

Ejections Through the Years and the Impact of Expanded Replay

Ejections are a fascinating part of baseball and some have led to memorable confrontations, several of which are readily accessible in various electronic archives. Perhaps surprisingly, reliable information on ejections has been available only sporadically and there are many conflicting numbers in both print and on-line for even the most basic data such as the number of times a given player, manager or umpire was involved.

The first comprehensive compilation of ejection data was carried out over many years by the late Doug Pappas, a tireless researcher in many areas of baseball, including economic analyses of the game. He not only amassed the details of over 11,000 ejections, he also lobbied intensely to have ejection information become a standard part of the daily box scores. He was successful in that effort and we have him to thank for something we now take for granted.

After Doug's passing, his ejection files made their way to Retrosheet where they were maintained and updated by the late David Vincent who expanded the database to over 15,000 events. In 2015, David used the expanded data in the Retrosheet files as the basis for an article which provided some fine background on the history of ejections along with many interesting anecdotes about especially unusual occurrences (<https://www.retrosheet.org/Research/VincentD/EjectionsHistory.pdf>). Among other things, David noted that ejections only began in 1889 after a rule change giving umpires the authority to remove players, managers, and coaches as necessary. Prior to that time, offensive actions could only be punished by monetary fines.

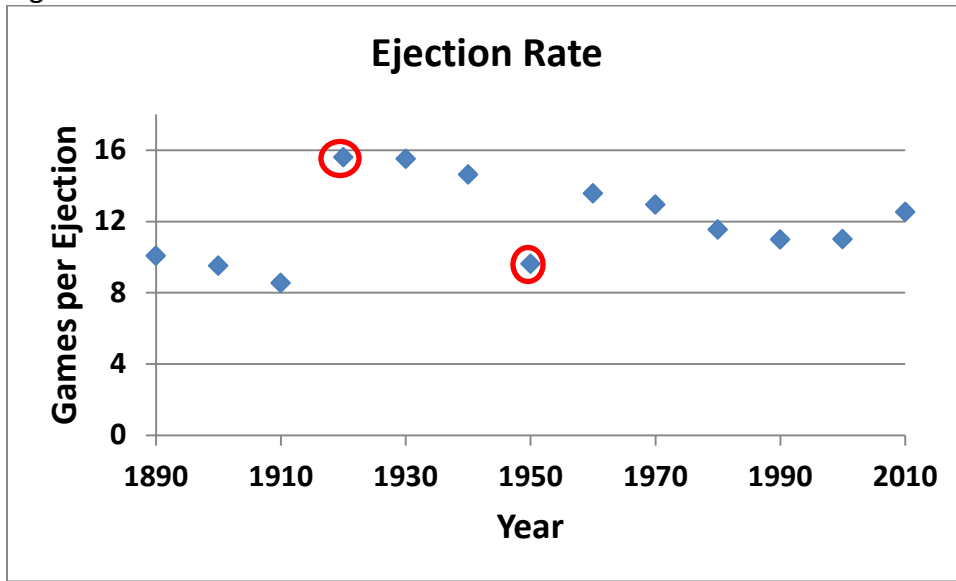
I took over the database following David's death and have continued to add more ejections and to make corrections/enhancements to previous information. As we continue backwards in compiling play by play accounts of games, we have been able to add almost 3000 more ejections in the last five years with the current (as of June 30, 2020) total standing at 17,975. This effort has been tremendously facilitated by the work of Rob Wood whose extraordinary attention to detail and exhaustive study of on-line newspapers has made our data much better and more complete than before. Our records are now standardized to an excellent degree and are much more useful as the basis for research.

This paper has two purposes. First, I present some updated lists of various types which will provide a basic summary of the ejections. There are some surprising results here. Second, I examine changes in ejection details over the last 130 years with special attention to the effect of recent changes due to the replay system on the type of play that leads to ejections.

Figure 1 presents the rate of ejections aggregated by decade. These numbers are for regular season games only and do not include the 60 events in post-season play. Note that the values are the average number of games played for each ejection so that low values mean more frequent ejections. Up until 1920, they were quite frequent, occurring once in every 8 to 10 games with the greatest frequency between 1910 and 1920. Beginning with lively ball era, this rate decreased suddenly, dropping to one ejection in nearly 16 games. I have no obvious

explanation for the apparently improved civility on the diamond in the roaring 20s, great depression and World War II. Following a dramatic increase in ejection rate in the 1950s, there was a steady increase in frequency with one occurring once in about 9 games in that decade. It is not at all clear why the 1950s saw such high rates. The trend of increasing ejections resumed its previous trajectory in the 1960s, reaching a level of one ejection for each 10 games in the 1990s. Beginning in 2000, ejections became less frequent with one every 12.5 games in 2019.

Figure 1.



The totals for individuals are frequently in the sports pages and websites although not usually broken down by the role of the person who was ejected. Note that the totals presented here often differ from other sources. For example, Retrosheet has 165 ejections for Bobby Cox but his Wikipedia page puts the total at 158. I am confident in our total. The 20 most frequently ejected personnel are in Table 1.

Table 1. Most frequently ejected (includes players, manager and coaches)

Bobby Cox	165	Lou Piniella	78
John McGraw	136	Bruce Bochy	77
Leo Durocher	131	Jim Leyland	73
Earl Weaver	97	Johnny Evers	72
Frankie Frisch	95	Bill Rigney	72
Tony LaRussa	89	Bill Dahlen	70
Ron Gardenhire	85	Clint Hurdle	68
Joe Torre	84	Dick Williams	64
Paul Richards	83	Jimmy Dykes	61
Clark Griffith	79	Gene Mauch	61

The large majority of these “leading” individuals were managers and some were ejected both as players and managers. For example, Joe Torre, Major League Baseball’s current disciplinarian was banished 84 times: 70 as a manager and 14 as a player.

Table 2 lists those men most frequently ejected as players. Most of those on this list did not play in the modern era with Gary Sheffield being the most recent player.

Table 2. Players ejected most times.

Johnny Evers	58	Eddie Stanky	27
Heinie Zimmerman	44	Joe Kelley	26
Jimmy Piersall	36	Al Lopez	25
Bill Dahlen	34	Kid Elberfeld	23
Larry Doyle	34	Art Fletcher	23
Gary Sheffield	33	Leo Durocher	23
Dan McGann	31	Johnny Temple	23
Roger Bresnahan	31	Tony Phillips	22
Red Dooïn	29	Bill Madlock	21
Mike Donlin	28		

Table 3 has the 20 most frequently ejected managers. John McGraw was ejected 15 times as a player and Leo Durocher 23 times as a player as well as 10 times as a coach.

Table 3. Managers ejected most times.

Bobby Cox	165	Clark Griffith	72
John McGraw	121	Joe Torre	70
Leo Durocher	98	Bill Rigney	64
Earl Weaver	97	Lou Piniella	64
Tony LaRussa	89	Clint Hurdle	64
Frankie Frisch	87	Dick Williams	57
Ron Gardenhire	84	Sparky Anderson	57
Paul Richards	82	Joe Maddon	57
Bruce Bochy	77	Gene Mauch	55
Jim Leyland	73	John Gibbons	53

The other side of the equation is, of course, the umpires. Given his status as the man with the most games umpired, it is not surprising that Bill Klem leads the list. As an example of the extreme variation in currently reported ejection data, there are many different numbers for

Klem’s total, as summarized in Table 4. This total could certainly change as new information becomes available, but I am certain he had at least 346 and that value can only increase.

Table 4. Bill Klem ejection total according to different sources.

Wikipedia	251
Closecallsports.com	256
SABR Biography	279
Retrosheet, Fall 2019	315
Retrosheet, Summer, 2020	346

Table 5 lists the 20 umpires who ejected the most people, listed by raw total and normalized for the number of games officiated.

Table 5. Most ejections by an umpire, total and games per ejection.

	Total	Games/Ejection		Total	Games/Ejection
Bill Klem	346	15.2	Lord Byron	165	6.1
Cy Rigler	272	15.2	Bob Emslie	160	26.4
Jack Sheridan	264	8.2	Jocko Conlan	136	26.6
Tommy Connolly	261	18.3	Derryl Cousins	125	36
Hank O’Day	238	16.7	Frank Dascoli	121	17
Jim Johnstone	208	8.3	Bruce Froemming	121	42.7
Joe West	194	27.4	Augie Donatelli	118	32
Silk O’Loughlin	185	13.9	Gary Darling	118	27.7
Bob Davidson	175	22.3	Billy Evans	117	28.4
Ernie Quigley	174	19.3	Bill Stewart	117	27.4

Although Bill Klem’s total was large, he only removed someone every 15.2 games, which would be a bit less than two per month. Others had much quicker triggers. Jack Sheridan and Jim Johnstone averaged one ejection about every 8 games and Bill “Lord” Byron did so at an amazing rate of one every 6.1 games, or one a week! Byron, known as “The Singing Umpire” for the way he sang many calls and ejections, only umpired a little over 1000 games in seven seasons, but comes in at the 11th spot in total removals. Modern umpires have ejections much less frequently with Bruce Froemming only doing one every 42.7 games.

Specific ejection combinations of player/manager and umpire have always been of interest. In relatively modern times, the disputes between Baltimore manager Earl Weaver and umpire Ron Luciano are nearly legendary and existing video documents some ferocious arguments. However, as Table 6 shows, Weaver and Luciano don’t make the top 20. In fact, they are tied for 31st on the combination list with 7. Furthermore, Weaver was also ejected 7 times by Marty Springstead, showing once again that individual memories can be tricky.

The combination of Evers and Rigler leads by a sizable margin, as shown in Table 6. In fact, Rigler accounted for 22 of Evers' career total of 72 (58 as player, 9 as manager and 5 as coach), a remarkable percentage. Bill Klem appears in no fewer than 7 of top 21, having ejected John McGraw 15 times. McGraw is here five times, or nearly one quarter of the leaders.

Table 6. Most common ejectee-umpire combinations

Johnny Evers	Cy Rigler	22	John McGraw	Hank O'Day	10
John McGraw	Bill Klem	15	Clark Griffith	Silk O'Loughlin	10
John McGraw	Bob Emslie	14	Red Doooin	Jim Johnstone	10
John McGraw	Jim Johnstone	14	Heinie Zimmerman	Bill Klem	10
Red Doooin	Bill Klem	13	Leo Durocher	Bill Stewart	10
John McGraw	Cy Rigler	13	Leo Durocher	Al Barlick	10
Clark Griffith	Jack Sheridan	12	Roger Bresnahan	Bill Klem	9
Bill Dahlen	Bill Klem	12	Heinie Zimmerman	Lord Byron	9
Larry Doyle	Bill Klem	12	Paul Richards	Larry Napp	9
Joe Kelley	Bob Emslie	11			
Johnny Evers	Bill Klem	11			
Frankie Frisch	George Barr	11			

There have been 12 days in which the total number of ejections was 10 or more. They are presented in Table 7. Most are in modern times as there are now more games each day. There have been 346 days with at least 5 ejections.

Table 7. Most ejections on one day.

August 12, 1984	18
July 22, 1986	14
August 24, 1993	13
June 2, 1998	12
April 22, 2000	12
April 20, 1912	11
September 16, 1978	11
June 30, 1990	11
July 4, 2003	11
June 29, 1914	10
May 9, 1979	10

The next list, in Table 8, has the individual games with the most ejections. Amazingly, the top one on the list accounts for 17 of the 18 ejections on the day with the most. The details are extraordinary and are included as an appendix.

Table 8. Most ejections in single game.

Atlanta, August 12, 1984	17
Kansas City, June 2, 1998	12
Chicago AL, April 22, 2000	11
Milwaukee, August 24, 1993 (G2)	10
Seattle, June 30, 1990	9
New York NL, May 11, 1996	9
Cincinnati, July 30, 2019	8
New York NL, June 30, 1949 (G2)	8
Pittsburgh, May 31, 1960	8
Baltimore, June 6, 1993	8
Tampa Bay, August 20, 2000	8
Texas May 15, 2016	8
Detroit August 24, 2017	8

The most ejections for one person in one season is 11, done five times – twice by John McGraw in consecutive seasons. Table 9 lists the 15 times someone was ejected 10 or more times in a single season. McGraw is there four times, Bobby Cox three and Paul Richards twice.

Table 9. Most times ejected in single season.

1905	John McGraw	11
1906	John McGraw	11
1910	Bill Dahlen	11
1952	Paul Richards	11
2001	Bobby Cox	11
1909	Roger Bresnahan	10
1910	John McGraw	10
1911	Bill Dahlen	10
1913	Johnny Evers	10
1915	John McGraw	10
1956	Paul Richards	10
1975	Earl Weaver	10
1999	Bobby Cox	10
2003	Jerry Manuel	10
2007	Bobby Cox	10

The final list is for the umpires with the most ejections in a single season, presented in Table 10. Mal Eason leads the way with 33 in the 1914 season. Although he did not have the single biggest season, Bill Klem makes this list five times as did the quick-tempered Lord Byron who is tied for second with 31 in 1914. Byron's five seasons here were his first five in the NL.

Table 10. Most ejections by an umpire in single season

1914	Mal Eason	33	1915	Lord Byron	28
1914	Cy Rigler	31	1907	Cy Rigler	27
1914	Lord Byron	31	1905	Bill Klem	26
1904	Jim Johnstone	30	1912	Bill Klem	25
1910	Bill Klem	30	1915	Ernie Quigley	25
1916	Lord Byron	29	1911	Bill Klem	23
1917	Lord Byron	29	1912	Silk O'Loughlin	23
1903	Augie Moran	28	1913	Lord Byron	23
1907	Bill Klem	28	1950	Frank Dascoli	23
1909	Cy Rigler	28			

In addition to the above lists of people, it is interesting to examine the various reasons that ejections occur. There have been dozens of different provocations, many of which only occurred a handful of times. By far the two most common causes were calls on the bases and arguments on balls and strikes, together comprising about two thirds of the overall total. The causes of ejections are varied and some are quite unexpected, such as the 30 cases of removal of a team mascot or a camera operator. I divided the events into nearly 40 categories, with Table 11 showing the highlights. The reasons are summarized in Table 11.

Table 11. Most common reasons for ejections.

Balls and strikes (all types)	7655
General	4758
Called third strike	2402
Check swing	495
Calls on bases	4332
Bench jockeying	1060
Fighting	952
Intentionally throwing at batter	818
Interference/Obstruction	530
Fair/foul	479
Balk	441
Hlt by pitch	222
Catch/no catch	166
Home run	82
Replay	65
General	556
Includes:	
Arguing about warnings	
Managers protecting ejected players	
Yelling to eject opponent, usually pitcher	
Automatic ejection after warning	
Continuing previous arguments (even previous game)	
Bumping umpire	
Obscene or abusive language	
Unknown reason	265

Earlier I showed a figure demonstrating the different rates of total ejections over the years. It occurred to me that the implementation of the replay challenge system could change the frequency of ejection types. In particular, the replay system has two key features:

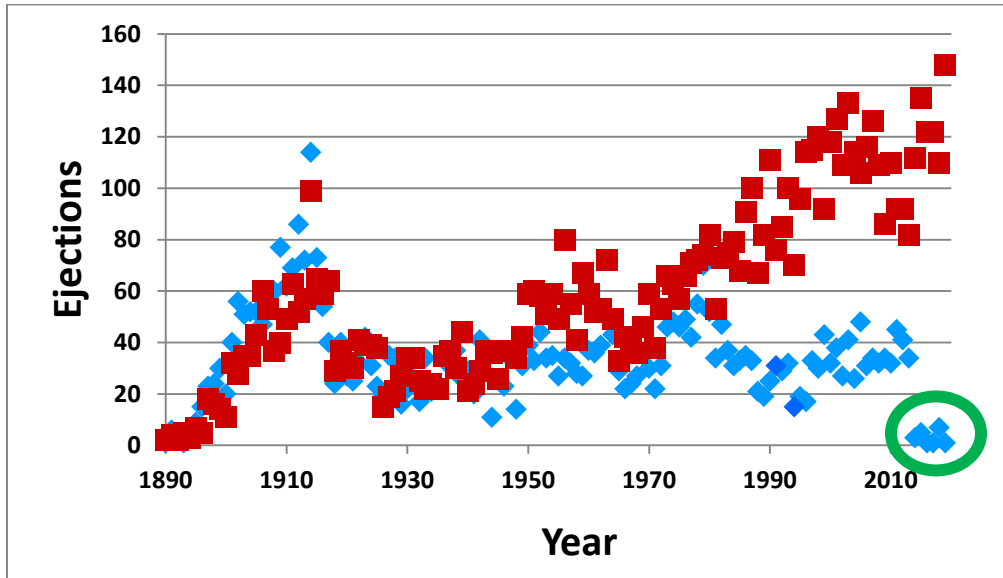
1. Arguing a replay decision is grounds for ejection
2. Ball and strike calls cannot be challenged.

As a result, I predicted that ejections arising from calls on the bases and other challenges on balls in play should be greatly reduced, but that disagreements over balls and strikes should not be affected.

Figure 2 shows the totals of the two types of ejection since 1890. The red points are those following arguments on balls and strikes and the blue those from calls on the bases. There have been many variations over the last 130 years, but these two types have clearly not changed together. In the last 50 years, there has been a fairly steady increase of ejections from balls and strikes while those from calls on the bases were mostly steady. That changed dramatically in

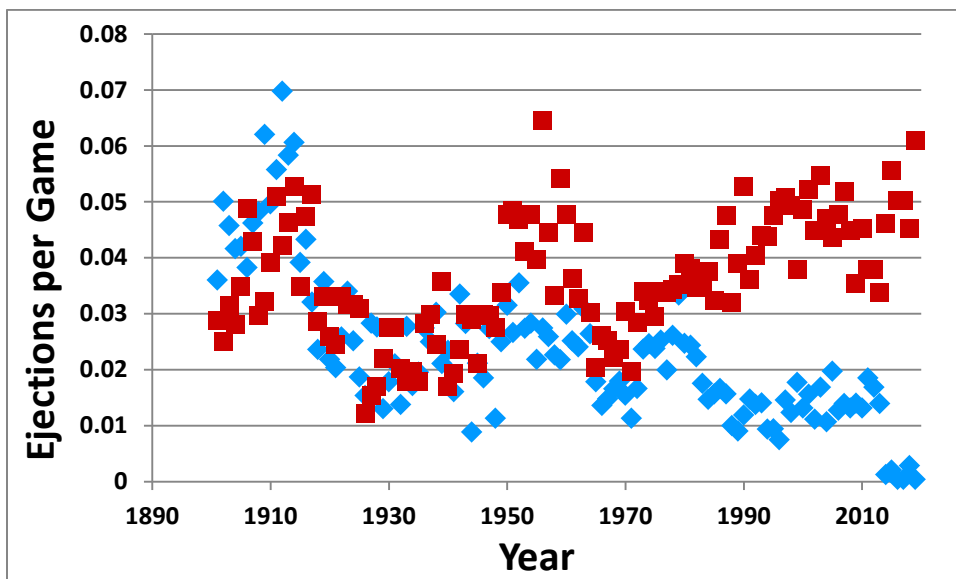
2014 when the current regime of expanded replays went into effect. Since that time, the number of ejections after calls on the bases has almost completely collapsed. In three of these six years, there was only one ejection for this reason. In 2019 there were 148 ejections for balls and strikes and only one for a call on the bases.

Figure 2. Ejections from Balls and Strikes (Red) and Calls on Bases (Blue)



Of course, the number of games each season has not been constant. Note, for example, the big spike in 1915, which was the last year of the Federal League which added another 620 games. Therefore we need to normalize these raw totals. Figure 3 presents the number of the two types of ejection normalized per game.

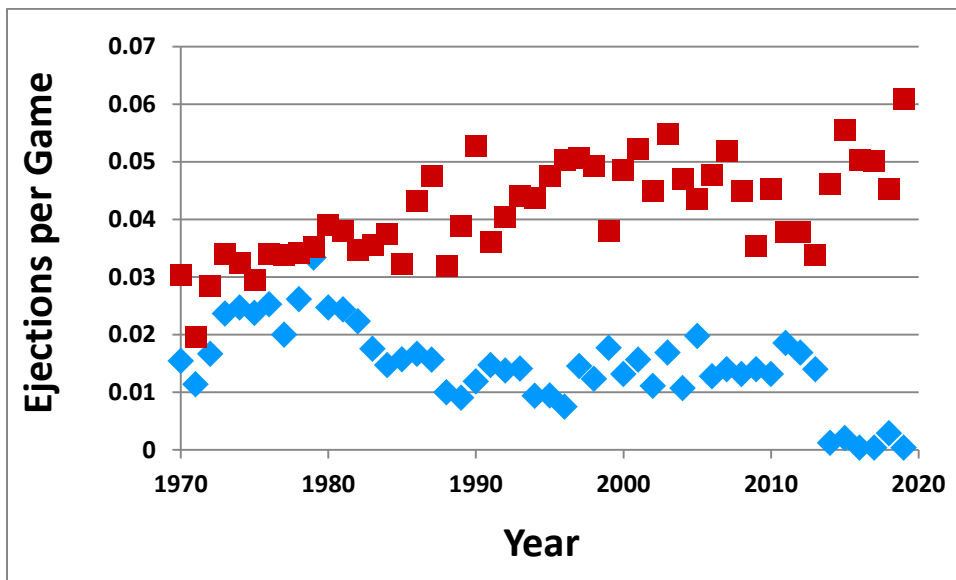
Figure 3. Ejections per game from Balls and Strikes (Red) and Calls on Bases (Blue)



Note these are rates per game, the inverse of the measure in Figure 1. The annual variations are still dramatic even after this normalization with the highest rates near the start of the 20th century. There is a big spike in the 1950s as we saw before, but now we can see that this jump was almost entirely due to ejections related to balls and strikes. After a drop through the 1960s, this rate has increased fairly steadily ever since which ejections after calls on the bases was relatively stable until the last six years.

These trends may be seen more clearly in Figure 4 when the data are truncated to show just the last 50 seasons.

Figure 4. Ejections per game from Balls and Strikes (Red Line) and Calls on Bases (Blue Line), 1970 – 2019



The patterns noted before are even clearer as the ejections for the two reasons occurred at similar rates from 1970 to 1980 but steadily diverged after that. Once again most of the difference is from an increase in ejections after ball and strike calls. The last six years with very rare ejections after calls on the bases stand out dramatically.

Conclusions

1. Ejections were much more frequent in the deadball era, then decreased a great deal through the 1940s
2. In the 1950s, ejections rose suddenly and then dropped to near-record low levels by 1970.
3. The spike in the 1950s was largely due to increased ejections following calls on balls and strikes.
4. Prior to the 1950s, calls on the bases and balls and strikes led to ejections with similar frequencies.
5. Beginning in 1970, decisions on balls and strikes have been much more likely causes for ejections than calls on the bases with the latter stable until 2014
6. Since the implementation of expanded replay in 2014, calls on the bases are extremely unlikely to cause ejections, with over 60% of ejections following disputes on balls on strikes. The historical average was around 40%
7. As expected, expanded replays have nearly completely eliminated ejections following decisions on the bases.
8. The full ejection database is available on the Retrosheet website at <https://www.retrosheet.org/Ejecdata.txt>

Finally, here is an appropriate Baltimore picture for this paper.



Appendix. Ejections on 08-12-1984, San Diego at Atlanta

The Padres were in Atlanta on a Sunday afternoon and there were beanball incidents throughout the game which had a 90 minute rain delay at the start. Atlanta pitcher Pascual Perez hit Al Wiggins in the back with the first pitch of the game. When Perez came to bat in the 2nd, Padre pitcher Ed Whitson tried to hit him but missed, throwing a wild pitch in the process. Both teams were warned by plate umpire Steve Rippley and the benches cleared, but no one was ejected. When Perez batted in the 4th, Whitson threw three pitches at him, but missed with all three. Whitson and San Diego manager Dick Williams were ejected due to the earlier warning. When Perez batted in the 6th, the Padre pitcher, Greg Booker, again tried to hit him, but missed. He was ejected along with acting manager Ozzie Virgil who had taken over when Williams was ejected. When Perez batted in the 8th inning, Craig Lefferts was pitching and Lefferts succeeded in hitting Perez. Lefferts and the new acting San Diego manager, Jack Krol were ejected as the benches cleared for a 10-minute brawl. Three Braves were ejected: Steve Bedrosian, Rick Mahler and Gerald Perry. Two more Padres, Bobby Brown and Champ Summers, were also ejected. When the brawl began, Perez retreated to the Braves dugout and Summers went after him there. His path was blocked by Atlanta's Bob Horner who was on the disabled list with a broken arm and watching the game from the press box until the 6th inning when he went to the clubhouse and put on his uniform. The bad blood continued in the 9th when new Braves pitcher Donnie Moore hit Graig Nettles with his first pitch, earning an automatic ejection for him and Braves manager Joe Torre. The benches cleared again and four more Padres were ejected: Kurt Bevacqua, Tim Flannery, Rich Gossage and Nettles. Fans came on the field and Bevacqua was hit on the head with a beer stein and he tried to get into the stands, but was restrained. Five fans were arrested and Crew Chief John McSherry ordered both benches cleared, threatening to forfeit the game. Five days later, National League President Chub Feeney announced fines and suspensions against 12 Padres and six Braves, a total of 28 days in suspensions and \$17,750 in fines. San Diego manager was fined \$10,000 and suspended for 10 games. Although he was not ejected, Bob Horner was suspended for coming on the field while on the disabled list.