



Nuclear Powered Baseball: Articles Inspired by The Simpsons episode "Homer At the Bat" (SABR Digital Library) (Volume 34)

Emily Hawks

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The Simpsons and baseball. Since its debut in 1989 (that's back in the last century!), The Simpsons has run for 27 seasons and (back in 2009) became the longest-running American scripted primetime television series. Though it would be considered sacrilege in some circles, some might even see it as a national pastime of its own. The series has a long history with baseball and in Season Three, the episode "Homer at the Bat" aired, on February 20, 1992. Co-editor Emily Hawks writes in her Introduction, "To see so many of the biggest MLB stars of the day in Simpsonian animated form — Ken Griffey, Jr., Ozzie Smith, and Jose Canseco, just to name a few — seemed the most exciting thing in the world to this '90s kid. And the fact that they all lent their own voices to the parts seemed even cooler. It may have also been one of my first glimpses into baseball's early days. As a kid, I had no idea that Mr. Burns' dream squad — comprised of colorful names like Shoeless Joe Jackson, Pie Traynor, and Napoleon Lajoie—actually referenced real players. Those seemed like decidedly fabricated names to me!" They weren't. They were real ballplayers. And, one way or another, Simpsons writers have worked the names of 68 major-league ballplayers into one episode or another. Football's Joe Namath, Warren Sapp, and Johnny Unitas have appeared in shows. So have basketballers Kobe Bryant, Magic Johnson, Yao Ming, and Dennis Rodman. Without doing exhaustive research, we believe there may be more baseball players than the other pro sports combined. Some 27 members of the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) have collaborated in Nuclear Powered Baseball to tell the stories of each player—past and present—featured in the classic Simpsons episode. The biographies compiled here take the players well beyond their two-dimensional caricatures, and present a well-rounded view of their lives in baseball. We've also included a few very entertaining takes on the now-famous "Homer at the Bat" episode from prominent baseball writers Jonah Keri, Erik Malinowski, and Bradley Woodrum. As an added bonus, we've also included Joe Posnanski's piece on the Season 22 sabermetric-themed episode, "MoneyBart." Cover Art by Bob Krieger TOC: Introduction by Emily Hawks The Making of "Homer at the Bat" by Erik Malinowski The Burns-Smithers Question by Bradley Woodrum Wade Boggs by Steve West Jose Canseco by Geoffrey Dunn Roger Clemens by Frederick C. Bush Ken Griffey Jr. by Emily Hawks Don Mattingly by James Lincoln Ray Steve Sax by Alan Cohen Mike Scioscia by Susan Lantz Ozzie Smith by Charles F. Faber Darryl Strawberry by Shawn Morris Cap Anson by David Fleitz Mordecai "Three Finger" Brown by Cindy Thomson Jim Creighton by John Thorn Honus Wagner by Jan Finkel Pie Traynor by James Forr Harry Hooper by Paul Zingg and E. A. Reed Nap Lajoie by David Jones and Stephen Constantelos Gabby Street by Joseph Wancho Joe Jackson by David Fleitz Homer Simpson by Bill Nowlin "Homer at the Bat" — the game by Bill Nowlin Ryan Tosses No-Hitter; Cash Wilds Table Leg by Gregory H. Wolf The New Springfield Nine by Jonah Keri The Simpsons Baseball Edition by Joe Posnanski Baseball People Mentioned in The Simpsons

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