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The Associated Press State & Local Wire

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HEADLINE: Software allows **baseball** buffs to find unique stats about teams

BYLINE: KRISTEN HAYS, Associated Press Writer

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BODY:

In 128 years, **baseball** has racked up plenty of statistics to keep trivia buffs busy.

Now a **computer** scientist has created a program that can pinpoint unique aspects of the 2,297 teams that have played major league **baseball** through 1998.

Raul Valdes-Perez of Carnegie Mellon University wrote software that lets **baseball** fans differentiate teams in any year since 1871.

"Our culture makes niche statements," he said. "Go on the Web and type in 'is the only,' and you'll find hundreds of pages pointing out some sort of niche."

Four years ago, he started writing a program to sift through mountains of data to determine what makes something special as compared to everything else in the data pool.

Then Valdes-Perez, a Chicago Cubs fan, contemplated what kind of data the program could be used for.

"I certainly was a baseball fan when I was a kid," he said. "Baseball seemed like a natural thing to want to pose these questions for."

The program asks the user to plug in a city, team and year. It will then say what makes that team special - no matter how obscure the result may be.

For instance, the program says the 1950 New York Yankees had eight All-Stars, the most of seven teams that were both managed by Casey Stengel and had a player with 100 RBIs. That year, the Yankees with Whitey Ford and Yogi Berra swept the Phillies to win the World Series.

Ask the program to ignore the qualification of the manager, and it says the team had the most All-Stars of nine teams that played in New York and had a player with at least 200 hits.

The 1965 New York Mets, with players such as Galen Cisco and Tug McGraw, had the most losses (112) of the 897 teams that had at least 1 million fans in a season.

Steve Hirdt, a spokesman for the Elias Sports Bureau, the official statistician for major league baseball, said fans are notorious for being fascinated with statistics. He said the program might be a way to compare teams from different decades.

"It's sort of a safe ground that anybody can talk to anybody about," Hirdt said. "It happens with other sports, but more with baseball because baseball goes back furthest in this country. If a CEO and a delivery boy get stuck in an elevator for several hours, they'd end up talking about sports."

Valdes-Perez is still tweaking the program, which could be applied to other subjects, such as national politics.

"You can use this software with non-sports or any sport," he said. "It's meant to mine through data to find things interesting to people."

The program will answer electronic mail requests sent to [baseball\(at\)cs.cmu.edu](mailto:baseball(at)cs.cmu.edu). In lower case, enter the year, city and nickname of the team in the body of the message.

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