

Catcher Arm Ratings

By Jim Weigand

While it is often argued that bases are stolen off pitchers, the man behind the plate can significantly influence the running game. In this study I attempt to measure a catcher's influence on the running game by calculating the number of stolen base attempts per game. Here is where I am going to lose some of you. I use caught stealing as a negative statistic. Shouldn't the best catcher have caught the most runners? No. Ivan Rodriguez led the majors in caught stealing only three times in 19 years. Johnny Bench and Yadier Molina never led. A catcher's arm, once tested and proven, discourages potential base stealers, thus reducing the number of both stolen bases and caught stealing. I realize that utilizing caught stealing as a negative statistic can be considered controversial. But if we consider that a runner who attempts to steal is himself delivering a judgment on the catcher, I hope we can overlook our initial distrust of this method and make a judgment on the results it yields.

The data in this study is obtained from Retrosheet (1952-2009) and consists of Outs (Innings times 3), stolen bases, caught stealing, and pick offs. I combined both leagues for two reasons. First, interleague play essentially lumps all data together and statistics will not balance unless they are joined. Second, too few catchers in a league could qualify in an 8-team league for useful evaluations to be made.

The catcher and major league averages are computed by subtracting pick offs from stolen base attempts and dividing that by outs. Pick offs are certainly a positive measure of a catcher's arm, while stolen base attempts are a negative measure. Extra weight was not added to pick offs, although a case could be made for doing so. The Catcher Arm Rating is then calculated as a percentage above or below the major league level: $100 - 100 \times (\text{individual} / \text{majors})$. To qualify for a season a catcher must have 2000 outs, which is equivalent to about 74 27-out games. To qualify for a career a catcher must have 20,000 outs, which is equivalent to 10 full seasons.

All I ask is that you review the results before you entirely dismiss this method. Thank you.

Career Leaders ranked by Arm Rating (20,000 career outs)

Catcher	First	Last	Outs	SB	CS	Pko	SB%	Arm	Rank
Rodriguez, Ivan	1991	2009	57478	732	626	87	53.90	35.64	1
Bench, Johnny	1967	1983	43465	610	469	62	56.53	32.49	2
Howard, Elston	1960	1968	24348	249	177	15	58.45	27.60	3
Battey, Earl	1960	1967	23779	255	183	38	58.22	25.93	4
LaRue, Jason	1999	2009	20089	294	183	9	61.64	22.28	5
Munson, Thurman	1969	1979	33325	533	427	38	55.52	21.58	6
Karkovice, Ron	1986	1997	20918	401	281	14	58.80	20.25	7
Boone, Bob	1972	1990	55375	1108	731	76	60.25	20.17	8
Azcue, Joe	1960	1972	20779	243	201	25	54.73	19.35	9
Macfarlane, Mike	1987	1999	24941	543	265	9	67.20	19.07	10
Santiago, Benito	1986	2005	47776	998	529	49	65.36	18.87	11
Martinez, Buck	1969	1986	22027	464	258	17	64.27	18.79	12
Yeager, Steve	1972	1986	28274	595	365	44	61.98	18.55	13
Roseboro, Johnny	1960	1969	29231	345	253	24	57.69	17.35	14
Matheny, Mike	1994	2006	30158	552	298	26	64.94	17.22	15
Dempsey, Rick	1969	1992	36973	770	507	24	60.30	17.21	16
Wilson, Dan	1992	2005	31091	623	314	8	66.49	15.53	17
Valle, Dave	1984	1996	20994	475	267	9	64.02	14.94	18
Sundberg, Jim	1974	1989	47701	1012	708	62	58.84	14.76	19
Schneider, Brian	2000	2009	21397	338	209	13	61.79	14.64	20
Ausmus, Brad	1993	2009	47019	877	480	20	64.63	14.52	21
Sanguillen, Manny	1967	1979	28507	504	314	15	61.61	14.38	22
Heath, Mike	1978	1991	25126	571	327	5	63.59	13.91	23
Johnson, Charles	1994	2005	29158	530	343	10	60.71	13.63	24
Whitt, Ernie	1976	1991	28202	691	347	9	66.57	12.76	25
Lieberthal, Mike	1994	2007	29486	592	248	8	70.48	12.36	26
Cerone, Rick	1975	1992	30340	705	413	12	63.06	11.87	27
Steinbach, Terry	1986	1999	34009	765	436	6	63.70	11.83	28
Fisk, Carlton	1969	1993	55535	1302	664	20	66.23	11.80	29
Parrish, Lance	1977	1995	45607	1043	655	26	61.43	11.50	30
Rodgers, Buck	1961	1969	22146	283	215	27	56.83	11.29	31
Wynegar, Butch	1976	1988	31563	708	478	13	59.70	10.43	32
Hassey, Ron	1978	1991	22269	579	262	13	68.85	10.19	33
Moore, Charlie	1973	1987	20239	488	272	10	64.21	8.59	34
Grote, Jerry	1963	1981	32823	579	350	32	62.33	7.90	35
Pierzynski, A.J.	1998	2009	29987	627	202	4	75.63	7.35	36
Pena, Tony	1980	1997	47916	1225	656	39	65.12	6.49	37
Alomar, Sandy Jr.	1989	2007	31914	758	328	4	69.80	6.36	38
Hundley, Randy	1964	1977	25462	396	288	11	57.89	5.87	39
Tettleton, Mickey	1984	1995	20854	581	238	0	70.94	4.81	40
Miller, Damian	1997	2007	23648	453	263	2	63.27	3.76	41
Porter, Darrell	1971	1987	37824	902	553	25	61.99	3.45	42
Etchebarren, Andy	1962	1978	20905	388	244	5	61.39	3.44	43
Mayne, Brent	1990	2004	26674	651	268	4	70.84	3.08	44
Manwaring, Kirt	1987	1999	23054	569	311	6	64.66	3.00	45
Lopez, Javy	1992	2006	33226	798	309	21	72.09	2.69	46
Molina, Bengie	1998	2009	29542	601	286	13	67.76	2.38	47
Pagnozzi, Tom	1987	1998	20017	496	293	4	62.86	1.82	48

Catcher	First	Last	Outs	SB	CS	Pko	SB%	Arm	Rank
Torre, Joe	1961	1970	22309	322	223	13	59.08	1.79	49
Kendall, Jason	1996	2009	49380	1121	454	11	71.17	1.27	50
Oliver, Joe	1989	2001	24608	669	303	16	68.83	1.08	51
Haller, Tom	1961	1972	28999	485	258	26	65.28	1.05	52
Gedman, Rich	1980	1992	22833	633	314	14	66.84	0.91	53
Freehan, Bill	1961	1976	40311	741	433	24	63.12	0.12	54
McCarver, Tim	1960	1979	34665	634	333	20	65.56	-0.04	55
Slaught, Don	1982	1997	28944	843	347	3	70.84	-0.54	56
Daulton, Darren	1983	1995	23824	701	290	8	70.74	-1.25	57
Scioscia, Mike	1980	1992	33700	952	500	22	65.56	-2.05	58
Duncan, Dave	1964	1976	21892	472	225	7	67.72	-2.30	59
Bateman, John	1963	1972	23823	425	222	28	65.69	-2.49	60
Hoiles, Chris	1989	1998	20298	589	228	4	72.09	-2.77	61
Fosse, Ray	1967	1979	21263	437	286	15	60.44	-3.61	62
Girardi, Joe	1989	2003	30184	798	384	3	67.51	-3.68	63
Tenace, Gene	1969	1983	20034	515	290	14	63.98	-4.08	64
Carter, Gary	1974	1992	52107	1498	810	51	64.90	-4.33	65
Simmons, Ted	1968	1988	45277	1188	611	32	66.04	-4.66	66
Hernandez, Ramon	1999	2009	29939	676	291	10	69.91	-5.22	67
Diaz, Bo	1977	1989	23090	686	357	14	65.77	-5.57	68
Edwards, Johnny	1961	1974	34055	579	373	32	60.82	-6.27	69
Borders, Pat	1988	2005	23049	633	333	10	65.53	-7.00	70
Kennedy, Terry	1978	1991	33540	1051	478	14	68.74	-8.46	71
Dalrymple, Clay	1960	1971	23503	321	306	29	51.20	-9.20	72
Varitek, Jason	1997	2009	33948	885	280	4	75.97	-9.25	73
Hundley, Todd	1990	2003	25818	793	266	2	74.88	-9.78	74
Zaun, Gregg	1995	2009	23973	632	203	8	75.69	-10.19	75
Posada, Jorge	1995	2009	36578	912	373	13	70.97	-11.51	76
Reed, Jeff	1984	2000	23063	727	301	10	70.72	-11.56	77
Barrett, Michael	1998	2009	21926	591	165	9	78.17	-11.81	78
May, Milt	1971	1984	25618	724	407	11	64.01	-11.96	79
Flaherty, John	1992	2005	24647	707	302	7	70.07	-15.14	80
Davis, Jody	1981	1990	25688	815	445	21	64.68	-15.74	81
Benedict, Bruce	1978	1989	23342	772	361	6	68.14	-16.74	82
Fletcher, Darrin	1989	2002	26577	884	280	3	75.95	-16.80	83
Ashby, Alan	1973	1989	31546	1112	445	14	71.42	-18.10	84
Lo Duca, Paul	1998	2008	23460	610	267	10	69.56	-24.88	85
Piazza, Mike	1992	2006	40665	1400	423	6	76.80	-29.42	86

Active Catchers with at least 10,000 career outs but fewer than 20,000

Catcher	First	Last	Outs	SB	CS	Pko	SB%	Arm	Rank
Molina, Yadier	2004	2009	16142	149	129	35	53.60	48.72	1
Mauer, Joe	2004	2009	15707	204	124	1	62.20	28.99	2
Olivo, Miguel	2002	2009	16945	273	142	21	65.78	20.30	4
Barajas, Rod	1999	2009	18522	304	155	7	66.23	17.12	7
Buck, John	2004	2009	14170	267	94	8	73.96	13.88	13
Johjima, Kenji	2006	2009	11078	174	116	5	60.00	13.21	15
Snyder, Chris	2004	2009	11724	207	99	4	67.65	11.34	17

Top Three Seasonal leaders with 2,000 outs

Year	First	Arm	Second	Arm	Third	Arm
1952	Rice, Del	50.23	Westrum, Wes	47.35	Grasso, Mickey	36.42
1953	Burgess, Smoky	35.27	Rice, Del	33.39	Seminick, Andy	30.15
1954	Sarni, Bill	46.67	Crandall, Del	36.47	Lollar, Sherm	15.66
1955	Lollar, Sherm	32.46	Sarni, Bill	26.74	Crandall, Del	20.61
1956	Crandall, Del	65.06	Lollar, Sherm	35.28	Hegan, Jim	17.16
1957	Foiles, Hank	41.90	Bailey, Ed	35.67	Campanella, Roy	27.93
1958	Bailey, Ed	43.34	Triandos, Gus	28.25	Foiles, Hank	28.01
1959	Roseboro, Johnny	34.84	Bailey, Ed	30.78	Crandall, Del	28.02
1960	Crandall, Del	33.31	Triandos, Gus	24.69	Howard, Elston	22.76
1961	Triandos, Gus	33.73	Burgess, Smoky	32.63	Battey, Earl	32.06
1962	Battey, Earl	45.34	Howard, Elston	44.55	Brown, Dick	42.35
1963	Howard, Elston	53.68	Triandos, Gus	39.74	Battey, Earl	37.55
1964	Freehan, Bill	39.30	Howard, Elston	36.69	Martin, J.C.	35.61
1965	Haller, Tom	32.38	Roseboro, Johnny	27.22	Azcue, Joe	27.10
1966	Freehan, Bill	28.42	Howard, Elston	28.21	Azcue, Joe	27.59
1967	Azcue, Joe	33.37	Casanova, Paul	28.68	McCarver, Tim	26.25
1968	McCarver, Tim	27.65	Azcue, Joe	27.21	Bateman, John	26.93
1969	Bench, Johnny	38.93	Ryan, Mike	18.06	Hendricks, Ellie	14.70
1970	Bench, Johnny	44.39	Casanova, Paul	36.86	Munson, Thurman	31.24
1971	Bench, Johnny	38.56	Munson, Thurman	26.95	Sanguillen, Manny	25.25
1972	Bench, Johnny	51.02	Munson, Thurman	40.62	Sanguillen, Manny	25.34
1973	Bench, Johnny	49.77	Fisk, Carlton	22.98	Grote, Jerry	22.93
1974	Bench, Johnny	43.06	Yeager, Steve	33.87	Munson, Thurman	21.81
1975	Bench, Johnny	48.16	Yeager, Steve	46.66	Oates, Johnny	34.93
1976	Boone, Bob	37.75	Bench, Johnny	30.85	Yeager, Steve	30.83
1977	Sundberg, Jim	41.26	Yeager, Steve	35.23	Fisk, Carlton	34.26
1978	Moore, Charlie	32.55	Porter, Darrell	22.88	Martinez, Buck	21.72
1979	Munson, Thurman	36.08	Dempsey, Rick	24.66	Boone, Bob	20.59
1980	Moore, Charlie	41.60	Cerone, Rick	31.50	Wynegar, Butch	30.34
1981	Sundberg, Jim	27.12	Parrish, Lance	23.19	Heath, Mike	19.49
1982	Martinez, Buck	44.29	Dempsey, Rick	38.74	Boone, Bob	33.83
1983	Boone, Bob	31.00	Kearney, Bob	29.60	Dempsey, Rick	27.23
1984	Parrish, Lance	38.33	Boone, Bob	37.43	Whitt, Ernie	30.10
1985	Boone, Bob	32.13	Whitt, Ernie	28.18	Sundberg, Jim	26.37
1986	Boone, Bob	49.23	Skinner, Joel	32.95	Heath, Mike	27.68
1987	Boone, Bob	44.21	Pena, Tony	22.46	Nokes, Matt	22.06
1988	Hassey, Ron	35.66	Santiago, Benito	34.95	Nokes, Matt	26.39
1989	Santiago, Benito	51.47	Steinbach, Terry	35.96	Berryhill, Damon	28.74
1990	Macfarlane, Mike	29.47	Steinbach, Terry	26.78	Tettleton, Mickey	20.04
1991	Valle, Dave	34.32	Rodriguez, Ivan	19.35	Parrish, Lance	18.23
1992	Surhoff, B.J.	19.53	Pagnozzi, Tom	18.86	Manwaring, Kirt	17.47
1993	Pena, Tony	27.32	Stanley, Mike	21.88	Taubensee, Eddie	21.15
1994	Rodriguez, Ivan	41.11	Hoiles, Chris	26.47	Alomar, Sandy Jr.	16.49
1995	Rodriguez, Ivan	42.03	Mayne, Brent	25.53	Walbeck, Matt	22.84
1996	Rodriguez, Ivan	39.93	Macfarlane, Mike	32.19	O'Brien, Charlie	31.75
1997	Rodriguez, Ivan	46.13	Steinbach, Terry	25.32	Ausmus, Brad	25.15
1998	Rodriguez, Ivan	38.90	Lieberthal, Mike	35.24	Lopez, Javy	33.87
1999	Rodriguez, Ivan	52.46	Steinbach, Terry	33.58	Eusebio, Tony	32.93

Year	First	Arm	Second	Arm	Third	Arm
2000	Rodriguez, Ivan	47.02	Ausmus, Brad	34.13	Johnson, Charles	24.45
2001	Matheny, Mike	48.71	Rodriguez, Ivan	37.65	Estrada, Johnny	34.75
2002	Rodriguez, Ivan	55.95	Pierzynski, A.J.	33.04	Wilson, Dan	27.97
2003	Wilson, Dan	41.96	Matheny, Mike	41.60	Rodriguez, Ivan	39.25
2004	Matheny, Mike	35.30	Rodriguez, Ivan	35.27	LaRue, Jason	31.99
2005	Molina, Yadier	62.05	Ausmus, Brad	38.50	Mauer, Joe	34.44
2006	Rodriguez, Ivan	47.43	Buck, John	40.42	Mauer, Joe	38.06
2007	Molina, Yadier	37.16	Mauer, Joe	34.75	Buck, John	31.68
2008	Molina, Yadier	48.66	Shoppach, Kelly	38.44	Iannetta, Chris	28.98
2009	Molina, Yadier	58.17	Rodriguez, Ivan	31.04	Kendall, Jason	27.25

Points Leaders where 5 points are awarded for 1st place, 3 for 2nd, and 1 for 3rd.

Catcher	Yrs	1st	2nd	3rd	Pts
Rodriguez, Ivan	19	9	4	1	58
Bench, Johnny	13	7	2	0	41
Boone, Bob	16	5	1	2	30
Molina, Yadier	5	4	0	0	20
Crandall, Del	9	2	1	2	15
Howard, Elston	8	1	3	1	15
Triandos, Gus	6	1	3	0	14
Matheny, Mike	9	2	1	0	13
Munson, Thurman	10	1	2	2	13
Steinbach, Terry	13	0	4	0	12
Bailey, Ed	7	1	2	0	11
Sundberg, Jim	13	2	0	1	11
Azcue, Joe	7	1	1	2	10
Freehan, Bill	11	2	0	0	10
Moore, Charlie	5	2	0	0	10
Yeager, Steve	6	0	3	1	10

Best Seasonal Arm Rating

Catcher	Year	Team	LG	Outs	SB	CS	Pko	SB%	Arm Rank
Crandall, Del	1956	Mil	N	2459	9	7	2	56.25	65.06 1
Molina, Yadier	2005	SL	N	2878	14	25	9	35.90	62.05 1
Molina, Yadier	2009	SL	N	3530	32	22	8	59.26	58.17 1
Rodriguez, Ivan	2002	Tex	A	2509	26	15	7	63.41	55.95 1
Howard, Elston	1963	NY	A	3433	22	15	2	59.46	53.68 1
Rodriguez, Ivan	1999	Tex	A	3625	34	41	10	45.33	52.46 1
Santiago, Benito	1989	SD	N	3263	46	32	15	58.97	51.47 1
Bench, Johnny	1972	Cin	N	3419	24	31	8	43.64	51.02 1
Rice, Del	1952	SL	N	3586	16	20	5	44.44	50.23 1
Bench, Johnny	1973	Cin	N	3345	28	27	4	50.91	49.77 1
Boone, Bob	1986	Cal	A	3559	41	43	6	48.81	49.23 1
Matheny, Mike	2001	SL	N	3006	30	28	5	51.72	48.71 1
Molina, Yadier	2008	SL	N	3006	34	18	7	65.38	48.66 1
Bench, Johnny	1975	Cin	N	3008	32	27	2	54.24	48.16 1
Rodriguez, Ivan	2006	Det	A	3163	25	26	2	49.02	47.43 1
Westrum, Wes	1952	NY	N	2734	11	17	3	39.29	47.35 2
Rodriguez, Ivan	2000	Tex	A	2209	20	19	1	51.28	47.02 1

IVAN RODRIGUEZ

Year	Team	LG	Outs	SB	CS	Pko	SB%	Arm	Rank
1991	Tex	A	2052	36	34	2	51.43	19.35	2
1992	Tex	A	2948	53	57	5	48.18	16.19	4
1993	Tex	A	3351	64	51	5	55.65	18.11	5
1994	Tex	A	2513	37	23	4	61.67	41.11	1
1995	Tex	A	3195	40	37	6	51.95	42.03	1
1996	Tex	A	3670	46	48	12	48.94	39.93	1
1997	Tex	A	3603	37	49	9	43.02	46.13	1
1998	Tex	A	3592	38	49	7	43.68	38.90	1
1999	Tex	A	3625	34	41	10	45.33	52.46	1
2000	Tex	A	2209	20	19	1	51.28	47.02	1
2001	Tex	A	2566	23	35	3	39.66	37.65	2
2002	Tex	A	2509	26	15	7	63.41	55.95	1
2003	Fla	N	3397	40	20	2	66.67	39.25	3
2004	Det	A	3153	40	19	2	67.80	35.27	2
2005	Det	A	3098	33	35	6	48.53	27.13	4
2006	Det	A	3163	25	26	2	49.02	47.43	1
2007	Det	A	3158	47	21	2	69.12	29.30	4
2008 TOT			2790	52	25	1	67.53	6.59	15
2009 TOT			2886	41	22	1	65.08	31.04	2
			57478	732	626	87	53.90	35.64	

JOHNNY BENCH

Year	Team	LG	Outs	SB	CS	Pko	SB%	Arm	Rank
1967	Cin	N	699	5	5	3	50.00	60.36	
1968	Cin	N	3903	49	44	12	52.69	21.41	5
1969	Cin	N	3747	30	40	7	42.86	38.93	1
1970	Cin	N	3474	32	30	8	51.61	44.39	1
1971	Cin	N	3509	37	26	7	58.73	38.56	1
1972	Cin	N	3419	24	31	8	43.64	51.02	1
1973	Cin	N	3345	28	27	4	50.91	49.77	1
1974	Cin	N	3400	37	35	2	51.39	43.06	1
1975	Cin	N	3008	32	27	2	54.24	48.16	1
1976	Cin	N	3213	57	42	3	57.58	30.85	2
1977	Cin	N	3197	64	42	1	60.38	21.05	7
1978	Cin	N	2508	49	35	2	58.33	19.11	5
1979	Cin	N	3250	70	45	2	60.87	13.24	8
1980	Cin	N	2541	83	34	1	70.94	-6.98	17
1981	Cin	N	180	9	4	0	69.23	-77.05	
1982	Cin	N	3	0	0	0		100.00	
1983	Cin	N	69	4	2	0	66.67	-102.01	
			43465	610	469	62	56.53	32.49	

GARY CARTER

Year	Team	LG	Outs	SB	CS	Pko	SB%	Arm	Rank
1974	Mon	N	144	1	1	0	50.00	61.58	
1975	Mon	N	1563	22	21	2	51.16	28.24	
1976	Mon	N	1481	27	27	3	50.00	20.30	
1977	Mon	N	3814	113	55	4	67.26	-3.36	17
1978	Mon	N	3912	80	58	1	57.97	13.36	8
1979	Mon	N	3643	75	66	4	53.19	6.16	13
1980	Mon	N	3913	94	63	1	59.87	6.58	11
1981	Mon	N	2583	50	44	3	53.19	13.63	4
1982	Mon	N	4061	103	70	5	59.54	0.32	16
1983	Mon	N	3784	86	75	10	53.42	7.30	10
1984	Mon	N	3600	107	50	3	68.15	-7.70	16
1985	NY	N	3753	99	51	6	66.00	3.11	15
1986	NY	N	3236	114	45	2	71.70	-12.39	16
1987	NY	N	3426	122	46	2	72.62	-7.60	16
1988	NY	N	2995	136	31	2	81.44	-33.62	22
1989	NY	N	1108	46	20	1	69.70	-47.47	
1990	SF	N	1604	66	21	1	75.86	-27.55	
1991	LA	N	1492	59	28	0	67.82	-41.91	
1992	Mon	N	1995	98	38	1	72.06	-59.23	
			52107	1498	810	51	64.90	-4.33	

YADIER MOLINA

Year	Team	LG	Outs	SB	CS	Pko	SB%	Arm	Rank
2004	SL	N	1032	9	8	1	52.94	44.49	
2005	SL	N	2878	14	25	9	35.90	62.05	1
2006	SL	N	3112	37	29	8	56.06	36.75	4
2007	SL	N	2584	23	27	2	46.00	37.16	1
2008	SL	N	3006	34	18	7	65.38	48.66	1
2009	SL	N	3530	32	22	8	59.26	58.17	1
			16142	149	129	35	53.60	48.72	

JOE MAUER

Year	Team	LG	Outs	SB	CS	Pko	SB%	Arm	Rank
2004	Min	A	771	11	7	0	61.11	16.41	
2005	Min	A	2999	31	23	0	57.41	34.44	3
2006	Min	A	3178	36	22	0	62.07	38.06	3
2007	Min	A	2333	21	24	0	46.67	47.75	2
2008	Min	A	3609	51	29	1	63.75	24.93	4
2009	Min	A	2817	54	19	0	73.97	16.81	6
			15707	204	124	1	62.20	28.99	