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[Review of] Baseball Ratings: The All-time Best Players at Each Position

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A number of attempts have been made to compare baseball players statistically, all running up against difficulties brought about by the changing nature of the game over the years. Leo Leahy does a creditable job with hitters (Lumber Men, 1994), and A.W. Laird has formulated an effective system (Ranking Baseball’s Elite, 1990). Faber provides by far the most diverse application of statistical evaluation, adding pitchers and a number of additional hitting, fielding, and team comparisons not present in the first edition (1985). Readers may quibble with the methodology, but Faber has made a gallant attempt to quantify the comparison of players in a game that has changed dramatically in 93 years. Each section (“Hitters,” “Fielders,” “Players,” “Pitchers,” “Relievers”) lists leaders by year and career. To be eligible, players had to play in 100 games/year, except catchers (75 games) and pitchers (15 decisions). Additional rankings and lists (including, for example, right-handed vs. left-handed relievers, best careers by teammates, and teams with best regular starting lineups) provide a formidable variety of perspectives for evaluating players’ performance. A solid improvement over the first edition, this work should be in any collection that supports study of the sport of baseball.

—R. A. Aken, University of Kentucky

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