

# Demythologizing Dubious Memories

Or:

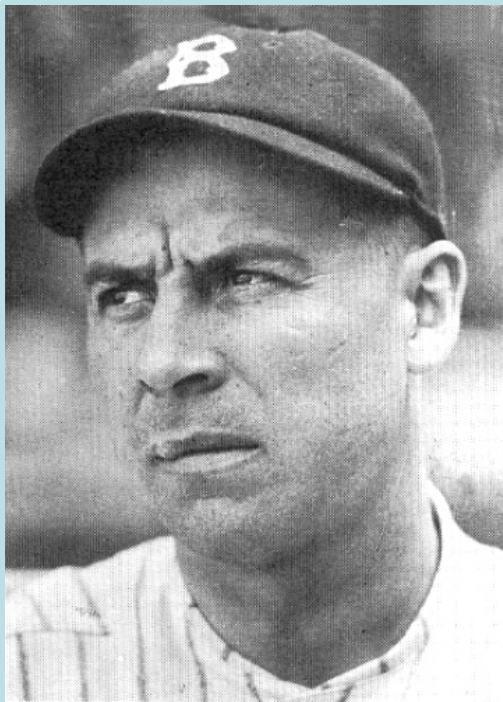
Do players really remember what  
they did?

David W. Smith

SABR32

Boston, MA

June 28, 2002



# June 29, 1923

## Situation:

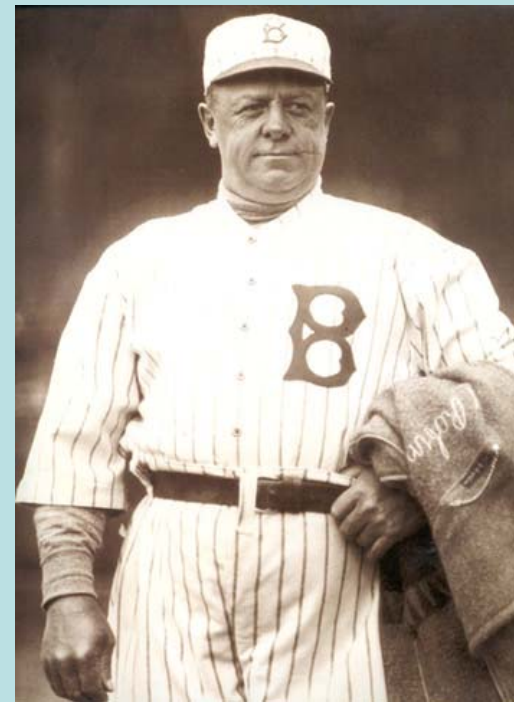
Jack Fournier goes 6-6 for Brooklyn in Philadelphia

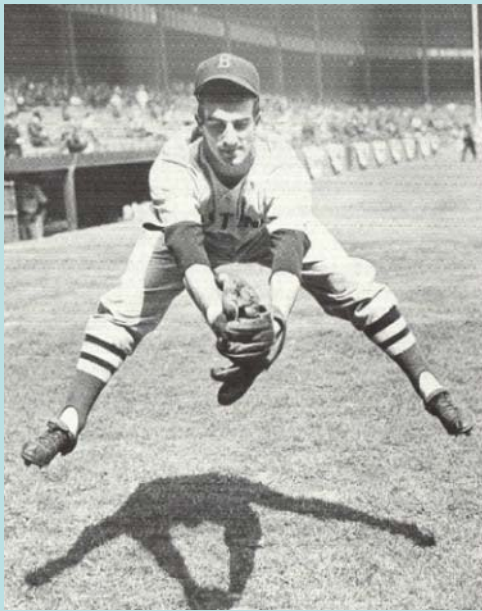
## Memory:

With 2 out in 9<sup>th</sup> and Fournier on deck, Manager Wilbert Robinson sends slow runner on futile steal try, depriving Jack of chance for 7<sup>th</sup> hit, which would tie the record held by Robinson. (Frank Graham's book on the Dodgers and Kavanagh/Macht book on Robinson).

## Reality:

Fournier did bat in 9<sup>th</sup> with 2 out and singled for his 6<sup>th</sup> hit. Dodgers sent 51 men to plate that day, so 6 men batted 6 times and 3 men batted 5 times. There were no stolen base attempts by either team in this game.





# October 15, 1946

## Situation:

Game 7 of World Series.  
Enos Slaughter scored  
deciding run from first on hit  
by Harry Walker.

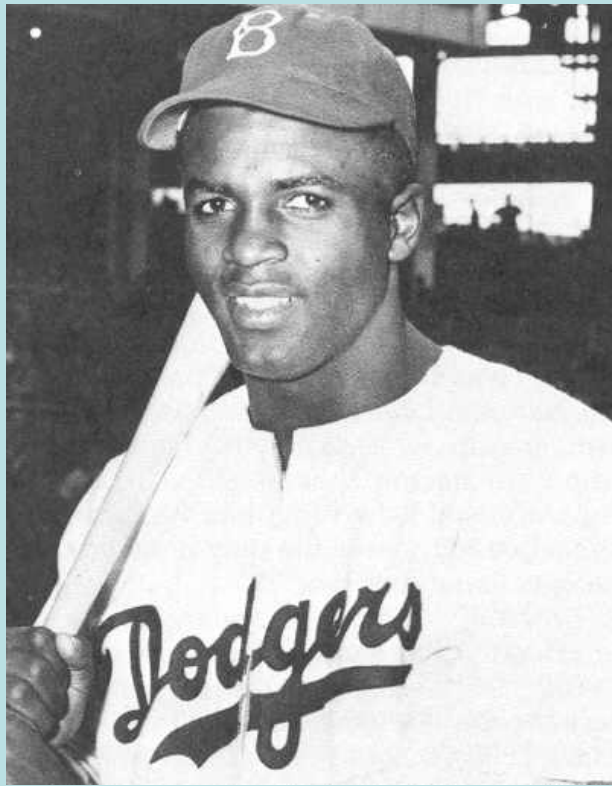
## Memory:

The hit was a single to left-center, played by Dom DiMaggio and Slaughter scored as Pesky hesitated on relay (frequent account).

## Reality:

The hesitation is still debated, but in fact the hit was a double and the center fielder was Leon Culberson who had just replaced the injured DiMaggio.





# April, 1947

## Situation:

Jackie Robinson's first month in the Major Leagues.

## Memory:

After an 0-3 debut, Robinson wrote of his next 4 games: "I went to the plate 20 times without a base hit."  
(From "I never had it made").

## Reality:

Date	AB	H	Date	AB	H
4-15	3	0	4-24	4	0
4-17	3	1	4-26	3	0
4-18	4	2 (HR)	4-27	4	0
4-19	4	3 (2B)	4-29	3	0
4-22	4	2	4-30	4	0
4-23	4	1	April	40	9

# October 3, 1951

## Situation:

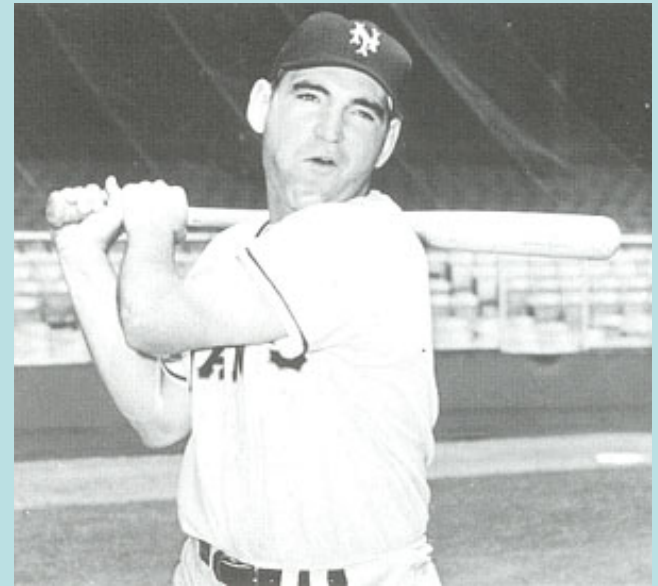
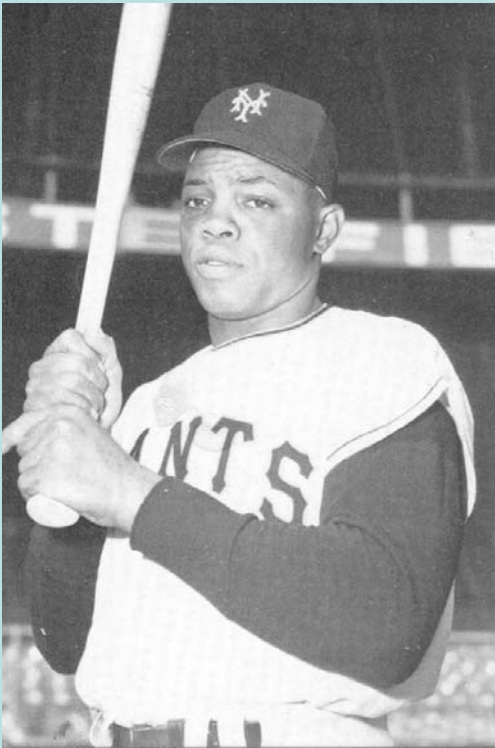
9<sup>th</sup> inning of final playoff game between Brooklyn and New York

## Memory:

Mays, a rookie, was on deck when Bobby Thomson homered to end the game. When asked a few years ago if he were nervous in that situation, he answered: "I was afraid that Leo would use Dusty Rhodes to hit for me."

## Reality:

Dusty Rhodes did not play for the Giants in 1951! His ML debut was in July of 1952.







# April, 1954

## Situation:

Henry Aaron's rookie year

## Memory:

Chuck Tanner claims he pinch-hit for Aaron and homered. (SABR keynote speaker in 1994).

## Reality:

Tanner never batted for Aaron (Marty Perez and Mike Lum did)





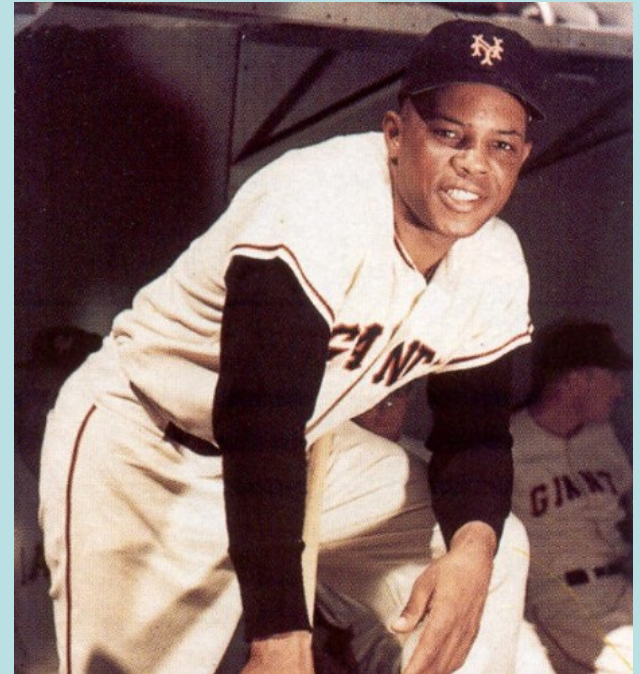
# 1951-1973

## Situation:

Willie Mays throwing out runners at home

## Memory:

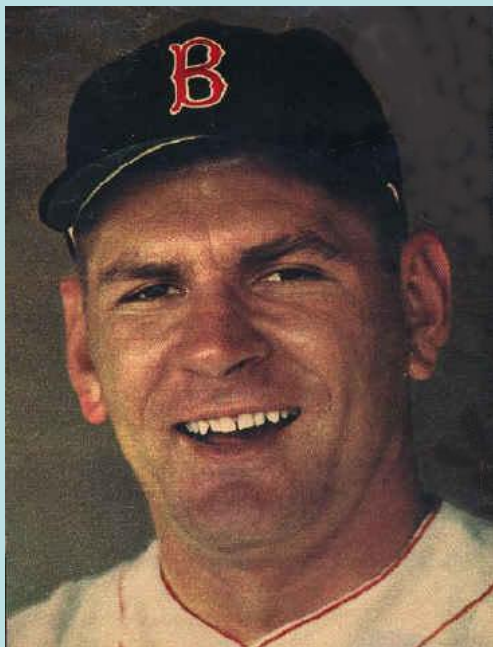
In a Coors beer ad in 2000, Ahmad Rashad said that Mays “threw out hundreds of runners at home plate”



## Reality:

Mays had 195 assists as an outfielder in his career. Retrosheet can document 143 of them as follows:

1 <sup>st</sup>	16
2 <sup>nd</sup>	35
3 <sup>rd</sup>	40
Home	52



# 1962-1967

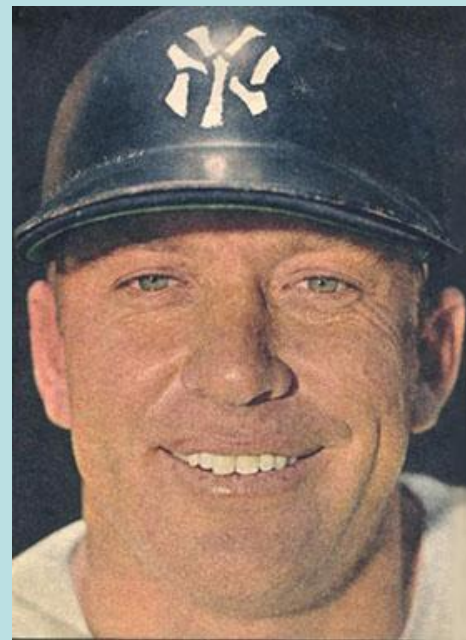
## Situation:

Career matchup between Dick Radatz and Mickey Mantle

## Memory:

Radatz: "I faced (Mantle) 63 times and he got one hit -- that home run -- off me. Believe it or not, I struck him out 47 times." (500 HOME RUN CLUB, by Bob Allen with Bill Gilbert).

## Reality:



AB	H	2B	3B	HR	BB	SO	RBI	BA	OBA	SA
16	3	1	0	1	3	12	2	.188	.316	.438





# 1962-1966

## Situation:

Career matchup between  
Bob Uecker and Sandy  
Koufax

## Memory:

Uecker claims that he hit  
Koufax very well.



## Reality:

AB	H	2B	3B	HR	BB	SO	RBI	BA	OBA	SA
38	7	2	0	1	3	8	2	.184	.244	.316



# September 9, 1965

## Situation:

Perfect Game by Sandy Koufax

## Memory:

Ron Santo insists that in the first inning he took three strikes “without ever moving my hands”.

## Reality:

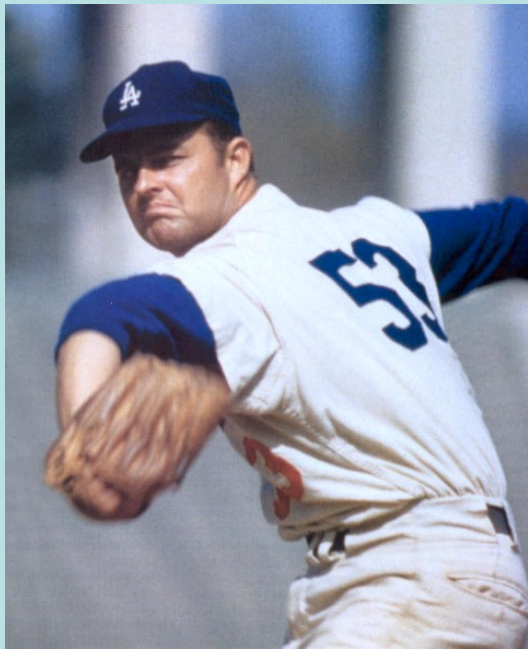
Ball one

Strike one Swinging

Ball two

Foul out to Catcher





# May 31, 1968

## Situation:

9<sup>th</sup> inning of Don Drysdale's 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive shutout. Dick Dietz was hit by pitch with bases loaded, but umpire Wendelstedt called him back.

## Memory:

After play resumed, Dietz popped up next pitch to Wes Parker at first to end game (Buzzie Bavasi, David Smith).

## Reality:

Dietz flied out to left, then pinch-hitter Ty Cline hit into force out (32), and then pinch-hitter Jack Hiatt popped out to first to end the game.







# September 19, 1968

## Situation:

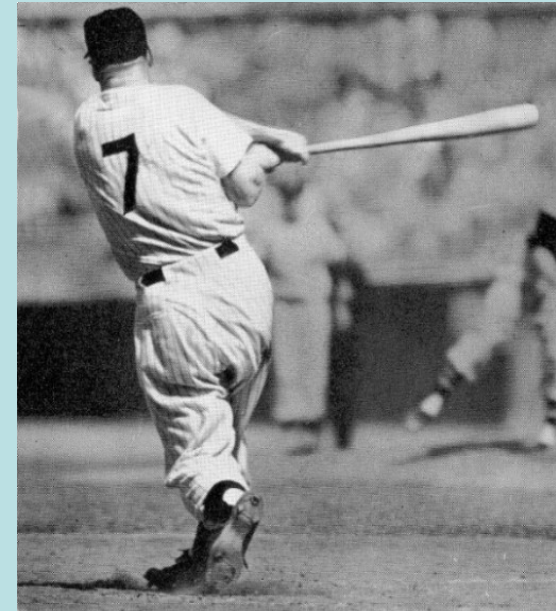
Mickey Mantle hits home run #535, passing Jimmy Foxx for third place on all-time list.

## Memory:

McLain “grooved” pitch for Mantle, telling catcher Bill Freehan to let Mickey know it was coming (McLain’s own words in his autobiography plus eyewitness testimony of many).

## Reality:

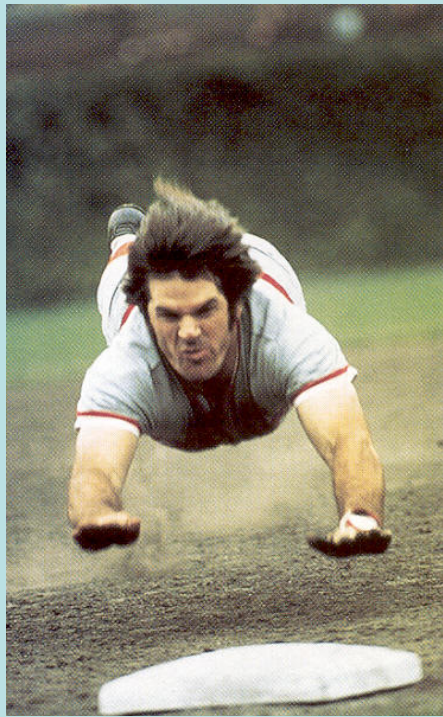
Freehan did not play in this game! Catcher was Jimmy Price.



# July 14, 1970

**Situation:**

End of 1970 All-Star Game



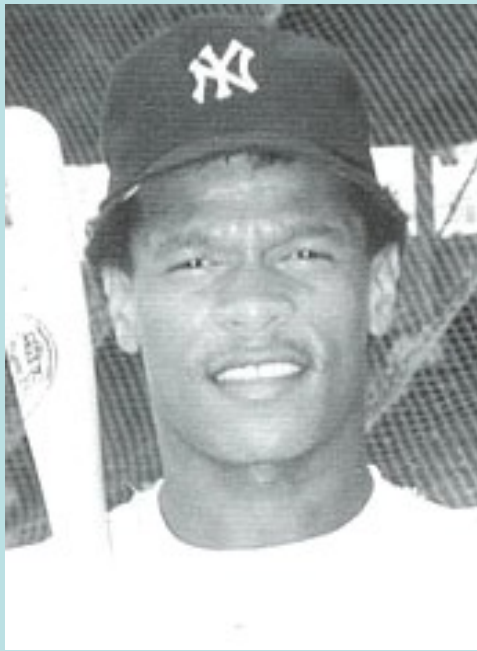
**Memory:**

Collision seriously injured Fosse, ruining his career as an effective catcher (Widely asserted part of Rose history.)

**Reality:**

Rose is the one who was injured. He missed the next 3 games, then pinch-hit before starting again on July 20. Fosse missed no games, catching 10 games in 9 days. From July 14 to season's end, Rose dropped from .323 to .316 while Fosse went from .309 to .307.





## 1985-1988

### Situation:

Rickey Henderson being driven in by Don Mattingly

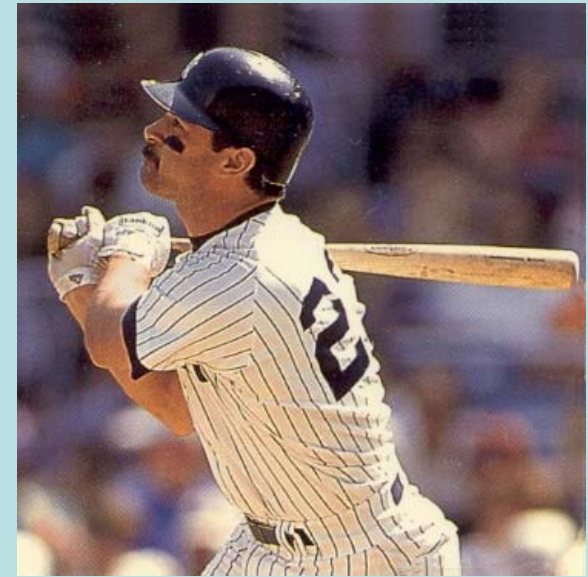
### Memory:

In the Boston Globe on March 26, 2002, Henderson is quoted: "One year, he [Don Mattingly] drove me in 79 times."

### Reality:

They were teammates for 4 full seasons. Rickey was driven in by Mattingly:

1985	50 times
1986	37 times
1987	21 times
1988	34 times





# May 31, 1951

## Situation:

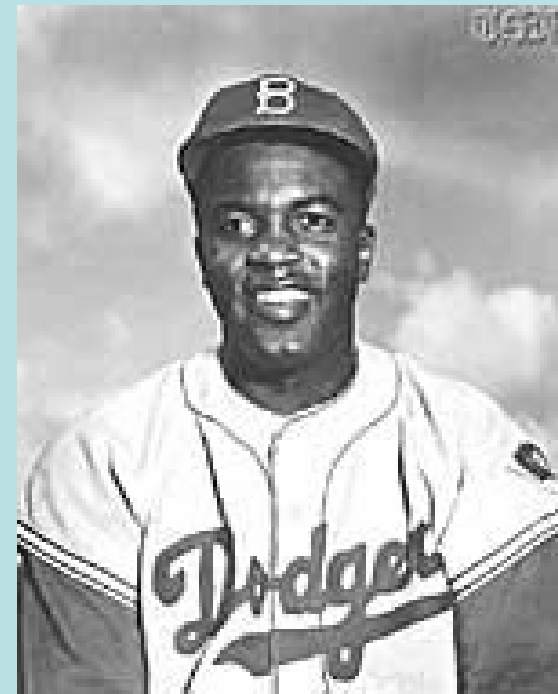
Jackie Robinson in rundown  
vs Phillies

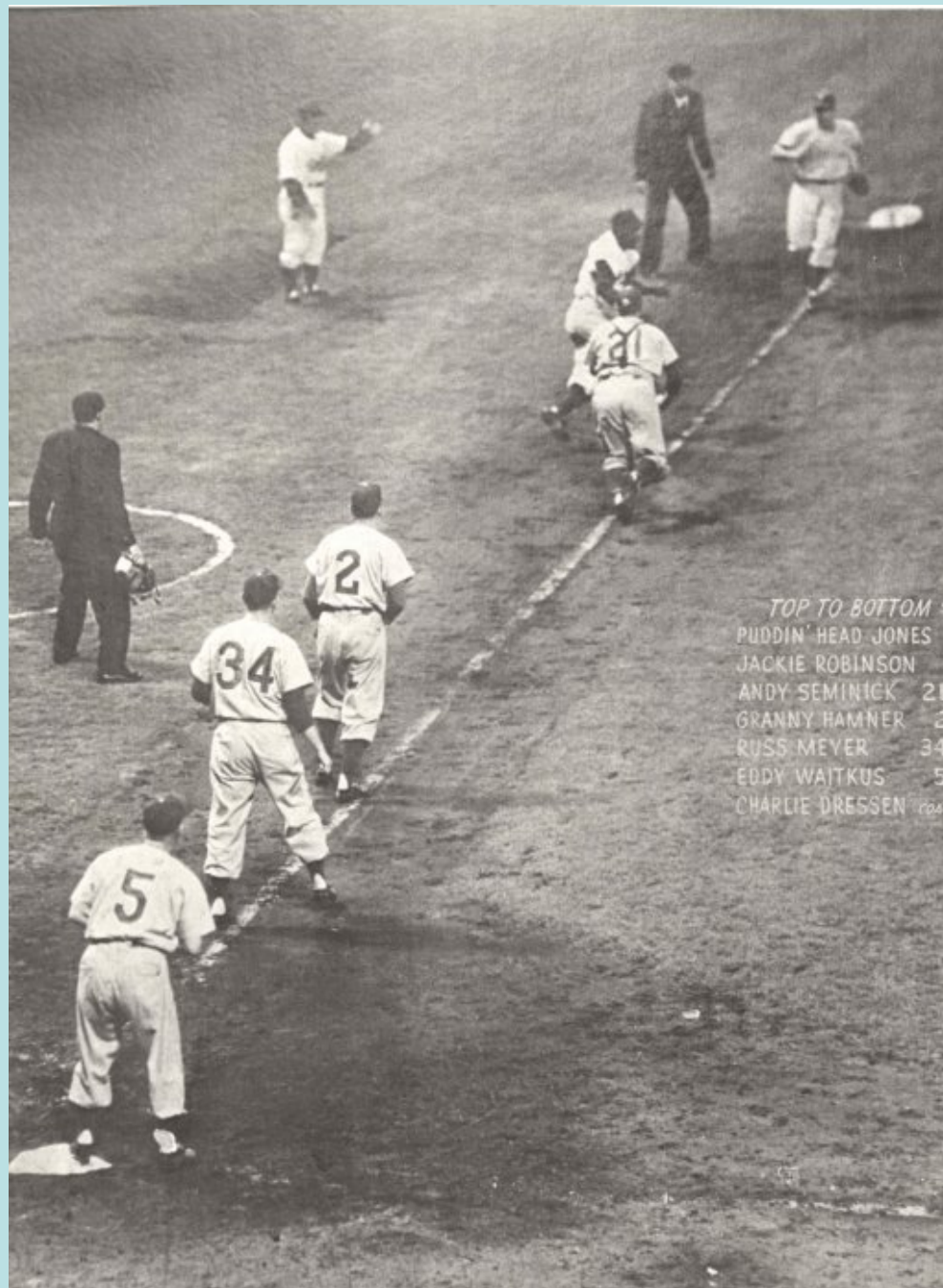
## Memory:

Roger Kahn writes in *The Boys of Summer* about Robinson's incredible ability to escape rundowns: "All the Phillies rushed to the third base line ... Granny Hamner, Mike Goliat, Eddie Waitkus, Puddin' Head Jones, Andy Seminick, Russ Meyer.

## Reality:

Kahn has the cast slightly off, but not by much.





TOP TO BOTTOM :  
PUDDIN' HEAD JONES  
JACKIE ROBINSON  
ANDY SEMINICK 21  
GRANNY HAMNER 2  
RUSS MEYER 34  
EDDY WAITKUS 5  
CHARLIE DRESSEN 1950