

CHAMPIONSHIP CHASE

Which baseball teams will be real hits in the playoffs? Batting averages can help decide!

High-scoring slugfests. Nail-biting pitchers' duels. Come-from-behind rallies. Major league baseball has thrilled fans all summer long. Now that the playoffs are nearing, the race to the World Series is on. And star hitters like Chase Utley, second baseman for the Philadelphia Phillies, hope to bat their teams to the championship.

To reach the World Series, teams rely heavily on their top hitters. These are the players who consistently bat at a high level, game after game. They deliver clutch hits exactly when their teams need them most. They excel under postseason pressure.

One statistic used to compare baseball's top hitters is *batting average*. Written in decimal form and carried out 3 decimal places, it shows about how many hits a player would get per 1,000 times at bat. (For example, a .323 batting average shows that in 1,000 at-bats, that player would get about 323 hits.) The best hitters usually have batting averages of .300 or greater.

Read on to learn how to calculate batting averages. Then step up to the plate to answer our questions about some of the game's best hitters. In this activity, we're sure you'll bat 1.000 (called "a thousand")—the highest batting average possible!

—by Bill Wise

Chase Utley of the Philadelphia Phillies

CAREER POSTSEASON (PLAYOFFS & WORLD SERIES) BATTING AVERAGES OF SELECTED PLAYERS

Player (Current Team)	Hits	At-Bats	Batting Average
Carlos Beltran (N.Y. Mets)	30	82	<input type="text"/>
Vladimir Guerrero (L.A. Angels)	18	75	<input type="text"/>
Derek Jeter (N.Y. Yankees)	153	495	<input type="text"/>
Chipper Jones (Atlanta Braves)	96	333	<input type="text"/>
David Ortiz (Boston Red Sox)	68	232	<input type="text"/>
Albert Pujols (St. Louis Cardinals)	61	189	<input type="text"/>
Ichiro Suzuki (Seattle Mariners)	16	38	<input type="text"/>
Chase Utley (Philadelphia Phillies)	13	61	<input type="text"/>

CALCULATING A BATTING AVERAGE

- ✓ Divide a player's number of hits by the player's number of at-bats.
- ✓ Round to the nearest thousandth (the third digit to the right of the decimal point).

Example: In the 2008 National League Championship Series, Chase Utley had 6 hits in 17 at-bats.

- ✓ Divide: $6 \text{ hits} \div 17 \text{ at-bats} = .3529411\dots$
- ✓ Round: Utley's batting average was .353

WHAT TO DO

The chart to the right lists the career postseason hits and at-bats of some of today's top players. Read "Calculating a Batting Average" and use that information to fill in each player's batting average on the chart. Then, answer the questions.

1 Which player on the chart has the...

a. highest batting average?

b. lowest batting average?

2 Albert Pujols has fewer career postseason hits than David Ortiz. Why does Pujols have a higher batting average?

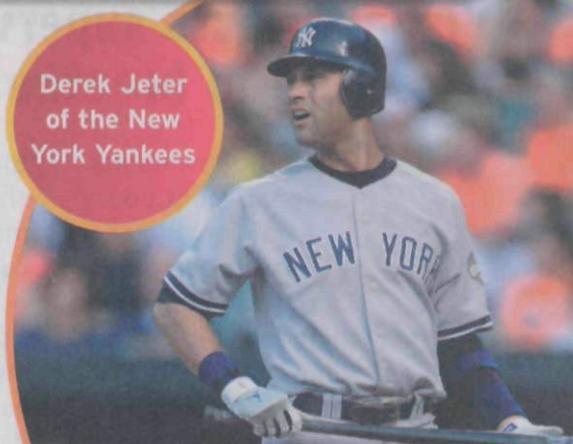
3 In Derek Jeter's postseason career, he has 114 hits in 366 at-bats in the American League playoffs, while the remainder of his postseason hits and at-bats occurred in the World Series.

What is Jeter's batting average...

a. in the A.L. playoffs?

b. in the World Series? (Hint: First subtract his statistics in the playoffs from his total postseason statistics.)

Derek Jeter
of the New
York Yankees



WEB WISE

Follow the stats for your favorite players through the rest of the season and playoffs at <http://mlb.mlb.com/mlb/stats/>

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