

Dynasties aren't chopped liver

One of the favorite pastimes of sportswriters and broadcasters is naming All-Time All-Star teams, or trying to pick the greatest player ever, or best team ever.

I've decided to take this one step further. What about the great Dynasties in sports? Every sport has them . . . those teams that ruthlessly rule the roost for years at a time, earning both hatred and admiration at the same time. I decided to list the five greatest dynasties in sports.

The 132-year stranglehold the United States had on the America's Cup is simply amazing. When Australia won last September off Rhode Island Sound, it

of five and three consecutive titles and a couple back-to-back title seasons in that time. Nobody in NHL history has come close. So, Vive les Canadiens, or whatever they say in Montreal. The Canadiens are the best in the NHL.

3. BOSTON CELTICS, 1957-1969. Red Auerbach's victory cigar. The Garden. The parquet floor. Heinsohn, Russell, Cousy, Havlicek, Jones . . . and all those championship banners!

Twelve times in that 13-year span the Celtics played in the NBA Championship Series. They won 11. The great moments, the great battles between Russell and Chamberlain, and always that intangible . . . Celtic Pride. It led them out of some tight spots during the dynasty, and really, is still alive today. I think it's an interesting note that nobody has won back-to-back NBA titles since the Celts did it in 1968-69. It's unlikely that any team will ever approach the eight straight league titles Boston won between 1959 and 1966.

2. NEW YORK YANKEES, 1949-1964. There's a book out about the Yankees in this era. It's called "Dynasty." Nuff said, really.

The Yankees of the 1920s coached by Miller Huggins and the 1930s coached by Joe McCarthy were great. But even these teams pale in comparison to those 16 seasons between 1949 and 1964. Casey Stengel guided the Bronx Bombers to five consecutive World Series crowns in his first five seasons. It took a major-league record 111 wins by Cleveland in 1954 to halt the string. Stengel answered the challenge with four more pennants.

So spoiled by success were the Yankees that Stengel and General Manager George Weiss were fired after Pittsburgh beat New York in the 1960 Series. Ralph Houk took over as manager, winning two world titles and a third pennant in three years. Finally, Yogi Berra, in his only year as Yankee skipper, won yet another American League Pennant in 1964.

The record reads 16 years, 14 pennants. Nine World Championships. Ten MVP awards. Four Rookie-of-the-Year honors. Roger Maris belted 61 homers and Mickey Mantle 54 in 1961. Don Larsen pitched the only perfect game in World Series history for the Yanks in 1956.

1. UCLA BRUINS, 1964-1975. The Cowboys, Canadiens, Celtics and Yankees are clearly a cut above the field. But they can't touch the Bruins of Coach John Wooden in their glory years. In those 12 years, UCLA won the NCAA basketball title 10 times, including seven in a row. The Bruins won an incredible 88 games in a row during three seasons in the early 1970s.

The Bruins began their dynasty by taking the title in 1964 and 1965. Texas Western, now Texas-El Paso, won the crown in 1966, but then Wooden brought in Lew Alcindor, and for the next seven years, UCLA munched on the college basketball world. When North Carolina State beat UCLA 80-78 in double overtime in the 1974 NCAA semi finals, it marked the Bruins' first NCAA tournament loss in a decade.

The thing that separates UCLA from the rest is their total, complete, and utter domination of their sport.



John Kopetzky

ended the longest winning streak in sporting history. However, I know nothing about yachting.

Then there's the Nebraska gymnastics team. Five straight NCAA titles isn't chopped liver, to be sure. But, and I'll be honest, I'd never heard of college gymnastics until Francis Allen started building his powerhouse in the late 1970s. Because of that limited knowledge of the sport, I'm leaving them off my list.

The U.S. Olympic basketball team's seven consecutive gold medals from 1936 to 1968 merited consideration. When the U.S.S.R. beat the Americans in Munich in 1972, it marked the first loss in Olympic history for U.S. basketball teams.

The Notre Dame football teams of the 1920s, 1940s, and early 1950s were a true dynasty. Coached by Knute Rockne and Frank Leahy, the Irish established themselves as the terrors of college football.

Another dynasty that merited consideration was Bud Wilkinson's Oklahoma Sooners teams of 1946-63. The Sooners compiled a 145-29-4 mark with Wilkinson and won national titles in 1950, 1955 and 1956. Oklahoma won 14 conference titles in Wilkinson's 17 years, posting a 75-game unbeaten string in conference play from 1947 to 1959.

But these, great as they were, couldn't crack the Kopetzky Top Five. Listed in reverse order, they are:

5. DALLAS COWBOYS, 1966-1983. Yeah, I know, America's Team. The Team Everyone Loves to See Lose. But like it or not, Tom Landry's Cowboys are professional football's greatest dynasty. They have been winners for a much longer period of time than Green Bay, Oakland/Los Angeles, Chicago, or the New York Giants. Dallas played their first playoff game in 1966 and have missed but one year since. They've made four Super Bowl appearances, winning two. They've played in 11 NFC championship games. The day will come when Tom Landry won't be coaching, yes, and the Cowboys have come up short of the Super Bowl four years running now, but one fact is clear: While other NFL teams have come and gone as powerhouses, the Dallas Cowboys have been a remarkable model of consistency.

4. MONTREAL CANADIENS, 1956-1978. In those 23 NHL seasons, the Canadiens won Lord Stanley's Cup an amazing 14 times. They put together streaks

Huskers sign 16 recruits

Nebraska recruiting coordinator Steve Pederson and football Coach Tom Osborne announced Thursday the signing of 16 high school seniors to national letters-of-intent. The signees are: Dana Brinson, 5-10, 175 wingback from Valdosta, Ga.; Jason Gamble, 6-1, 171 split end from Santa Barbara, Calif.; Willie Griffin, 6-4, 230 tight end from Monrovia, Calif.; Lorenzo Hicks, 6-1, 180 wingback from Kansas City, Mo.; Randall Jobman, 6-4, 205 line-backer from Oshkosh, Neb.; Keith Jones, 5-10, 180 I-back from Omaha;

Andy Keeler, 6-3, 255 lineman from Omaha; John Kroeker, 6-0, 180 kicker from Henderson, Neb.; Mark Mendel, 6-3, 230 lineman from Wayzata, Minn.; Todd Millikan, 6-3, 215 linebacker from Shenandoah, Iowa; Lawrence Pete, 6-3, 260 lineman from Wichita; Neil Smith, 6-6, 230 lineman from New Orleans; Steve Stanard, 6-0, 205 end from Lincoln; Brian Washington, 6-2, 205 back from Richmond, Va.; Wendell Wooten, 6-2, 190 quarterback from LaMarque, Tex.; and Jamie Worden, 5-11, 175 back from Scottsbluff, Neb.

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