

## SPORTS



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**Don't count on Phils repeating as champs****In five trips to the Series, the team didn't make it back the next year, much less repeat.**By Rich Westcott  
For The Inquirer

The euphoria from the Phillies' 2008 World Series victory has yet to subside, but as spring training begins, the speculation already has started. Can the Phillies do it again?

Can the team that was one of the best in Philadelphia baseball history and one that captured the hearts of the region win a second consecutive World Series championship? Will there be another parade down Broad Street?

While posing that question, which the Phillies and most of their fans hope will be answered in the affirmative, let's look at what the team did in the years after its previous trips to the World Series.

The Phils appeared in the Fall Classic in 1915, 1950, 1980, 1983 and 1993.

Despite high expectations, there were no repeats. In the last half-century, only one of Philadelphia's major sports teams, the 1974-75 Flyers, won two championships in a row. And in baseball, no team has won two straight since the 1998-2000 New York Yankees.

In the years after their World Series ventures, the Phillies finished second once, fourth twice and fifth once, and lost in the first round of a special playoff.

That playoff appearance was in 1981 after the team won its first World Series championship the previous year. The only other time the Phils came close was in 1916, when the club stayed in the running until the last week of the season.

For the Phillies' five pennant winners, being unable to repeat was certainly disappointing. But each team had noteworthy achievements.

Grover Cleveland Alexander - Ol' Pete to his friends - won 33 games, posted a 1.55 ERA, completed 38, and hurled 16 shutouts in 1916. Nowadays, whole teams don't record that many complete games or shutouts in an entire season.

In other post-pennant seasons, Richie Ashburn had one of the best years of his career, Pete Rose broke the all-time National League record for most hits, and Mike Schmidt socked a milestone home run. The years-after also featured slumps, trades, tirades, managerial shifts, even a change in ownership. Twice, the seasons were crippled by player strikes.

Winning pennants, of course, hasn't been something in which the Phillies specialize. They didn't win their first flag until 33 years after the team was formed. That came in 1915, when the Phils jumped from sixth place the previous year to first before losing in five games to the Boston Red Sox in the World Series.

The following year, Alexander's second straight 30-win season, plus 22 wins by Eppa Rixey and 19 by Al Demaree weren't enough. Former Philadelphia Athletics pitcher Chief Bender wasn't much help. Defending home-run champion Gavvy Cravath tumbled from 24 home runs and 115 RBIs to 11 and 70. No regular hit .300. And promising prospect Stan Baumgartner was farmed out after pitching in only one game. Much later, Baumgartner made his mark as the Phillies beat writer for The Inquirer, often wearing his Phils cap in the press box.

Despite a 91-62 record that included one more win than the previous season and a record-setting attendance of 515,365 - a figure that wasn't surpassed until 1946 - manager Pat Moran's 1916 Phillies had to settle for second place.

After holding first place as late as Sept. 8, the Phils lost six of their next eight games and finished 21 1/2 games behind the Brooklyn Dodgers. It would be 35 years, a period that included a stretch in which the Phils had one first division finish in 31 seasons, before they won another pennant.

That pennant was the handiwork of the Whiz Kids, a collection of talented young players joined by a handful of seasoned veterans. These Phils had earned a trip to the 1950 World Series after winning the National League flag on Dick Sisler's three-run homer on the last day of the season.



Although they were swept in the Series by the Yankees, the popular Whiz Kids were expected to spend the rest of the



ERIC MENCHER / Staff Photographer  
Phillies catcher Darren Daulton (right) and reliever Mitch Williams during the 1993 World Series against Toronto.



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decade as one of the league's top teams. Instead, despite the same lineup they had the previous year, the not-so-whizzy kids plummeted to fifth place in 1951, finishing 231/2 games out of first with a 73-81 record, 18 fewer wins than the '50 team's total.

It got so bad that at one point, after the Phils had tumbled briefly into seventh place, normally easygoing manager Eddie Sawyer called a meeting and ripped the players for their inflated egos, lackluster play, and devotion to off-field activities. To add to the misery, the batting averages for every regular except Ashburn and Willie Jones dropped. Ashburn's average was .344, and he led the league with 221 hits. Jones hit .285, with 22 home runs and 81 RBIs.

Among pitchers, Curt Simmons spent all of '51 in the National Guard, Bob Miller was hurt and ineffective, and the magic that reliever Jim Konstanty had displayed as the 1950 National League most valuable player virtually disappeared.

Only Robin Roberts with 21 wins and Bubba Church with 15 provided any consistency on the mound.

The glowing promise that once surrounded the Whiz Kids did not resurface the rest of the decade. Players who had career seasons in 1950 drifted quietly out of sight. Sawyer was fired midway through the 1952 season. And to make matters worse, while other teams, especially those in the National League, were signing African American players, the Phillies remained grounded with an all-white roster until 1957.



Finally, after advancing to the National League championship series, but losing three times in the 1970s, the Phillies ended a 30-year famine when they reached the World Series again in 1980. This time, they won it, beating the Kansas City Royals in a memorable six-game series.

The Phillies had every reason to believe they would repeat in 1981, and for a while it looked as if they would, especially with Cy Young Award winner Steve Carlton and Schmidt, the MVP, having enjoyed career seasons in 1980. The club had sold Greg Luzinski but picked up Gary Matthews in a trade, and it got off to a 24-10 start.

The Phils were in first place when a players strike brought the season to a screeching halt. The strike lasted 60 days. In the first game after it ended, Rose broke Stan Musial's National League record for most hits. The Phillies finished the regular season with a 59-48 record.

During the strike, club owners had decided that there would be first- and second-half winners in each division, and they would meet in special playoffs to decide which ones would appear in the league championship series in each league. The Phillies won the first half in the East Division, and after finishing third in the second half, met the Montreal Expos in the division playoffs.

Despite a dramatic, game-winning homer by George Vukovich in the fourth game, the Phils lost the best-of-five series, three games to two. Soon afterward, Schmidt, who was possibly on his way to the best season of his career, was named MVP for the second straight year. Manager Dallas Green announced that he was leaving to become general manager and president of the Chicago Cubs. And Phillies president Ruly Carpenter revealed that the team was being sold to a group headed by vice president Bill Giles.

At the time, the Phillies were in their most successful era, a period in which they appeared in the playoffs six times and two World Series. The "Golden Era" ended in 1983 when a Phillies team dubbed the Wheeze Kids because of its preponderance of older players lost to the Baltimore Orioles in a five-game Series.



In 1984, former general manager Paul Owens was still the manager after taking the reins during the previous season. But Garry Maddox, Joe Morgan, Bo Diaz, Tony Perez, Rose and Matthews, all key players in 1983, had either moved on or been relegated to part-time status. Cy Young winner John Denny dropped from 19 to seven wins while Jerry Koosman led the team with 14 wins (and with 15 losses).

The only holdovers in the starting lineup were Schmidt, who hit his 400th home run during the season; Von Hayes; and Ivan DeJesus, who had joined the Phils two years earlier in one of the club's worst trades of all time (Larry Bowa and future Hall of Famer Ryne Sandberg for DeJesus).

As it turned out, the Phillies led the league in hitting, finishing 17 points higher than the 1983 team. Their top hitters were part-timers Tim Lincecum (.341) and Greg Gross (.322), and Schmidt, who led the league in home runs (36) and RBIs (106). With a team that barely resembled the '83 club, the Phillies lost 14 of their last 16 games but still managed to finish at 81-81, only nine fewer wins than the previous year. All that got them was fourth place, 151/2 games behind Green's Cubs.



Manager Jim Fregosi's club, nicknamed Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves by catcher Darren Daulton, had gone from last in 1992 to first in 1993, and met the Toronto Blue Jays in a World Series that the locals lost in six games. But there was more disappointment in 1994. Again, a players strike dealt a disastrous blow to baseball. This time, the stoppage began in mid-August and lasted through the rest of the season, forcing cancellation of the World Series.

While the season lasted, the Phillies lineup was virtually the same as in 1993. The offense was strong with Daulton, Jim Eisenreich and John Kruk, who had fought off testicular cancer during the off-season, all hitting .300. The Phils, though, were devastated by injuries to key pitchers. Curt Schilling, Tommy Greene and Ben Rivera, who won a combined total of 45 games in '93, each spent long periods on the disabled list, and won just seven games among them. Only Danny Jackson won in double figures, with 14, while Al Holland continued to sparkle in relief.

In the shortened season, Montreal ran away with the division title, while the Phillies finished fourth with a 54-61 record, 201/2 games out of first. And there, once again, went a chance for the Phils to prove that the previous year's World Series team was no fluke.

Will the outcome be different in 2009? Can the Phillies reach the World Series and win the championship two years in a row? As spring training gets under way, they begin a journey that ultimately will provide the answer.

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