

By Thomas Ryan Stone

Cincinnati Reds All-Time Team

The early days of baseball in Cincinnati are complicated. The original Cincinnati Red Stockings were baseball's first openly all-professional team (1869). As such, they dominated the early baseball scene: they won their first game that year 45-9, and they won 130 games in a row over two seasons (actually, 81 games and 49 "exhibitions"). However, their best players moved to Boston to start up the Boston Red Stockings -- the ancestor of the Atlanta Braves, not the modern day Boston Red Sox. A new Cincinnati team, again named the Red Stockings (although at times called the Porkopolitans... I kid you not!), became a charter member of the National League in 1876. The team was expelled from the league after the 1880 season, in part for violating rules by serving beer to fans at games (not to mention that they rented out their ballpark on Sundays... the horror!). A new Cincinnati team joined the American Association starting in 1882, and it is this club that can truly be said to be the direct ancestor of the current franchise. The club was granted re-admission to the NL after the 1889 season. The upshot is that this All-Time Team will follow tradition and consider the Reds franchise to have begun in 1882, and therefore only count the players and statistics from that year onward.

Fast-forwarding to modern times, as you might expect the familiar 1970s Big Red Machine is well-represented on this All-Time Reds team. But what other stars have the Reds had over the past 100+ years? Since 1882 they have captured ten pennants and five championships (including the 1919 World Series, where they were the "winners" against the infamous "Black Sox"). What you'll find, however, is that like some other teams their all-time hitters seem much stronger, relatively speaking, than their all-time pitchers.

1st Base

Historically, first base has been an impressive position for the Reds. And not only strong, but I have some roster flexibility to work with as well. The starter might initially seem to be Tony Perez, as he played more games here than 3B, and obviously must make the all-time team somewhere. Further, since Pete Rose could reasonably be a starter either

at 3B or OF (he didn't play much 1B for the Reds), this means the decision comes down to who is better: the alternate 1B (who would otherwise be left off the roster) or an alternate OF. As you'll see after my complete analysis, it makes more sense to shift Perez over to 3B.

What that all means is that monster home-run hitter **Ted Kluszewski** (1947-57) is the starter at 1B. A .300+ hitter, he belted 40+ HRs three times and had 100+ RBIs five times for the Reds. This included a league-leading 49 HR and 141 RBI in 1954 which earned him second place (to Willie Mays) in the NL MVP balloting.

The reason I'm starting Perez at 3B and Rose in the OF, is that I prefer **Frank McCormick** (1934, 37-45) to any of the final OF candidates (see that section). McCormick managed four seasons with 100+ RBI, was an All-Star eight consecutive years for the Reds, and won the NL MVP in 1940 (.309, 19 HR, 127 RBI, 44 D). A .300 hitter, he also led the league in hits three consecutive years (1938-40).

An old-timer did get a serious look here, namely John Reilly (1883-91). He posted five seasons with 100+ runs, and twice led the league in HR with 11 in 1884 and 13 in 1888. He hit 11 or more triples every season, and led the league with 26 in 1890. His earliest SB totals are not available, but he clearly had lots of speed as shown by 50 SB in 1887 and 82 the following year.

I also gave some consideration to Sean Casey (1998-2005), Dan Driessen (1973-84), and Jake Beckley (.325). In his eight years with the Reds, Casey had five .300+ seasons and three seasons with 20+ HRs. Driessen was a consistent player, with some speed and some power, but never had any standout seasons. He is ninth in games played for the Reds. Beckley (1897-1903) was a high-average hitter (.325) from the early days, but only played seven seasons with the club.

A few others had some strong seasons, but didn't play long enough with the club. Most notable here is Lee May (1965-71), who started his career with the Reds and had three seasons displaying 30+ HR power.

2nd Base

Initially, I thought this would be an easy task. After all, who could top **Joe Morgan** (1972-79) one of the best second basemen of all time. The trouble is, Joe played many years for other teams, and hence played only 1154 games for the Reds. During that time he garnered two MVP awards and was clearly the sparkplug on two World Champion teams. He posted a .415 OBP for the Reds, stole 406 bases, and scored 100+ runs in

six consecutive seasons. And he was great defensively too, winning five consecutive Gold Glove awards.

But to choose Morgan as the starter so quickly is an injustice to 19th-century star **Bid McPhee** (1882-1899). He is fifth in games played for the Reds, fourth in hits, leads the team in stolen bases and triples, and is second in runs (though he had more runs per game than the leader, Pete Rose). He started with Cincinnati in their first year in the American Association, and was a lifetime Red through 18 seasons. Ten times he scored 100 or more runs (with a shorter season too), and he had 95 SBs in 1887. I'll still give the starting nod to Morgan, but McPhee deserves his recent election to baseball's Hall of Fame.

Light-hitting lifelong Reds 2B Ron Oestor (1978-90) deserves mention for his longevity with the club, but not much else. After these three, the names that appear next in games played at the position are Johnny Temple (1952-59, 64), Lonny Frey (1938-46), and Hughie Critz (1924-30). Temple was a .291 hitter and three-time all-star for the Reds, Frey was also a three-time all-star, and Critz had two moderately good seasons that somehow got him into the top-five in MVP balloting. Lastly, Tommy Helms (1964-71) won the NL Rookie of the Year award in his first season in 1966. He later was an all-star twice, and took home two Gold Glove awards as well. But none of these fellows come close to McPhee or Morgan.

3rd Base

As I said earlier, I've decided to select **Tony Perez** (1964-76, 84-86) here, even though he played more games at 1B (1092 vs. 760). In addition to allowing Big Klu and McCormick to play 1B, and Rose to shift to OF, there also is a relative paucity of solid 3B candidates for this roster. Perez was a seven-time all-star and the main RBI cog in the Big Red Machine. He had six 100+ RBI seasons for the Reds, plus four others with 90 or more.

The backup at 3B will be **Heinie Groh** (1913-1921), not a very impressive choice. A .298 hitter, he led the league in runs and hits once, and double twice.

Old-timer Arlie Latham (1890-95) was a speedster, stealing 340 bases in just over five seasons for Cincinnati.

Two other recent players were considered, Chris Sabo (1988-93, 96) .270, 3 AS) and Aaron Boone (.271, 1 AS). Sabo burst onto scene in 1988 with 40 doubles and 46 stolen bases, taking home NL Rookie of the

Year honors. He was an all-star that year, and two other years as well, but that isn't quite enough to beat out Groh for this roster.

Shortstop

Barry Larkin (1986-2004) is the clear starter, having starred for the Reds for his entire career. He won the MVP in 1995, though surprisingly he's never led the NL in any major offensive category. In addition to gold-glove defense (won three), he provided both speed and some power, with nine seasons of 20+ SBs, and nine with double-digit HRs. His career bests were 51 steals and 33 homers, and he was a 12-time all-star.

Another lifetime-Red is the backup for this roster, **Dave Concepcion** (1970-88). Though never a tremendous hitter, he was fast (321 SB), won five Gold Gloves, and was an all-star nine times. He also played in the second most games (Rose is first) in Reds history.

Another slick-fielding shortstop, Roy McMillan (1951-60) won three Gold Gloves, but doesn't compare well against Concepcion. Neither does four-time all-star Leo Cardenas (1960-68), who did smack 20 HR in 1966 but never had more than 11 in any other season in Cincinnati.

Catcher

Johnny Bench (1967-83), arguably the greatest catcher of all-time, and another lifelong Red, is the starting backstop. He was great with the bat, the glove, and with his pitchers. He won MVP awards in 1970 (.293, 45 HR, 148 RBI) and 1972 (.270, 40 HR, 125 RBI), leading the league in HR and RBI both years. Amazingly, he was an all-star every year from 1968-1980, and took home lots of hardware including ten Gold Glove awards and the NL Rookie of the Year award in 1968.

The All-Time Reds also have a very capable backup in **Ernie Lombardi** (1932-41). A high-average hitter (.311), he also provided some pop and won the MVP award in 1938 when he batted .342 (led the league) with 19 HR and 95 RBI. He was legendary for his lack of speed, but few catchers can run well.

No one else comes close to Bench and Lombardi, but I will briefly mention a few other backstops they've had over the years. The next three in terms of games played behind the plate are Ivy Wingo (1915-26, 29), Joe Oliver (1989-94, 96-97), and Johnny Edwards (1961-67), with only Edwards earning much acclaim: a three-time all-star and two Gold Glove awards.

Perhaps the most noteworthy additional resume is found in the players with the best name of the group, Bubbles Hargrave (1921-28). A .314 hitter for the Reds, he managed to lead the NL in 1926 with a .353 (in admittedly fewer plate appearances than would be required today).

Outfield

The first outfield spot clearly goes to **Pete Rose** (1963-78, 84-86). Rose played a fair amount at other positions (3B - 629 G, 2B - 627, 1B - 174), but played the most games for Cincy in the OF (1264 G). This is also where he was best defensively, taking home Gold Gloves in 1969 and 1970. "Charlie Hustle" was the most consistent singles and doubles hitter of his time. While with the Reds he won three batting titles, six times leading the league in hits, scored 100+ runs ten times, and was an all-star 13 times. He was NL MVP in 1973. He was signed by the Phillies as a free agent after the 1978 season, but returned late in his career as player-manager (a rare occupation in the contemporary game). After retirement his name has stayed in the news due to his banishment from baseball for gambling on the game, but that punishment doesn't extend to his making this all-time roster.

Frank Robinson (1956-65) had an incredible career as well, but only the first half of it was spent playing for the Reds. Still, he is second only to Bench for lifetime HRs as a Red (324). He won the MVP award in 1961 hitting .324 with 37 HR, 122 RBI, and 22 SB. He followed that up with a statistically superior 1962 season: .342, 39 HR, 136 RBI, 18 SB (and 51 doubles). A .302 hitter while in Cincinnati, he won one Gold Glove and was an all-star six times.

Vada Pinson (1958-68) had his best seasons for Cincy, batting .296 during his time there. He led the league in hits, doubles, and triples twice each while with the Reds. He also had six 20+ HR and seven 20+ SB seasons.

Unlike the starting trio, the fourth, fifth and sixth spots could be argued I suppose. **Edd Roush** (1916-26, 31) seems to deserve one, with his excellent .331 batting average. A supreme singles hitter, he won batting titles in 1917 and 1919, and also hit a lot of triples (152) and stole a lot of bases (199).

George Foster (1971-81) had 52 homers in 1977, along with 149 RBI and a .320 average, to take the MVP crown. He was an all-star five times and led the league in RBIs three times for the Reds before being traded to the Mets before the 1982 season.

And **Eric Davis** (1984-91, 96) had several of the best power/speed combination seasons of all time, including 27 HR with 80 SB in only 132 G in 1986, and 37 HR with 50 SB in only 129 G in 1987. But these numbers also indicate his downside: Davis was always injury prone, never playing more than 135 games in a season, for the Reds or anyone else. He was an all-star twice, and won three Gold Glove awards.

Consider again the issue of moving Tony Perez to 3B for this roster. Doing so allowed Frank McCormick to make the team as the backup 1B, and it meant Rose was going to play at his dominant position (OF). But it also means there is no room for Gus Bell (1953-61) as a final outfielder. If you look at the Reds career numbers for McCormick and Bell, they seem similar. But a closer look reveals that McCormick is the stronger candidate, hands down. He has many more appearances on the leader board than Bell, won an MVP award, and was in eight all-star games compared with Bell's four appearances. I'm not knocking Bell though, who did have four 100+ RBI campaigns.

And Bell isn't the only close-but-not-close-enough candidate I considered. Slugger Adam Dunn (2001-08) was getting very close, but then was traded to Arizona during the 2008 season. In 2004 he hit 46 HR, and then for the next four years would hit exactly 40 HR in each. He ended his time in Cincinnati with 270 HR in just over 1,000 games, though he never led the league in round-trippers. He batted an anemic .247 and had 160+ strikeouts in six of his Reds seasons, so like Bell, I can't quite select him for this all-time team.

Other OF possibilities that I considered included:

- Ken Griffey Sr. (1975-81, 88-90) was an all-star three times, hit for average (.303), and had some speed, but little power.
- Wally Post (1949, 51-57, 60-63) piled up 172 HR for the Reds, and had several fine seasons, the best being 1955 when hit .309 with 40 HR and 109 RBI.
- Cesar Geronimo (1972-80) won four consecutive gold glove awards roaming in center for the Big Red Machine, but was of little help offensively (not that they needed it).
- Reggie Sanders (1991-98) played the first half of his career in Cincy, before becoming a bit of a baseball nomad (a different team each year from 1999-2004). Like Davis, he combined power and speed, and had his career year in strike-shortened 1995: .306, 28 HR, 99 RBI, and 36 SB.

- Ken Griffey Jr. (2000-08) sadly had many injuries and so only managed two seasons of 140+ games for the Reds. Still popular, he was an NL all-star twice, but never led the league in any significant categories.
- Ival Goodman (1935-42) led the NL in triples in his first two seasons, and hit a career-high 30 HR in 1938.
- Curt Walker (1924-30) was a lifetime .303 hitter for the Reds and was often amongst the NL leaders in triples.

There some fine individual seasons by other Reds outfielders over the years, including two 30+ HR, 100+ RBI seasons from Dave Parker (1984-87) in the 1980s, and the near triple-crown performance by Cy Seymour (1902-06) in 1905: .377 average, 121 RBI, and 8 HR (yes, the league leader had all of 9 that year).

Oh, and how can I conclude this discussion without mentioning Bug Holliday (1889-98). And you thought I'd forget the lifelong Cincy player who in his rookie season scored 104 runs, stole 46 bases, batted .321, and led the league with 19 HR. He only played six full seasons, but ended with a .311 average and 248 SB.

Starting Pitching

As I said at the outset, the Reds don't have a particularly strong corps of starting pitchers for this All-Time team. For the ace of the staff I'll go with **Bucky Walters** (1938-48). He won the MVP award in 1939, when he captured the pitching triple crown: 27-11, 2.29, 137 K (with few exceptions, strikeouts were not plentiful during this era). He then topped the NL in ERA and wins again in 1940 (22-10, 2.48). He also led the league in wins with a 23-8 record in 1944, and was an all-star five times for the Reds. Not bad for a converted third baseman.

A teammate of Walters, **Paul Derringer** (1933-42) 161-150, 3.36, 6 AS) will be next on this staff. He struggled when he first joined the Reds, going 7-25 for them in 1933. But he later won 20+ games four times, including interestingly a 25-7 record in 1939. He was an all-star for Cincinnati six times.

A second pair of Reds teammates are the next to be chosen for this team. **Eppa Rixey** (1921-33) was a three-time 20+ game winner for the Reds and he is the Reds all-time leader in wins with 179. A control artist, he led the league with 25 wins in 1922. But his winning percentage is less than impressive (due in part to two 19-18 seasons) and his ERA isn't stellar (though better than league average for his era).

Early Cuban star **Dolf Luque** (1918-1929) only had a few truly good seasons, most notably 1923 when he led the league in ERA with a 1.93 mark and wins with a 27-8 record. He also led the league two years later with a 2.63 ERA, but his record was only 16-18.

Now the pickings get even thinner. I'll argue that **Jim Maloney** (1934-81, 3.16, .623 Pct., 1 AS) deserves a spot, though he only pitched seven full seasons as a regular member of the rotation. He was often amongst league leaders in strikeouts and had two 20+ win seasons. He was a feared flame-thrower, and struck out 200+ in four consecutive seasons.

The sixth spot will go to old-timer **Noodles Hahn** (1899-1905), who played most of his brief career with the Reds. He had four 20+ win seasons in only six full years with Cincinnati. He led the league in strikeouts three times, and was usually amongst the league leaders in wins and ERA.

As I'll be choosing three relief pitchers for this squad, that means I can select one more starting pitcher. As you'll see, I considered many candidates, but in the end I am going with really-old-timer **Tony Mullane** (1886-1893). For one thing, he is second in all-time wins for the Reds, behind only Rixey on that list. It can be hard to compare such old-timers with players from the modern era: Mullane had three seasons with 400+ innings pitched, and one with 529 IP. In that 1886 season he started 56 games, and completed 55 of them. But he was often amongst the league leaders in both wins and ERA, so that helps to earn him this seventh pitching spot.

Of the many others I considered, two are most famous for unique events. Joe Nuxhall (1944, 52-60, 62-66) pitched 2/3 of an inning at the age of 16, and then returned eight years later to have a good career (130-109, 3.80 ERA) with the Reds. Johnny Vander Meer (1937-43, 46-49) spent most of his career with the Reds, and amassed an even 116-116 record while making the all-star team four times. His claim to fame, however, was throwing consecutive no-hitters.

The others I considered included:

- Will White (1882-86) was like Mullane in that he pitched in the early days and so had seasons of 400+ IP and led the league in wins in 1882 going 40-12 and again in 1883 going 43-22.
- Frank Dwyer (1892-99) came a few years later, and had his best season in 1896 going 24-11.

- Bob Ewing (1902-09) managed only a 108-103 record for the Reds, but sported a 2.37 ERA which was good even by the standards of that era.
- Pete Donohue (1921-30) was a teammate of Rixey and Luque, and a three-time 20+ winner.
- Red Lucas (1926-33) was also a member of the fine 1920s-era Red rotation, and had top seasons of 18-11 in 1927 and 19-12 in 1929.
- Bob Purkey (1958-64) was a three-time all-star and had an outstanding 1962 season going 23-5 with a 2.81 ERA.
- Gary Nolan (1967-73, 75-77) produced well during a brief career, posting a 3.02 ERA and a 110-67 record backed by the Big Red Machine.
- Don Gullett (1970-76) pitched alongside Nolan, and posted an even more impressive 91-44 record to go with his 3.03 ERA.
- Tom Seaver (1977-82) was traded by the Mets to the Reds for four players, and promptly went 14-3 with a 2.34 ERA for the rest of the year. Also of note was his outstanding work during the strike-shortened 1981 season: 14-2, 2.54 ERA.
- Mario Soto (1977-88) was a lifetime Red, posting a 100-92 record with a 3.47 ERA. A three-time all-star, Soto had more strikeouts than any other pitcher from 1980-85, with a personal best of 274 in 1982.
- Tom Browning (1984-1994) pitched almost his entire career for the Reds, starting with his NL ROY campaign in 1985 when he went 20-9. He led the league in games started four times, and ended up with a 123-88 record for Cincinnati.
- Jose Rijo (1988-95, 00-01) always posted a winning record for the Reds, and ended with a 97-61 mark and an outstanding 2.83 ERA. He led the league with 227 strikeouts in 1993, and has the rare accolade of mounting a comeback and pitching after a five year absence, meaning he pitched after having received a vote for the Hall of Fame.

Relief Pitching

The number one relief man for the Reds is **John Franco** (1984-89). He was solid for both the Reds and then the Mets, but his numbers

for Cincy are good enough to earn him top honors here. He led the NL in saves in 1988 with 39, and had a 1.57 ERA that year.

The all-time saves leader for the Reds (182) is actually **Danny Graves** (1997-05), so he'll also make this all-time roster. He had five fine seasons as a closer, and one horrible failure of a season as a starter (2003, when he went 4-15). He bounced back the next year though to have his career high saves total with 41.

And **Clay Carroll** (1968-75) was a closer before the position became as specialized as it is today. He led the league in saves in 1972 with 37.

Four other relievers deserve mention. First, Pedro Borbon (1970-79) had a fine career as both a closer and setup man for the Big Red Machine teams in the 70s. From 1972-1977 he pitched 120+ innings per year, almost exclusively as a reliever. He saved 18 one year, twice saved 14, and posted a 2.16 ERA in 1973 to go with an 11-4 record.

The other three guys had exactly 88 saves for the Reds: Tom Hume (1977-85, 87), Rob Dibble (1988-93), and Jeff Brantley (1994-97). They earned those saves with very different innings pitched totals: Hume 921, Dibble 450, and Brantley 218. Dibble was insanely overpowering, striking out 619 batters in 450.2 IP, while Brantley led the league with 44 saves in 1996.

Extra Spot

The extra spot could go to any number of people -- there is no clear cut player who was unjustly left off the team. Jake Beckley at 1B, outfielders like Gus Bell, Adam Dunn, Ken Griffey Sr, Reggie Sanders, or Wally Post, or any number of starting pitchers not included on the roster thus far. I'll go with Adam Dunn's consistent HR production in a squeaker over Gus Bell, but I wouldn't waste much breadth debating you if you picked any of large number of other candidates here.

Team Captain

The captain of the All-Time Reds team is a tough one. There are many reasonable candidates, but in the end I choose Johnny Bench. As a catcher, he is an on-the-field leader. I gave some consideration to Pete Rose of course, not only for his numbers but also for his versatility. Frank Robinson and Barry Larkin were also given a look. But in the end, Bench is the man.

Starting Lineup

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

Joe Morgan 2B
Pete Rose OF
Frank Robinson OF
Johnny Bench C
Tony Perez 3B
Ted Kluzewski 1B
Vada Pinson OF
Barry Larkin SS
Bucky Walters SP

This lineup could be configured a few different ways as Morgan, Rose, and Larkin could all hit first or second, and the other guys all provide ample power for the 3-7 spots. They also have some flexibility amongst the outfielders, as Pinson played CF (as did Roush and Davis for that matter), while Robinson and Rose spent significant time in both RF and LF. Choosing a DH from the backups is not easy – McCormick, McPhee, Roush, Foster, Davis? I guess it would depend on whether you wanted more table-setting or a guy to drive them in.

Joe Morgan 2B
Pete Rose LF
Frank Robinson RF
Johnny Bench C
Tony Perez 3B
Ted Kluzewski 1B
Vada Pinson CF
Barry Larkin SS
Edd Roush DH

Prospects for Current Players

With Adam Dunn no longer with the Reds, the most likely player to join this team has left town. Joey Votto is off to a good career so far, but he'd have to stay a Red for a long time to crack this roster. Brandon Phillips also is a productive player, but I don't see him unseating McPhee

or Morgan. And Francisco Cordero is racking up the saves, but is also racking up the years at this point too. We'll see...

Reds Retired Numbers

Fred Hutchison (1, manager), Johnny Bench (5), Joe Morgan (8), Sparky Anderson (10, manager), Dave Concepcion (13), Ted Kluszewski (18), Frank Robinson (20), Tony Perez (24)

Selections From Other Authors and Fan Surveys

- 1958: Sport magazine, January 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: Ted Kluszewski, the Redlegs' muscleman who has the fans in Rhineland pulling for him to make a comeback next season.

Second Base: Hughie Critz, a great little competitor who held down the position for the Reds from 1924 through 1930.

Shortstop: Roy McMillan, one of the most brilliant defensive shortstops anybody has ever had.

Third Base: Heinie Groh, a fine fielder and a tough hitter who came to Cincinnati in 1913 and stayed there until 1921.

Left Field: Chick Hafey, whose savage line drives are still talked about by Cincy fans. Chick played with the Reds from 1932 to 1937. He finished with a lifetime batting average of .317.

Center Field: Edd Roush, who would be an all-time great on anyone's team. He came to the Reds from the Giants in 1916 and played in Cincinnati until 1926. He made a brief comeback in 1931, and finally retired with a lifetime average of .323.

Right Field: Gus Bell, who is being moved over from center for this occasion. We figure the readers of SPORT know Gus too well for us to recount his accomplishments here.

Catcher: Ernie Lombardi, one of the game's most feared hitters, who played in Cincinnati from 1932 through 1941 and had a lifetime average of .306.

Lefthanded Pitcher: Eppa Rixey, whom many fans and writers believe merits a niche in the Hall of Fame. Eppa pitched for the Reds from

1921 through 1933 and, when he finally retired, he had piled up a total of 266 National League victories.

Righthanded Pitcher: Bucky Walters, the converted infielder who arrived in Cincy in 1938, won 27 games in pitching the Reds to the pennant the next year, and was a big name hurler there until 1948. He managed the Reds in his last season at Crosley Field.

Back in 1958 this is a reasonable roster. The only two questionable selections in my view are at 2B and LF. If their project was intentionally ignoring pre-1900 players, then that explains why McPhee is not chosen. If that is so, then Critz is a fine choice. Chick Hafey's best seasons were in St. Louis, and he only played two full years for the Reds. Also, he mostly played CF for the Reds, so assuming any outfielder would have been eligible for the LF spot in their eyes, I would have preferred not only Wally Post, but also Ival Goodman, Curt Walker, or Cy Seymour.

Oh, and per the hope expressed in their write up on Kluszewski, he didn't make a comeback. Instead he was traded to Pittsburgh for fellow first-sacker Dee Fondy, and never had a full, productive season again.

- 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 Reds were:

1B: Ted Kluszewski

2B: Hughie Critz

3B: Heinie Groh

SS: Roy McMillan

C: Ernie Lombardi

OF: Edd Roush

OF: Pete Rose

OF: Frank Robinson

RHP: Bucky Walters

LHP: Eppa Rixey

I assume that Critz wasn't a runaway winner over Frey at 2B, and obviously fans here weren't remembering McPhee from the old days. It is

interesting to see that Rose was already considered good enough to make the club. He won the Rookie of the Year award in 1963, had already had four consecutive .300 seasons, and went on to have a superb 1969 season (a gold glove, a .348 average, and a career high 16 HR and 82 RBI). Fans likely were assuming he would continue to thrive for their club, which he certainly did. They already liked him enough to select him over Gus Bell, Wally Post, and others.

- 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 Tony Perez 15.0

2B Joe Morgan 32.3

SS Dave Concepcion 18.4

3B Heinie Groh 19.0

RF Frank Robinson 25.8

CF George Foster 20.8

LF Pete Rose 17.9

C Johnny Bench 17.8

SP Bucky Walters 23.0

SP Doff Luque 18.1

SP Noodles Hahn 16.5

SP Jim Maloney 14.2

RP John Franco 7.8

Total player rating attempts to provide a single number representing the overall value of the player (including fielding). It is the application of this approach to only the player's best 800 consecutive games for the Reds that leads to these results. Players who played a long time for the team, racking up quality career numbers but not having as many standout seasons in a row will see their rating relatively lower. So that is why George Foster rates higher than Pete Rose and Tony Perez. And it is also why he makes this team over Edd Roush – though it must be noted it is a stretch to consider Foster a centerfielder: he did play some

CF, but played much more in LF. With that one exception, I think this is a fine lineup through 1990.

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

In their brief writeup on the Reds, the authors note as I did the emphasis on hitting over pitching throughout the Reds history. I think there choices are very good. They went with Perez at 1B, deciding to play Rose at 3B instead of OF. They have Morgan at 2B, and Concepcion at SS (given that Larkin came along later). The outfield is Robinson, Roush, and Foster. Bench is the catcher and Rixey the pitcher. Honorable mention is given to Ernie Lombardi.

- 1995 *Baseball Ratings* by Charles S. Faber

The Faber system as applied in 1995 creates a reasonable all-time team. The infield is Perez, Morgan, Concepcion, and Groh. The outfield is the same as mine: Rose, Robinson, and Pinson. The five starting pitchers are Walters, Rixey, Maloney, Nuxhall, and Derringer. Not bad, though I would argue for Luque over Nuxhall. Carroll is the reliever chosen.

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

Neyer's choices don't differ much from mine. He starts Perez at 1B with Big Klu as the backup, which means McCormick is left off. This also means Groh is promoted to starting 3B. He has Rose in LF, Roush in CF, and Robinson in RF. I prefer Pinson over Roush in CF, but both were outstanding for many years. Besides Vada his backup OF is Foster in LF and Griffey Sr. in RF. He has the same first six SP as I do, and then includes Pete Donohue and Jose Rijo, which I think are respectable choices. He lists Carroll as the top reliever with Franco second.

The only two choices I'll comment further on are his backup 3B and backup 2B. At the hot corner he selected Billy Werber to backup Groh. He writes: "Valuable member of the 'Jungle Club' infield -- Werber was 'Tiger' -- that helped Reds win pennants in '39 and '40; scored 220 runs in those two seasons." I'll grant him that, but the thing is... that is all he ever did for the Reds really. His third and only other season was rather poor. So that isn't much of a resume. Then again, I'm not keen on Sabo or Boone instead, which is why I moved Perez to 3B and bumped Groh to the bench.

As for backup 2B, he goes with Lonnie Frey, about whom he writes: "Born Linus Reinhard Frey, but nicknamed 'Lonnie,' 'Junior,' and 'Leopard'; easily the best defensive 2B in the National League before he got drafted." Frey isn't a bad choice, given that Neyer states in his Introduction that he is only considering players from 1900 forward. So that means McPhee is not eligible, which is a real shame since his Cincy career far surpassed Frey's.

- 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 Reds he included: Beckley, Bell, Bench, Browning, Carroll, Concepcion, Davis, Derringer, Driessen, Dwyer, Ewing, Foster, Franco, Graves, Griffey Sr., Groh, Hahn, Klusewski, Larkin, Lombardi, Luque, Maloney, McCormick, McPhee, Morgan, Mullane, Perez, Pinson, Rixey, Robinson, Rose, Roush, Vander Meer, Walters, White.

In my view Mr. Purdy made outstanding selections – I really have no complaints with this list.

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 Reds are (100 or more):

First Base:

1. 180 Ted Kluszewski
2. 171 Frank McCormick
3. 163 John Reilly
4. 162 Dan Driessen
5. 125 Jake Beckley
6. 123 Sean Casey

With Perez considered at 3B, it is remarkably close here. I'm surprised to see Driessen make such a fine showing, and so close behind the three leaders.

Second Base:

1. 313 Bid McPhee
2. 260 Joe Morgan
3. 148 Lonnie Frey
4. 118 Johnny Temple
5. 113 Ron Oestor
6. 108 Miller Huggins

Like I said when discussing this position, a case can be made for McPhee over Morgan. No one else comes close though.

Third Base:

1. 270 Tony Perez
2. 216 Heinie Groh
3. 105 Grady Hatton
4. 101 Bobby Adams

As I am counting Perez at 3B, he is the clear starter, with Groh just as clearly the next in line.

Shortstop:

1. 344 Barry Larkin
2. 270 Dave Concepcion
3. 123 Roy McMillan
4. 120 Leo Cardenas
5. 103 Tommy Corcoran

No surprises here really.

Catcher:

1. 365 Johnny Bench

2. 148 Ernie Lombardi
3. 106 Bubbles Hargrave

No surprises here really.

Outfield:

1. 458 Pete Rose
2. 277 Frank Robinson
3. 252 Edd Roush
4. 245 Vada Pinson
5. 198 George Foster
6. 170 Ken Griffey Sr.
7. 160 Eric Davis
8. 152 Adam Dunn
9. 139 Bug Holliday
10. 135 Gus Bell
11. 130 Ival Goodman
12. 119 Curt Walker
13. 118 Ken Griffey Jr.
14. 111 Mike Mitchell
15. 110 Cy Seymour
16. 106 Bob Bescher
17. 105 Reggie Sanders

Roush edges out Pinson for the third spot, and interesting to see that Griffey Sr. tops Davis for the sixth spot, with Dunn not far behind.

Starting Pitcher:

1. 221 Tony Mullane
2. 212 Eppa Rixey
3. 201 Dolf Luque
4. 199 Bucky Walters
5. 178 Paul Derringer

6. 165 Frank Dwyer
7. 157 Noodles Hahn
8. 151 Will White
9. 142 Red Lucas
10. 138 Joe Nuxhall
11. 135 Jim Maloney
12. 135 Bob Ewing
13. 134 Elmer Smith
14. 131 Johnny Vander Meer
15. 130 Pete Donohue
16. 124 Billy Rhines
17. 121 Jose Rijo
18. 113 Gary Nolan
19. 112 Mario Soto
20. 106 Bob Purkey
21. 105 Ken Raffensberger
22. 102 Tom Browning

Tony Mullane racked up the Win Shares in those early years, edging out Rixey for the top of this list (old-timers Frank Dwyer and Will White also rate highly) Jim Maloney ranks a bit lower by this standard than when I considered him against the other candidates.

Relief Pitcher:

No Reds relief pitcher has gotten to 100 Win Shares. (Clay Carroll had 88 and John Franco 81.)

Pos.	Name	Key Career Red Sox Statistics
1B	Ted Kluszewski	.302, 251 HR, 886 RBI
1B	Frank McCormick	.301, 800 RBI
2B	Joe Morgan	.288, 152 HR, 816 R, 406 SB
2B	Bid McPhee	.271, 1678 R, 188 T, 1067 RBI, 568+ SB
3B	Tony Perez	.283, 287 HR, 936 R, 1192 RBI
3B	Heinie Groh	.298
SS	Barry Larkin	.295, 1,329 R, 345 SB
SS	Dave Concepcion	.267, 993 R, 950 RBI, 321 SB
C	Johnny Bench	.267, 389 HR, 1091 R, 1376 RBI
C	Ernie Lombardi	.311
OF	Pete Rose	.307, 3358 H, 1741 R, 1036 RBI, 601 D
OF	Frank Robinson	.302, 324 HR, 1043 R, 1009 RBI, 161 SB
OF	Vada Pinson	.296, 186 HR, 978 R, 814 RBI, 221 SB
OF	Edd Roush	.331, 152 T, 199 SB
OF	George Foster	.286, 244 HR, 861 RBI
OF	Eric Davis	.270, 203 HR, 270 SB
SP	Bucky Walters	160-107, 2.93
SP	Paul Derringer	161-150, 3.36
SP	Eppa Rixey	179-148, 3.33
SP	Dolf Luque	154-152, 3.09
SP	Jim Maloney	134-81, 3.16, .623 Pct.
SP	Noodles Hahn	127-92, 2.52
SP	Tony Mullane	163-124, 3.15
RP	John Franco	2.49, 148 SV
RP	Danny Graves	3.94, 182 SV
RP	Clay Carroll	2.73, 119 SV