

STRAT-MAG

December 2025



The unofficial magazine of Strat-O-Matic Baseball

Dear Reader:

It's been a while since I've written an issue of Strat-Mag. The decision to create the magazine was one of love for the game. I've played it since I was a kid and the community is passionate. Going to Strat-O-Matic's opening day in February of each year reminds me how great my fellow enthusiasts are.

Saying all of that, the issues seemed to be well received for those who read them, but the feedback and support was lacking. Did that mean there were just a handful of people reading the magazine? Honestly, I don't know. The website I use is Wix.com and it's free, so there are holes in the reporting system about how many people download the files I have available. Throw in the fact that I was going through a divorce and things just got way too complicated, leaving me very little time to write almost the entire magazine every other month.

Recently I've had some people reach out to me and inquire if I'm still publishing. It's put the spark back in my mind to do it again, but less issues per year. I'm also going to concentrate on the baseball game. The other sports in Strat are great, but I just don't have time to play them and create meaningful articles.

Send me your thoughts! What would you like to see in future issues of Strat-Mag?

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Keep rolling and Happy Holidays!

Ron
Lottermann

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Dugout Notes

VOLUME 2 - ISSUE 1

DECEMBER 2025

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DONATIONS:
PAYPAL.ME/STRATMAG



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Cover photo by Ron Lottermann in MidJourney

CARDS & DICE



Photo credit Sports Illustrated

The Top 5 Best Seasons to Replay in Strat-O-Matic

Baseball history is a long boulevard of unforgettable summers, seismic storylines, and improbable champions. Strat-O-Matic lets you revisit those roads any time you want—dice in hand, charts at the ready, history laid out like a blueprint waiting to be redrawn. Some seasons feel designed for replay: balanced leagues, iconic teams, vivid personalities, and card sets with enough texture to invite long replay projects and late-night series.

After years of debate, multiple surveys, and more rolled dice than we can count, Strat-Mag presents the Top 5 Best Seasons to Replay—complete with the single best team to manage in each.

5. 1941 – The Summer When Baseball Felt Mythic

Replaying 1941 feels like stepping into baseball folklore. Two of the sport's most unbreakable feats—Williams hitting .406 and DiMaggio hitting in 56 straight—unfolded in the same season. But the year's richness extends beyond the monuments: it's full of tight pennant races, wildly varied ballparks, and strategic baseball

that emphasizes contact, situational hitting, and defensive nuance. It's a season with heart, pace, and texture—an old-world rhythm that Strat captures beautifully.

Best Team to Manage: Boston Red Sox
Managing Ted Williams' chase for .400 adds a constant narrative current to every game. The Sox have a balanced lineup and just enough pitching to stay dangerous with attentive managing.

Runner-up: New York Yankees (if you're brave enough to chase the streak).

4. 1986 – Legends, Agony, and What-Ifs

The 1986 season is a mosaic of big personalities and dramatic fault lines. Some stars arrived, others imploded, and pennant races twisted into unforgettable shapes. Clemens became unhittable. The Astros were a quietly coiled threat. The Mets walked through the league with a swagger that felt both earned and precarious. In Strat-O-Matic, '86 offers a perfect mix of offensive variety, clutch pitching, and matchup-rich bullpens. The season already carries mythic weight, and replaying it gives you the intoxicating sense that you're navigating a timeline where any moment could go differently.

CARDS & DICE

Best Team to Manage: New York Mets

They give you tools for every situation—rotation depth, lineup versatility, defensive options, and a bullpen that rewards savvy matchup decisions. They're built for replay magic.

Runner-up: Houston Astros (Ryan + Scott + constant tension).

3. 1977 – The Bronx Zoo and the Battle for October

Few seasons crackle with as much personality as 1977. Free agency reshaped rosters, big-market drama spilled into dugouts, and the entire league played with an electric edge. The Yankees were a traveling spectacle of brilliance and chaos. The Royals were a blur of speed and athleticism. The Dodgers were a power-packed machine. For Strat players, 1977 offers tight division races, wildly different team identities, and lineups that seem designed to test every managerial instinct. Every series feels important. Every homestand feels combustible. It's a season that never slows down.

Best Team to Manage: Kansas City Royals

They are the perfect Strat team—speed, contact, situational hitting, bullpen depth, and enough pop to blow games open. You dictate the pace and force opponents to react.

Runner-up: Los Angeles Dodgers (balance and power across the roster).

2. 1927 – Murderers' Row Let Loose

Playing 1927 is like opening a time capsule stuffed with dynamite. Baseball in the late 1920s was already explosive, but nothing prepared the league for the destructive brilliance of Ruth, Gehrig, and the Yankees' supporting cast. Yet the season's charm isn't just that juggernaut—it's the way everyone else scrambles to keep up, improvising through a league bursting with lively bats and overworked arms. Strat brings out the era's chaotic energy: aggressive offense, unpredictable pitching, and games where momentum can flip with a single roll. This season isn't just historic—it's cinematic.

Best Team to Manage: New York Yankees

Piloting one of the most iconic teams ever assembled is incredibly fun. You get firepower, depth, and a pitching staff good enough to make every game feel like an event.

Runner-up: Philadelphia Athletics (surprisingly deep and competitive).

1. 1968 – The Year of the Pitcher

The 1968 season plays like baseball stripped down to its bare, brilliant essentials. Offenses sputtered, pitching dominated every corner of the league, and run-scoring became a daring act of defiance. Bob Gibson didn't just dominate—he turned every start into a personal indictment of hitters everywhere. Denny McLain wasn't merely good; he posted a win total that feels mythological. In Strat-O-Matic terms, '68 is a master class in tension, where every pitching change matters, every walk feels dangerous, and every run feels like a stolen treasure. It's baseball as a duel, played across a razor's edge.

Best Team to Manage: Detroit Tigers

Detroit gives you elite starting pitching, a flexible bullpen, and an offense that demands smart, timely managing. You never coast—you craft wins in '68, and that's the beauty of it.

Runner-up: St. Louis Cardinals (ride Gibson's fury).

Runner-up Seasons:

Here are five runner-up seasons—the ones that just missed the Top 5 but are so good in Strat-O-Matic that they practically form a Tier 1B.

1. 1969 – The Miracle Mets and Expansion Chaos.

2. 1954 – The 111-Win Indians and a Wild Postseason Twist.

3. 2001 – A Season Big Enough to Feel Unreal.

4. 1971 – Koufax's Afterglow, Pitching Power, and Rising Stars.

5. 1982 – Speed, Parity, and Perfect Strat Balance.

HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS



The holidays are rolling toward us, and for Strat players, that means one thing: the annual hunt for the perfect baseball-themed gift. Whether you're treating yourself or trying to nudge a loved one toward the right idea, there's a special kind of magic in unwrapping something that upgrades your tabletop ballpark. Dice roll smoother, charts flip cleaner, and suddenly your replay season feels just a little bit brighter.

Strat-Mag doesn't make or endorse these products—our joy is simply discovering clever tools and thoughtful accessories that make the Strat experience even more fun. We combed through hobby shops, crafting corners, and the best corners of the internet to find items that any Strat fan would be thrilled to see under the tree... or conveniently highlighted in a magazine left open on the kitchen table.

What accessories are a must for your gaming sessions? Let Strat-Mag know and we'll include it in a future article.

Magnetic Baseball Lineup Board

This magnetic baseball clipboard is a clean, practical upgrade for any Strat setup. The steel board holds markers and lineup magnets firmly in place, making it easy to track innings, lineups, and game flow without clutter. It's compact, sturdy, and perfect for solo play or league nights—a simple, useful gift that instantly makes your tabletop ballpark feel more organized.

There are 72 pieces in total. Amazon sells it for \$22.99 at the time of publication. It's made by Synthomorphix and has a 4.9 star rating. Search for Magnetic Baseball Lineup Board for Dugout.



Multicolor Game Pawns

Want your Strat lineup to look and feel more like "your team" on the table? This set of multicolor plastic pawns and game-board components is a fun, inexpensive way to do it. With a rainbow of colors available, you can match pawn colors to your favorite MLB team's palette.

Search Hestya 32 Pieces Board Game Pawns Multicolor Plastic Game Pieces for Chess Tabletop Markers 1 Inch. Only \$5.99 on Amazon.



HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

Dice Organizer & Rolling Tray

If you're the kind of Strat player who juggles multiple dice sets — for different seasons, league play, or backup rolls — a dedicated dice organizer + rolling tray is a game-changer. This compact, soft-interior case keeps over 500 dice sorted, protected, and ready at a moment's notice. The integrated tray gives you a stable, clean surface for your rolls, whether you're at the kitchen table, a friend's house, or a league night. A great gift for anyone who values order, portability, and smooth dice flow between games.

It retails for about \$50.00 and can be found at several stores, including Walmart.



1972 Strat-O-Matic Baseball Vintage-Look Metal Sign

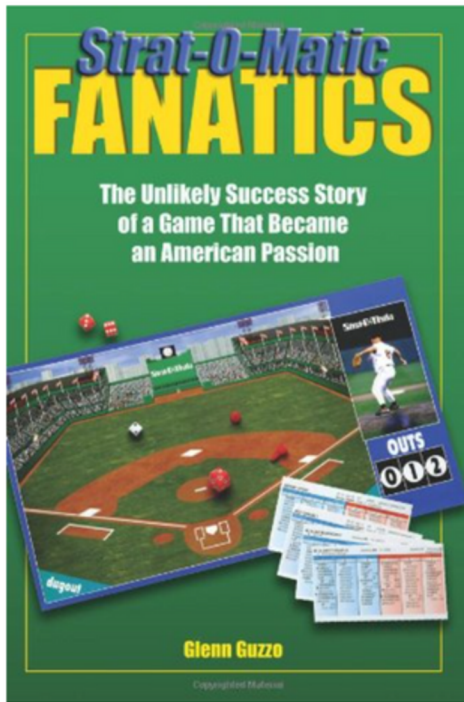
Hang this reproduction 1972 Strat-O-Matic metal sign on your gaming wall and you instantly get vintage-class charm for every Strat season. The 8"×12" tin sign brings a splash of baseball heritage to your den, game room, or office — a small reminder that every dice roll is part of a grand tradition. Affordable, easy to hang, and full of old-school character, it's a simple but meaningful gift for anyone who loves the history and feel of Strat-O-Matic as much as the gameplay itself.

It can be found at several retailers, including Amazon. It sells for about \$10, but some places charge as much for shipping.



"I first started playing Strat-O-Matic in 1964... hundreds of times each summer." - Bob Costas, Announcer

HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS



Strat-O-Matic Fanatics Book

Whether you've been rolling Strat dice since the '70s or just cracked open your first card set, this book is the definitive origin story of what became America's most beloved baseball simulation. Author Glenn Guzzo traces the journey of Strat-O-Matic from humble mail-order beginnings (when a young Hal Richman tinkered with baseball and dice in his bedroom) to its rise as a cultural touchpoint for generations of fans.

More than a timeline, the book is a love letter to dedication, statistical obsession, and baseball nerd culture — detailing the obstacles, passion, and community that kept Strat alive through decades of competition, challenges, and changing tastes. Even die-hard fans say it rekindled their love for the game.

If you want to understand why Strat means more than a box, dice, and cards — why it becomes tradition, memory, and obsession — Strat-O-Matic Fanatics is essential reading.

Moonlight Graham's Marketplace

moonlightgrahamsmarketplace.com/

If you're shopping for a Strat-O-Matic fan this holiday season, Moonlight Graham's Marketplace is one of the best places to find the treasures Strat players really want: the cards. Whether it's a rare vintage season, a missing year from a long-running replay project, or a childhood favorite set they've been trying to replace for decades, this shop specializes in the exact kind of baseball nostalgia that makes a Strat fan's heart skip a beat.

Moonlight Graham's Marketplace carries an impressive rotating inventory of classic full seasons, retro releases, partial sets, team-only sets, replacement cards, sealed reissues, and hard-to-find expansions. From the iconic seasons of the 1970s and 1980s to the earliest black-and-white gems, you can browse like you're walking through Strat history. Many items are gently used and well-preserved; others are still sealed—perfect for collectors who value condition as much as completeness.

For Strat players, there's no better gift than a new season to play, and no better surprise than discovering a set they thought they'd never see again. If your holiday shopping list includes a Strat gamer—whether they're a die-hard replay junkie or a fan who cherishes the classics—Moonlight Graham's Marketplace offers the cards that make their tabletop baseball world come alive.

Editor's Note: I've purchased from Moonlight Graham's Marketplace and Chris Rosen is top notch seller.





Photo by Sports Illustrated

How Did You Get Started Playing Strat-O-Matic?

My friend's father brought home some photocopied teams from the 1972 set. No game boards, dice or anything else. It didn't matter. We were hooked and rolled thousands of games.

- Ron

Because of my older brother playing in the early 70's I got started young. By the time I was 12, my first league was in full swing using teams from 1978. Tracking stats kept me hooked and the Yankees took home my first Strat Championship.

- Owlhead326 (Reddit)

I had heard of the game from interviews with Keith Olbermann, Bob Costas, and Dan Patrick and also heard that Keith Hernandez used to play it during games while commentating. My family got me 2 board sets and I got the Hall of Fame and 2016 set for Christmas and loved it right away. When the pandemic hit, I immediately ordered the 1998, 2004, and 2019 sets as we didn't know how long we would be isolating and wanted to keep busy. I'm busy a lot of the time now, but when I get a free night or weekend, I'm always happy to open the box and play a 3 game set to keep me busy and happy.

- Diehardcubforever (Reddit)

My dad taught me to play the basic baseball game at age 7, and my we have played regularly for the last 25 years. In the last few years we got my brother and sister to play so now we have family tournaments for Baseball and Hockey and are excited to teach the game to my daughter and nieces and continue our Strat Family Tradition. **- IronFerring (Reddit)**

Saw an ad in The Sporting News or another sports publication. My buddies and I pooled our money and bought the 1981 season. We played for HOURS.

- MikeThrone (Reddit)

I was coming up on my birthday in 1995, wandering through a toy store in a mall - Kay-Bee's I think - and I found an interesting looking baseball board game. At the time I had Ethan Allen's All-Star Baseball, the one with the disc's and spinners, and loved it. But this looked even cooler. I asked for it, I got it, and all these years later I still have it and sometimes play with the 1994 season set, with all the components and cards still intact. **-KingofthePenguins (Reddit)**

My dad's friend has sets going back to the 1910s. We'd never heard of it and I got him the most recent one for Christmas a couple years ago. He got me the HoF set this year and I've started a league at work.

- DeaconCorp (Reddit)

STRAT LIFE

My Dad bought the 1973 season back in 1974. A year later he started an 8 team league of All-Time teams. 27 Yankees, 31 A's, 46 Red Sox, 53 Dodgers, 54 Indians, 61 Yankees, 62 Giants and 65 Dodgers with a few hitters from the 74 Dodgers. I joined him for many games over those 2 years or so it took to play. I was 8 years old to start.

The A's beat the 65ish Dodgers to win the Championship. Mickey Mantle won the MVP. At some point in time Koufax threw a No-Hitter. My Dad rolled a 3-5, called shot, walk-off with Ted Williams for our coolest moment that we've talked about for 50 years. Most recently, when I visited this summer and we replayed the 1963 World Series. Even though he has dementia, he still remembered that. The Dodgers swept the Yankees once again. - **DohertyClaim (Reddit)**

I saw an ad in the back of Baseball Digest when I was 11-12 years old. It seemed like a fun game so I saved up to buy it. It seemed like it took forever to be delivered to my house. Been hooked ever since. - **Representative_Tap68 (Reddit)**

A friend invited me into his Super Advanced C&D baseball league, even though I had never played the game. I dove right in and was terrible at first. I went 11-43 my first year. 20 years later, including 3 years as league Commissioner, I'm still here! But only 1 appearance in the World Series. - **captainp42 (Reddit)**

Was watching 2 guys in 7th grade detention playing it. The kid had an extra unopened set and sold it to me for \$5. I think the teams were the 77 Giants and Expos. I got the full set for Christmas and I've been hooked ever since. - **DartNJ (Reddit)**

I was working at a newspaper in Halifax, N.S., on the advertising side. Caught the attention of the sports department, which had a fledgling league going. They invited me to play and I was hooked. I'm still in the league - though I did step away between 2007 and 2012 - and even though I live halfway across the country in Thunder Bay, Ont., I still play and even fly in every year for the draft. - **Leith D.**

Top 10 Strat Hitting Cards - All-Time

1. Barry Bonds, 2001

Maybe the most feared hitter card ever printed. Walks for days, absurd HR range, almost no dead zones. If you pitch to him, you accept your fate.

2. Babe Ruth, 1921

The Sultan at the peak of his powers. Ruth's '21 card is a buffet of on-base, slugging, and "are-you-serious?" power results. He's a one-man offense.

3. Rogers Hornsby, 1922

A .400 hitter with power and at-bats that never feel safe for pitchers. The card is a laser show of singles, doubles, and line drives that never stop falling.

4. Ted Williams, 1941

Disciplined, powerful, and beautifully balanced. Williams' '41 card is what happens when on-base percentage turns into a superpower.

5. Joe Dimaggio, 1939

The ultimate clean, symmetrical, everything-is-a-hit card. The '39 DiMaggio feels unfair when the dice run hot—and they usually do.

6. Stan Musial, 1948

Sneaky devastating. Tons of extra-base hits, hardly any holes, and a card built for long replays where consistency wins championships.

7. Lou Gehrig, 1927

Raw power and terrifying clutch zones. Gehrig's '27 is a middle-of-the-order wrecking ball who practically demands intentional walks.

8. Mickey Mantle, 1956

Switch-hitting greatness with power on both sides. Mantle's MVP campaign translates into a Strat card that ruins righties and lefties equally.

9. Jimmie Foxx, 1932

One of the purest slugger cards ever printed—loaded columns, ruthless HR numbers, and the ability to turn any inning into a crooked one.

10. George Brett, 1980

Not as nuclear as the pre-war giants, but maybe the greatest "modern era" card. The batting average is overwhelming, the power real, and every column feels alive.

STRAT BASEBALL HISTORY

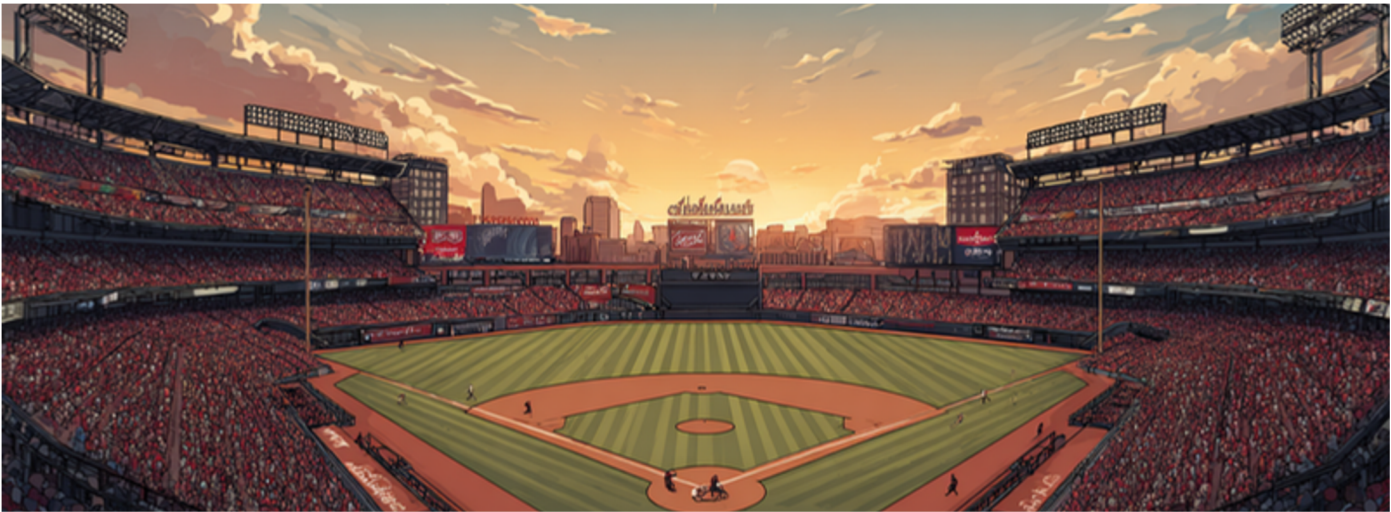


Photo credit Ron Lottermann - MidJourney

Strat-O-Matic has issued almost every season in card format. Seasons were issued in a variety of formats and updated when they started releasing past seasons. I've tried to compile a list of all the seasons with the year they were issued and what format. The list may not be perfect as much of the information had to be culled from the Internet as Strat-O-Matic does not have a formal list. If you find any errors, please let me know. This table is through December 2025 as Strat has not release what past season they are releasing in 2026.

Season	Year Released	SA = Super A = Advanced	Notes
1911	2004	SA	First dead ball full season released
1920	1999	SA	First post-Black Sox championship
1924	2009	SA	Senators win improbable World Series
1927	1990	SA	One of the first SA retro sets.
1930	1984	A	Peak "live-ball" batting surge
1934	1996	SA	Tigers' pennant-race power surge
1938	2013	SA	Classic pre-war NL drama
1941	1992	SA	DiMaggion (56) / Williams (.406)

STRAT BASEBALL HISTORY

Season	Year Released	SA = Super A = Advanced	Notes
1947	2022	SA	Jackie Robinson Debut
1948	2005	SA	Last Cleveland championship season
1949	2017	SA	Yankees begin dynasty run
1950	1986	A	Whiz Kids shock baseball
1951	2008	SA	Shot heard 'round the World
1953	2015	SA	Yankees overpowering five-peat
1954	1995	SA	Indians 111 Wins
1955	2002	SA	Dodgers finally Win
1956	1982/2020	A / SA	Mantle MVP
1957	2006	SA	Braves win Milwaukee crown
1958	2012	SA	Dodgers / Giants move to California
1959	1991	SA	Go-Go White Sox
1960	1997	SA	Pirates win on Walk-off in WS
1961	1961 / 2013	B / SA	Original Card Set Produced
1962	1960s / 2019	B / SA	Mets / Astros Inaugural Season
1963	2003	SA	Dominant Dodgers pitching year

STRAT BASEBALL HISTORY

Season	Year Released	SA = Super A = Advanced	Notes
1964	1996	SA	Yankees Last Hurrah
1965	1998	SA	Koufax Best Year
1966	2000	SA	Orioles First Pennant
1967	1994	SA	Impossible Dream Red Sox
1968	2018	SA	Year of the Pitcher
1969	2015	SA	Miracle Mets
1970	1984 / 2025	A / SA	Orioles' powerhouse championship
1971	1972 / 2007	A / SA	Pirates' emerging dynasty peak
1972	1973 / 2021	A / SA	A's launch championship run
1973	1974 / 2013	A / SA	American League Adopts DH
1974	1975	A	A's complete three-peat
1975	1976	A	Reds' Big Red Machine peak
1976	1977 / 2023	A / SA	Reds Sweep Yankees
1977	1978 / 2010	A / SA	Yankees' Reggie-fueled resurgence
1978	1979	A	Yankees win dramatic comeback
1979	1980	A	We Are Family

STRAT BASEBALL HISTORY

Season	Year Released	SA = Super A = Advanced	Notes
1980	1981 / 2019	A / SA	Phillies First Championship
1981	1982	A	Split-season strike-shortened chaos
1982	1983 / 2016	A / SA	Cardinals' speed-driven title
1983	1984	A	Orioles' veteran-powered triumph
1984	1985	A	Tigers roar wire-to-wire
1985	1986	A	Royals rally for crown
1986	1987 / 2022	A / SA	Mets' unforgettable miracle season

Starting with the 1987 season, the cards were issued in Super Advanced format and issued the February of the year following the season.

Specialty Sets

While full-season releases make up the heart of Strat-O-Matic's catalog, the company has also produced a rich lineup of special editions and non-season sets that deserve a place in any collector's library. These include the Hall of Fame sets (released in 2000, 2010, 2014, 2016, 2019, 2020, and 2023), the celebrated Negro Leagues set from 2009, and the three Baseball Heroes releases (2011, 2017, 2020). Fans also enjoy a variety of themed collections such as Oldtimer teams, the Diamond Gems series, Baseball Enemies matchups, and other nostalgic or rivalry-driven sets that add depth and flavor to a Strat collection.

Most of these unique releases are compatible with the Advanced and Super Advanced rule sets, though the level of statistical research and design detail varies from series to series. That variety is part of the fun—each special set offers a different window into baseball history and can inspire its own style of replay project.

“The last time I hit a home run in the bottom of the ninth to win a game was in Strat-O-Matic.” - Lenny Dykstra after his homerun in Game 3 of the NLCS.

STRAT BASEBALL POP CULTURE



Strat-O-Matic has never been just a board game—it's been a quiet thread woven through American pop culture for more than half a century. From surprise cameos in films and TV shows to references by comedians, sportscasters, and late-night hosts, Strat keeps showing up wherever baseball nostalgia and storytelling meet. Its presence on screen is usually subtle—a line of dialogue, a quick shot, a character revealing just how deep their fandom runs—but for those who know the game, these moments feel like a secret handshake. Strat's cultural footprint may be understated, but it's unmistakably enduring.

MOVIES

1. *The Odd Couple* (1968) — Felix & Oscar argue over Strat plays

There's a scene where Oscar (Walter Matthau) is shown arguing about a Strat-O-Matic baseball game result with Felix (Jack Lemmon). It's one of the earliest on-screen depictions of the game and a fan favorite reference.

2. *Punch-Drunk Love* (2002)

The side character Lance (Luis Guzmán) mentions Strat-O-Matic in a brief throwaway line about hobbies. It's small, but it counts — and Strat fans caught it immediately.

3. *Crooklyn* (1994) — Spike Lee's semi-

autobiographical film features one of the most iconic Strat-O-Matic moments on screen. Young Troy's brothers are shown playing Strat in their Brooklyn brownstone, complete with dice, charts, and arguments that feel instantly familiar to any Strat gamer. It's a brief scene, but it captures the game's place in everyday family life during the 1970s, and remains the most authentic cinematic depiction of Strat ever put on film.

(continued on page 17)

Strat-O-Matic on the Internet

The Internet and social media has added another way for Strat Fans to interact and share their thoughts on the game, ways to enjoy the game or exchange homebrew charts, cards and more.

Facebook Groups:

Strat-O-Matic Game Company
Strat-O-Matic World
Strat-O-Matic Games
Stratomic C & D
Strat-O-Matic Baseball
Strat-O-Matic DIY
Brian's Strat-O-Matic Ballparks
Strat-O-Matic Baseball - a group for players, collectors and hobbyists
Strat-O-Matic Hockey
Strat-O-Matic Hockey Players
Strat-O-Matic Football Fans
Strat-O-Matic Homebrew Exchange
StratOMatic Cards & Dice Opponents Wanted
Strat-O-Matic Marketplace
Strat-O-Matic C&D Baseball Marketplace

Twitter

@StratOMatic

Instagram

Stratomic

Reddit

r/StratOMatic

Miscellaneous

Stratfanforum.com

Strat Clubs

strat-o-matic.com/strat-clubs

Official Strat Website

strat-o-matic.com

Strat-Mag Website

deredain.wix.com/somtic

STRAT PROJECTION - 1979



Photo credit Ron Lottermann - MidJourney

Is 1979 the Next Retro Season?

Every winter, Strat-O-Matic reveals its newest classic season upgraded into full Super Advanced format, and this year the smart money might just be on 1979. It's a season that sits in a sweet spot—just late enough to have modern strategy, statistics, and fully fleshed-out rosters, but still early enough in the card-set history that it has never received the complete Super Advanced treatment. If Strat is continuing its pattern of filling in the “late-70s to pre-80s” gap, 1979 is one of the most attractive candidates remaining.

What makes 1979 especially appealing to Strat gamers is the incredible competitive balance across both leagues. You've got the “We Are Family” Pirates marching toward a championship on the strength of depth, chemistry, and an offense built for dice fireworks. The Orioles were a 102-win juggernaut with pitching precision, defense, and Earl Weaver's efficient style that Strat players love to replicate. Over in the NL West, the Astros and Reds battled in a tight race that feels tailor-made for a replay project. Nearly every division had storylines, surprises, and multiple legitimate contenders—meaning a Strat replay of '79 doesn't settle into predictability.

But the biggest reason 1979 is such a juicy season for Strat players is the style of baseball. Power is back after the mid-70s dip, bullpens matter without dominating the sport, and speed is still a strategic weapon rather than an afterthought. The season is bursting with memorable personalities—Stargell, Murray, Brett, Winfield, Ryan, Seaver, and more—and the statistical environment gives every type of team a way to win. '79 is a playground for card-driven experimentation: longball clubs, contact teams, deep rotations, devastating closers, and everything in between. If Strat's next Super Advanced classic release really is 1979, gamers will be getting one of the most replay-friendly, fun-to-manage seasons of the entire late-20th-century catalog.

On the field, 1979 produced some monster individual seasons that Strat gamers would love to roll out on the tabletop. George Brett hit .329 with 212 hits, 42 doubles, and his usual arsenal of extra-base pop. Dave Winfield posted a .308 average with 34 homers and 118 RBI for San Diego, while Jim Rice followed up his MVP campaign by blasting 39 homers and driving in 130. Pitching was equally dramatic—Nolan Ryan struck out 223 hitters, while Jim Palmer and Scott McGregor anchored an Orioles staff that combined for a 3.28 team ERA. And, of course, Willie Stargell delivered one of the great “intangibles-meets-output” seasons in baseball history, splitting the MVP award with Keith Hernandez.

STRAT PROJECTION - 1979

The surprises of 1979 were just as fun. The Houston Astros climbed to 89 wins behind a dominant bullpen and an emerging staff, finishing just short of toppling Cincinnati. The Montreal Expos hit 95 wins—yes, 95—with a young, electric roster featuring Gary Carter, Andre Dawson, and Ellis Valentine. Even the California Angels shocked the AL West by winning their first division title behind Don Baylor's 36 homers and AL-leading 139 RBI. As for rookies, 1979 sprinkled in future stars like Rick Sutcliffe, who captured the NL Rookie of the Year with a 17–10 record and 3.46 ERA, and John Castino, who shared AL honors with a .285 batting average and smooth glove at third. These young contributors add a layer of depth to a Strat replay—players who start modestly but can rise to stardom in alternate histories.

What teams are the best to manage in a 1979 season replay? Here is our top 4.

1. Pittsburgh Pirates – The Most Fun You Can Have Rolling Dice

If you want a team that feels built out of pure joy, swagger, and offense, the 1979 “We Are Family” Pirates are your go-to choice. Willie Stargell and Dave Parker anchor a lineup that blends thunder with consistency, while Bill Madlock and Omar Moreno keep the pressure on every inning. What makes this team sing in Strat is its balance: a deep bullpen led by Kent Tekulve, solid starting pitching, speed at the top, power in the middle, and quality bats all the way down. They're one of those rare Strat teams where you genuinely feel like you can win any style of game—slugfest, chess match, or late-inning nail-biter.

2. Baltimore Orioles – The Strat Player's Chessboard

Earl Weaver's 102-win Orioles are a dream for the gamer who loves tactical depth. This pitching staff is a work of art—Scott McGregor, Mike Flanagan, and Steve Stone all have manageable WHIPs and Strat-friendly control.

The bullpen is strong, defense is stellar at multiple positions, and the offense is wonderfully efficient, with Eddie Murray, Ken Singleton, and a roster full of situational tools. Managing the Orioles feels like running a machine. You're not overpowering opponents with flash—you're strangling them with precision, matchups, and defense that saves runs the cards don't show.

3. California Angels – A Team Built to Surprise... Again

The 1979 Angels are perfect for Strat gamers who enjoy running a team with personality and quirks. Don Baylor's MVP season (36 HR, 139 RBI) gives you a legitimate centerpiece, and surrounding him is a mix of timely hitters like Rod Carew, power from Brian Downing, and rotation workhorses such as Nolan Ryan. They won the AL West by out-hustling expectations, and in Strat they play exactly the same way—gritty at-bats, high-variance games, and the ability to string together innings when the dice cooperate. They're not a powerhouse, but they're a blast to manage because every decision feels meaningful.

4. Montreal Expos – A Young Juggernaut Waiting to Break Out

If you like athleticism, emerging superstars, and electric dice roller outcomes, the 95-win Expos are pure candy. Gary Carter, Andre Dawson, and Ellis Valentine form one of the most dynamic young cores of the era. Add in Larry Parrish's pop (30 HR), Warren Cromartie's underrated consistency, and a pitching staff with Steve Rogers topping it, and you get a team that can dominate long replays. Montreal gives Strat managers something rare: big upside, real diversity in play styles, and the joy of steering a franchise on the rise. They're the kind of team that can create alternate dynasties.

Honorable Mention: Houston Astros

With the likes of J.R. Richard and Joe Niekro and a good bullpen, they'll stifle offenses. This team didn't have power but they had good hitters and a ton of speed.

STRAT BASEBALL POP CULTURE

continued from page 14.

TELEVISION SERIES

4. The Simpsons — reference in Season 20
Comic Book Guy mentions Stat-O-Matic in a gag about baseball simulations and obsessive stat-tracking. It's a parody reference, but unmistakably aimed at Strat.

5. Everybody Loves Raymond
Robert Barone references Strat-O-Matic in a line about baseball stats and obsessive record-keeping. They don't show the game, but the name-drop is clear.

6. The Goldbergs
Given the show's 1980s setting, there's a scene where a tabletop baseball game is referenced, heavily implied to be Strat-O-Matic (though not shown by name due to licensing).

NON-FICTIONAL TELEVISION

7. The Howard Stern Show
Robin Quivers mentions that she collects Strat-O-Matic cards. It became a small running bit for a week.

8. Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel (HBO)
A full segment on Strat-O-Matic's cultural impact aired in the 2000s, featuring interviews with Hal Richman and longtime players.

9. MLB Network
Multiple shows (including MLB Now) have referenced or displayed Strat cards when discussing simulations, projections, and baseball analytics.

BASEBALL BROADCASTS

Keith Hernandez – New York Mets (SNY)
Keith has brought up Strat-O-Matic numerous times during Mets broadcasts, often while discussing stats, player comparisons, or how he learned to evaluate hitters as a kid. His mentions are usually casual, nostalgic, and always delivered with that signature Keith shrug.

Ron Darling – New York Mets (SNY, TBS)
Darling has referenced Strat alongside Keith, usually during deeper analytical segments. While not a frequent Strat storyteller, he's nodded to the game's stat-focused style during conversations about pitching matchups and probabilities.

Gary Cohen – New York Mets (SNY)
Cohen has acknowledged Strat on air when Keith brings it up and has briefly discussed its role in teaching kids baseball statistics and strategy. He doesn't reveal himself as a player, but he shows clear awareness of the game.

Bob Costas – MLB Network, NBC Sports
Costas has mentioned Strat in interviews and discussions about his childhood fandom. He talks about using Strat-O-Matic and APBA to learn baseball history, evaluate players, and grow into the obsessive stat fan he became.

Jon Miller – ESPN, San Francisco Giants
Miller has referenced Strat in the context of tabletop baseball games while calling games, recalling his own experiences playing simulation games as a kid. He doesn't single Strat out every time, but he's acknowledged it by name in past interviews. He's also mentioned that he learned to broadcast using Strat games he played as a child.

Michael Kay – YES Network
Kay has mentioned Strat-O-Matic (and APBA) when discussing how baseball fans learned statistics before the internet era. It's usually in historical or nostalgic segments on the YES broadcast.

Dan Shulman – ESPN, Toronto Blue Jays
Shulman has referenced Strat-O-Matic during analytical conversations about OPS, run simulations, or player projections, noting that games like Strat were the "sabermetrics playground" for young stat-minded fans.

Brian Kenny – MLB Network
A known Strat player. Kenny has explicitly praised the game on MLB Network segments when talking about analytics, projections, and baseball simulations. He's one of the most openly pro-Strat broadcasters alive.

STRAT BASEBALL POP CULTURE

Kevin Burkhardt – FOX Sports

Before reaching national prominence, Burkhardt mentioned Strat in local NYC sports radio appearances when discussing baseball simulations and how fans engage with statistics.

PLAYERS, COACHES AND EXECS WHO PLAY

Strat-O-Matic isn't just a hobby—it's been a quiet part of baseball culture for decades. Many players and executives who grew up on Strat credit it with shaping how they think about matchups, numbers, and decision-making. It's a fun reminder that rolling dice and flipping charts is woven more deeply into the baseball world than people might expect.

Apart from the aforementioned Keith Hernandez, here are the people in Major League Baseball circles who play Strat-O-Matic.

Doug Glanville – Player, Analyst, Author
Glanville is the most outspoken Strat-O-Matic fan among modern MLB players. He has written multiple essays about the game, describing it as his gateway into statistics, decision-making, and baseball psychology. He once joked he learned more from Strat cards than high school algebra.

Curt Schilling – Pitcher, World Series Champion
Schilling has openly talked about his Strat-O-Matic obsession, including running full-blown season replays during off-days. He owned massive collections of cards and created detailed notebooks from his Strat seasons.

Adam Wainwright – Pitcher, St. Louis Cardinals
Wainwright has said he played Strat growing up in Georgia and still keeps sets. In interviews, he's talked about using Strat cards to imagine pitching sequences and how hitters react to different approaches.

Lenny Dykstra – Player, Mets & Phillies

Dykstra said in multiple interviews that he played Strat compulsively as a teenager and that card-game baseball helped shape how he thought about risk, probability, and attacking pitchers.

Joe Maddon – Manager, Cubs/Rays/Angels

Maddon has referenced Strat and other tabletop simulations when discussing how he learned to think about matchups, platoons, and run-production paths. His “cubist,” matchup-heavy style has similar roots.

Bill James – Sabermetric Pioneer (Adviser to Red Sox)

James is openly a tabletop-simulation devotee and played Strat during the early years of his baseball research. His writing often reads like a Strat manager evaluating a roster.

Theo Epstein – Executive (Red Sox, Cubs)

Though not a Strat gamer in adulthood, Epstein has admitted he played tabletop baseball games (including Strat and APBA) as a kid, and they helped spark his interest in roster construction and statistical thinking.

Ben Christensen – Pitching Coach & Former Prospect

Christensen has been quoted saying he played Strat during rehab and used the game to think about pitch sequences, fatigue, and bullpen usage.

Do you know of any other Major League players, execs or manager's who have played Strat? Maybe we missed a pop culture reference? Let us know! We'd love to hear from you.

Finally, Strat released its own documentary, *Managing to Win*. It doesn't appear to be listed for sale on their website, but secondary markets might have copies. For the Strat fan, it's worth the watch!

“I believe I was about 9 or 10 years old when I started playing Strat-O-Matic Baseball.” - Ken Singleton Orioles Outfielder

STRAT LIFE

My father and his best friends ran a league in the basement of our home. Once a week they would get together at night to play a couple series of the season. One night when I was 8 years old, my dad came into my room with my own custom player card and said, "son, you'll never be the Red Sox, that's my team. Congratulations on being named the new manager of the Kansas City Royals!"

- **BrilliantCricket_177 (Reddit)**

Found it in a hockey magazine as an 11-year old and saved for months to buy my first game. My friend and I played every afternoon after school for a year or more. I fell in love with the baseball shortly thereafter but those days watching Gretzky and Bossy and others light up the net is something I won't forget. - **Brigmcneil (Reddit)**

Played games in the mid 70's. Started a league in the 90's. Lasted 10 years. Started an on line league during the pandemic , which switched to face to face after. Now have two leagues with 20 teams here on LI. Playing 2024, with 1966 up next! - **hr4rbi (Reddit)**

Played games in the mid 70's. Started a league in the 90's. Lasted 10 years. Started an on line league during the pandemic , which switched to face to face after. Now have two leagues with 20 teams here on LI. Playing 2024, with 1966 up next! - **Ultthdoc90 (Reddit)**

Saw the game advertised in a Street and Smith football magazine way back when. 40 years later and I'm still playing. - **UsedBeing (Reddit)**

So for me, I was in a mall. I walked into a game store and saw a Strat Baseball game on the shelf. I remembered the ads that I saw as a kid in the comic books for Strat baseball games. So I bought the game. 40 years later and I'm still playing it. - **Joe Cards (Facebook)**

It was 1975, Austin College, Sherman Texas. A dorm friend, a Vietnam and Air Force vet, had the game, and since several of us were baseball fans, we played. I've been hooked ever since.

- **Sam S (Facebook)**

My mom had a friend whose son had the 86 baseball cards and game. The friend gave it to me, at age 10, because her son couldn't/wouldn't figure out the rules. Getting that game for free is one of the best things that ever happened to me.

- **Zak B (Facebook)**

Lived on Long Island. My Dad heard of it, went to Strat and bought the 1972 set. Brought it home and I was addicted almost immediately. - **Larry M (Facebook)**

I saw the boxes in Kay Bee toys and went nuts.

- **Scott N (Facebook)**

My mom saw in article in our local newspaper, The Star-Ledger (Newark, NJ), about Strat O Matic playing the 1981 All Star Game in Cleveland on its scheduled date. She found the game at Kay Bee, bought it, and kept it hidden until Christmas morning when Santa left it under the tree. I've been playing ever since. - **Christopher G (Facebook)**

My uncle showed me the game when I was about 11-12. In my early 20s I remembered how fun it was and started occasionally buying seasons. Now my wife and 3 sons play a 30 game fantasy season every year. - **Reddog34 (Reddit)**

Got the 1979 baseball season at Christmas of 1980. I knew nothing of the game and immediately became obsessed. I was evenly interested in playing games and the data the card held. I wanted to know how the game worked and spent hours and hours doing the math on every card. - **Rene B (Facebook)**

1966 I broke the used milk bottle in the basement coming down the stairs to watch my big brother and his friends play the 1965 season. They let me watch, sometimes I could roll the dice, I was four, and by ten I had my own league with my friends - **Mrock61 (Reddit)**

What a great thing Hal Richman did for us all
-**Kinkscash (Reddit)**