



## ***No-hitters generate unusual tidbits on which to chew through the decades***

*By George Castle, CBM Historian  
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The years and decades keep flipping past, but the Cubs maintain one proud record.

A team enmeshed in so much failure has succeeded in avoiding one ignominious record. The Cubs have compiled the longest active streak without being no-hit, since Sandy Koufax did a real number on them with his famed perfect game on Sept. 9, 1965.

And Wrigley Field itself has avoided hosting a no-hitter since Sept. 2, 1972, when Milt Pappas went 1-and-2 on the Padres' Larry Stahl – one strike away from a perfect game. Uncle Miltie then tried to paint the corners, plate ump Bruce Froemming disagreed, and Stahl walked. Somehow, a peeved Pappas collected himself to get Garry Jesteadt, the next hitter, to pop to second baseman Carmen Fanzone to complete the no-no.

Ever since, a no-hitter has been broken up either for or against the Cubs four times in the ninth inning at Wrigley Field. “For” being Chuck Rainey against the Reds in 1983 and Mike Morgan against the Braves in 1993. “Against” was Tom Seaver of the Mets in 1975 and Alex Fernandez of the Marlins in 1997.

The only Cubs no-hitter since Pappas was tossed by Carlos Zambrano against the Houston Astros at Miller Park on Sept. 14, 2008, in bizarre circumstances. The Astros' home game had been hastily relocated to Milwaukee due to a hurricane. Houston's bedraggled team clambered off their charter, one of the first planes to take off from Humidity City once the hurricane passed, a few hours before the game. They were a bunch of tired hombres with slow bats going up against Zambrano in what proved to be his last hurrah as a Cub.

In contrast, the White Sox don't have such no-hit parsimony at U.S. Cellular Field. Mark Buerhle tossed a no-no on April 18 2007, then bettered himself with Dewayne Wise's



**With the center-field camera somehow out of commission on the last batter, Milt Pappas will never know if he was squeezed by plate ump Bruce Froemming.**

miracle catch to seal a perfect game on July 23, 2009. All from a lefty who pitched to contact. Francisco Lirano threw a very messy no-no against the Sox at home on May 3, 2011. Of course, the Sox traded for Lirano the following season.

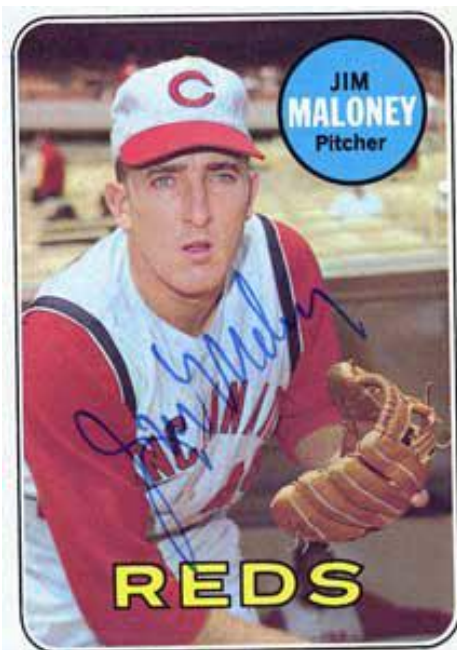
And that was just the hitless games at The Cell. Since 1972, Philip Humber – now in baseball limbo – threw a perfect game at Seattle on April 21, 2012. John “Blue Moon” Odom and Francisco Barrios combined for a Lirano-type no-no at Oakland on July 28, 1976. Joe Cowley, the pitcher and not the beat writer, had a somewhat messy no-no at Anaheim on Sept. 19, 1986. And Wilson Alvarez was a rookie sensation in tossing a no-no at the Orioles in the final season of Memorial Stadium on Aug. 11, 1991.

Besting the Sox in no-nos have been Mike Warren of the A’s in Oakland Sept. 29, 1983; Jack Morris of the Tigers in the last official hitless gem at old Comiskey Park on April 7, 1984, and Bret Saberhagen of the Royals at KC on Aug. 26, 1991.



**An embarrassment of riches: Mark Buehrle pitched no-hitters two seasons part at U.S. Cellular Field. Photo credit [Sliver7](#).**

### **Hawkins’ no-hitter stricken from record books**



**Jim Maloney hurled his 10-walk no-no against the Cubs in this style of sleeveless uniform.**

Andy Hawkins of the Yankees would have been the last to throw a no-hitter at old Comiskey on July 1, 1990, if not for rules changes that disallowed such bizarre games. Hawkins tossed eight innings of hitless ball, but lost 4-0 through a combination of three errors and five walks. Non-winning complete games like those were disallowed as no-hitters soon afterward.

So, with no-hitters nearly as rare as World Series appearances on the North Side, here are some tidbits about hitless games that have nearly been lost to history. Smile as you go along:

- Exactly three weeks before the Koufax perfecto, the Cubs were no-hit by Reds’ Jim Maloney at Wrigley Field, on Aug. 19, 1965 – also exactly four years to the day prior to Ken Holtzman’s no-hitter against the Braves from the same mound. Maloney set a record with 10 walks (in 10 innings) in a no-no, while fanning 12. He threw more than 170 pitches in the 1-0 victory. In contrast, tough-luck

loser Larry Jackson walked none in 10 innings. Jackson went on to lose 21 games that season, one year after winning 24 as a Cub.

- WGN announcers Lloyd Pettit and Lou Boudreau converged near the mound to interview Maloney, who was only momentarily mobbed by his teammates. No one else was loitering as in other no-hitters at Wrigley Field. Pettit and Boudreau did a simulcast for WGN TV and radio. Boudreau reached for the mic when he wanted to ask a question, but Pettit kept full control of the device and held it away from Boudreau's grasp.
- Former big-league pitcher Jim Brosnan, then a sportscaster for WLS-TV, and his film crew raced to Wrigley Field to try to interview Maloney in time for their early-evening news; after all, the game was the opener of a doubleheader. Meeting Maloney, Brosnan and Co. came away empty. The pitcher wanted \$25 for his time.
- Don Landrum slugged a two-out, two-run walkoff homer in the bottom of the ninth off Billy McCool in the nitecap to win the game 5-4 for the Cubs.

### **Aaron ball took left turn into Williams' glove?**

- On Henry Aaron's seventh-inning drive that almost ruined Holtzman's no-hitter in '69, witnesses claimed the ball actually passed over several rows of bleachers before the inblowing wind pushed the ball back into Billy Williams' glove backing into the well in left field. Watching from the nearby bullpen, Cubs closer Phil Regan claimed the ball actually made a "left turn" from over the bleachers into Williams' eager grasp.
- Holtzman recalled how groups of fans waited for the Cubs on street corners as they drove toward the Kennedy Expressway after the game.
- Braves players accused Cubs groundskeeper Pete Marcantonio of letting the infield grass grow during the preceding West Coast road trip. They claimed several potential hits were swallowed up by the near-prairie.
- After his seven-walk no-hitter against the Phillies at Wrigley Field on April 16, 1972, Burt Hooton told WGN interviewer Jim West he dreamed of pitching the no-no the night before.
- Pappas woke up with a cold the morning of his aborted perfecto. He also had a long commute from west suburban Wheaton. Can you imagine today's players commuting an hour each way to a game?



**Burt Hooton said he dreamed the night before he'd pitch a no-hitter. Photo credit [TexianPolitico](#).**

- A center-field camera shot of Stahl's fateful at-bat for some reason was not available on the WGN telecast. The late Arne Harris directed the game. Longtime Harris directing partner Bill Lotzer speculated the camera had conked out for that at-bat. Lotzer had used the pitcher-batter shot from center on Joe Cunningham's final at-bat in Don Cardwell's no-hitter in 1960. Without the center-field shot, Pappas lost the crucial evidence in his claim he was squeezed by Froemming.
- A certain future Chicago Baseball Museum historian ditched his men's department stockboy duties to watch the ninth inning of the Pappas game in the TV department of the old downtown Chicago Goldblatt's department store. The young lad in question was then discovered by the men's department assistant manager, who was a Cubs fan, but still devoted to duty. "If it wasn't your last day on the job, I would have kicked your ass," was the lecture from the boss.