

# SOMWORLD

Opening Day Newsletter  
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## 2001 – THE YEAR OF THE PITCHER

### Will Kolodzie

2001 was such a great season that one hardly knows to begin. Barry Bonds and his 73 home runs were one of the more phenomenal feats in sports history, especially considering that so much of it was accomplished in PacBell Park, the ultimate pitcher's ballpark. His .515 OBP was the best in 45 years. He's only the fifth player in major league history to achieve that mark, following Babe Ruth, Rogers Hornsby, Mickey Mantle, and Ted Williams.

The Seattle Mariners had a "miracle" season with 116 victories, thanks in large part to a phenomenal rookie in Ichiro Suzuki and a career season by Bret Boone, only to fall short in the playoffs.

The New York Yankees scrapped and battled their way throughout the season. They came back from an 0-2 deficit against the Oakland Athletics, then again in the World Series against the Arizona Diamondbacks and eventually forced a deciding Game Seven. But the Diamondbacks were a team with the best 1-2 punch since Koufax and Drysdale. Arizona's Randy Johnson and Curt Schilling gave us one of the most memorable World Series in recent memory.

They weren't the only stars on the mound. For every youngster named Pujols, Chavez, and Berkman, there was a great young pitcher making his mark in the league. Freddie Garcia, Tim Hudson, Roy Oswalt, Mark Mulder, Barry Zito, Brad Penny, Javier Vasquez, and Joe Mays are just a few of the new pitching stars in the league. Let's not forget Mark Buehlre and Kerry Wood. Both of these pitchers could have special careers ahead of them.

Yet we're a long way from 1968. There's as much hitting in the 2001 set as ever. Besides Bond's superlative efforts, Chicago's Sammy Sosa had his greatest season ever, as did Arizona's Luis Gonzalez and his 57 home runs. Jason Giambi and Alex Rodriguez were Strat gods of the highest order. A-Rod's 52 home runs were the highest total ever for a player other than a first basemen or an outfielder. Shawn Green redeemed himself admirable with a 49-homer campaign in his second season with the Dodgers.

SOMWORLD is glad to be here with you at Opening Day. This is the best time of the Strat year. There is nothing like getting the new cards and the latest computer version. This is our fourth year of existence, and we're hoping to make this the best year ever for our hobby by bringing you current, informative articles, exciting downloads, and all of the links and resources necessary for enjoying everything that Strat-O-Matic has to offer.

We're proud to serve as sponsors of Dell's Strategy Guide. Terry Dell has done wonders with this project. Of

interest to veterans and newbies, there's a little something there for everyone. His analysis of the "unbalanced" lineup is a Strat classic.

SOMWORLD provides a plethora of Strat-O-Matic articles, information, and resources. We have produced 14 articles on the 2001 card set alone. Plus, we interview the key figures in the hobby, from SOM founder and owner Hal Richman and past seasons whiz Steve Barkan, to SOM hobby favorites like Del Newell and Glenn Guzzo. Later this Spring, we will release a comprehensive interview with SOM computer programmer Bob Winberry. The company wouldn't be where it is today without his generous efforts. We plan to tackle as many subjects and topics with him as time permits.

Stay warm, enjoy yourselves!! We hope to see you at our website or the Strat-O-Matic Forum, the largest meeting place for Strat fans in existence. Gary Altman, Jeff Crowder, and Bruce Bundy are on hand today, waiting and willing to provide any assistance or answer any questions about us.

<b>SOMWORLD NET RADIO IS PLAYING TONIGHT!!!</b>
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## GWYNN: CLASSY, CLEVER, AND CLUTCH

### Bill Vargus

The baseball world has lost one of its greatest ambassadors ever, not to mention one of the greatest hitters ever. And one of the greatest clutch hitters ever. The great Tony Gwynn is all of these things.

Of course, different people will define the term "clutch" in different ways. Strat-O-Matic already has an existing definition-runners in scoring position with two outs. If you go back to 1990, you will find that over the last decade (11 years, actually), Gwynn's batting average increased by 25 points in "clutch" situations; his .330 average with the bases empty goes up to .355 with runners in scoring position and two out.

The numbers speak for themselves. But in an effort to help explain the numbers, I spoke to the man himself. And when I interviewed Tony Gwynn, and started rattling off some of the above numbers, he smiled and nodded. He is very much aware, and proud, of his special qualities as a clutch hitter.

"The one situation where I think most managers don't want to see me come up to the plate is with guys in scoring position," Gwynn said. "Because you have too many options when you put the bat on the ball. As a hitter, that kind of takes away some of the pitcher's options, because he knows, most of the time, you're going to put the bat on the ball." (That is, if you're Tony Gwynn, who almost never strikes out.)

What Gwynn is talking about is situational hitting. He is able to take advantage of situations where a pitcher is more likely to give him something he can hit. And that's an important consideration to keep in mind because people who believe that there's no such thing as clutch hitting fail to understand that the term "clutch hitting" really refers to being able to take advantage of the dynamics involved in

critical situations. (Read more of Bill's article at the *SOMWORLD* website.)

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## LINEUP STRETCHERS

### Jeff Crowder

There are plenty of great player cards in the 2001 card set, maybe more than we've seen in any set ever. There's a lot of balance between pitching and hitting, much more than is readily apparent at first glance.

Among this list of players will be some veterans, and some youngsters. Some of them are guys that have had good years recently, but (a few at first glance STATISTICALLY) don't look like they had that great of a year in comparison to the 'superstars'. These are guys that may be had for a cheaper price and provide you with great production.... Granted, they are not among the elite players, but these are the guys that fill out a team at important positions that translate into championships and 'stretch' your line-up.

**Frank Catalanotto**- All this multi-position player did was put up a nifty .391 OB% and managed 15 steals. He should be pretty valuable to a team lacking depth at several positions. He's a bit of a late bloomer (28 in April) that has hit at every level. He should stick around for a nice handful of years and bring in 400+ at-bats every year before eventually getting a full time job at one position, which may be sooner than later.... Look for 20+ homer power to develop soon, and a consistent .300 average to go with a .370 to .400 OB average.... He would fit nicely into the leadoff or number two slot. If you're batting him 6, 7 or 8, you've probably got a good team. In usage leagues though, you may want to use him in those slots to keep his at-bats down, but that's if you're planning on using him every day. I would. Anytime you can get a .391 OB% in the lineup, do it. (Read this remainder of Jeff's article at the *SOMWORLD* website.)

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## THE UNDERRATED RAUL MONDESI

### Bruce Bundy

Don't let Raul Mondesi's performance vs. right-handed pitchers fool you. There's gold in Mondesi's card. His Strat value remains high and he fulfills a number of functions for your draft league team. The great thing about Mondesi's card is his "intangibles." There are so many ways that this card can help you. Whether you're playing in a 10 team or 24 team league, Mondesi will add more than his fair share of wins.

**DEFENSE: RANK= TOP 10** - SOM made 98 minus arms of the 568 batters in this set, 70 of which belong to OFers. Mondesi's "-4" ranks him in the TOP 7 OFers: Guerrero,V - Suzuki, I. - Jones,A - Mondesi,R - Dye,J - Walker,L\* - Hidalgo,R. All of these guys will probably be playing FULL-TIME in your league. Mondesi's "2e9" makes him very playable (better than Vlad), and his arm alone is irreplaceable. Most importantly, throwing arms are one of the most coveted of all the "intangibles" because they stay VERY consistent and are extremely VITAL to superior defense (note: I rate him better offensively than A.Jones, Dye, and Hildago in this group). This also makes his "upside" HUGE when he has a superior year.)

**STEALING: RANK= TOP 10** - Of the 210 fulltime (300PA) OFers in this set, Mondesi's 3-6(18-13) ranks 6th of the full timers. 6th! Ichiro, Hunter, Cedenno, Tyner, and Knoblauch rank higher, and only Ichiro has better Offensive numbers. Base stealing is a rather consistent quality as well - this quality makes for a LARGE upside with a better year.

**SPEED: RANK= TOP 10** - Of the fulltime 210 OFers, only 25 are 1-17 baserunners. Of that select crowd, Mondesi ranks 5th behind Walker, Suzuki, Pierre, and Cameron offensively. This is a HUGE and very consistent intangible that tags along with stealing. Give me a team of 1-17 runners any day! (Get the rest of Bundy's prognostications, sample cards, and data files at *SOMWORLD*.)

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