



Top Five Hitters in the Sun Division, l-r: Paul Gayer, Reyes Gonzales, Steve Hilby, Mark McKinnon and Larry Kaufmann (Photo by Core Photography)

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## RECORD SETTING YEAR FOR SENIOR SOFTBALL

By Larry Wolfe

The 2017-18 softball year, including our fall, winter and spring sessions, saw seven individual hitting records set. It was truly the “year of the hitter.”

As promised in last month’s *Splash*, this is our annual overview of the major statistics that baseball and softball players and fans love to analyze. There are many views regarding the traditional stats such as batting average and homeruns versus the relatively new “advanced metrics” such as WAR (Wins Above Replacement) and BABIP (Batting Average on Balls In Play). Being seniors, we’ll stick to the traditional stats.

“Statistics are the lifeblood of baseball. In no other sport are so many available and studied so assiduously by participants and fans. Much of the

game's appeal lies in the opportunity the fan gets to back up opinions and arguments with convincing figures."-Leonard Koppett in *A Thinking Man's Guide to Baseball*.

There are those who think differently. Jim Bouton, author of *Ball Four*, says, "Statistics are about as interesting as first base coaches." However, I think most baseball fans agree with Mr. Koppett. Former infielder Toby Harrah took the middle ground. He said "Statistics are like bikinis. They show a lot, but not everything!"

Here are our stats leaders for 2017-18 (an asterisk indicates an all-time record was set):

At bats: Tom Erpelding (394\*), Jeff Jay 331, Doug Friesen (329)  
Singles: Tom Erpelding (177\*), Dennis McCarthy (158), Jeff Jay (154)  
Doubles: Doug Friesen (47), Dennis LePore (38), Doug Warwick (33)  
Triples: Tom Erpelding (13), Dan Bradfield (11), Three with 10  
Home runs: Mark McKinnon (51\*), Steve Hilby (48), Dan Melosi (38)  
Total On Base: Tom Erpelding (269\*), Bill Stanick (219), Steve Hilby (215)  
Runs: Tom Erpelding (181\*), Steve Hilby (168), Doug Friesen (155)  
Walks: John Whitman (36\*), Tom Erpelding (31), Steve Hilby (29)  
Intentional Walks: Steve Hilby and Mark McKinnon (13). Kim Whitney (8)  
Sacrifice Flies: Rick Ebel (12\*), Dennis LePore (11), Two with 10  
On Base Pct.: Reyes Gonzales (.825), Bill Stanick (.774), Steve Hilby (.754)  
Slugging Pct.: Mark McKinnon (1.368), Reyes Gonzales (1.271), Steve Hilby (1.196)

Of the dozen stats tracked, Tom Erpelding set new highs in four different categories. It was also the "Year of the Long Ball," as Mark McKinnon topped his record of 50 HRs set last year with 51 this year. In total, home runs were up 37% (489 vs. 358) and twenty players hit over ten each. (Was the ball "juiced" or were the players eating extra bowls of Wheaties?!) Let the discussions and arguments begin!