



# The Hardball Times Graphical Report

August 19, 2010

Welcome to the Hardball Times Graphical Report. In these pages, you'll find division standings and graphs highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each team. First, though, here is one of this week's highlights from THT Live. Be sure to check for new content daily at [www.hardballtimes.com](http://www.hardballtimes.com). (All stats courtesy of Fangraphs.com).

## Panda Month by Month: What the Fudge?

by Steve Treder (August 11)

I had the pleasure of taking in one of the Giants vs. Braves games in Atlanta last week sitting next to THT's own Studes. When Pablo Sandoval came to bat, Studes asked me the obvious question, to which I, as a close observer of the Giants, should have some manner of reasonable answer, namely: just what the heck is going on with The Panda?

After all, he hit 330/387/556 last year as a 22-year-old, and while one might expect that particular torrid pace a bit difficult to sustain, a thudding drop all the way to 268/325/382, which is where Sandoval is through yesterday's games, was hardly what anyone expected.

The answer I gave Studes, the stock answer I give to everyone who asks (and I get asked this question with increasing and depressing regularity), is that The Panda doesn't appear to have the tremendous bat speed he wielded last year. He's been especially vulnerable to the high fastball, fouling off pitches

he used to be driving with power. And one look at this ballplayer will suggest the likely reason for the loss bat speed: his weight, which is egregious. It would seem awfully hard to get around on the high heat when you've got that kind of belly in your way.

But here's the thing: the weight explanation would be a lot more persuasive if Sandoval were noticeably heavier this year than he was last year. But he isn't.

Moreover, one would think that whatever it is about Sandoval that's different this year than last would have manifested itself at the very beginning of this year—or perhaps even toward the end of last year. But it didn't.

Let me show you some numbers to explain what I mean.

Here's Pablo Sandoval's batting performance month-by-month, ever since he arrived in the majors in mid-August of 2008, though July of this year:

Month	PA	H	2B	3B	HR	BB	SO	BA	OBP	SLG	OPS	BABIP	ISO
Aug-08	58	22	4	1	1	1	6	.393	.397	.554	.950	.420	.161
Sep/Oct 08	96	28	6	0	2	3	8	.315	.333	.449	.783	.317	.134
Mar/Apr 09	80	23	5	1	1	3	12	.307	.350	.440	.790	.355	.133
May-09	100	29	9	1	2	5	12	.309	.350	.489	.839	.338	.180
Jun-09	109	37	9	0	8	13	16	.394	.459	.745	1.203	.403	.351
Jul-09	110	31	7	1	5	5	17	.298	.327	.529	.856	.313	.231
Aug-09	105	33	7	0	5	10	12	.355	.419	.591	1.010	.364	.236
Sep/Oct 09	129	36	7	2	4	16	14	.321	.403	.527	.930	.337	.206
Mar/Apr 10	97	32	7	1	3	10	8	.368	.433	.575	1.008	.382	.207
May-10	120	26	7	1	1	6	19	.234	.275	.342	.617	.269	.108
Jun-10	105	22	4	0	2	10	11	.234	.305	.340	.645	.244	.106
Jul-10	106	22	6	0	0	10	19	.232	.302	.295	.597	.286	.063

## Panda Month by Month: What the Fudge? (continued...)

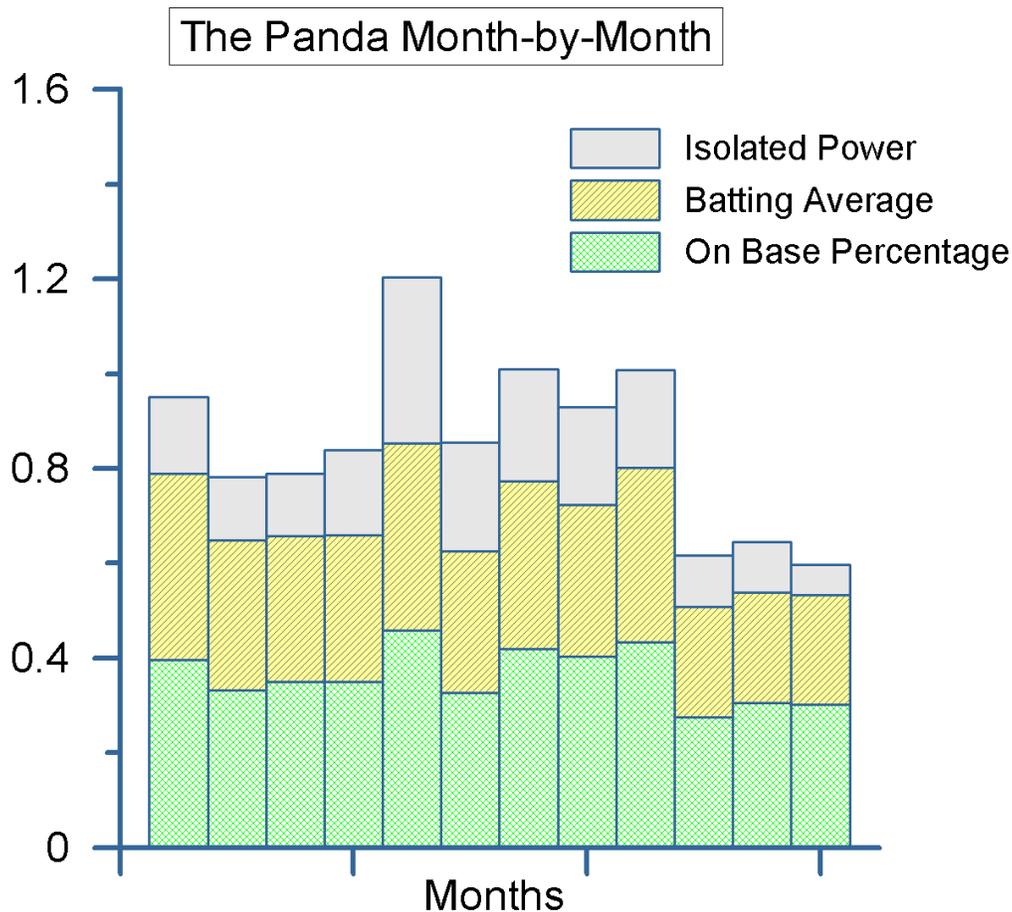
Here's what strikes me about that table: The Panda's performance in the first month of 2010 was tremendous, right in line with his hottest hitting of 2009. It wasn't until May of this year when the bottom just suddenly dropped out, and he weirdly has sustained his lousy May 2010 performance with dreary consistency through June and July—a level of performance vastly lower than any he'd presented in any month of his prior career.

We see that when Sandoval arrived in the big leagues, he was immediately a very high-average hitter, but with limited power and virtually no strike zone discipline. But over 2009, he sustained the lofty batting average, while adding substantial power, and an increasingly healthy walk rate as well.

Through March/April of 2010, he was keeping up that across-the-board excellence. Only in May did he suddenly encounter a disastrous evaporation in both batting average and Isolated Power. The drop in BABip has been particularly stunning. He's still drawing a few walks, but not nearly enough to make up for the complete loss in production when he swings the bat.

So, I don't know. His weight might very well be a significant problem, but the fact is that Sandoval didn't suddenly gain a ton of weight on May 1, 2010. But whatever his problem is, it seems to have arrived with extraordinary suddenness in May, and it doesn't seem to be in any mood to go away.

*Following is a month-by-month graph of the three averages that comprise OPS: OBP, Batting Average and Isolated Power (also known as ISO, or Slugging minus Batting Average). You can see that Sandoval's decline has been across the board, but his power decline particularly stands out.*

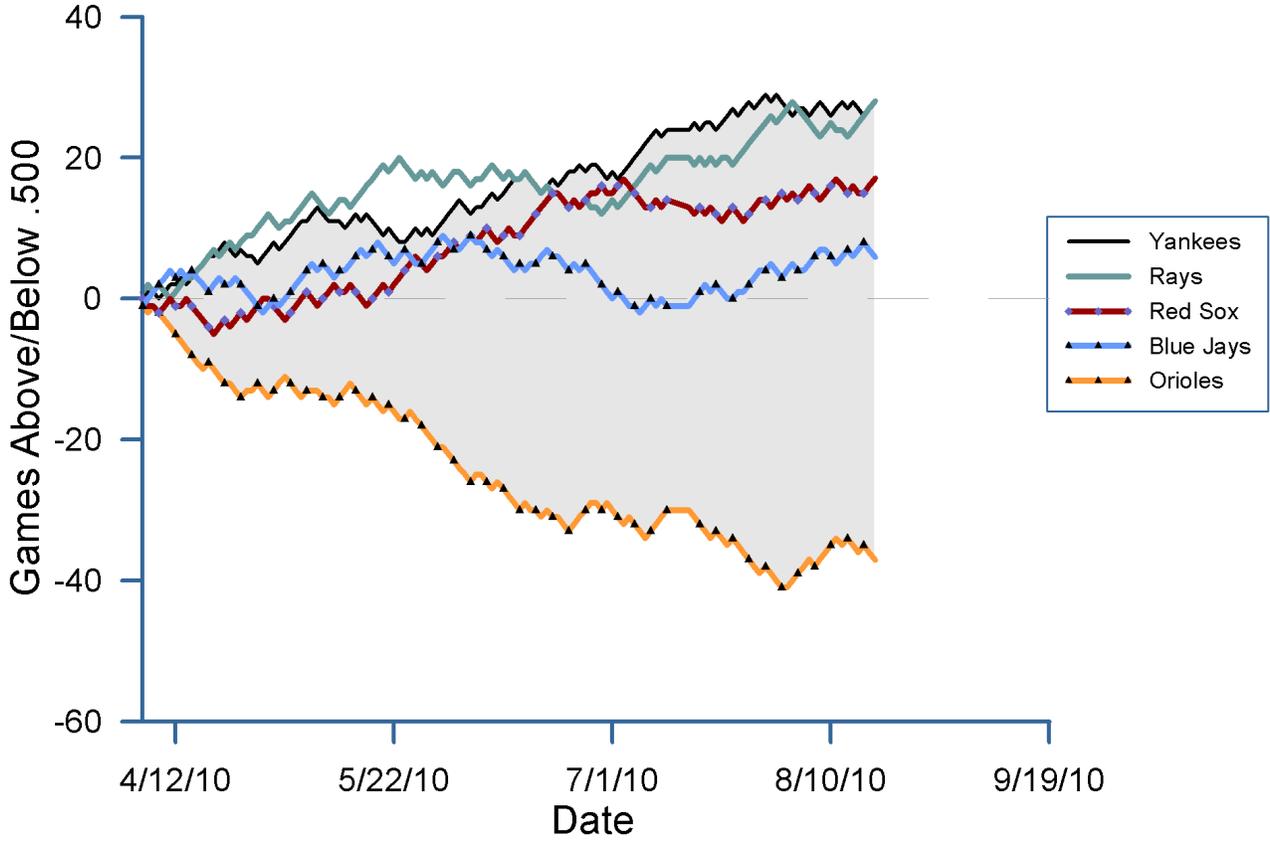


# Division Standings

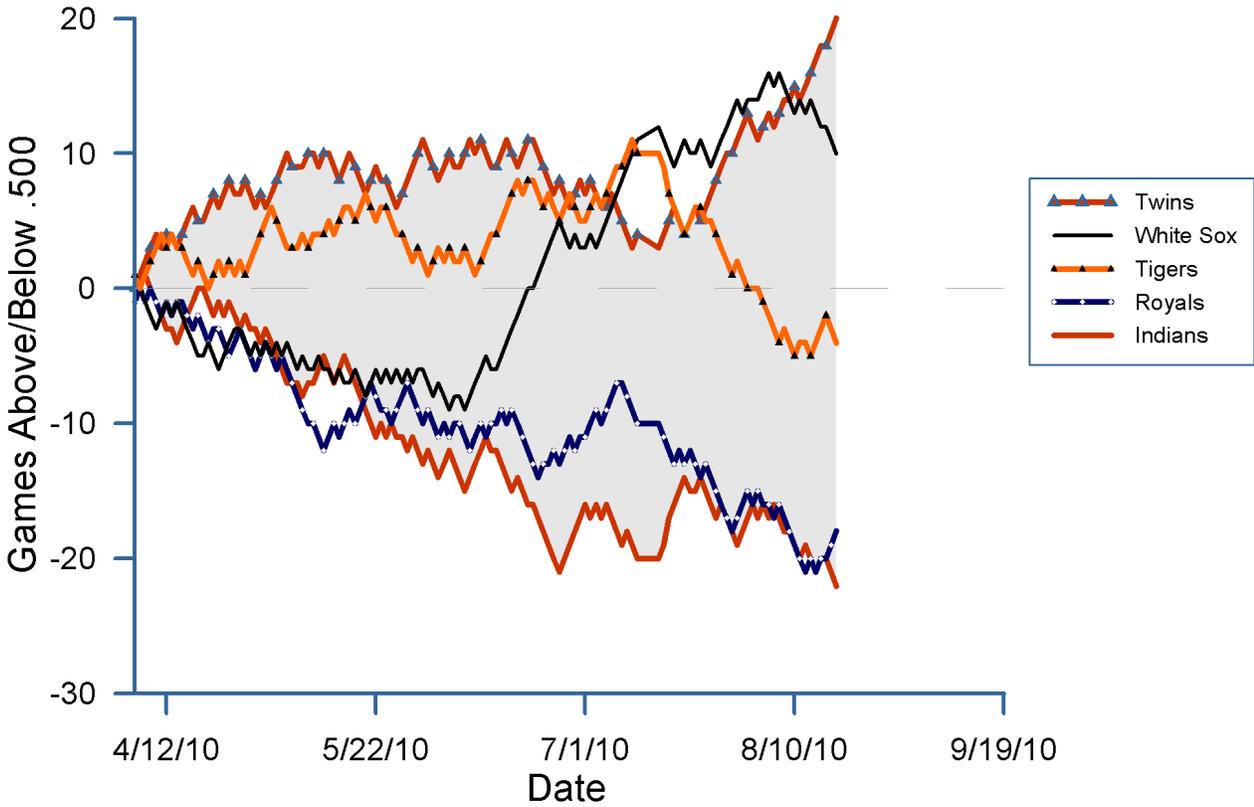
8/19/2010									Win Probability Added		
American League East			RS	RA	PWINS	DIFF	Close	Bat	Starters	Bullpen	
TBR	74	46	.617	605	460	75	-1	34-27	-0.26	6.46	7.79
NYY	74	46	.617	633	485	75	-1	27-22	3.44	6.07	4.50
BOS	69	52	.570	623	547	68	1	35-30	0.62	5.31	2.57
TOR	63	57	.525	557	521	64	-1	24-30	-0.17	3.96	-0.79
BAL	42	79	.347	448	634	42	0	27-33	-12.58	-4.66	-1.26
American League Central			RS	RA	PWINS	DIFF	Close	Bat	Starters	Bullpen	
MIN	70	50	.583	595	485	71	-1	31-24	1.63	4.80	3.57
CHW	65	55	.542	555	504	65	-0	28-31	-1.81	5.11	1.70
DET	58	62	.483	518	567	55	3	26-27	-1.65	-2.30	1.94
KCR	51	69	.425	493	620	47	4	31-33	-9.30	-3.17	3.47
CLE	49	71	.408	487	583	50	-1	24-30	-8.84	-3.56	1.39
American League West			RS	RA	PWINS	DIFF	Close	Bat	Starters	Bullpen	
TEX	67	52	.563	591	502	69	-2	34-29	0.83	1.87	4.80
LAA	60	61	.496	537	560	58	2	31-25	-7.67	4.55	2.62
OAK	59	60	.496	479	461	62	-3	27-29	-8.50	6.00	2.00
SEA	48	73	.397	397	519	46	2	28-33	-12.33	2.62	-2.79
									Win Probability Added		
National League East			RS	RA	PWINS	DIFF	Close	Bat	Starters	Bullpen	
ATL	71	49	.592	552	442	72	-1	30-28	6.53	2.31	2.16
PHI	68	51	.571	569	495	67	1	32-20	1.79	5.14	1.57
NYM	60	60	.500	486	472	62	-2	27-40	-8.45	6.54	1.90
FLA	59	60	.496	527	518	60	-1	33-31	-2.31	3.37	-1.56
WSN	51	69	.425	481	559	52	-1	31-33	-7.41	-1.83	0.24
National League Central			RS	RA	PWINS	DIFF	Close	Bat	Starters	Bullpen	
CIN	69	51	.575	593	500	70	-1	35-27	6.11	1.41	1.48
STL	65	53	.551	540	449	69	-4	26-29	0.05	4.38	1.58
MIL	57	64	.471	570	643	53	4	30-21	1.93	-3.06	-2.36
HOU	52	67	.437	460	565	48	4	20-23	-3.24	-2.56	-1.71
CHC	50	71	.413	513	597	52	-2	23-40	-10.37	0.08	-0.21
PIT	40	80	.333	410	642	36	4	27-29	-11.27	-8.75	0.02
National League West			RS	RA	PWINS	DIFF	Close	Bat	Starters	Bullpen	
SDP	72	47	.605	523	401	73	-1	34-26	-1.19	5.22	8.48
SFG	67	54	.554	523	457	68	-1	30-28	-0.68	3.78	3.40
COL	62	57	.521	561	525	63	-1	29-30	-2.59	1.72	3.37
LAD	61	60	.504	527	524	61	0	31-29	-2.04	2.09	0.45
ARI	47	74	.388	549	665	49	-2	23-31	-4.94	-1.58	-6.98

Notes: "PWins" stands for Pythagorean Wins (based on each team's runs scored and allowed). "Diff" is the difference between actual and Pythagorean wins. "Close" is each team's records in games decided by two runs or less.

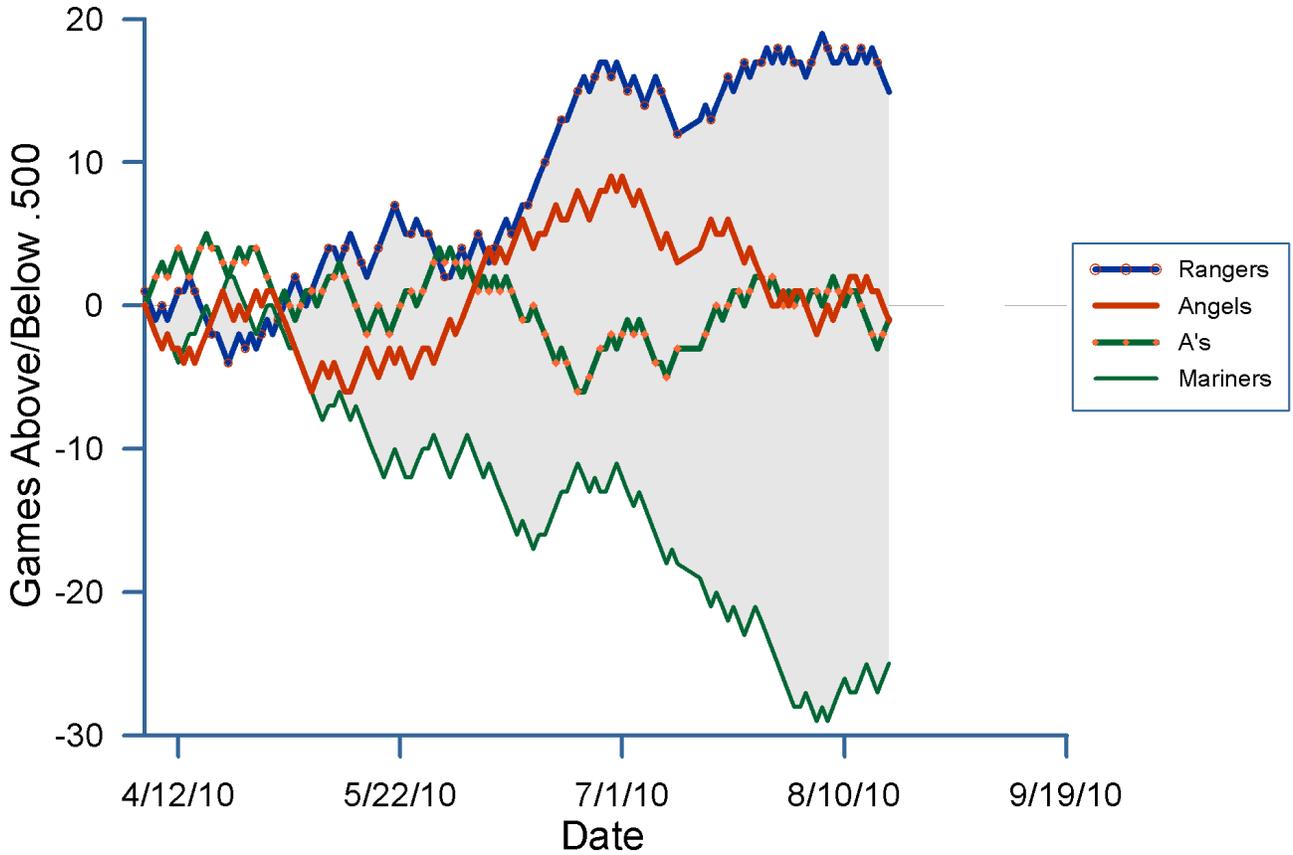
### American League East



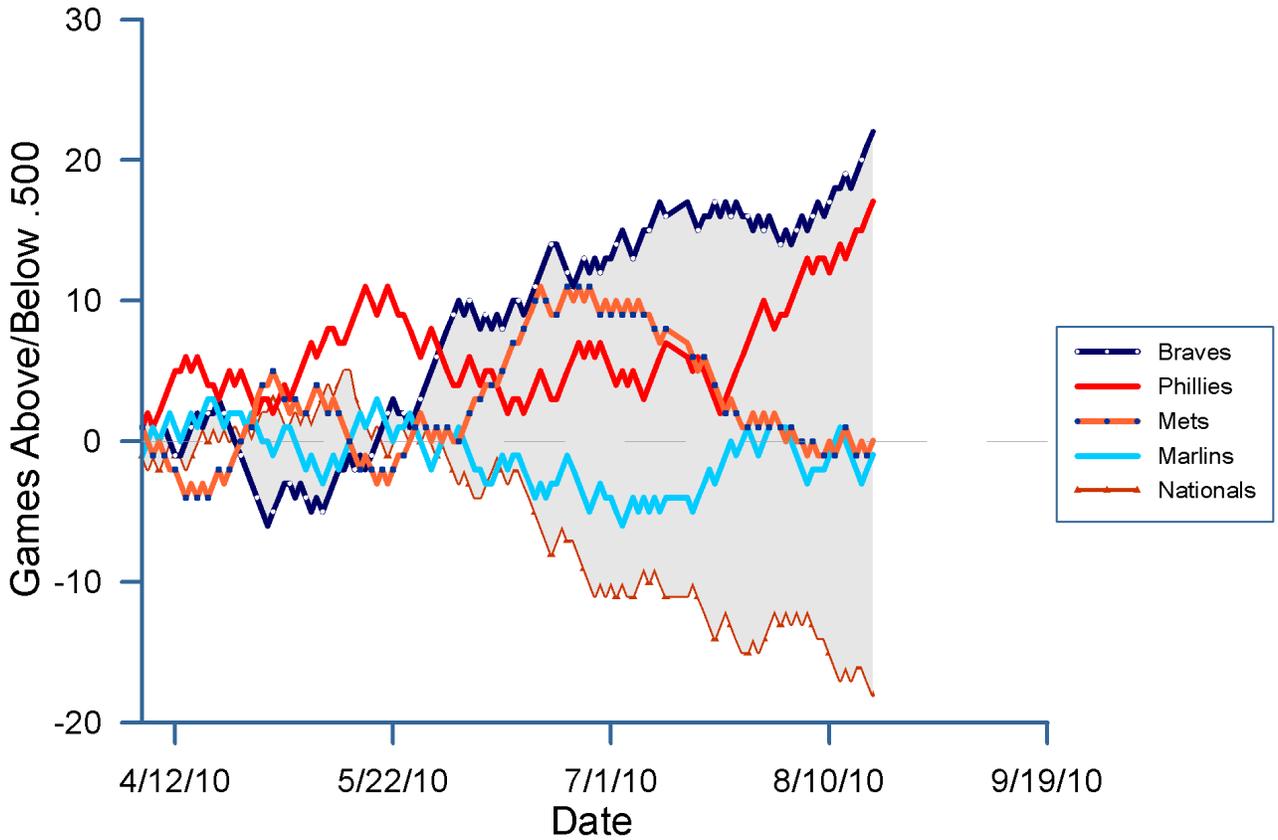
### American League Central



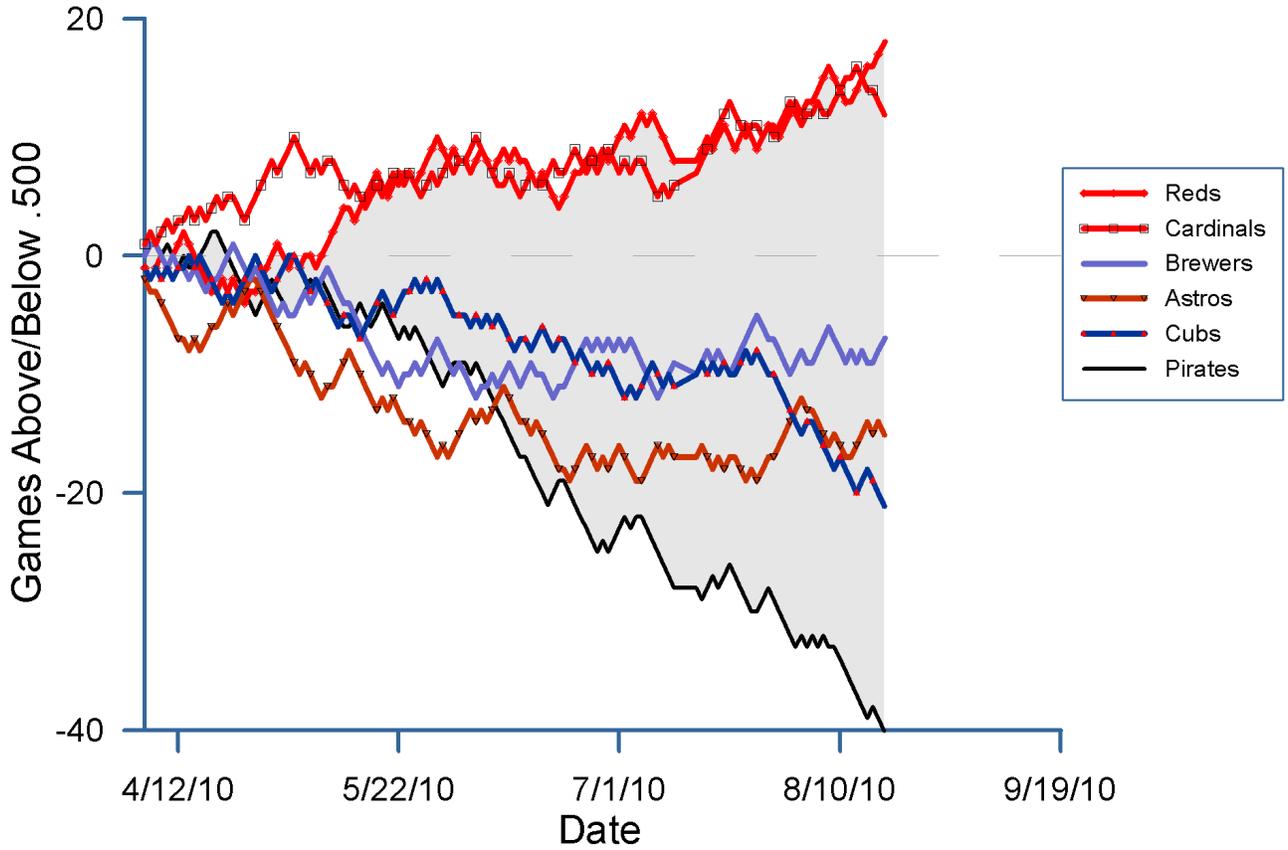
### American League West



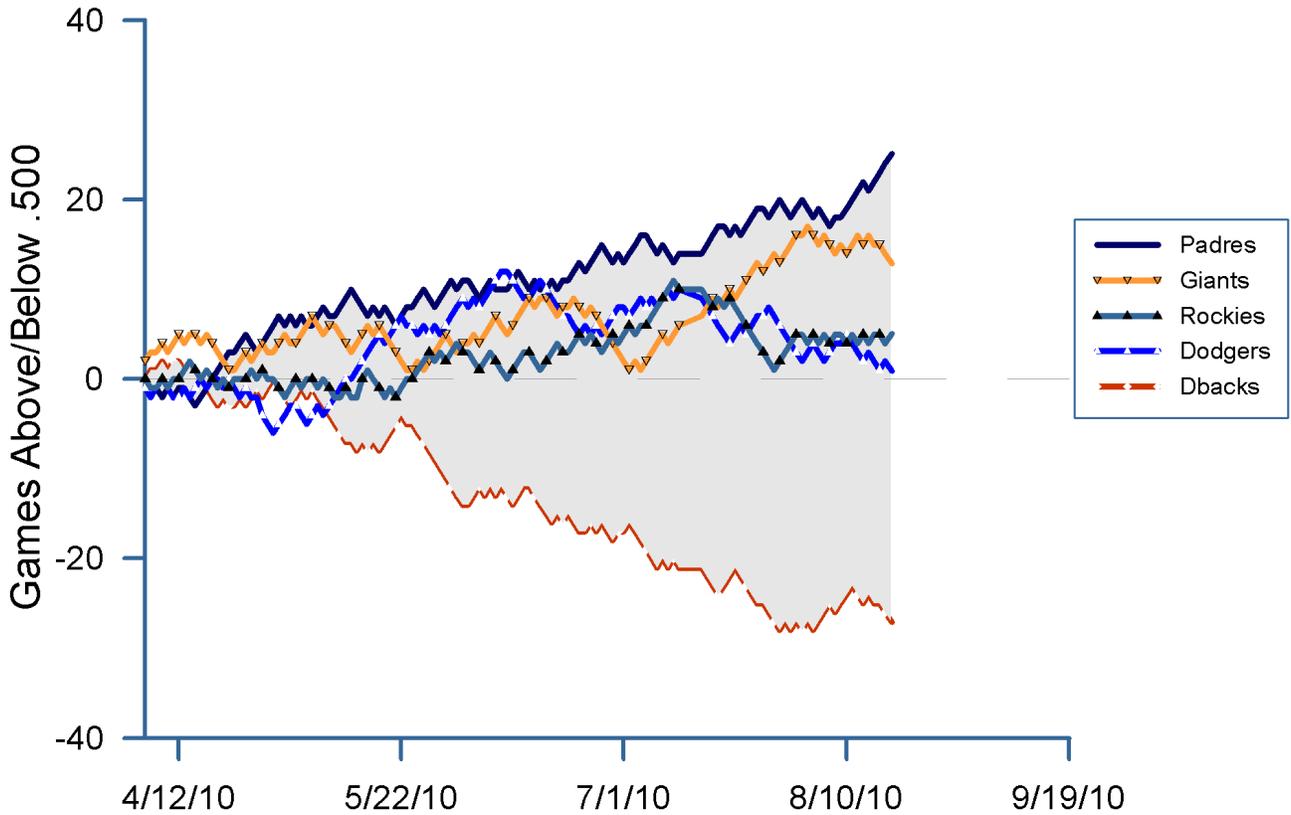
### National League East



### National League Central



### National League West



# American League Diagnostic Graphs

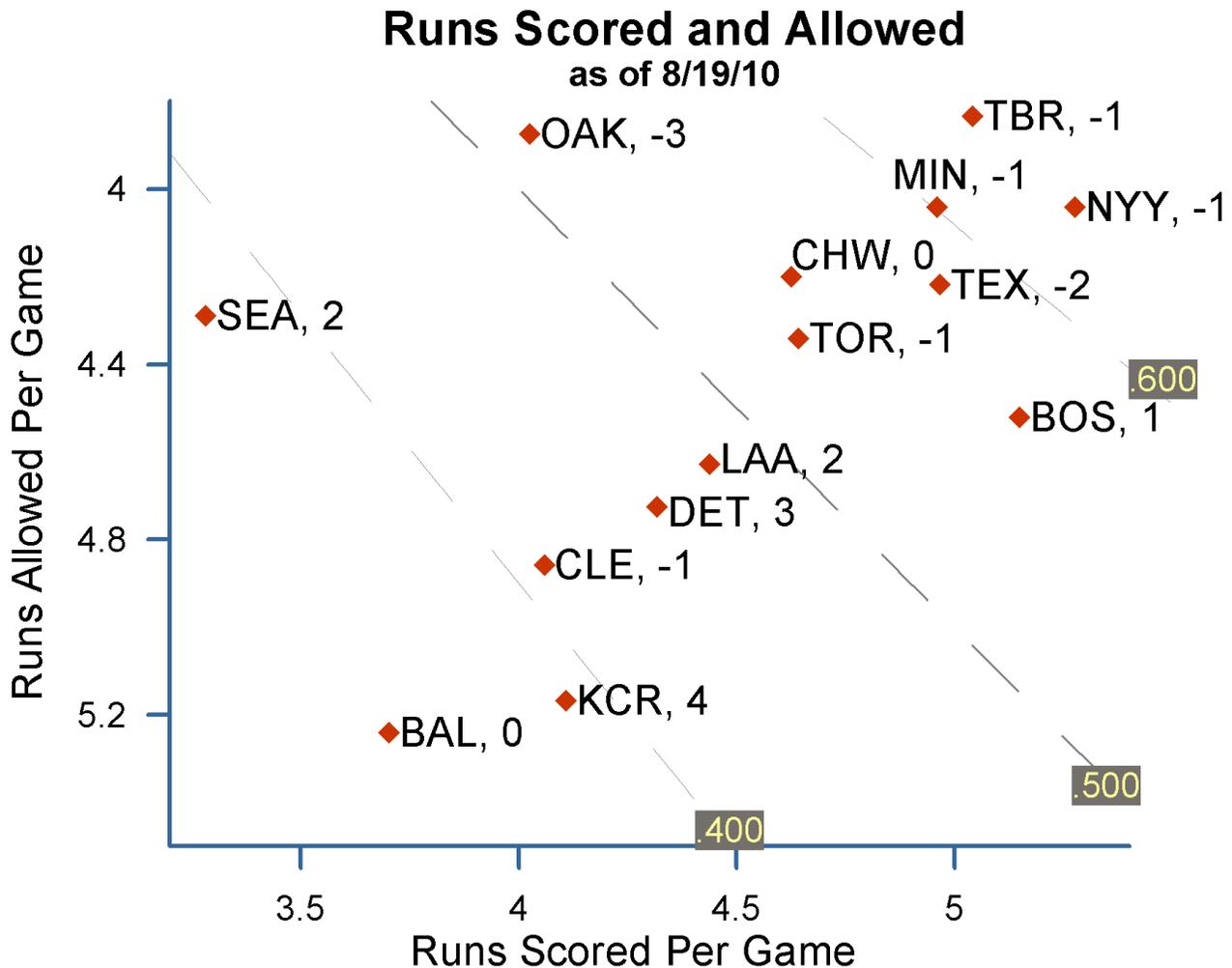
There are three graphs we like to use to get a handle on each team's strengths and weaknesses. Below is a graph of the average number of runs scored and allowed by each team. The graph is built so that the best teams are in the upper right-hand corner (lots of runs scored, fewer allowed) and the worst teams are in the lower left. High offense/bad pitching teams are in the lower right and low offense/good pitching teams are in the upper left. The dotted lines are "isotopes" and signify three different levels of winning percentage based on a number of runs scored and allowed anywhere on the graph. The number next to the team's label

is its pythagorean variance—the number of wins it actually falls above or below its indicated place on the graph.

On the next page, you'll find two graphs. One breaks down each team's offensive strength into three categories: getting runners into scoring position, hitting with runners in scoring position, and hitting home runs (the circle size). The second graph breaks each team's defensive strength into pitching (FIP, which is based solely on strikeouts, walks and home runs allowed) and fielding (DER, which is the proportion of batted balls in play that have been turned into outs by the defense).

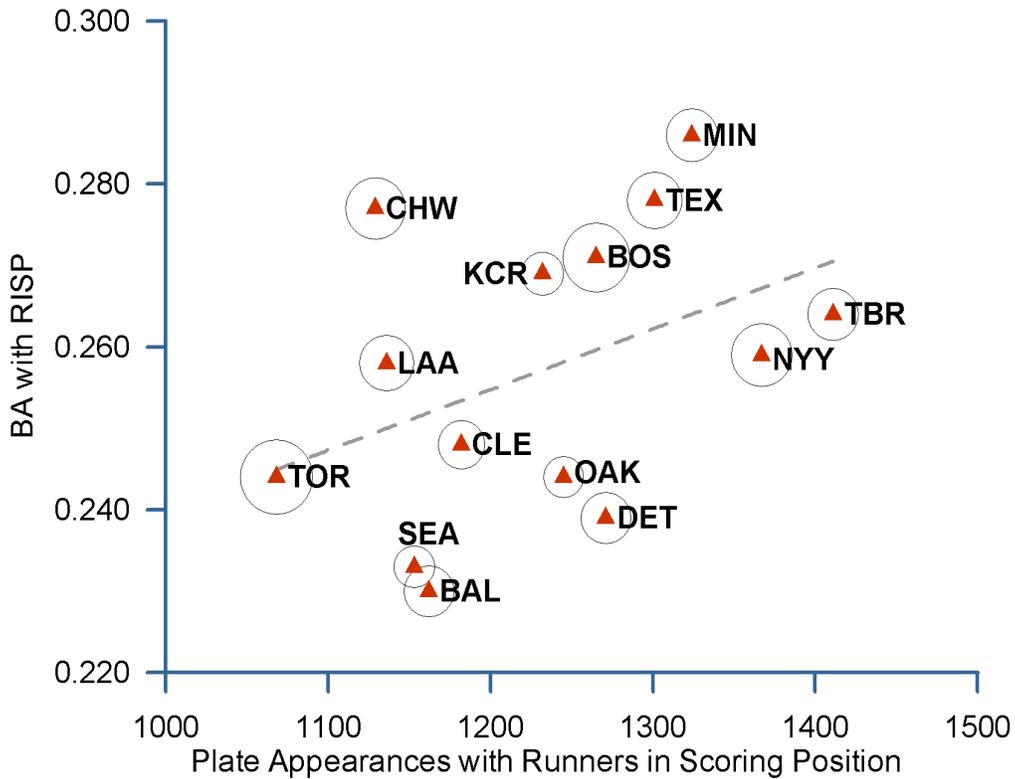
*Perhaps the biggest difference in this graph from our last report on August 3rd lies with Baltimore's defense, which improved its season mark of runs allowed by 0.2 runs a game. The biggest drop in performance has*

*been the Tigers, who were just below the .500 line last time. Otherwise, the Rays and Yankees remain the .600+ teams and the Twins are still on the .600 line.*



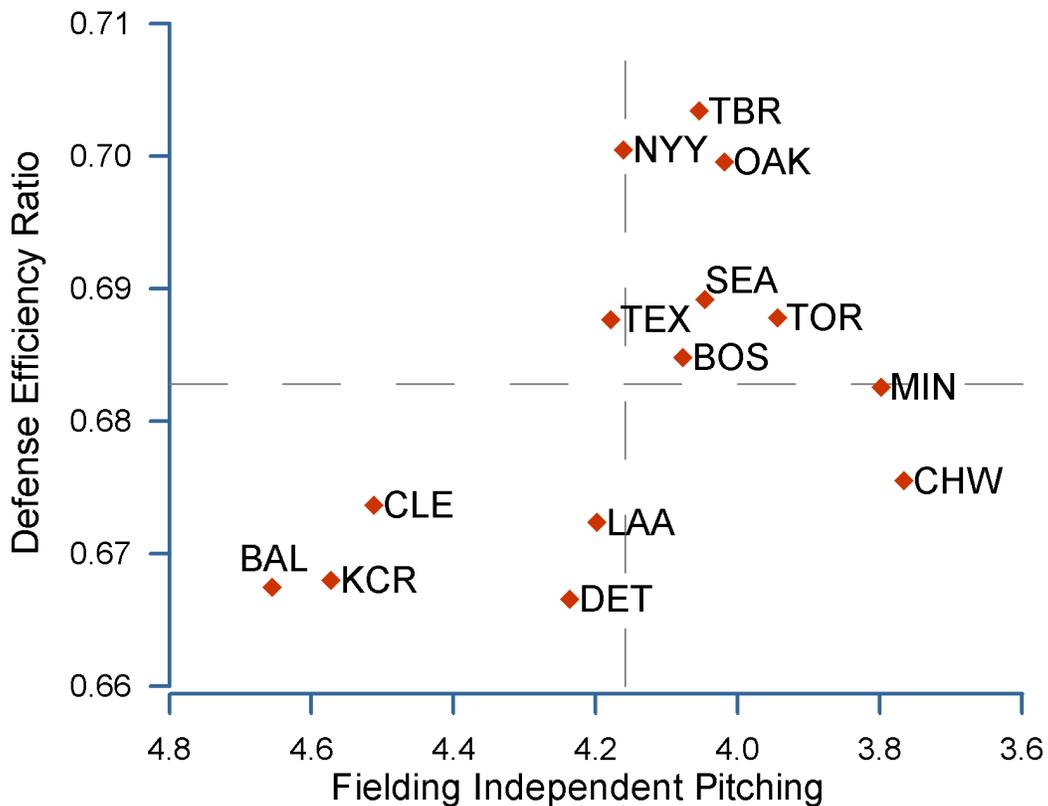
## The Hardball Times Graphical Report

*Since the last time we talked, the Rangers and Orioles have stepped up their batting with runners in scoring position, while the A's and Tigers haven't. The Royals aren't getting runners into scoring position as often as they used to.*



*The Orioles defense has improved primarily because their DER has improved. But the biggest changes appear to be in Toronto's pitching (worse), the Yankees' fielding (also worse) and the gloves in Texas (better).*

### Pitching and Fielding as of 8/19/10



# National League Diagnostic Graphs

There are three graphs we like to use to get a handle on each team's strengths and weaknesses. Below is a graph of the average number of runs scored and allowed by each team. The graph is built so that the best teams are in the upper right-hand corner (lots of runs scored, fewer allowed) and the worst teams are in the lower left. High offense/bad pitching teams are in the lower right and low offense/good pitching teams are in the upper left. The dotted lines are "isotopes" and signify three different levels of winning percentage based on a number of runs scored and allowed anywhere on the graph. The number next to the team's label

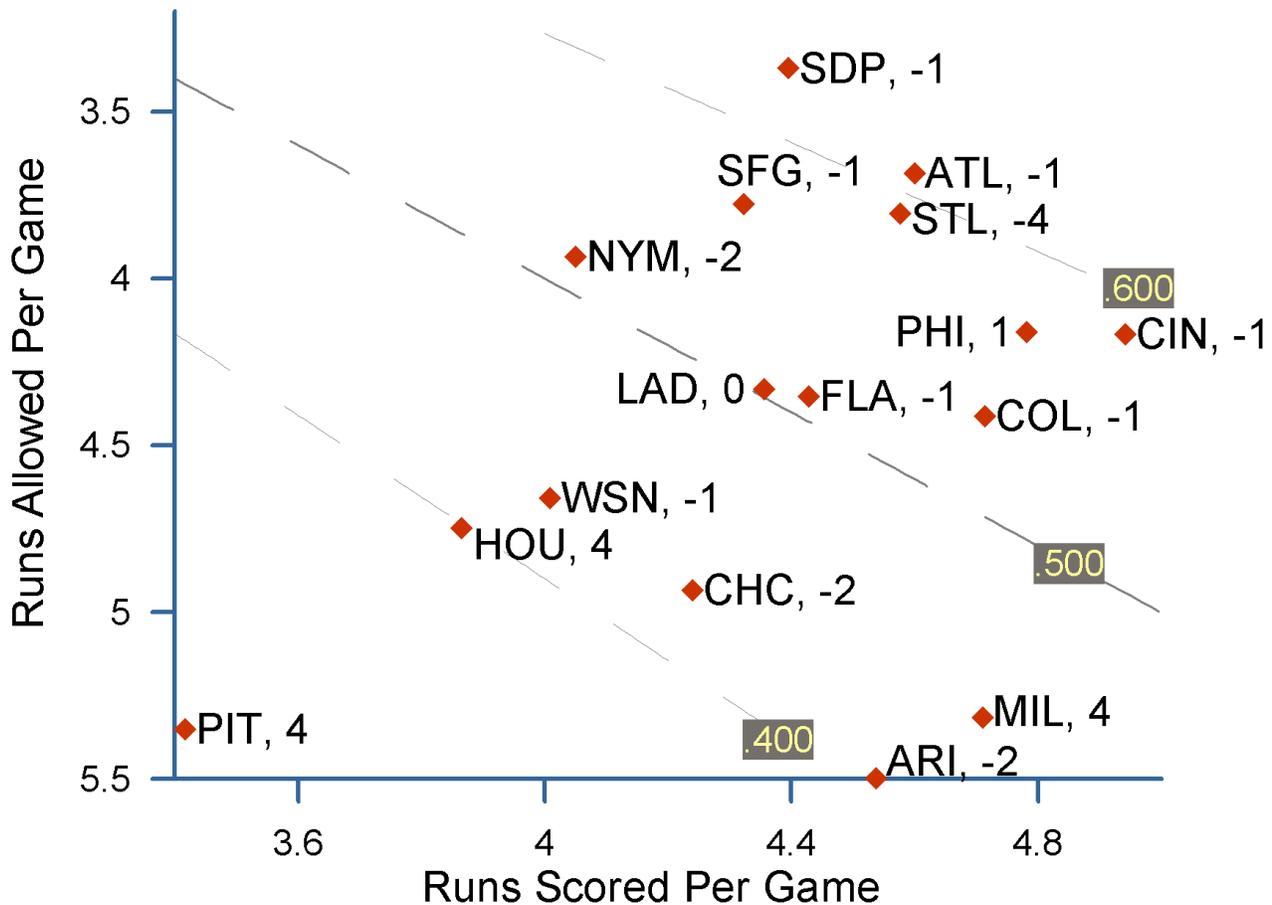
is its pythagorean variance—the number of wins it actually falls above or below its indicated place on the graph.

On the next page, you'll find two graphs. One breaks down each team's offensive strength into three categories: getting runners into scoring position, hitting with runners in scoring position, and hitting home runs (the circle size). The second graph breaks each team's defensive strength into pitching (FIP, which is based solely on strikeouts, walks and home runs allowed) and fielding (DER, which is the proportion of batted balls in play that have been turned into outs by the defense).

*The biggest change since last time has probably been the New York offense—the Mets have moved to the left quite a bit. The Giants have also*

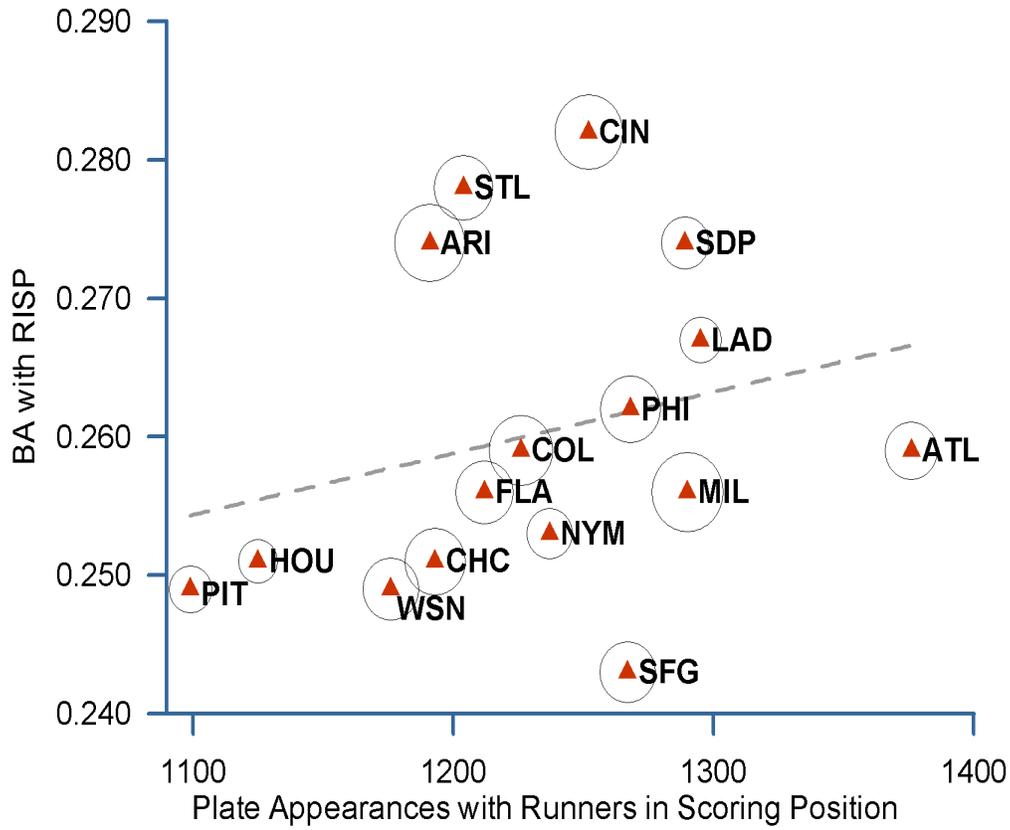
*lost some of their position, due to a decline in both offense and defense, while the Padres and Braves—already pretty good—have gotten even better.*

**Runs Scored and Allowed  
as of 8/19/10**



## The Hardball Times Graphical Report

*Under the surface, there have been some big offensive changes: the Marlins, Mets, Padres and Nationals are hitting relatively worse with runners in scoring position, but the Cardinals have really improved. Still, the Cards have had some problems getting runners into scoring position.*



*The fielding appears to have fallen in San Francisco, but gloves have been a factor in the Phillies' run at first in the NL East.*

### Pitching and Fielding as of 8/19/10

