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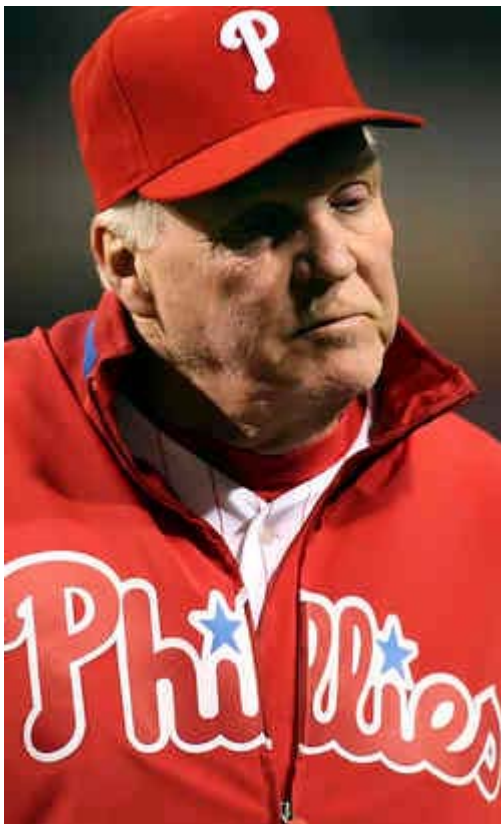
Phillies' Manuel joins elite 500-win club

By Rich Westcott
 For The Inquirer

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The Little General, The Father of Baseball, and the Wizard of Oz have a new partner. Charlie Manuel has become part of their group.



STEVEN M. FALK / Staff Photographer

Charlie Manuel achieved the feat midway through his sixth season. "That's a nice record to have," he said.

When the Phillies beat the Colorado Rockies at the end of July, Manuel became the fourth manager in Phillies history to lead the club to 500 wins. In so doing, Manuel joined Gene Mauch (646 wins), Harry Wright (636), and Danny Ozark (594) as Phillies skippers who have won 500 or more games.

Manuel achieved his lofty status faster than the other three. He did it midway through his sixth season, just 16 days before Ozark won his 500th. Mauch, the Phillies' skipper from 1960-68, reached the milestone in his seventh season, while Wright (1884-93), managing in seasons when the schedules were considerably shorter, took nine years to get there.

Now 66 and the oldest manager in team history, Manuel has led the Phillies to levels none of the other three ever did. His Phillies have gone to the World Series twice, and he is the only manager whose teams have posted 85 or more wins five straight years. Currently, only Manuel and Ozark, who worked for the Phillies from 1973-79, have managed teams to three division titles.

As he usually does, the affable Manuel deflected praise for his achievements.

"My record reflects back to the players and the teams we've had," he said. "It's not an individual achievement by any means. It feels real good to have reached 500 wins. That's a nice record to have. But it's all about the players. They're the ones who made it possible."

There is some disagreement on that point. Players such as Ryan Howard, for instance, say that Manuel himself is largely responsible for his success.

"He's a player's manager, and that's what makes him a winner," said the power-hitting first baseman. "He understands when the team is going well and when it's not going well, and he reacts to it. And he keeps the players loose and



Phillies 6, Marlins 1

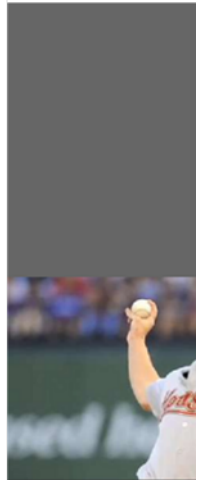


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las Green as the only Phillies managers who have led their teams to victories in the World Series. Manuel, Green, Pat Moran, Eddie Sawyer, Paul Owens, and Jim Fregosi are the Phils skippers who have won National League pennants.

While this group ranks at the top level of Phillies managers, the team has been under the command of an unusual assortment of 51 skippers (counting interim managers) during its 128 years. Of this group, 13 have had winning records. Thirteen Phils managers have held the job for four or more years, 40 had no previous managerial experience when hired, and 31 never managed in the major leagues after leaving the Phillies.

Forty-two Phillies managers played in the big leagues, 21 of them with the Phillies at some point during their careers.

Hugh Duffy, who finished his playing career with the Phillies with a single at-bat in 1906, owns the highest single-season batting average in big-league history (.438 in 1894 with the Boston Beaneaters).

Two managers, Fregosi and Larry Bowa, were all-star shortstops. A Phillies manager (Terry Francona) was the son of former Phils player Tito Francona, who played for the team in 1967. Two of the team's greatest catchers of all time, Jimmie Wilson and Red Dooin, managed the Phillies, as did Gavvy Cravath, an outfielder who won six home-run titles between 1913 and 1919.

Three Phils managers - Wilson, Bill Shettsline and Lee Elia - were natives of Philadelphia. Two others, Green and Hans Lobert, came from Delaware. The Phillies also were led briefly by two former stars of the Philadelphia Athletics, Jack Coombs and Stuffie McInnis.

Phillies managers have had many unusual characteristics. Arthur Irwin was an alleged bigamist who came to an early demise when he jumped off a ship in the Atlantic Ocean. George Stallings had been a medical-school student, was the son of a Confederate general, and later managed the "Miracle Braves" to a World Series victory in 1914.

Shettsline, who weighed in excess of 300 pounds, went from a Phillies office boy to ticket taker to manager to club president.

Dooin was a vaudeville singer in the off-season. While a player, the speedy Lobert once raced a horse around the bases, losing after he stumbled crossing second base. Sawyer was a college professor in the winter.

Three Phillies managers - Wright, Duffy and Bucky Harris - became Hall of Famers. Phillies managers also directed college teams, including Irwin at Penn, where one of his players was future novelist Zane Grey. Lobert coached at West Point, and Coombs at Duke, Williams, Princeton, and Rice. Phillies president Al Reach also managed the team for 11 games in 1890, when Wright became ill.

Wright, along with Reach, is buried in West Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia, where he is called "The Father of Baseball" on his tombstone. He was a cricket player from England before coming to the United States and eventually became manager in 1869 of the Cincinnati Red Stockings, baseball's first all-professional team. Wright is credited with creating baseball uniforms made of flannel and that included colored stockings and knickered pants.

Manuel, who took over the team in 2005 after compiling a 220-190 record as skipper of the Cleveland Indians from 2000-2002, ranks among the best of the crowd.

Pat Gillick, who became general manager of the Phillies after Manuel's first season on the job, was convinced that his predecessor, Ed Wade, made an extremely good decision when he hired Manuel. "I knew he was going to be successful here," Gillick said. "Charlie's got something a lot of people don't have. He knows how to handle players, he is good in the clubhouse and on the field, and he has the right frame of mind. You can't get a better combination than that."

Rich Westcott is a baseball writer and historian and the author of 21 books, including seven about the Phillies.

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