

Dr. Allen

The Most Proficient Years at Sports and Games

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WHAT are the chronological ages at which men exhibit their greatest physical skill? What are the ages at which individuals are most likely to win (or retain) various kinds of championships? Study of the chronological ages at which men have achieved their most outstanding performance is, of necessity, limited to behaviors which can be evaluated or appraised, and which can therefore be dated with a reasonable degree of precision. In previous articles the present writer and his associates have presented factual data regarding the most creative years in the fields of science, invention, literature, and music.^{1*} The present paper sets forth the chronological ages at which extraordinary proficiency has been exhibited most frequently by the following kinds of performers:

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| 1. Professional baseball players | 7. Corn huskers |
| 2. Professional pugilists | 8. Bowlers |
| 3. Amateur tennis players | 9. Rifle and pistol shooters |
| 4. Professional ice hockey players | 10. Duck pin bowlers |
| 5. Professional football players | 11. Professional billiardists |
| 6. Automobile racers | 12. Professional and amateur golfers. |

METHOD

In the most recent edition of his *All Sports Record Book*, F. G. Menke lists for numerous sports and games the following information:² (1) The names of the annual champions, (2) the national and the world record-holders, and (3) the years during which both the annual champions and the record-holders won or retained their honors. In order to determine the chronological ages of the performers at the time they exhibited their superior abilities it was necessary to obtain their birth dates. The latter information was obtained by writing to the secretaries, or other executives, of organizations which control or which sponsor the various sports. The procedure that was employed for the study of professional baseball players will first be described.

PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL

Study of age differences in baseball proficiency would be a relatively simple task if all the major league players started to play in the major leagues at very youthful ages and if all continued to play in the major

*Indices refer to Bibliography at end of article.