

American League's Best Teams

Chapter Twelve

The 1976-80 New York Yankees: Underrated in the Yankee Lineage

With the mid-1970s came a changing of the guard in the American League: the Baltimore Orioles in the mid-1970s gave way to the resurgent New York Yankees in the American League East, and in the American League West, the Oakland Athletics gave way to the Kansas City Royals, one of the four 1969 expansion teams that propelled major league baseball into its divisional alignment. The Yankees and Royals would each win four of the five titles in their respective divisions from 1976 to 1980, ironically sharing 1979 as the only year they did not finish in first place, the Orioles recapturing the East and the California Angels finishing on top in the West. They played each other four times in the AL Championship Series, with the Yankees beating the Royals three straight times for the American League pennant from 1976 to 1978 before Kansas City finally subdued New York in 1980.

The Yankees and Royals both had stability among their core players during these years, even if neither did with their managers. The 1970s Yankees won their first two division titles under Billy Martin as manager, their third with Bob Lemon in charge (after Martin was fired in mid-season), and their fourth with Dick Howser on the top step of the dugout. As for their core players, the Yankees had Chris Chambliss at first base, Willie Randolph at second, Bucky Dent played shortstop, Graig Nettles was at third, Mickey Rivers in center, and Reggie Jackson in right for all or most of the five years. Thurman Munson was the Yankee catcher until his untimely death during the 1979 season when he crashed on takeoff in his sideline avocation as recreational airplane pilot. Outfielder Lou Piniella was on the team all five years, not always a regular, but an integral part of their success. On the mound for all or most of those years, the Yankees had Ron Guidry, Catfish Hunter until

1978, and Ed Figueroa at the heart of their starting rotation, and one great relief ace in Sparky Lyle giving way to another in Goose Gossage, with both pitching for the Yankees in 1978.

White Herzog was the manager when the Royals won their first three division titles, and Kansas City won the West a fourth time and the pennant for the first time in 1980 with Jim Frey as manager. The cornerstone players for Kansas City were Frank White at second, Freddie Patek at short, George Brett at third, Willie Wilson, Amos Otis, and Al Cowens in the outfield, Hal McRae as the American League's first long-term designated hitter (the DH not part of baseball until 1973), and Darrell Porter behind the plate. Dennis Leonard, Larry Gura, and Paul Splittorff were core starting pitchers for the Royals.

The **1976 to 1980 Kansas City Royals** won 100 games only once, with 102 in 1977, and two division titles by blowout margins—by eight games over the Texas Rangers in 1977 and by 14 games over the Oakland Athletics in 1980. Although their final margin of victory over Oakland in 1976 was only 2½ games, the Royals were in charge the entire season, building up a lead of 12 games by early August; the closest the A's would get to the top was the 2½-game deficit they would end the season with on the final two days. In 1978, Kansas City went into first place to stay at the end of the August, eventually winning by five games over the Rangers.

The Royals' dominance, however, was in a Western Division that was much weaker than the AL East. While 23 AL East teams finished with a record of .500 or better from 1976 to 1980, only 14 teams did so in the AL West. Nine Eastern Division teams had a winning percentage of better than .600 during those five years, including the Yankees in all but the star-crossed (because of Munson's tragic death) 1979 season; one team alone in the AL West won more than 60 percent of its games in any of these years—the Royals in 1977. In winning four division titles, Kansas City had the best record in the league only once, in 1977; the second-best record in the league in 1976; the fourth-best in 1978; and the third-best in 1980. In 1979, the Royals were tied with only the sixth-best record in the league when they finished three games back of California in their division, a race they had to desperately re-enter after trailing by 10½ games in mid-July.

An overpowering team, Kansas City was not. They were no better than between third and fifth in the league in scoring in the years they won the division (they were second in 1979, when they finished second to the Angels). Although Brett and McRae were both elite hitters who could drive the ball, the Royals—playing in a new stadium with artificial turf—were a team whose offense was built around speed. After finishing second to the Athletics in steals in 1976 and 1977, KC led the league each of the next three years. Freddie Patek stole more than 50 bases in both 1976 and 1977, although he did so from the bottom of the line-up rather than the top in part because he had a poor on-base percentage. In 1978, Willie Wilson arrived to give the Royals a legitimate base-stealing threat with a substantially better than average on-base percentage to bat lead-off; he stole 208 bases for the Royals from 1978 to 1980—including a league-leading 83 in 1979 and 79 the next year, second to Rickey Henderson's 100—and was caught only 34 times, giving him an 86 percent success rate when the league average was 64 percent for the three years.

Although they tied the Yankees for the fewest runs allowed in 1977, the Royals were typically fourth or fifth in the league. Good defense was a necessary backstop to a pitching staff that was solid but not exceptional. Dennis Leonard, a twenty-game winner three times

from 1976 to 1980, alone accounted for 27 percent of the player value, as measured by the wins above replacement (WAR) metric, of the Royals' pitching staff. From 1976 to 1980, the Royals were second or third in the league in defensive efficiency—making outs on balls put into play—four times, which was important because Kansas City pitchers were usually in the bottom half of the league in getting outs by way of the strikeout. In 1979, poor pitching was what most likely cost the Royals the division title. Giving up the fourth-most runs in the league that year, pitching accounted for less than 10 percent of the team's collective player value as measured by WAR—a colossal imbalance making it very hard to win even with a relatively proficient offense (Kansas City was second in scoring). The Royals' team ERA of 4.45 in 1979 was nearly a full run higher than their 3.50 ERA for the four years they won the division title.

Third baseman George Brett and DH Hal McRae were the only members of this Kansas City team who were the best at their position, according to me, and McRae had virtually no competition for the honor because the idea of a baseball player making a career as a designated hitter had yet to take root. Having emerged as the best all-around player in the American League, Brett has a century-plus legacy for his best consecutive years including 1976 to 1980. While none of Brett's teammates joined him among the 10 best position players or five best pitchers in the surrounding decade, the Royals included a cadre of accomplished players who helped drive their success. These included center fielder Amos Otis, who was one of the AL's three best outfielders from 1971 to 1975, according to me, but now on the downside of his career—although he did have an outstanding season in 1978—and left fielder Willie Wilson, who I believe was one of the league's three best outfielders from 1979 to 1984.

Taking their modest performance as a team into account, as well as their relative lack of best players (only Brett and McRae), the 1976-80 Kansas City Royals are not in my mix for consideration as a best team, even in the divisional era, despite their four division titles in five years.

The **1976 to 1980 New York Yankees** were the far better team. They won 100 games three times, but the only division title the Yankees won by a decisive margin was in 1976, by 10½ games, when the Yankees won only 97 on their way to their first pennant since 1964. The Yankees gained separation from their competitors early in the season that year and had a nine-game lead by Independence Day. In all three years that this Yankee team equaled or exceeded 100 victories, they were involved in close pennant races because AL East teams were so strong. In 1977, they battled from third place and five games behind in early August to finish with exactly 100 victories, 2½ games ahead of Baltimore. In 1978, the Yankees engineered one of the great pennant-race comebacks of all time by overcoming deficits of 14 games on July 19 and nine games on August 13, with only 46 games remaining, to ultimately beat Boston for their one hundredth victory of the season in the one-game playoff that made Bucky Dent an iconic hero in New York and a curse word in Beantown for his seventh inning three-run home run that erased a 2-0 Red Sox lead at Fenway Park. The Yankees concluded the scheduled regular season with a 34-12 record after August 13, while the Red Sox lost their entire lead by going only 25-21 the rest of the way. And in 1980, the Yankees needed every one of their 103 victories because the defending American League champion Orioles won 100 games of their own. This time it was the Yankees that nearly squandered a 9½-game lead they had in mid-July. The Yankees had the best record in the American League

when they won each of their division titles except for 1977, when their 100 victories were trumped by the Royals' 102.

This Yankee team went on to win a fifth division title and fourth American League pennant in 1981, but I do not extend the years under consideration for the 1976-80 Yankees to include that year because of the unusual circumstance of them winning the AL East despite having only the third-best record in the division, courtesy of the split season on either side of a seven-week players' strike. Having just come off a nine-game winning streak, the Yankees led the AL East by two games and were on a pace to win 98 games when the season came to a halt on June 12. Rather than merely pick up the season from the standings as of that date once the strike ended, Commissioner Bowie Kuhn's decision to declare the teams that were in first place when the strike started to be first-half division winners meant that the Yankees had little urgency about winning when the season resumed on August 10 because they had an automatic bid against whoever would emerge as the second-half winner in a one-time-only (until the wild card era) division series to determine division champions. With the post-season assured, the Yankees went only 25-26 in the second-half, but ramped it up for the division series and then the league championship series to return once again to the World Series. Projected to a full 162-game season, the Yankees would have won only 89 games in 1981, the same as when they finished fourth in 1979.

As imposing as the Yankees' line-up was with the likes of Graig Nettles and Reggie Jackson, pitching and defense were the foundation for the Yankees' success, particularly in the first three years. The Yankees gave up the fewest runs in the league when winning each of their three consecutive pennants from 1976 to 1978, helped in large part by the best defensive efficiency ratio (DER) in the league, and were third in fewest allowed (after Baltimore and Oakland) in 1980 despite their team defense as measured by DER being well-below the league average. (The Yankees were also the league's stingiest team in the 1981 split season, for what it's worth.) As for the offense, the Yankees did not lead the league in scoring in any season, but were second when they took their division in 1976 and 1980 and fourth when they won the AL East in 1977 and 1978.

This being the dawn of baseball's new era of player leverage, the 1976-80 Yankees were the first championship team to have added key players through free agency. Free agency fit perfectly with owner George Steinbrenner's ambitions and willingness to pay whatever it took to see his championship ambitions realized. Steinbrenner made Catfish Hunter the first of his major free agent acquisitions to ring in the new year of 1975, taking advantage of an arbitrator's ruling that Hunter was a free man because Oakland owner Charley Finley had violated the terms of his contract. When Reggie Jackson became a free agent after the 1976 season, there was Mr. Steinbrenner to offer a lucrative multi-year contract for him to become a New York Yankee. But as great as Reggie was, securing his reputation as Mr. October with home run dramatics in the 1977 World Series, Steinbrenner's best free agent addition was reliever Goose Gossage for the 1978 season despite the fact that the Yankees' reigning relief ace, Sparky Lyle, had just won the AL Cy Young Award. Gossage used his Yankee years to build Hall of Fame credentials as one of the greatest relief pitchers ever. Steinbrenner went on to secure pitchers Tommy John and Luis Tiant as free agents before the 1979 season, and outfielder Dave Winfield for 1980, although none of the three was with the 1976-80 Yankees long enough to be counted by me as core players on this team.

The 1976-80 Yankees surely benefited from Steinbrenner's free agent spending, but the team was not built on free agency alone. The foundation players of this team were really guys like Munson, Nettles, Randolph, Chambliss, Piniella, Lyle, and Guidry who were obtained mostly in trades or, in the case of Munson and Guidry, developed in the Yankees' minor league system. The oft-told tale, of course, is that free agency ironically contributed to the Yankees spending thirteen years without a post-season appearance after 1981 because Steinbrenner was so enthralled by signing big-name free agents that he neglected to build an infrastructure of players from within. Nine players take the field in baseball, pitchers pitch in rotation, and batters bat in order precluding any one great star from controlling a team's destiny. As demonstrated by the 1976-80 Yankees—and the Yankees from the mid-1990s through the first decade of the twenty-first century—free agents have the biggest potential winning impact when added to complement a strong foundation of players developed within the system or acquired through savvy trades.

That none of the 1976-80 Yankees' core position players were the best at their position during these years, according to me, and only one—Graig Nettles—was among the AL's 10 best in the surrounding decade (based on a majority of their seasons being for this team) is misleading. Nettles was not the best third baseman in the league only because of George Brett. Willie Randolph, who had been acquired in a trade from Pittsburgh after the 1975 season, had the highest player value, as measured by WAR, of any of the Yankees' core regulars between 1976 and 1980 and would have been the league's best second baseman were it not for Bobby Grich. The gritty gamer Thurman Munson had been the league's best catcher from 1970 to 1975 only to be overtaken by Boston rival Carlton Fisk beginning in 1976, according to me. Unlike Fisk (whose best consecutive years that earned him a century-plus legacy were 1972 to 1978, according to me), Munson was also one of the best players in the surrounding 1973-82 decade, but only the last two of his best seasons (1973 to 1977) were for this Yankee team. And then there was Reggie Jackson, the "straw" that certainly helped "stir" things up for the Yankees, including contributing to Billy Martin being fired the first of many times by Steinbrenner in 1978. Jackson chose to be a Yankee for his Hall of Fame plaque, but all of his best years were with the Oakland Athletics.

The Yankees' pitching staff was hamstrung by injuries to Catfish Hunter and Don Gullett—another free agent acquisition, picked up after he helped the Cincinnati Reds sweep the Yankees in the 1976 World Series—in 1977 and 1978 that effectively ended the careers of both men, and to starter Ed Figueroa and relief ace Goose Gossage in 1979 that helped doom the Yankees to an eventual fourth-place finish even before Munson's tragic death. Both the dynamic southpaw Ron Guidry (as one of five starting pitchers) and the intimidating Gossage (as a reliever), however, were the best at their positions for most of the years under consideration for this team. Based on their best consecutive seasons including at least three years between 1976 and 1980, both Guidry and Gossage have century-plus legacies that count for this team.

My selection of Guidry as one of the AL's best pitchers of the century and not Hall of Fame Yankee pitchers Whitey Ford and Lefty Gomez from earlier decades is likely to be controversial. As explained in **Transparency Annex C**, my selection of the best players is based on their best five-or-more consecutive seasons, not on the totality of their careers. And it is also based on consistency of performance within those consecutive years. Gomez makes my list for one of the 15 best starting pitchers in the American League in the first half of the twentieth century for his best years of 1934 to 1938, but two relatively-ordinary seasons in those five years as measured by WAR preclude his having a century-legacy, according to me.

Ford also has a half-century legacy, for the second half of the twentieth century, and his consistency was such that he would have merited the same for either the years 1954 to 1958 or 1961 to 1965. While Ford was the better pitcher over his full career, neither of his best years stretches were quite as good as Guidry's from 1977 to 1983. All three southpaws of slight build, Gomez, Ford, and Guidry pitched their entire careers for the Yankees (okay, Gomez pitched one game—just one—and five innings for Washington at the very end of his career): Ford with a 236-106 record over sixteen seasons for a .690 winning percentage; Gomez with a 189-101 record over thirteen years (including 1940, when he pitched only 27 innings because of injury), for a .652 winning percentage; and Guidry with a 170-91 record over eleven full seasons and small parts of three others for a .651 winning percentage. All three also had one phenomenal season: Gomez going 26-5 with a league-leading 2.33 ERA in 1934; Ford going 25-4 in 1961; and Guidry, 25-3 with a league-leading 1.74 ERA in 1978.

If the 1976-80 Yankees bear passing resemblance to any other best team discussed so far, it is to the **1971-75 Oakland Athletics** rather than to any of the great teams of Yankee history past. They revived the Yankee tradition of we-can't-be-beat swagger, but their swagger had more of an edge than the cool almost dispassionate killer-instinct professionalism of Yankee teams associated with Gehrig, DiMaggio, and Mantle. Remember the old witticism about rooting for the New York Yankees being like rooting for US Steel? Like the Athletics under Finley, these Yankees held together as a team despite all the controversies surrounding them because of a despotic owner's incessant meddling, managerial changes dependent on whether Billy Martin was in "Boss" Steinbrenner's good graces or not, and personality clashes in the clubhouse often provoked by the outsized ego of Reggie.

Steinbrenner's first Yankee mini-dynasty, however, was not as good a team as Finley's only A's mini-dynasty. Both teams won three consecutive pennants, but the Oakland Athletics also won three straight World Series and a total of five straight division titles, while the Yankees had that unfortunate fourth-place finish in 1979. Of course, their catcher Thurman Munson was killed in a plane crash, a key starting pitcher (Ed Figueroa) was limited to only 16 games because he was hurt, Gossage got into only 36 games (compared to 63 in 1978 and 64 in 1980) because *he* was hurt (in a clubhouse fight with a teammate) and missed most of the first half of the season, and the top three teams in the AL East all won more than 90 games. Furthermore, the 1979 Yankees won many more games than third-place Baltimore in 1972—the one year in six that the best American League team in the divisional era, the 1969-74 Orioles, failed to win the AL East. Still, fourth place among seven Eastern Division teams does mar an otherwise great five-year stretch for the Yankees, even if no team in the Western Division had a better record than did the New York Yankees that year.

What finally matters most, however, is that the 1971-75 Athletics had Reggie Jackson, Catfish Hunter, Rollie Fingers, Sal Bando, and Bert Campaneris in their best years, giving them a decided advantage in "best players" over the 1976-80 Yankees, according to my methodological approach for evaluating the best teams. The century legacies of Reggie and Catfish are based primarily on their accomplishments with the Oakland Athletics, according to me, not with the New York Yankees. Hunter won 20 games for the fifth consecutive year in his first season with the Yankees in 1975, but Catfish was at the end of his great career, his arm worn down, when the Yankees won their three straight pennants; all but one of his best consecutive years (1971-75) were with the A's, as indicated by WAR. Jackson became one of the most celebrated World Series heroes of all time with the Yankees,

but his best consecutive years were 1971 to 1976, before he arrived in New York and inspired the “Reggie Bar.”

4 BEST AMERICAN LEAGUE TEAMS, 1969-1980

	D-P-WS	W - L %	Ach	Dom	Play	Total
Baltimore Orioles, 1969-74	5 - 3 - 1	586-374 .610	38	58	24	120
Oakland Athletics, 1971-75	5 - 3 - 3	476-326 .594	44	20	29	93
New York Yankees, 1976-80	4 - 3 - 2	489-317 .607	37	35	24	96
Kansas City Royals, 1976-80	4 - 1 - 0	466-344 .575	31	20	16	67

P = Pennant WS = World Series Ach = Achievement Score
Dom = Dominance Factors Score Play = Players Score Total = Total Score

The 1976-80 Yankees restored the Yankee tradition not only of winning, but playing their best and being nearly impossible to beat when the stakes were highest. Just ask Boston about 1978 and their 14-game lead in mid-July and that one game playoff for the Eastern Division title decided by Bucky Dent’s home run. Or ask Kansas City about three consecutive League Championship Series losses to the Yankees that must have made the post-season seem like Groundhog Day and the Chris Chambliss walk-off home run that won Game 5 of the 1976 ALCS. Or ask Los Angeles, whose Dodgers lost two straight World Series to these Yankees and were present at the creation of “Mr. October” when Reggie Jackson launched three magnificent home runs deep into the night on three consecutive pitches in the final game of the 1977 World Series. But notwithstanding these iconic moments, the 1976-80 New York Yankees are not typically included among the great all-time Yankee teams extending back to the days of Ruth and Gehrig and forward to the days of Jeter and Rivera, except by the fans who grew up cheering for them.

Perhaps it is because they did not seem quite as successful with *only* three straight World Series appearances. Perhaps it is because they did not seem so dominant in the manner of “US Steel” as much as resilient in an edgy sort of way; none of the previous Yankee teams that won 29 pennants from 1921 to 1964 had to make up a mid-summer deficit greater than 5½ games, nowhere close to the 14 games as late as July 19 that the 1978 Yankees had to overcome. Perhaps it’s just Yankees fatigue—do they have to have a “best team” candidate in every decade since 1920? Or perhaps it was that fourth-place finish.

Where do the 1976-80 Yankees stand in the pantheon of great New York Yankee teams to this point in time? Well, for sure, they are not in the same ballpark as the DiMaggio 1936-42, the Mantle-Berra 1954-58, or the Ruth-Gehrig 1926-32 Yankees. (That, of course, is literally as well as figuratively true, it being that the Yankee Stadium in which those earlier teams played was drastically renovated by the time the 1976-80 Yankees played there—field dimensions altered, outfield fences raised, center field monuments no longer in play, the bullpens between the triple-deck grandstands and the bleachers in left and right fields eliminated and placed elsewhere, the distinctive aging façade removed so it wouldn’t fall on the patrons.) That leaves the 1949-53 and 1960-64 Yankees, both teams which won five consecutive American League pennants.

While five-and-five-in-five for the **1949-53 Yankees** is, well, five pennants and five World Series championships in five years—an unprecedented and unsurpassed achievement—they were not required to play in a five-game League Championship Series to win the pennant, the always-fraught-with-danger path the 1976-80 Yankees had to travel. In keeping with Yankee tradition, the 1976-80 Yankees were very tough to beat when championships were at stake. For both teams, taut pennant races were more the norm than blow-out first-place finishes, but the 1976-80 Yankees were the more dominant team in their time. And while it's not really relevant, but certainly worth noting, both teams also had Billy Martin—a second baseman on the 1949-53 Yankees, and manager of the Yankees in 1976 and 1977, before running afoul of the “Boss” and being fired in mid-1978, restored as manager during the 1979 season, after which he was cast aside yet again in what would become a repetitive pattern.

The Yankees' distant fourth-place finish in 1979, 13½ games back of the Eastern Division champion Orioles, is cause for pause, certainly in comparison to five-and-five-in-five. There were, however, extenuating circumstances, not that those should be an excuse: Gossage missing most of the first half of the season; Figueroa—a 20-game winner the year before, and winner of 55 games from 1976 to 1978—missing more than half of the year; and Reggie missed nearly all of June with injuries. And then, of course, there was the untimely death of Thurman Munson, although the Yankees were 14 games out when that happened at the beginning of August and not likely to make up that kind of ground with three teams in front of them. The 1949-53 Yankees played exceptionally well together as a team and had five players (Yogi Berra, Phil Rizzuto, past-his-prime Joe DiMaggio as one of three outfielders through 1951, Gil McDougald as a multi-position regular, and Allie Reynolds as one of five starting pitchers) who were the best at their position for all or the majority of those years, and Reynolds was joined by Ed Lopat and Vic Raschi to constitute a more formidable trio of starting pitchers than the 1976-80 Yankees had.

The Yankee revival in the 1970s may not have included any position players who were the best at their position during their five-year run, but that was more circumstance of Nettles being a direct contemporary of Brett, Randolph of Grich, Munson of Fisk, and Reggie—like Joe D. for the 1949-53 Yankees, still dangerous—just coming off his greatest years. And the Yankees' ‘Seventies Show included historical-legacy pitchers Guidry and Gossage, not to mention Lyle. Probably having all-around better players in context, and taking into account their relatively greater dominance of the league, I believe the 1976-80 Yankees were the better team, notwithstanding their one not-in-contention season and that the 1949-53 Yankees won five consecutive World Series.

As for the **1960-64 Yankees**, with five straight trips to the World Series of their own (but only two championships to show for it), their dominance of the league was somewhat more fragile than their remarkable record suggests because of the 1961 expansion. They had three position players—Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris, and Elston Howard—among the AL's 10 best in the surrounding decade, and Whitey Ford as one of the league's five best pitchers, and the 1976-80 Yankees had only three such players (Nettles, Guidry, and Gossage), but once again the 1976-80 Yankees had better all-around players in context when you also consider Randolph, Munson, and Reggie Jackson.

The 1976-80 New York Yankees may be underrated in history because they do not match up with great Yankee teams that came before them, but they were better than history gives them credit. They may not have been quite so fearsome as the Bronx Bombers of Ruth

and Gehrig's day, DiMaggio's era, or Mantle and Berra's years, and their style may have been different, but they definitely belong in the lineage of the New York Yankees' twentieth century dominance of the American League.

5 BEST AMERICAN LEAGUE TEAMS, 1951-1980

	D-P-WS	W - L %	Ach	Dom	Play	Total
Baltimore Orioles, 1969-74	5 - 3 - 1	586-374 .610	38	58	24	120
New York Yankees, 1954-58	4 - 2	486-284 .631	32	45	31	108
Oakland Athletics, 1971-75	5 - 3 - 3	476-326 .594	44	20	29	93
New York Yankees, 1976-80	4 - 3 - 2	489-317 .607	37	35	24	96
New York Yankees, 1960-64	5 - 2	505-296 .630	34	35	22	91
<i>New York Yankees, 1949-53</i>	5 - 5	487-280 .635	40	20	21	81

P = Pennant WS = World Series Ach = Achievement Score
Dom = Dominance Factors Score Play = Players Score Total = Total Score

8 BEST AMERICAN LEAGUE TEAMS, 1901-1980

	D-P-WS	W - L %	Ach	Dom	Play	Total
New York Yankees, 1936-42	6 - 5	701-371 .654	34	78	51	163
Philadelphia Athletics, 1928-32	3 - 2	505-258 .662	30	45	39	114
Baltimore Orioles, 1969-74	5 - 3 - 1	586-374 .610	38	58	24	120
New York Yankees, 1954-58	4 - 2	486-284 .631	32	45	31	108
Philadelphia Athletics, 1910-14	4 - 3	488-270 .644	32	50	31	113
New York Yankees, 1926-32	4 - 3	677-400 .629	29	43	27	99
Oakland Athletics, 1971-75	5 - 3 - 3	476-326 .594	44	20	29	93
New York Yankees, 1976-80	4 - 3 - 1	489-317 .607	37	35	24	96
<i>New York Yankees, 1960-64</i>	5 - 2	505-296 .630	34	35	22	91

P = Pennant WS = World Series Ach = Achievement Score
Dom = Dominance Factors Score Play = Players Score Total = Total Score

TRANSPARENCY ANNEX

NEW YORK YANKEES, 1976-1980

4 AL Eastern Division Titles (1976, 1977, 1978, 1980)

3 Pennants (1976, 1977, 1978)

2 World Series Wins (1977, 1978)

ACHIEVEMENT

1 st place (x 3)	2 nd place (x 2)	3 rd place (x 1)	World Series (x 1)	Score
4 x 3 = 12	0	0	2 x 1 = 2	
+ 3 pennants = 3				
+ 3 AL1 (x .5) = 1.5				
16.5	0	0	2	18.5

ACHIEVEMENT SCORE = 18.5 / 5 years x 10 = **37**

DOMINANCE

100 Wins	8 Games Ahead	AL1/Runs Scored	AL1/Fewest Runs Allowed	Score
3	1	0	3	7

DOMINANCE SCORE = 7 / 20 (4 x 5 seasons) x 100 = **35**

PLAYERS

CORE REGULARS	WAR 1976-80	BEST at POSITION	Decade 1973-82	2 nd ½ 20 th C	20 th C +
1B Chris Chambliss, 1975-79	9.7	no	no		
2B Willie Randolph, 1976-88	25.7	s/o	no		
SS Bucky Dent, 1977-81	10.7	no	no		
3B Graig Nettles, 1973-83	22.4	s/o	1973-78	no	
OF Lou Piniella, 1974-80	6.0	no	no		
CF Mickey Rivers, 1976-79	13.6	no	no		
RF Reggie Jackson, 1977-81	16.4	s/o	*	^	^
C Thurman Munson, 1970-79	15.4	no	*	no	
P Ron Guidry, 1977-86	22.5	1977-85	1977-82	yes	yes
P Catfish Hunter, 1975-78	1.7	no	no		
P Ed Figueroa, 1976-78	8.8	no	no		
RP Sparky Lyle, 1972-78	5.4	s/o	no		
RP Goose Gossage, 1978-83	7.9	1978-83	1978-82	yes	yes
TEAM WAR, 1976-80 = 220.2	166.2				
Core WAR= 75.5 % of Team War	77.2 / 10	4 / 13	3 x 1	2 x 2	2 x 3
44.0 Av. Team WAR + 75.5 %	7.7	3.1	3	4	6

* Jackson and Munson both were among the best position players of the decade, but their best consecutive years included less than half the years for the 1976-80 Yankees.

^ Jackson has a century-plus legacy for his best consecutive years of 1971-76.

PLAYERS SCORE = 7.7 (Base WAR) + 3.1 (Best at Position) + 13 (AL Best) = **23.8**

KANSAS CITY ROYALS, 1976-1980

4 AL Western Division Titles (1976, 1977, 1978, 1980)

1 Pennant (1980)

0 World Series Wins

ACHIEVEMENT

1 st place (x 3)	2 nd place (x 2)	3 rd place (x 1)	World Series (x 1)	Score
4 x 3 = 12	1 x 2	0	0	
+ 1 pennants = 1				
+ 1 AL1 (x .5) = .5				
13.5	2	0	0	15.5

ACHIEVEMENT SCORE = 15.5 / 5 years x 10 = **31**

DOMINANCE

100 Wins	8 Games Ahead	AL1/Runs Scored	AL1/Fewest Runs Allowed	Score
1	2	0	1	4

DOMINANCE SCORE = 4 / 20 (4 x 5 seasons) x 100 = **20**

PLAYERS

CORE REGULARS	WAR 1976-80	BEST at POSITION	Decade 1973-82	2 nd ½ 20 th C	20 th C +
2B Frank White, 1974-89	9.8	no	no		
SS Freddie Patek, 1971-79	5.9	no	no		
3B George Brett, 1974-86 *	39.0	1975-82	1975-80	yes	yes
LF Willie Wilson, 1978-90	15.3	s/o	no		
CF Amos Otis, 1970-83	18.2	no	no		
RF Al Cowens, 1974-79	9.5	no	no		
DH Hal McRae, 1973-86	15.6	1974-82	no		
C Darrell Porter, 1977-80	17.3	no	no		
P Dennis Leonard, 1975-82	16.7	no	no		
P Paul Splittorff, 1971-83	8.1	no	no		
P Larry Gura, 1976-84	12.6	no	no		
P/RP Marty Pattin, 1974-80	4.3	no	no		
P/RP Doug Bird, 1973-78	0.6	no	no		
TEAM WAR, 1976-80 = 210.0	172.9				
Core WAR= 82.3 % of Team War 42.0 Av. Team WAR + 82.3 %	76.6 / 10 7.7	2.5 / 13 1.9	1 x 1 1	1 x 2 2	1 x 3 3

* Brett finished career with Royals at 1B from 1987-90 and as DH from 1991-93.

PLAYERS SCORE = 7.7 (Base WAR) + 1.9 (Best at Position) + 6 (AL Best) = **15.6**

BEST PLAYERS IN SURROUNDING DECADE

(based on best consecutive years, informed by wins above replacement)

1976-80 YANKEES and 1976-80 ROYALS		
10 BEST AL POSITION PLAYERS, 1973-82		
	George Brett, 3B, 1975-80, KC	
	Rod Carew, 2B-1b, 1973-77	
	Reggie Jackson, OF, 1973-77	
	Bobby Grich, 2B, 1973-81 (-1)	
	Graig Nettles, 3B, 1973-78, NY	
	Robin Yount, SS, 1978-82	
	Thurmon Munson, C, 1973-77 *	* Only two years of Munson's best years count for '76-80 Yankees.
	Ken Singleton, OF, 1975-79	
	Eddie Murray, 1B, 1978-82	
	Fred Lynn, OF, 1975-80	
5 BEST AL PITCHERS + BEST RELIEVER, 1973-82		
	Jim Palmer, 1973-78	
	Bert Blyleven, 1973-77	
	Nolan Ryan, 1973-77	
	Ron Guidry, 1977-82, NY	
	Gaylord Perry, 1973-77	
	Goose Gossage, 1978-82, NY	

BEST AT POSITION

1B	(68) Powell-----→Scott-----→Murray-----→
2B	(67) Carew-----→Grich-----→Whitaker-----→(91)
SS	Campaneris-----→Yount-----→Ripken-----→(95)
3B	Bando-----→Brett-----→Boggs-----→(91)
OF	Jackson-----→Wilson-----→
OF	White-----→Lynn-----→Henderson-----→(91)
OF	Otis-----→Singleton-----→Evans-----→(89)
MP	Yastrzemski, OF/1B-----→Molitor, IF/DH-----→(89)
DH	McRae-----→Baylor-----→
C	Munson-----→Fisk-----→Parrish-----→
P	(68) McNally----→Ryan-----→Stieb-----→(90)
P	Cuellar-----→Eckersley-----→Petry-----→
P	Palmer-----→John-----→Viola-----→(89)
P	Hunter-----→Guidry-----→
P	Blyleven-----→ Morris-----→
	Perry-----→
	Fingers-----→ Gossage-----→
RP	Lyle-----→ Quisenberry-----→
	69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87