

By Thomas Ryan Stone

Pittsburgh Pirates All-Time Team

The Pirates franchise began in 1882 as the Pittsburgh Alleghenys of the American Association. They joined the NL in 1887 and switched to their current nickname in 1891. Generally mediocre or poor during these early years, they became a blockbuster club during the first decade of the 20th century due in large part to the efforts of superstar Honus Wagner and player-manager Fred Clarke. They later had some good seasons here and there, but didn't approach that level of success again until the 1970s. After a period of decline in the 1980s, they briefly flirted with success in the early 1990s, before the financial reality of being a small-market team set in.

1st Base

Although I generally try to select players based on the position they played the most for that particular team, sometimes feast/famine scenarios demand exceptions. This is just such a case. The Pirates are loaded with great OFs, but are not very strong at 1B. **Willie Stargell** (1962-82) was a lifetime Pirate who played more games as an OF (1296 G), but nonetheless played significant time at 1B (848 G). He smacked 475 HR, and twice led the league: with 48 in 1971 and 44 in 1973. He is perhaps best known for his leadership of the 1979 Pirates when they won the World Series. Although physically over-the-hill, he was given co-MVP honors that year with batting champion Keith Hernandez.

The backup 1B is a tough choice between:

- **Jake Beckley** (1888-89, 91-96) who was a HOFer who split most of his career between the Pirates and the Reds. He began playing in Pittsburgh in 1888 and continued until partway through the 1896 season. He was a productive run producer, often having both 100 runs and 100 RBIs. And he had extremely consistent Triples numbers: exactly 19 per season for five consecutive years!
- **Gus Suhr** (1930-39), who had three seasons with 100 RBIs or more, and often compiled 30+ doubles, 10+ triples, and 10+ homers.

- Elbie Fletcher (1939-43, 46-47) missed two seasons due to WW2, but was a good hitter and a fine fielder. He had a good eye, walked a lot, and led the league in OBP for three consecutive seasons.
- Donn Clendenon (1961-68) was the Pirates' starter at 1B from 63-68. His best season was 1966, when he belted 28 HRs, had 98 RBIs, and batted .299.

The edge between these fellows will be given to Suhr, because he played significantly more games for Pittsburgh, and the most at 1B as well (1339). Another feather in his cap was his 822 consecutive games played streak.

Sluggers Dick Stuart (1958-82) and Jason Thompson (1981-85) didn't play in Pittsburgh long enough to compare well, while longtime Pirate Kevin Young (1992-03) didn't have enough star seasons.

2nd Base

Known for his excellent glove, Hall-of-Famer **Bill Mazeroski** (1957-72) is the clear choice as 2B starter. Mazeroski won eight gold glove awards, was an all-star seven times, and hit one of the most famous homeruns in World Series play in 1960. He also ranks fifth in games played for Pirate position players.

The backup again is a tough choice. There are three fellows with mediocre resumes: Rennie Stennett (1971-79), Johnny Ray (1981-87), and Claude Ritchey (1900-06). They each played between 900 and 1000 games at 2B for Pittsburgh, and they have very similar career numbers (equally unimpressive).

So I'm going with **George Grantham** (1925-31) .315, .490 Slg), who split his time for the Pirates between 2B and 1B. He hit .315 for the club, and adds some pop to a generally weak offensive position with his best season (1930) providing these numbers: .324, 120 Runs, 34 D, 14 T, 18 HR, 99 RBI.

3rd Base

The starting 3B has to be **Pie Traynor** (1920-37). Pie's unique name used to regularly surface in discussions of the greatest third basemen of all time. But today it is rightly drowned out by more recent stars like Schmidt, Brett, Robinson, Mathews, and Boggs. Traynor was a high-average hitter (.320) and a good fielder, but didn't have much power

or speed, and didn't walk very often (.362 OBP). Then again, in his outstanding 1929 season, in which he hit .356 with 108 RBI, he only struck out 7 times in 540 at-bats!

Bobby Bonilla (1986-91) was a five-time all-star and Bill Madlock (1979-85) won two batting titles while with Pittsburgh. But for this backup spot, **Tommy Leach** (1900-18) gets the nod. Leach played during the dead-ball era, and was a good run scorer and hit a lot of triples. He played 850 games at 3B, nearly 200 less than Richie Hebner (1968-76, 82-83) did. However, Leach also played a lot in the OF, and so ended up ninth overall in games played for the Bucs. Four-time Pirates all-star Bob Elliott (1939-46) also got some consideration, given his three seasons of 100+ RBI (impressive as he had 10 HRs or less each year).

Shortstop

The starting shortstop is clearly **Honus Wagner** (1900-17). He'd get my vote as the greatest ever at the position. His large size (for a SS during that era) helped him generate awesome numbers: he won 8 batting titles, 5 slugging titles, 12 times scored 90+ Runs, and 7 times had 100+ RBIs (excluding his three years in Louisville).

The Pirates have had several steady shortstops since then, including Glenn Wright (1924-28), Dick Groat (1952, 55-62), Gene Alley (1963-73), Jay Bell (1989-96), and Jack Wilson (2001-09). Groat is perhaps the best from this bunch, having won the MVP award in 1960.

But **Arky Vaughn** (1932-41) would be good enough to start on most All-Time teams, so he gets the backup spot. Vaughn played most of his career with Pittsburgh, earning an all-star nomination eight times, before moving on to the Dodgers. He captured a batting title in 1935 with a .385 mark, and led the league in Runs and Triples three times each. With Wagner and Vaughn, the Pirates have two of the top ten shortstops of all time.

Catcher

Going from a position of strength to one of weakness, we can see that the Pirates are not famous for having great catchers. For a team that has been around since the 19th century, it is unimpressive to nominate **Jason Kendall** (1996-04) as the starting catcher. A .306 hitter, he was also a catcher with speed – managing 140 SBs during his tenure in Pittsburgh.

Manny Sanguillen (1967, 69-76, 78-80) was a capable backstop and often a .300 hitter, but had no power or speed. He is actually third in

games caught for the Bucs, just behind Kendall and George Gibson (1905-16). Gibson was an extremely light hitter, so Sanguillien gets the backup duties.

Tony Pena (1980-86) was also given consideration, mostly for his defense (three Gold Glove Awards) and adequate batting average (.285). Smokey Burgess (1959-64) was a good hitter (.296), and a four-time all-star, but wasn't always a full-time catcher as he was often used as a pinch-hitter.

Outfield

Aside from shortstop, OF is the biggest strength for the Pirates All-Time team. **Roberto Clemente** (1955-72) anchors the group, having played his entire career with the Bucs. Known for his reckless abandon on the basepaths, he didn't actually amass very many stolen bases (83). But he brought a gun of an arm to right field, and provided power while capturing four batting titles and one MVP award (1966). He was a 12-time all-star, won 12 Gold Glove awards, and when his live ended in tragedy he had a .324 average and exactly 3,000 hits.

Joining Clemente as a starting OF on this club is **Paul "Big Poison" Waner** (1926-40). Waner hit loads of doubles and triples, and was amongst baseball's leaders in lifetime batting average (he hit .340 for the Pirates). He scored 100+ runs nine times and won four batting titles, taking home MVP honors in 1927.

For me, the third starting OF slot is a tough call. I'm going to go with **Max Carey** (1910-26) .287, 688 SBs, 1414 Runs). For the Pirates, he is second only to Clemente in games played in the OF, and is fourth overall in games played. Carey was fast – he stole 688 bases for the Pirates, led the league ten times, and in 1922 had an amazing 51 SB while only being caught twice! And his speed helps him rank as one of the top defensive centerfielders of all time (some put him in company with Speaker, Mays, Ashburn, and the best of today).

Choosing Carey was not easy though, because it is hard to compare his resume with that of **Ralph Kiner** (1946-53). In fact, you'd be hard-pressed to find two candidates with more divergent credentials. Kiner was the second most prolific homerun hitter in history, if judged by HRs per AB over an entire career, until the recent surge in HRs by the likes of Bonds and McGwire. Kiner smashed 301 HRs in only 3,913 at-bats for Pittsburgh, including a five-year span from 1947-51 with 100+ Runs and 100+ RBIs per year, and homer totals of 51, 40, 54, 47, 42. He actually led the NL in HR in all of his seven full seasons in Pittsburgh.

The decision here clearly comes down to power vs. speed, defense, and longevity. Also, if you demanded that a true centerfielder be amongst the starters, then Carey is your man for that reason also.

The remaining two OF spots also force some tough decisions; as I see four strong candidates (in chronological order):

- **Fred Clarke** (1900-15) was a typical dead-ball era star, hitting .299, scoring 1015 runs, and stealing 261 bases for Pittsburgh. And you can give him extra points for being a player-manager of one of the greatest dynasties ever, leading the club to four pennants, one world series championships, and a .595 winning percentage over 16 seasons.
- **Lloyd “Little Poison” Waner** (1927-41, 44-45) hit .319 but was a more one-dimensional than his brother. He hit very few home-runs and not very many doubles, though still hit double-digit triples five times including a league-leading 20 in 1929. So
- Dave Parker (1973-83) had some great seasons, winning the MVP award in 1978, took home two consecutive batting titles, all while providing excellent defense in right field (three Gold Gloves and a fearsome arm).
- Barry Bonds (1986-92) was outstanding but packed his bags for San Francisco before attaining his most impressive numbers. He had MVP seasons for the Pirates in 1990 and 1992 (also the only two years he represented the club as an All-Star). His numbers certainly deserve recognition, including his 1990 season which was the first 30-30 Pirate season, and the first 30 HR, 100 RBI, .300 BA, and 50 SB season in major league history. But he only played for the Pirates for 1,010 games (around 300 less than Parker and 800 less than the younger Waner). On the plus side, he was a great fielder (three Gold Gloves) and the recent steroid allegations against Bonds do not extend back to his years in Pittsburgh, but on the minus side he did not hit well in the post-season for the Bucs.

All things considered, Clarke will be the fifth choice, and Waner edges out Parker and Bonds due in part to longevity with the club.

The list of good Pirate outfielders doesn't end there, as others I considered included (in chronological order):

- Mike Smith (1892-97, 01) scored 120+ runs three times and hit .325 for those early Pittsburgh teams.

- Patsy Donovan (1892-99) hit .307 for Pittsburgh, and stole 312 bases while scoring 838 Runs in only 979 games.
- Ginger Beaumont (1899-1906) hit .321 for the Pirates, stole 200 bases, and scored 757 Runs in only 989 games (four seasons of 100+ runs). While in Pittsburgh he led the league in hits three times and led the league in batting (.357) in 1902.
- Chief Wilson (1908-13) is likely most well known for leading the league in triples in 1912 with an amazing total of 36!
- Carson Bigbee (1916-26) was a lifetime Pirate with some speed: 182 SB and three seasons of 15+ triples.
- Kiki Cuyler (1921-27) really only had two full seasons for the Pirates, but they were awesome! In 1925 he batted .357 with 220 hits, 43 doubles, 18 HR, 102 RBI, 41 SB, and a league-leading 26 triples and 144 runs scored. Then the next year wasn't quite as stellar, but was still solid as he hit .321 with 15 triples and a league-leading 35 SB and 113 runs scored.
- Frank Thomas (1951-58) hit 20+ HR in six consecutive seasons, and was a three-time all-star.
- Bob Skinner (1954, 55-63) regularly hit double digit HR and stole double-digit bases, and was an all-star twice.
- Bill Virdon (1956-65, 68) took home one Gold Glove award and is eleventh in total games played for Pittsburgh. He also managed the team for two years (1972-73) before managing the Yankees, Astros, and Expos.
- Matty Alou (1966-70) led the NL in batting (.342) in 1966, and then in 1969 led the league in at-bats (698), hits (231), and doubles (41). In total he batted .327 when in Pittsburgh.
- Al Oliver (1968-77) played the first half of his impressive career with the Pirates, batting .296 with double-digit HRs in all nine of his full seasons.
- Omar Moreno (1975-82) was a speed demon, stealing 412 bases in just 6+ full seasons. His three top totals were 96, 77, and 71.
- Andy Van Slyke (1987-1994) won five Gold Gloves and was an all-star three times, providing both HR power and speed on the basepaths.

- Brian Giles (1999-2003) blossomed after coming to Pittsburgh from Cleveland, batting .308 with a .426 OBP, and also hit 35-39 HR in each of his four full seasons.
- Jason Bay (2003-2008) was obtained by Pirates in a trade for Giles, and quickly proved to be nearly his equal, hitting 30+ HR, 100+ Runs, and 100+ RBI in both 2005 and 2006.

Now you can see why Stargell really needs to be listed at 1B and not OF!

Starting Pitching

The Pirates have not had consistently good pitching, certainly not in comparison to their hitting. The six fellows with the most wins deserve spots, and arguably in this order too:

- **Wilbur Cooper** (1912-24) played most of his career for the pirates, posting a club record 202 wins and a 2.74 ERA. He won 20+ games four times, the leading the league with 22 in 1921.
- **Babe Adams** (1907, 09-16, 18-26) burst onto the scene in 1909, going 12-3 with a 1.11 ERA and winning three games in the World Series as a rookie. He had great control, leading the league in WHIP (Walks + Hits per Innings Pitched) five times.
- **Sam Leever** (1898-10) A lifetime Pirate, Leever had a 2.47 ERA and an impressive 194-100 record for a .660 winning percentage. He won 20 games four times with his best season arguably being 1903 when he went 25-7 with a 2.06 ERA.
- **Bob Friend** (1951-65) (191-218, 3.55 ERA, 3 AS) Played most of his career for Pittsburgh, and ended up with a losing record (191-218), in part due to his first four seasons as an unsuccessful spot starter and long reliever (his 1959 season of 8-19 didn't help either). He led the NL in ERA in 1955 with a 2.83 mark, and led the league in wins in 1958 when he went 22-14.
- **Deacon Phillippe** (1900-11) won 20 games five times and had a 2.50 ERA for the Pirates.
- **Vern Law** (1950-51, 54-67) 162-147, 3.77 ERA, 1 AS) was a lifetime Pirate, and posted a 20-9 record to win the Cy Young award in 1960 (when only one was given out for both leagues.)

Choosing a seventh starting pitcher is not as easy, with candidates including (in chronological order):

- **Jesse Tannehill** (1897-1902) had five outstanding seasons at the turn of the century for the Pirates, including four with 20+ wins, and another where he posted 18 wins and a 2.18 ERA to lead the league.
- **Howie Camnitz** (1904, 06-13) won 20 games for the Pirates three times, including a 25-6 mark in 1909 (with a 1.62 ERA).
- **Ray Kremer** (1924-33) was a lifetime Pirate, and twice won 20 games in a season. He also led the NL in both 1926 and 1927, with 2.61 and 2.47 respectively.
- **Rip Sewell** (1938-49) played almost his entire major league career with Pittsburgh, was an all-star four times, and won 21 games in both 1943 and 1944.
- **Bob Veale** (1962-72) pitched most of his career with the Pirates, posting a 3.06 ERA, while being one of Pittsburgh few strikeout artists (1652 Ks in 1868.6 IP). The flip side: he also led the NL in walks four times.
- **John Candelaria** (1975-85, 93) pitched the first half of his career in Pittsburgh, posting a solid 3.17 ERA during that time. His best season was easily 1977 when he went 20-5 with a league-leading 2.34 ERA.

You could make a case for just about any of these guys, but I'm going with Tannehill and his five strong seasons.

A couple of very old-timers deserve mention. Ed "Cannonball" Morris pitched for the franchise for five years in the 1880s, and managed two great seasons of 39-24 and 41-20. And Hall-of-Famer Pud Galvin (1885-89, 91-92) pitched part of his career for Pittsburgh, both winning and losing plenty of games (126-110) as was typical in that era.

And finally, two recent hurlers that also deserve brief mention include Dock Ellis (1968-75, 79) who posted a 3.16 ERA for the Pirates and a 19-9 record in 1971, and Doug Drabek (1987-92) who posted a 3.02 ERA for the club and won the Cy Young in 1990 when he went 22-.6.

Relief Pitching

This all-time team has two solid relievers in **Roy Face** (1953, 55-68) and **Kent Tekulve** (1974-85) 158 SVs, 2.68 ERA, 1 AS). In 1959 Face went 18-1 in relief, with 10 saves. Then in 1962 he had a 1.88 ERA and set a new NL record with 28 saves. He led the league in saves three times, and when he retired in 1969 he was the major league record holder in the

category. Sidermer Tekulve was a member of a generation of closers who raised the position to specialty status. He twice managed 31 SVs, and had a great ERA of 2.68 with the Pirates.

A third bullpen spot should go to **Dave Giusti** (1970-76) 133 SVs, 2.94 ERA, 1 AS), who was a top-notch closer for six years for Pittsburgh, after spending several seasons as a mediocre starter for Houston and St. Louis. He led the league with 30 saves in 1971, and followed that up with a 1.93 ERA the next year.

I also considered the more recent closer Mike Williams (1998-03) His 46 saves in 2002 deserve mention, but Giusti's numbers are more impressive when considered in the context of when he pitched (early 1970s), so he is my choice.

Extra Spot

There are several possibilities here, but the strongest leftover would seem to be Barry Bonds. It is hard to keep his all-around talent off the team that launched his career. Apologies to Dave Parker, Al Oliver, Jake Beckley, Bill Madlock, and the many other good ballplayers who are left of this team.

Team Captain

The captain spot is a no-brainer. With all due respect to Roberto Clemente and Willie Stargell, Honus Wagner is clearly the best the Pirates have ever had. The "Flying Dutchman" was the best player of his time in the National League, considered by many the parallel of the AL's Ty Cobb.

Starting Lineup

A mythical starting lineup for this squad might look like this:

Max Carey OF

Paul Waner OF

Honus Wagner SS

Roberto Clemente OF

Willie Stargell 1B

Pie Traynor 3B

Bill Mazeroski 2B

Jason Kendall C

Wilbur Cooper P

Strictly speaking, both Waner and Clemente were primarily right-fielders. Fortunately, Kiner was a left-fielder, so if I add him into the mix and have a DH (for those mythical inter-league games of course!), then I could have a lineup as follows, re-arranged a bit to accommodate Kiner's power:

Honus Wagner SS

Paul Waner DH

Roberto Clemente RF

Ralph Kiner LF

Willie Stargell 1B

Pie Traynor 3B

Bill Mazeroski 2B

Jason Kendall C

Max Carey CF

Prospects for Current Players

What are the prospects of current Pirates players making this all-time team? Not good. Given the pattern that the Pirates have followed the past 15 years – losing their home-grown talent to trades or free-agency due mostly to the economic reality of being a small-market team – I don't expect any good players they do develop or obtain to stay Pirates long enough to rack up the accolades that would be needed to make this roster.

Pirates Retired Numbers

Billy Meyer (1, manager), Ralph Kiner (4), Willie Stargell (8), Bill Mazeroski (9), Paul Waner (11), Pie Traynor (20), Roberto Clemente (21), Honus Wagner (33), Danny Murtaugh (40, player/manager)

Selections From Other Authors and Fan Surveys

- 1958 *Sport* magazine, March issue

As part of a running series, *Sport* magazine reported on all-time all-star teams picked by "big league publicity departments and the writers covering the clubs." Here is what they had to say:

First Base: Gus Suhr, who played for Pittsburgh from 1930 through 1939.

Second Base: John "Dots" Miller who played with the Pirates for five seasons, 1909-1913, at the start of a National League career which later took him to St. Louis and Philadelphia.

Shortstop: The immortal Honus Wagner, the greatest any team has ever had at the position. He came to Pittsburgh from Louisville in 1900, compiled a lifetime average of .329, and finally retired after the 1917 season. He is in baseball's Hall of Fame.

Third Base: Harold "Pie" Traynor, possibly the all-time best at his position, too, spent his entire big league career in Pittsburgh (1920-37) and batted .320. He's also in the Hall of Fame.

Left Field: Fred Clarke, who came to the Pirates as player-manager in 1900, played his last game for them in 1915. His lifetime average was .315. He was voted into the Hall of Fame in 1945.

Center Field: Max Carey, one of the greatest base-runners the game has known. He played for the Pirates from 1910 until 1926.

Right Field: Another Hall of Famer, Paul "Big Poison" Waner, who arrived in Pittsburgh in 1926 and stayed there through the 1940 season. His lifetime big-league batting average was .333.

Catcher: Walter Schmidt, the Pirates' backstop from 1916 through 1924.

Lefthanded Pitcher: Wilbur Cooper, a Pirate from 1912 through 1924; he won 216 big-league games.

Righthanded Pitcher: Remy Kremer, who spent his entire big-league career (1924-1933) in Pittsburgh, winning 143 games and losing only 85.

Back in 1958 the 1B and C positions were the weakest, as shown by the lack of accolades listed for Suhr and Schmidt. Dots Miller's numbers for his five seasons in Pittsburgh don't initially appear impressive, but relative to the era in which he toiled, they aren't too bad (amongst top 5 in several offensive categories a few times). Through 1958, I still prefer Grantham at 2B. I liked seeing the comment about Traynor, because it supports my recollection that until the 1980s Traynor was widely considered one of, if not the, best 3B of all-time. They went with Clarke over Kiner in LF – a close call presumably. But choosing Ray (Remy) Kremer over Adams and Phillippe was a mistake I think.

- 1969 *The Sporting News* Fan Poll

The July 5, 1969 issue reports the results of a fan poll for the long-standing franchises of the day. The results for the Pirates were:

1B: Gus Suhr

2B: Bill Mazeroski

3B: Pie Traynor

SS: Honus Wagner

C: Walter Schmidt

OF: Paul Waner

OF: Lloyd Waner

OF: Roberto Clemente

RHP: Deacon Phillippe

LHP: Wilbur Cooper

I consider this listing to be very reasonable. I like Carey or Kiner over the younger Waner, but I'm glad to again see Gus Suhr as the 1B. The pitching choices are sound. And again, I guess Walter Schmidt is an acceptable choice, though he would be laughed off most other all-time teams.

- 1971 *I Hate the Yankees*, by John R. Bizzelle

This book provides the author's all-time teams for most of the long-standing teams of the day. This is what he wrote for the Pirates:

My All-Star Pittsburgh team would be: Suhr, 1B; Mazerowski, 2B; Vaughn SS; Traynor 3B; Lloyd Waner, center field; Paul Waner, left field; and Bob Clemente, right field. Smokey Burgess would be the catcher, and Larry French and Lee Meadows the pitchers. Murtaugh would be the manager. The Pittsburgh Pirates have always had wonderful hitters. In this century they have had the batting champion 20 times, or over 35% of the time. Of course, they got a head start with Honus Wagner – 7 wins – but even recently Bob Clemente has led the league 4 times. Counting Dick Groat in 1960 and Matty Alou they have had the batting champion in 6 in nine years.

The fact that he mentions Wagner demonstrates he wasn't somehow unaware of him. But how he could select Vaughn over Wagner as his starting shortstop is beyond me. I don't really have any complaints with the rest of his hitters, but then his pitchers – French and Meadows? The former pitched only six years for the Pirates and accumulated a record of 87-83, a 3.50 ERA, and no outstanding individual seasons. The latter was only slightly better: essentially only five seasons with the Pirates, leading to an 88-52 record, a 3.50 ERA, with one 20-win and two 19-win seasons. I don't see how either French or Meadows are deserving of being on my all-time team roster, let alone the top two selections.

- 1990 *The Baseball Research Journal*

In an interesting article, Robert C. Berlo used Thorn and Palmer's TPR (Total Player Rating) system to choose all-time teams. He selected players based on their best 800 consecutive games for the franchise, with a minimum of five years played. His results:

1B Will Stargell 20.0
2B Bill Mazerowski 20.5
SS Honus Wagner 35.1
3B Pie Traynor 12.0
RF Roberto Clemente 21.9
CF Max Carey 14.2
LF Ralph Kiner 21.9
C Manny Sanguillen 11.8
SP Jesse Tannehill 17.6

SP Wilbur Cooper 13.4

SP Babe Adams 13.0

SP Sam Leever 11.3

RP Al McBean 8.3

It is interesting how low of a score Traynor manages here, presumably because his raw numbers get deflated when considered in the context of his era. Kiner's few but very powerful seasons earned him big points in the TPR system, giving him a tie with Roberto Clemente even. The starting pitchers are all reasonable results. But Al McBean? In 1990 he ranked fourth all-time for the Pirates with 59. Actually, the choice of McBean was enlightening for me. I should have given him honorable mention at least. He spent one season as a starter (15-10 in 1962) and then posted several impressive seasons as a reliever (especially given the period), including:

1963: 13-3, 11 saves, 2.57 ERA

1964: 8-3, 22 saves, 1.91 ERA

1965: 6-6, 18 saves, 2.29 ERA

- 1992 *The All-Time All-Star Baseball Book*, Nick Acocella, and Donald Dewey

They provide a lineup of the same hitters I did, except they start Kiner over Carey, and of course have Sanguillen as catcher. However, they inexplicably chose Ray Kremer as the starting pitcher. They note that catcher and pitcher are the weakest positions for this all-time team, and write: "The most reasonable alternatives to the following battery, for example, would be a pitcher (Bob Friend and Vern Law) who won 20 games only once and a catcher (Smokey Burgess) more noted for pinch hitting than back-stopping." The comment about catching is no problem for me, but I don't understand how they could not have chosen at least Cooper, Adams, Leever, or Phillippe over Kremer. They conclude by writing: "Honorable mentions to Max Carey, Fred Clarke, Lloyd Waner, Dick Groat, and Dave Parker."

- 1995 Media Guide

The 1995 Media Guide had another listing, which I obtained from <http://home.mindspring.com/~gearhard/pilineup.html>, which is

one page from Glenn Gearhard's site
(<http://home.mindspring.com/~gearhard/pirates.html>).

1B: Willie Stargell
2B: Bill Mazeroski
3B: Pie Traynor
SS: Honus Wagner
C: Manny Sanguillen
OF: Paul Waner
OF: Roberto Clemente
OF: Ralph Kiner
RHP: Vern Law
LHP: Harvey Haddix
RP: Elroy Face

Other than arguably preferring Carey over Kiner, this is a fine lineup. And I wouldn't argue to much with having Law as the top RHP. But then... ack! Harvey Haddix! Choosing him over Cooper is just wrong.

- 1995 Baseball Ratings by Charles S. Faber

Written in 1995, only Kendall could not be considered for his lineup. There are only two differences in his list of starting hitters: Gus Suhr is the 1B because Stargell was considered as an outfielder, and Fred Clarke earns the third outfield spot ahead of Stargell, Carey, Kiner, and others. While I defended Clarke above, I don't see him taking a spot from Stargell. His five starting pitchers are pretty good choices: Adams, Cooper, Leever, Law, and Sewell. I preferred Friend and Phillippe to Law, and Tannehill over Sewell. The Faber system deemed Face to be the top Bucs reliever.

- 1999 Fan Vote

In 1999 fans, in conjunction with the Pirates organization and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, voted on an All-Time Pirates squad. There were some 14,000 votes, and here are the results:

First Base: Willie Stargell (12,579), Dick Stuart (575), Donn Clendenon (251), Elbie Fletcher (243), Gus Suhr (236)

Second Base: Bill Mazeroski (13,049), Rennie Stennett (364), Chico Lind (314), Johnny Ray (240)

Third Base: Pie Traynor (9,754), Bill Madlock (2,173), Richie Hebner (1106), Don Hoak (800), Tommy Leach (149)

ShortStop: Honus Wagner (11,106), Dick Groat (951), Jay Bell (937), Arky Vaughan (264), Gene Alley (123)

Catcher: Jason Kendall (5,508), Manny Sanguillen (5,265), Smokey Burgess (1958), Tony Pena (1546), George Gibson (225)

Left Field: Ralph Kiner (7,948), Barry Bonds (4,834), Frank Thomas (385), Max Carey (344), Fred Clarke (232)

Center Field: Lloyd Waner (4,726), Andy Van Slyke (4,678), Bill Virdon (2,749), Omar Moreno (1,130), Kiki Cuyler (540)

Right Field: Roberto Clemente (12,791), Paul Waner (890), Dave Parker (497)

Right Handed Pitcher: Vernon Law (4,889), Bob Friend (3,177), Doug Drabek (2,432), Steve Blass (2,293), Babe Adams (673), Deacon Phillippe (656)

Left Handed Pitcher: Harvey Haddix (6,222), John Candelaria (4,249), Wilbur Cooper (1,850), Bob Veale (1,669)

Relief Pitchers: Kent Tekulve (6,366), Roy Face (6,206), Dave Giusti (747), Stan Belinda (597), Grant Jackson (197)

Manager: Danny Murtaugh (7,875), Jim Leyland (2,735), Chuck Tanner (2,369), Fred Clarke (861), Frankie Frisch (196)

As one would expect from such a fan survey, there is a clear bias that favors contemporary players. They wisely chose the same infield starters that I did, and by wide margins. The choice of Stuart as 1B backup is likely due to weighing his shorter, better peak seasons over the longevity of others. Voting for Stennett, Lind, and Ray over Grantham and Ritchey demonstrates a bit of a modern-player bias, but not too much. Ditto for choosing Madlock as the 3B backup over Leach. At SS this is more egregious: Bell and Groat garnered far more support than

Vaughn – a major flaw in these results. The catching vote is very reasonable (although in 1999 I wouldn't have chosen Kendall first).

The OF votes were broken down by position, so this must be considered in comparing with my selections. In particular, this elevates Lloyd Waner above his brother Paul, even though his overall numbers are less deserving. But Max Carey was listed in left field instead of center field where he played more games, and might have gotten more votes than Lloyd, moving Van Slyke down a notch. The fans went with Barry Bonds after Kiner, which I can certainly understand. But Fred Clarke got virtually no support, while Bill Virdon got much more than I think he should have – again, evidence for a bias in favor of contemporary players I think.

The starting pitching vote was divided by RHS and LHS. Law and Friend are fine choices, but Drabek and Blass got more than three times the support for Adams and Phillippe. And what about Haddix and Candelaria getting significantly more support than Cooper? Haddix only pitched a few years in Pittsburgh (posting a mediocre 45-38 record) and never had more than 12 wins in a season for the Bucs. Cooper won more games than any other Pirate ever and had a 2.74 career ERA for them. Choosing Haddix – no doubt largely because he pitched a 12-inning perfect game (lost in the 13th inning – is crazy. The voting for relief pitching, on the other hand, was spot on.

- 2003 *Rob Neyer's Big Book of Baseball Lineups*, by Rob Neyer

In Neyer's excellent book he chooses all-time lineups for each team. He moved Stargell from OF to 1B as I did, but then chose Fletcher as the backup. He selected Grantham as his second 2B, though he notes Ritchey's stronger defense. His backup 3B is Madlock, on the basis of his two batting titles (one in strike-shortened 81), even while he notes Bill's several deficiencies. Since Leach obviously won't crack the outfield spots, this means he is overlooked as usual. His choice of Pena as the second C is fine, probably waiting on Kendall to prove himself a bit more.

His outfield is a little different than mine, with starters Bonds in LF, Carey in CF, and Clemente in RF. Fine choices, as are backups LF Kiner and RF Waner. But I can't agree with Beaumont as the backup CF. He describes at length his thinking between Beaumont and Van Slyke, simply asserting that both were "finer than Lloyd Waner." Because of his use of each OF position, Fred Clarke is out of luck unless you weigh his star duration over Bonds or Kiner's shorter Pirates super-stardom.

My six starters are amongst his first seven. He also includes Vic Willis, who only pitched four seasons (1906-09) with the Pirates, though he won 20+ games each year. I think Doug Drabek is elevated above more deserving candidates for the last spot. Face and Tekulve are obvious relief selections.

- 2006 *The Team By Team Encyclopedia of Major League Baseball*, by Dennis Purdy

Purdy's massive book includes sections listing his choices of "significant" players for each franchise. He doesn't arrange these as all-time teams, with minimum players at each position. Nonetheless, I feel his choices worthy of including here. For the Pirates he included: Adams, Beckley, Bonds, Carey, Clarke, Clemente, Cooper, Cuyler, Donovan, Face, Friend, Galvin, Groat, Kendall, Kiner, Kremer, Law, Leever, Mazeroski, Morris, Oliver, Parker, Phillippe, Sanguillen, Sewell, Stargell, Tannehill, Tekulve, Traynor, Vaughn, Wagner, L. Waner, P. Waner, Willis.

In my view Mr. Purdy made great selections. I wouldn't say anyone was snubbed as such, but do wish he included the underrated Leach instead of some of the less deserving such as Beckley, Donovan, Cuyler, or Willis.

Win Shares

Amongst other things, Bill James' innovative Win Shares system is helpful in comparing players across eras. Using my data sources, and listing players only at the position I considered and rated them at for this book, the win shares for players while playing for the Pirates are (100 or more):

First Base:

1. 370 Willie Stargell
2. 161 Gus Suhr
3. 136 Elbie Fletcher
4. 125 Jake Beckley
5. 110 Don Clendenon

This is in line with my analysis: Stargell the obvious starter (since slotting him here instead of the crowded OF), and Suhr edges out the other three as the backup.

Second Base:

1. 219 Bill Mazeroski
2. 135 George Grantham
3. 135 Claude Ritchey
4. 111 Rennie Stennett
5. 100 Johnny Ray

Interesting that Grantham and Ritchey happen to end up tied in lifetime win shares with Pittsburgh. Toss a coin I suppose.

Third Base:

1. 274 Pie Traynor
2. 247 Tommy Leach
3. 147 Richie Hebner
4. 145 Bob Elliot
5. 133 Bobby Bonilla

As I noted earlier, Traynor was overrated by many for a long time, in part because he played during an era of inflated batting stats. Leach's total of 247 validates my giving him a roster spot.

Shortstop:

1. 598 Honus Wagner
2. 299 Arky Vaughn
3. 144 Jay Bell
4. 141 Dick Groat
5. 115 Gene Alley
6. 112 Jack Wilson

This is numerically fascinating: Wagner has exactly twice the Pittsburgh win shares of Vaughn. That makes clear Wagner's greatness, since Vaughn is a top-10 all-time shortstop!

Catcher:

1. 166 Jason Kendall
2. 148 Manny Sanguillen
3. 112 George Gibson
4. 109 Doggie Miller

The top three are in line with my analysis. But who is Doggie Miller? He played from 1884-1893 (most of his career), and split time mostly between C, OF, and 3B. He regularly had 30+ SB, and scored 103 runs in 1892.

Outfield:

1. 388 Paul Waner
2. 377 Roberto Clemente
3. 329 Max Carey
4. 282 Fred Clarke
5. 235 Lloyd Waner
6. 202 Dave Parker
7. 201 Barry Bonds
8. 194 Ralph Kiner
9. 181 Al Oliver
10. 168 Ginger Beaumont
11. 167 Andy Van Slyke
12. 142 Bill Virdon
13. 137 Mike Smith
14. 135 Brian Giles
15. 123 Bob Skinner
16. 120 Carson Bigbee
17. 113 Patsy Donovan
18. 111 Jason Bay
19. 110 Frank Thomas
20. 109 Matty Alou
21. 103 Chief Wilson

Waner topping Clemente is worth noting, but not entirely surprising I suppose. Carey coming in third validates my selection of him. But Kiner

comes out particularly poorly by this measure: obviously I rate leading the league in HRs for seven consecutive seasons more than the Win Shares system does (for better or worse).

Starting Pitcher:

1. 250 Wilbur Cooper
2. 243 Babe Adams
3. 212 Sam Leever
4. 205 Bob Friend
5. 183 Deacon Phillippe
6. 157 Vern Law
7. 157 Ed Morris
8. 144 Jesse Tannehill
9. 141 Ray Kremer
10. 139 Rip Sewell
11. 136 Pud Galvin
12. 135 John Candelaria
13. 128 Frank Killen
14. 117 Howie Camnitz
15. 116 Bob Veale
16. 115 Lefty Leifield
17. 108 Bill Swift
18. 102 Larry French

No major surprises here really.

Relief Pitcher:

1. 135 Roy Face
2. 123 Kent Tekulve

Dave Giusti had only 72 win shares with the Bucs, so perhaps I would have been better off selecting an eighth starting pitcher, such as Kremer or Sewell?

Pos.	Name	Key Career Red Sox Statistics
1B	Willie Stargell	.282, 475 HR, 1540 RBI, 1195 R
1B	Gus Suhr	.278
2B	Bill Mazerowski	.260
2B	George Grantham	.315
3B	Pie Traynor	.320, 1273 RBI, 1183 R
3B	Tommy Leach	.271, 1009 R
SS	Honus Wagner	.328, 1475 RBI, 1521 R, 639 SB, 551 D, 232 T
SS	Arky Vaughn	.324
C	Jason Kendall	.306, 140 SB
C	Manny Sanguillen	.299
OF	Roberto Clemente	.324, 240 HR, 1305 RBI, 1416 R
OF	Paul Waner	.340, 1177 RBI, 1493 R, 558 D, 187 T
OF	Max Carey	.287, 1414 R, 688 SB
OF	Ralph Kiner	.280, 301 HR
OF	Fred Clarke	.299, 1015 R, 261 SB
OF	Lloyd Waner	.319, 1151 R
SP	Wilbur Cooper	202-159, 2.74
SP	Babe Adams	194-139, 2.74
SP	Sam Leever	194-100, 2.47
SP	Bob Friend	191-218, 3.55
SP	Deacon Phillippe	168-92, 2.50
SP	Vern Law	162-147, 3.77
SP	Jesse Tannehill	116-58, 2.73
RP	Roy Face	100-93, 3.46, 188 SV
RP	Kent Tekulve	70-61, 2.68, 158 SV
RP	Dave Giusti	47-28, 2.94, 133 SV