Before designated hitters were introduced to the American League in 1973, we can see that the leagues have similar ERA scores. The National League had slightly higher slugging percentages before 1973. But after the designated hitter rule was introduced in 1973, in both graphs, the difference line between the leagues becomes positive for at least the next 30 years. This means that there was an apparent difference in ERA and slugging percentages between leagues because of this rule. Since the rule was introduced to the American League only, the American League has higher ERA and slugging percentages than the National League after 1973. This makes sense, as the designated hitter is meant to bat in place of the pitcher. The pitcher is going to be focused on and train pitching more than batting, so allowing the pitcher to concentrate on their own discipline and having someone else hit for them will increase both ERA and slugging percentage. Designated hitters were only introduced to the National League in 2020, so there is not enough data yet to see the effects of this addition.

A graph with lines and numbers

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Image 1 - Plot depicting the average ERA for each league

A graph of a graph

Description automatically generated with medium confidence Image 2 - Plot depicting the average Slugging % for each league