

## **A Few Moments With Strat-O-Matic Creator Hal Richman**

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If you were anything like us as a kid, you were a total nerd. That is to say: You spent the formative years of your youth, the time to roll down hills and eat grass, indoors playing the [Strat-O-Matic baseball simulation](#). (We could occasionally see other kids playing outside our window while rolling die and trying to win the pennant with the 1988 St. Louis Cardinals. Come on, Bob Horner!) Anyway, we spoke with Hal Richman, Strat-O-Matic's founder, about the new Negro League cards the company has introduced, and the game's place in the new century.

### **How do you accurately simulate a game from the Negro Leagues? So many of their statistics are unreliable, and they didn't really play actual seasons.**

We had 3,000 box scores and game stories, so we delved into and sorted through all that information. We read about 100 newspapers from the time, many black newspapers, reading what their opinions of the players were throughout the history of Negro Leagues. It was actually easier than some of our other historical simulations, because these guys really faced each other. It's more difficult to say how Babe Ruth would do against Bob Gibson, because they never played against each other. The Negro Leagues actually did have competitive games on their barnstorming tours. It gave us some idea of how they compared.

### **Baseball's statistical revolution has changed the way people look at the game. Has it changed your system?**

We don't get into the details of our "secret sauce," but we don't just look at statistics. We do a tremendous amount of reading and look at fielding abilities, running abilities, things not proven by statistics. We don't think statistics always tell the full story. We feel ours are the best in the business.

### **What's the main thing that has changed as you've come up with the baseball rankings over the years?**

Writers were much more objective in 1911 than they are in 2009. You got better insight into players' running ability and fielding and so on. There were a lot less homer writers in 1911.

### **You do simulations for baseball, football and basketball. Have you ever thought about other sports, like, say, soccer?**

For something to be successful in this country, it has to have a following. Soccer is played a lot, but there isn't much interest in a soccer game. If people would buy it, though, we'd find a way to make it work.

By: [Will Leitch](#)

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