



The game of numbers

By HAL HABIB
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

It's in baseball, and only baseball, that $56 + 714 + 1.12$ gives you the same thing as $.406 + 755 + 2,130$. What those numbers add up to, no calculator could ever say.

Think about them.

Let them swirl in the mind a minute.

Let them swirl in the mind a lifetime.

Baseball doesn't just ask us to do that, it requires it. Whether you live and die with the Yankees or couldn't care less about the Devil Rays, these numbers are imprinted in your brain like your PIN, only longer lasting and more important.

They belong to DiMaggio and to Ruth and to Gibson. And to Williams and to Aaron and to Gehrig. They belong to each of us.

They let us compare and contrast. They settle arguments. They start them.

They prove facts. They tell lies.

They're statistics, lovable statistics, damned statistics, as integral to baseball as the bat and the ball.

"That's what our sport is about, the statistics and the records," Yankees manager Joe Torre says.

But why?

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