

**One of Baseball's Most Dominant Pitchers, Dizzy Vance**

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**Abstract**

In this paper, we will look at what the author believes to be one of the most amazing stretches of dominance by one player, Dizzy Vance, in baseball history.

I have always loved baseball and baseball statistics. I like looking at who led in certain statistics during a particular season and by how much.

Batting average is reported as a decimal to three decimal places. In 1949, George Kell and Ted Williams appeared to be tied for the American League lead at .343. But, of course, they weren't, since they each rounded off to .343. The actual results were George Kell at .34291 and Ted Williams at .34275. Had Williams' average been .00017 higher, he would have won another Triple Crown.

In 1967, Carl Yastrzemski and Harmon Killebrew tied for the home run lead in the American League at 44. Yastrzemski DID win the Triple Crown, though had Killebrew hit one more home run, he would not have done so.

In 1970, the batting average lead in the American League again appeared to be a tie with Alex Johnson and Carl Yastrzemski at .329. But it was really Johnson at .32899 and Yastrzemski at .32862.

1967's runs batted in race in the National League had Orlando Cepeda with 111, Roberto Clemente at 110, Hank Aaron with 109 and Jimmy Wynn at 107. Four guys within four RBIs of each other.

Then there are some not so close statistical races. In 1920, Babe Ruth won the home run title in the American League with 54. Second place was George Sisler with 19.

Now let us turn our attention to the focus of this paper, Dazy Vance. Vance was a pitcher during the first half of the 20th century. He pitched for the following teams:

<b>YEARS</b>	<b>TEAMS</b>
1915	Pirates, Yankees
1918	Yankees
1922-1932	Dodgers
1933-1934	Cardinals
1934	Reds
1935	Dodgers

His career ended up with him being elected to the Hall of Fame.

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Of course, I have to include photos from his grave site in Stage Stand Cemetery in Homosassa Springs, Florida.



Dodgers teammate Johnny Frederick said, "Dazzy Vance could throw a cream puff through a battleship."

The following chart shows the top ten seasonal strikeout totals from 1922 through 1931. It also includes five other Dazzy Vance totals, showing where those ranked.

<b>RANK</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>SO</b>	<b>IP</b>	<b>TEAM</b>
<b>1</b>	Dazzy Vance	1924	262	308.333	Dodgers
<b>2</b>	Dazzy Vance	1925	221	265.333	Dodgers
<b>3</b>	Lefty Grove	1930	209	291	A's
<b>4</b>	Dazzy Vance	1928	200	280.333	Dodgers
<b>5</b>	Dazzy Vance	1923	197	280	Dodgers
<b>6</b>	Lefty Grove	1926	194	258	A's
<b>7</b>	George Earnshaw	1930	193	296	A's
<b>8</b>	Dazzy Vance	1927	184	273.333	Dodgers
<b>9</b>	Lefty Grove	1928	183	262	A's
<b>10</b>	Wild Bill Hallahan	1930	177	237	Cardinals
<b>13</b>	Dazzy Vance	1930	173	258.667	Dodgers
<b>24</b>	Dazzy Vance	1931	150	218.667	Dodgers
<b>32</b>	Dazzy Vance	1926	140	169	Dodgers
<b>38</b>	Dazzy Vance	1922	134	245.667	Dodgers
<b>49</b>	Dazzy Vance	1929	126	231.333	Dodgers

So Vance had the top two totals, four of the top five, five of the top eight, and ten of the top 49. Vance was the only pitcher to finish in his league's top 10 in all 10 of these years. Lefty Grove is the only other pitcher who finished in his league's top 10 at least seven times. Vance was the only one to finish in Major League Baseball's top 10 all ten years; Grove again did it seven times. Vance led the majors five times, Grove four times, and Urban Shocker once.

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Let us now look at several individual seasons to get a real feel for how dominant Vance was during those years.

In 1922, Vance led the National League and was third in the majors. That doesn't sound particularly impressive until you notice that he was only 14 and 15 strikeouts behind numbers 1 and 2 despite having more than 100 fewer innings pitched.

NAME	SO	IP	TEAM
Urban Shocker	149	348	Browns
Red Faber	148	353	White Sox
Dazzy Vance	134	245.667	Dodgers
Wilbur Cooper	129	295	Pirates

In 1923, Vance led the majors. He had 30.46% more than 2nd place in 42 fewer innings. He had 65.55% more than 3rd place in 47 fewer innings. And he had 51.54% more than the American League's leader despite having only 18-2/3 more innings.

NAME	SO	IP	TEAM
Dazzy Vance	197	280	Dodgers
Dolf Luque	151	322	Reds
Walter Johnson	130	261.333	Senators

In 1924, Vance again led the majors. He had 65.82% more than the American League's leader in just 30-2/3 more innings. That is the second greatest percentage margin ever between the two league leaders. He had an amazing 94.07% more than the National League's second best in 2-2/3 fewer innings. That is also the second greatest percentage margin ever. He had 204.65% more than third place in the National League (262 compared to 86) in 89-1/3 more innings. That is the greatest percentage margin ever between a league's number one and number three.

NAME	SO	IP	TEAM
Dazzy Vance	262	308.333	Dodgers
Walter Johnson	158	277.667	Senators
Burleigh Grimes	135	311	Dodgers

In 1925, he led the majors. He had 57.86% more than the National League's number two in 35-2/3 fewer innings (4th greatest % margin ever), 90.52% more than the American League's leader in 68-1/3 more innings, and 137.63% more than the National League's number three (221 to 93 - 2nd greatest % margin ever).

NAME	SO	IP	TEAM
Dazzy Vance	221	265.333	Dodgers
Dolf Luque	140	291	Reds
Lefty Grove	116	197	A's

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In 1926, he led the National League and was third in the majors. However, he had only 54 and 19 fewer than number one and two in 89 and 149 fewer innings respectively. He 10.24% more than the National League's number two in 102 fewer innings.

NAME	SO	IP	TEAM
Lefty Grove	194	258	A's
George Uhle	159	318	Indians
Dazzy Vance	140	169	Dodgers
Tommy Thomas	127	249	White Sox
Charlie Root	127	271	Cubs

In 1927, he again led the majors. He had ten more than second place in just 11-1/3 more innings. He had 26.90% more than the National League's #2 in 35-2/3 fewer innings.

NAME	SO	IP	TEAM
Dazzy Vance	184	273.333	Dodgers
Lefty Grove	174	262	A's
Charlie Root	145	309	Cubs

He once again led the majors in 1928. He had 17 more strikeouts than second place in just 18-1/3 more innings. He had 29.03% more than the National League's second place in 29-1/3 more innings.

NAME	SO	IP	TEAM
Dazzy Vance	200	280.333	Dodgers
Lefty Grove	183	262	A's
Pat Malone	155	251	Cubs

By 1929, his greatest dominance was over, though his numbers were still good.

This table shows the people with the most strikeouts in the major leagues from 1922 to 1928.

Dazzy Vance	1338
Burleigh Grimes	689
Dolf Luque	687
Walter Johnson	674

He had practically twice as many as the man who was second best.

Vance pitched in an era when batters were embarrassed to strike out, so his total numbers seem modest compared to today's totals. So I am going to give one more statistic that truly shows his amazing dominance in the context of his era.

This chart shows the seven best seasons for a pitcher in strikeouts per 9 innings as a percentage of the league average.

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Rube Waddell	1902	269.29%
Dazzy Vance	1925	263.16%
Dazzy Vance	1926	259.03%
Cy Seymour	1898	251.25%
Bob Feller	1937	249.59%
Johnny Vander Meer	1941	245.12%
Dazzy Vance	1924	239.06%

Vance did not have the best ever, but he finished with three of the top seven OF ALL TIME. That is dominance.

#### **Biographical Sketch**

Fred Worth received his B.S. in Mathematics from Evangel College in Springfield, Missouri in 1982. He received his M.S. in Applied Mathematics in 1987 and his Ph.D. in Mathematics in 1991 from the University of Missouri-Rolla. He has been teaching at Henderson State University since August 1991. He is a member of the Society for American Baseball Research and the Mathematical Association of America. He hates the Yankees.