



0. 20-GAME WINNING STREAK - Story Preface

1. BILLY BEANE and PAUL DePODESTA

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Achieving a 20-game winning streak, in the regular season, the Oakland A's react to that reality in September of 2002. The team became the American League West champions that year. Image online via cdn.govexec.com.

When the 2002 season began, the A's had a reasonable start. By May, they were struggling. After a sweep by the Blue Jays in Toronto, they were floundering. After their first game against the Orioles, during a stint at home, they had 19 wins and 25 losses.

Oakland's scouts, and other detractors of the sabermetrics method, could privately gloat. Some publicly slammed the "moneyball" process which Billy Beane had insisted would help the A's rebuild after losing three top players. (Parenthetically, some people *still* think the approach is bogus.)

On the 7th of June, the team was even again, after defeating the Astros. Their season record stood at 30-30.

The Blue Jays came to Oakland on the 12th of August. The last time the two teams had met, the A's lost every time. They lost the first game of the August match-up, too.

Then ... overcoming their obstacles, the A's began to function like a single, winning unit. With their record at 68-51, they started a winning streak. They won the rest of their games against the Blue Jays. Next they swept the White Sox, at home.

On the road they crushed the Indians, the Tigers, the Royals.

Back home, on the 30th of August, they kept the streak going against the Twins. On the 4th of September, still playing at their own Coliseum, they were up 11-0 in the second of two games against Kansas City.

Then they blew their lead. Totally. Scoring nothing further, for inning after inning, the A's let the Royals tie the game at 11-11.

Winning 19 games in a row was a terrific achievement, but the A's - and their fans - had been hoping for 20. No American League team had accomplished such a feat in decades.

In the bottom of the ninth inning, Art Howe took a risk. With the score at 11-11, he summoned Scott Hatteberg from the bench.

The former-catcher-turned-first-baseman (thanks to the help of coach Ron Washington) - who thought he might never play baseball again after hurting his catching hand - stepped up to the plate and ... hit a home run.

In less than a month, the A's had pulled-off a baseball miracle. They'd outscored all opponents 141 to 65, trailing in only 10 of 180 innings during their 20-game-winning streak.

Barry Zito, Tim Hudson, Mark Mulder and Cory Lidle pitched so well they were still throwing into the seventh inning in all but 6 of the 20 games.

And it wasn't just Hatteberg who had a game-winning walk-off hit. Miguel Tejada did as well - not to mention all his other runs-batted-in (causing him to win the 2002 American-League MVP Award).

At the end of the streak, the A's were the American League West champions. People still debate whether sabermetrics, and the "Moneyball" approach, was a contributing factor to their success.

Although they faltered in the post-season, the A's had outplayed teams with far-richer budgets during the regular season. For comparison purposes, MLB records show the following numbers on August 31, 2002:

	WINS	LOSSES	PAYROLL
Oakland	103	59	\$ 41,942,665

Anaheim	99	63	\$ 62,757,041
Seattle	93	69	\$ 86,084,710
Texas	72	90	\$106,915,180

Cory Lidle performed so well, during the 20-game winning streak, that he won all five of his starts and gave up only one run the entire month. Four years later, however, he was in serious trouble right after the 2006 playoffs.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/20-GAME-WINNING-STREAK-Moneyball>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/20-GAME-WINNING-STREAK-Moneyball>

Questions 2 Ponder

Does the Amount of Pay Always Lead to the Best Results?

In 2002, the Oakland A's finished the regular season at the top of their league. Looking at the wins/losses - compared with the total payrolls of four major-league baseball teams - analysis shows that the least-paid team performed better than the highest-paid team.

Did Billy Beane's new methodology of "Sabermetrics" have anything to do with such results - or - were the results just a coincidence?

If more information is needed to answer that question, what would it be?

How Does Momentum Impact Results?

By midpoint in the regular season, of 2002, the Oakland A's weren't doing very well. Then, in mid-August, the A's started to win. They extended their winning streak to 20 games.

Does the momentum of winning - as a team, or individually - have anything to do with the final results? Explain your answer.

How does momentum inspire us to continue our achievements?

How do we regain momentum if obstacles surface and "the tables turn" against us?

Media Stream



Oakland A's of 2002 Celebrate Their 20-Game Winning Streak

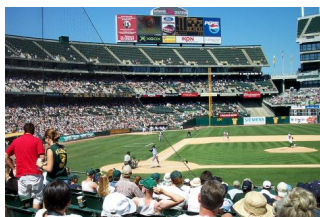
Image of the Oakland A's, celebrating their 20-game winning streak in September of 2002, online via cdn.govexec.com. Photographer unknown. Fair use for educational purposes.

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Coliseum - Home of the Oakland A's

Photo of Oakland's Coliseum by Chris Murphy, online courtesy Flickr.



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Art Howe - 2002 Oakland A's Manager

Image of Art Howe and Bill Beane, online courtesy the Oakland A's.

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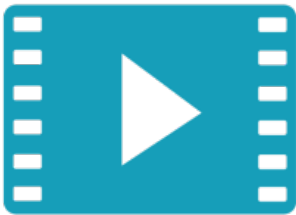


Moneyball - Oakland A's 2002 Winning Streak

Clip from *There is an "A" in Streak - The 2002 Amazin' A's*, online via YouTube.

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Moneyball - Billy Beane on the 20-Game Streak

Clip from *There is an "A" in Streak - The 2002 Amazin' A's*, online via YouTube.

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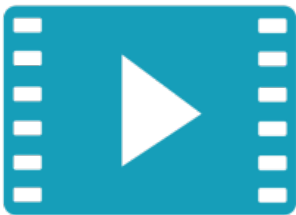


Moneyball - A's Comment on Their Winning Streak

Clip from *There is an "A" in Streak - The 2002 Amazin' A's*, online via YouTube.

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Moneyball - A's Go for the 20th Win

Clip from *There is an "A" in Streak - The 2002 Amazin' A's*, online via YouTube.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Moneyball-A-s-Go-for-the-20th-Win>



Moneyball - Scott Hatteberg Hits a Home Run in Game 20

Clip from the Oakland A's - online, courtesy A's and YouTube.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Moneyball-Scott-Hatteberg-Hits-a-Home-Run-in-Game-20>