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How Important Is Era In MLB

By Sebastien Veilleux

Today we are going to look at ERA and find out just how important having a pitcher with a good

ERA is for a team. We'll look at the top 10 pitchers, ERA wise, in the American League. Does knowing having a top 10 pitcher in ERA equate to wins? Does this mean we can pick more winners and take home more cash? Let's find out.

Our journey starts in the American League. Here's a listing of the top 10 pitchers for ERA as of this writing.

1. Santana - Minnesota 2. Verlander - Detroit 3. Halladay - Toronto 4. Kazmir - Tampa Bay 5. Sabathia - Cleveland 6. Lackey - LA Angels 7. Mussina - NY Yankees 8. Zito - OAK 9. Haren - OAK 10. Wang - NY Yankees

The first thing we see is that most of these teams are in the playoff hunt. The worst team to have a pitcher in this top 10 is Tampa Bay. Sabathia plays for Cleveland. The Indians are playing just under .500 ball right now. These two are the exception. However, the other 8 pitchers all play for teams that are either in the playoff hunt or are playing above .500.

Given that 80% of the top 10 plays for winning clubs, I'd say there is a strong coloration between having a top 10 pitcher in ERA and winning. By the way, the next three pitchers are Schilling with Boston, Bonderman with Detroit and Escobar with the LA Angels. So, now we have 11 of the top 13 ERA pitchers on winning clubs. That's 84.6%. The numbers are too strong to ignore.

It's not the end all, but paying attention to the ERA of pitchers on a team can help determine their overall ability. Starting pitchers typically pitch 6-7 innings per game on average. That means they account for the pitching in 66% to 77% of each game they start. While you can't bet solely on starting pitching, because the bullpen still accounts for up to 33% of the game on average, you can begin to get a great picture of the game by looking first at the starting pitching.

The next time you are deciding who's going to win, give some thought to where the pitcher ranks—for ERA—in the league. It just might be the one piece of information that helps you rope in another winner.

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Evaluating MLB Pitching

By Sebastien Veilleux

As a MLB baseball fan and sports bettor, you probably know that one key element in any baseball game is the pitching. A solid pitcher can completely shutdown an opposing side. What happens when you have two very good pitchers going at it? Usually the game is low scoring—no matter how good the hitters are. Just the opposite can happen when to sub-par pitchers take the mound. Knowing how to properly evaluate pitching is key to winning your baseball bets. However, evaluating can be a complicated task. Just what should we pay attention to? That's the purpose of this article. We will discuss what's important to look at and use the past performance of real pitchers to illustrate these points. It's time to play ball.

ERA

The most common mistake for those wagering on MLB baseball has to be simply looking at the pitcher's ERA. The ERA is important, but you have to dig a little deeper to get the full story. Let's take a look at Chicago White Sox pitcher Freddy Garcia. Let's imagine that it's late in the season and he's on the mound with his 3.87 ERA. It would be easy to look at that and decide that he's a good pitcher. However, looking at his stats deeper tells a tale of two pitchers—home and away. Let's compare.

1. At home, Garcia has a 4–5 record. On the road he is 10–3. 2. At home, his ERA is 4.38. On the road his ERA is 3.40. 3. At home he gave up 17 home runs 38 walks. On the road he gave up 9 home runs and 22 walks. 4. He pitched 10 more innings on the road.

So what does this data tell you? For one, it tells you that Freddy Garcia is not a good pitcher at home. By looking deeper into the ERA and where the game is being played, you can get a better picture of just who's taking the mound for a game.

Team Performance

Another area you want to look at is team performance, which looks at how well the pitcher has performed against the team. While you can look at history, it's best to look at the current season and only pull in history if there are no current season performances. The reason is simple; teams change, at least a little, each year. Let's keep looking at Freddy Garcia to see why team performance is so important. Take a look at a couple teams Garcia pitched against in 2005 and the outcome.

1. Garcia pitched four games against Detroit and had a 2.61 ERA.

How Important Is Era In MLB

2.Garcia pitched four games against Cleveland and had a 2.63 ERA. 3.Garcia pitched three games against Seattle and had an 8.35 ERA. 4.Garcia pitched two games against Oakland and had a 3.46 ERA.

By looking at team performance, we can see that Garcia's outcome fluctuated and there are certain teams that he just does not do well against and others he dominates. We just looked at ERA here, but you can drill down further and look at overall pitching performance such as: hits, walks, home runs, innings pitched and so forth.

Inning Count

The last area of our discussion involves inning count. It's vital that you know how deep, on average, the pitcher goes into games. If the pitcher is known for 5–6 inning outings, then you know the bullpen will be a major factor in the game. If this is the case and the team's bullpen is suspect, you have to devalue the starting pitcher some. If you have a pitcher that normally works 7–8 innings and the team has a dominant closer and possibly a very good setup man, then you can focus more on the starting pitcher. Here's an example list of pitchers and their 2005 averages.

1.Freddy Garcia 7 innings. 2.Randy Johnson 6 2/3 innings. 3.Pedro Martinez 7 innings. 4.Jose Contrares 6 13/ innings. 5.Livian Hernandez 7 innings.

In the case of Randy Johnson and Jose Contrares, we would have to discount their ability slightly if their team's bullpen was not solid. Getting 7 innings of work out of a starting pitcher is good and about the average.

So the next time you go to bet baseball, look at who is pitching and do a little evaluating. It will pay off in the end.

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