

Triple Milestones - 2014

By Bill Gilbert

Offensive production in the major leagues continued to decline in 2014. The number of home runs per game decreased in 2014 and batting average, on-base percentage and slugging average dropped to the lowest levels in over 20 years.

Year	Runs/Game	HR/Game	BAVG	OBA	SLG	OPS	Triple Milestone Hitters
1990	8.51	1.58	.258	.324	.386	.710	2
1991	8.62	1.61	.255	.323	.384	.707	3
1992	8.23	1.44	.256	.322	.377	.699	2
1993	9.20	1.78	.266	.332	.404	.736	5
1994	9.85	2.07	.270	.339	.424	.763	3
1995	9.69	2.02	.267	.338	.417	.755	8
1996	10.07	2.19	.270	.340	.427	.767	21
1997	9.53	2.05	.267	.337	.419	.756	7
1998	9.58	2.08	.266	.335	.420	.755	14
1999	10.17	2.28	.271	.345	.434	.779	19
2000	10.28	2.34	.271	.345	.437	.782	26
2001	9.55	2.25	.264	.332	.427	.759	21
2002	9.24	2.09	.261	.331	.417	.748	12
2003	9.46	2.14	.264	.332	.422	.754	8
2004	9.63	2.25	.266	.335	.428	.763	12
2005	9.18	2.06	.265	.330	.419	.749	10
2006	9.72	2.22	.269	.336	.432	.768	13
2007	9.59	2.04	.268	.336	.423	.759	8
2008	9.30	2.01	.264	.333	.417	.750	7
2009	9.23	2.02	.262	.333	.418	.751	6
2010	8.77	1.90	.257	.325	.403	.728	6
2011	8.57	1.87	.255	.321	.399	.720	7
2012	8.64	2.03	.255	.319	.405	.724	4
2013	7.77	1.79	.253	.318	.396	.714	3
2014	8.13	1.73	.251	.314	.386	.700	2

Runs and home runs were down in 2014 to the lowest level in over 20 years. Only one player (Nelson Cruz) hit 40 or more home runs in 2014 compared to two in 2013 and six in 2012. The 30 home run level was reached by only 11 players in 2014 compared to 14 in 2013 and 27 in 2012.

A useful indicator for tracking offense is the number of players who hit for both power and average by achieving a .300 batting average, 30 home runs and 100 runs batted in. A record 26 players reached all three milestones in 2000, but that figure has dropped significantly in recent years. Only two players reached all three milestones in 2014, the lowest since 1992, Of the 14 players with 30+ home runs, only two batted over .300 and seven had 100+ RBIs.

The two players who made the .300-30-100 club were Victor Martinez, for the first time, and Rookie Jose Abreu. They became the 173rd and 174th players to register at least one .300-30-100 season starting with Babe Ruth in 1920.

Following is a listing of players who achieved triple milestones in 2014.

<u>Player</u>	<u>Times</u>	<u>BAVG-HR-RBI</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Victor Martinez	1	.335-32-103	First time at age 36.
Jose Abreu	1	.317-36-107	Eighth rookie with triple milestones.

Three players achieved triple milestones in 2013 but fell short in 2014:

Player	Times	2013	2014	
		BAVG-HR-RBI	BAVG-HR-RBI	
Miguel Cabrera	7	.348-44-137	.313-25-109	Power shortage
David Ortiz	4	.309-30-103	.263-35-104	Big drop in BAVG.
Paul Goldschmidt	1	.302-36-125	.300-19- 69	On track until injury.

Since baseball is now in a low scoring era, it has become more difficult for players to achieve triple milestones. No others came close. I have been tracking and analyzing triple milestones for over 20 years but this might be the last one. If current trends continue, there may not be any triple milestone hitters next year. Even Mike Trout, considered by many to be the best player in the game, can't make it (.287-36-111 in 2014) in his first year with 100+ RBIs. Martinez, at age 37 is unlikely to match his 2013 success in 2014 and Abreu faces a challenge in repeating his rookie success. Of the other seven previous rookies to reach triple milestones, only Albert Pujols repeated in his second year. Others like Ted Williams and Mike Piazza fell short before racking up multiple triple milestone seasons. Hal Trosky and Rudy York each later recorded another such season but Wally Berger and Walt Dropo never had another one.

The following list contains the names of players, active in 2014, who have had multiple .300-30-100 seasons in the past but have not done it in the last three years. Many have been limited by injuries. Some are still productive players like Albert Pujols, Matt Holliday and Aramis Ramirez, but not at the same level as in their peak years. Since this list was started in 2004, Ortiz is the only player that has come back with another triple milestone season.

Player	Last		2014	Comments
	.300-30-100 Seasons	.300-30-100 Season		
Albert Pujols	10	2010	.272-28-105	Four straight years under .300
Jason Giambi	4	2002	.133- 2- 5	End of the line at 43.
Mark Teixeira	3	2008	.216-22- 62	Injuries have taken toll.
Paul Konerko	3	2011	.207- 5- 22	Retiring at 39.
Aramis Ramirez	2	2004	.285-15- 66	Still productive.
Matt Holliday	2	2007	.272-20- 90	Lowest BAVG of career.
David Wright	2	2008	.269- 8- 63	Worst year of career.
Josh Hamilton	2	2010	.263-10- 41	A shell of his former self.

Twenty nine of the thirty major league teams have now had at least one triple milestone hitter since the year 2000. Kansas City has not had a triple milestone hitter since Danny Tartabull in 1991.

Three minor league players also recorded triple milestone seasons. Only one is under the age of 29.

Player	Team (Level)	Organization	Age	BAVG-HR-RBI
Kris Bryant	Tennessee (AA)	Chicago Cubs	22	.355-22- 58
	Iowa (AAA)			.295-21- 52
				.325-43-110
Jake Fox	Laguna, Mex. (AAA)	None	31	.307-16- 46
	Reading (AA)	Philadelphia		.308-22- 70
				.308-38-116
Marquez Smith	Pensacola (AA)	Cincinnati	29	.156- 1- 5
	Bakersfield (A+)			.323-29-126
				.311-30-131

Another player who split time between the minors and majors just missed:

J.D.Martinez	Toledo (AAA)	Detroit	26	.308-10- 22
	Detroit			<u>.315-23- 76</u>
				.314-33- 98

No college players achieved triple milestones in 2014.

Pitchers also strive for triple milestones - 20 wins, 200 strikeouts and an ERA under 3.00. Only two pitchers made all three in 2014:

	<u>Wins-SO-ERA</u>	
Clayton Kershaw	21-239-1.77	Also did it in 2011.
Johnny Cueto	20-242-2.18	First 20 win and 200 strikeout season.

Another pitcher won 20 games but fell short on strikeouts:

Adam Wainwright	20-179-2.38	Made it in 2010.
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Twenty two pitchers with enough innings to qualify for the ERA title had an ERA under 3.00 but only three won 20 games and nine had 200 strikeouts.

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