



BONEHEAD PLAYS

There's something oddly satisfying about seeing major leaguers goof up to the point that they look like Little Leaguers. (Our apologies to all you skilled Little Leaguers out there.)

FOUR! Only once has a big-league player committed four errors on a single play: In 1895 New York Giants third baseman Mike Grady tried to field a routine ground ball, but bobbled it (1). He threw the ball to first, but it sailed over the head of the first baseman (2), who retrieved it and threw it back to Grady as the runner rounded second base. Grady missed the catch (3) and the ball went rolling toward the dugout. He ran over and scooped it up, then tried to throw it to home, but it sailed over the catcher (4), allowing the runner to score on what should have been an easy out at first.

NIGHT OF THE LIVING EDS. In the early 1950s, Phillies right fielder Bill Nicholson hit a high pop-up that was destined to come down somewhere near the mound. Pittsburgh pitcher Bill Werle called for one of his fielders to step in. "Eddie's got it! Eddie's got it!" he shouted. Then everyone in the Pirates' infield stood and watched as the ball landed on the grass...including catcher Eddie Fitzgerald, first baseman Eddie Stevens, and third baseman Eddie Bockman.

FREE PASS. In 1976 Phillies catcher Tim McCarver came up to bat with the bases loaded. Not known for his power, McCarver hit a deep fly ball. He watched it as he ran toward first base...and was elated when it sailed over the wall! McCarver put his head down and kept on running. One problem: Gary Maddox, the runner at first, held up to make sure the ball wasn't caught. McCarver ran right by him. By the time he realized his goof, it was too late—he was called out for passing a runner, thus negating his grand slam. Asked how he did it, McCarver replied, "Sheer speed."

THE BALL WAS JOOST. During a game between the Red Sox and the Philadelphia A's in 1948, Boston's Billy Goodman came up to bat with Ted Williams on at third. Goodman hit a sharp

grounder to A's shortstop Eddie Joost. The ball took a strange hop at the edge of the infield grass—it bounced over Joost's glove, rolled up his arm, and came to rest somewhere inside his jersey. He quickly untucked his shirt and started dancing (it looked like he was being stung by bees) until the ball finally fell out. By the time Joost picked it up, it was too late to even try to throw out Goodman at first. Luckily, the error didn't cost the A's a run—Williams was laughing so hard at Joost's dance that he forgot to run home.

HEAD GAMES. In 1993 Rangers center fielder Jose Canseco ran down a deep fly ball all the way to the warning track, but lost it in the lights. The ball bounced off of Canseco's head...and over the wall for a home run. The error has since become legendary. The television show *This Week In Baseball* awarded it the best blooper in its first 21 years of broadcasting. Also impressed by Canseco's heading skills was a professional indoor soccer team called the Harrisburg Heat, who offered Canseco a contract (which he turned down).

PICK ME UP. In the bottom of the ninth inning, in a tie game with first place on the line in August 2005, Angels closer Francisco Rodriguez threw ball one to Eric Chavez of the A's. Jason Kendall, representing the winning run, was standing on third. The catcher tossed the ball back to the mound. Rodriguez put his glove up...but the ball bounced out and fell softly onto the grass. Rodriguez just looked at it; the rest of his teammates later said they thought the ball wasn't even in play. But Kendall was paying attention. "You're never supposed to take your eye off the pitcher," he said after scoring the winning run just as Rodriguez went to pick up the ball. "That is the first time I've ever seen that happen," said Rodriguez. "Unfortunately, it happened to me."

WHAT RECORD? A reporter asked Red Sox catcher Doug Mirabelli, "Had the streak reached the point where no one on the team wanted to break it?" Mirabelli replied, "Streak?" Apparently, Boston had entered that July 2006 game with the all-time major league team record of 17 games without committing an error. "We set a record?" asked Mirabelli. Yes, they did...until Mirabelli made a high throw to second on a stolen-base attempt. "And I ended it?" he asked. "Sweet. Got to be remembered for something."