

PROFICIENT YEARS AT SPORTS

In order to avoid unfairness to the older age groups, one probably should compare the number of baseball players within a given age group with the total white male population of corresponding chronological age. The latter procedure enables one to answer the following question:—In proportion to the total number of living, eligible males, to what extent does each age group participate in major league baseball?

Since data for the years 1916 to 1938 inclusive* were utilized for constructing Figures 1 and 2, census data for 1920 and 1930 were combined in making allowance for the population differences at the several age levels. When the data were grouped by five-year intervals, and the correction for population differences was made, this correction changed the shape of the age curves only slightly, and the resultant age curves, for pitchers and for non-pitchers, were almost identical. Indeed, these curves yielded no hint that the modal ages of pitchers and of non-pitchers differ by a full year.

LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

League champions at batting, pitching, base-stealing, and the like are identified each year. The competition to win these league championships is exceedingly keen since the winners can usually command large salary increases when they are offered contracts for the succeeding year. Which of the age groups most frequently win these championship honors? In the *All Sports Record Book*² for 1936 Menke presents the following information: †

1. The batting champions of the National League from 1876 to 1936 inclusive.
2. The batting champions of the American League from 1900 to 1936 inclusive.
3. The pitching champions of the National League from 1876 to 1936 inclusive.
4. The pitching champions of the American League from 1900 to 1936 inclusive.
5. The stolen-base champions of both major leagues from 1907 to 1936 inclusive.

The birth dates of some of the above-mentioned champions were available in *Who's Who in Baseball*. But, since the first edition of *Who's Who in Baseball* did not appear until 1916, it was necessary to obtain the birth dates of the earliest champions from other sources as follows: (1) The Service Bureaus of the two major baseball leagues, ‡ (2) biographies of baseball players, and (3) personal correspondence with a number of the early champions who are still living.

* Excepting only for the year 1922.

† Except when otherwise stated, the data regarding championship performance were procured from Menke's books.

‡ The writer is indebted to Mr. Henry P. Edwards, Manager of the Service Bureau of the American League of Professional Baseball Clubs, and also to Mr. Wm. E. Brandt, Manager of the Service Bureau of the National League of Professional Baseball Clubs. Thanks are due also to individual players who provided the writer with their birth dates.