Best Pitches In Baseball History

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For baseball fans, the magic of a game often comes from the pitcher's arsenal. Over the decades, certain pitches have become legendary, not only for their effectiveness but also for the way they changed the sport. From the iconic **fastball** to the deceptive curveball, the best pitches in baseball history have defined eras, shaped careers, and captivated audiences worldwide. In this article, we'll explore the most celebrated pitches, the pitchers who perfected them, and why they remain unforgettable.

The Fastball Family

1. The Four-Seam Fastball

The four-seam fastball is the bedrock of every pitcher's repertoire. It delivers velocity, straightness, and a sharp break. Legendary pitchers like Nolan Ryan and Pedro Martínez ~~used this pitch to dominate hitters, with Ryan's~~

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100-plus mph throws setting a benchmark for power pitching.

2. The Two-Seam Fastball

Unlike the four-seam, the two-seam fastball has a slight movement toward the pitcher's arm side, making it harder for batters to pick up the ball’s trajectory. Babe Ruth’s early career featured a devastating two-seam that contributed to his 714 home-run legacy.

3. The Cutter

A cutter is a hybrid between a fastball and a slider, delivering late, sharp movement. Walter Johnson’s cutter was a staple in the early 20th century, and modern pitchers like Max Scherzer continue to use it as a key strike-out tool.

Breaking Pitches That Shocked the Game

1. The Curveball

The curveball, with its dramatic drop, has been a staple since the 19th century. Nolan Ryan’s “Ruth-like” curve in the 1970s was a sight to behold, and it remains a benchmark for modern pitchers. The pitch’s ability to change a batter’s timing has made it a classic staple.

2. The Slider

The slider is a fast, late-breaking pitch that blends speed with sharp movement. Barry Zito's 2002 season featured a slider that racked up 225 strikeouts, proving its effectiveness at the highest level.

3. The Splitter

The split-finger fastball, or splitter, is a fastball that splits at the last second, creating a steep drop. Tim Wakefield's splitter was a hallmark of his career, especially during the 2004 World Series, where it helped him secure a 3-0 series victory.

Specialty Pitches That Changed Pitching Strategies

1. The Screwball

The screwball, which moves opposite a typical breaking ball, was popularized by legendary pitchers such as Jim Bunning and more recently by Zack Greinke. Its unique movement can confuse hitters, especially in a game where pitches are often predictable.

2. The Knuckleball

While not as common today, the knuckleball has

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a storied history. Jack Johnson's 1930s career featured a knuckleball that baffled hitters, and modern pitchers like Tim Wakefield have brought it back into the spotlight with success.

3. The Eephus Pitch

The eephus is a slow, high-arc pitch that's more psychological than a genuine threat. Babe Ruth famously used it to great effect, and it remains a crowd-pleaser for its sheer audacity.

How Pitchers Mastered These Pitches

1. **Practice and Repetition** – Pitchers spend countless hours refining their grip and release.
2. **Biomechanics and Mechanics** – Understanding body mechanics ensures consistency and reduces injury risk.
3. **Game Situations** – Adapting pitches to matchups and game context is crucial.
4. **Mental Focus** – The psychological aspect of pitching cannot be overstated; confidence and calmness are key.

Why These Pitches Still

Matter Today

Modern analytics highlight the importance of pitch variety and deception. While velocity remains vital, the best pitches in baseball history remind us that movement, feel, and strategy are equally essential. Pitchers like Jacob deGrom and Max Scherzer blend classic techniques with modern data to dominate hitters.

Conclusion

The best pitches in baseball history are more than just physical tools; they are a blend of art, science, and personality. From the raw power of the fastball to the deceptive curves that defy expectations, each pitch has shaped the game’s narrative. As new generations of pitchers emerge, they’ll continue to draw inspiration from these historic pitches, ensuring that baseball’s rich pitching legacy endures for years to come.

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