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IN THE PRESS BOX TODAY

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Compiling Records Is Endless, Thankless Job

Working around sports for a few years, you begin to take records for granted. When the phone rings and someone puts a poser like "what's the world speed record on a bicycle" you come right back with "108 miles an hour" and never bat an eyelash,

Other items like the batting percentage of lefthanded pinch-hitters in the World Series might require a little research. But chances are that somewhere around the office—tucked away in a file cabinet drawer or the back of a co-worker's memory—is a record covering just about everything that happens in sports.

The files were increased recently with the arrival of the "Ohio Athletic Conference Record Reference Booklet." This was a notable occasion mainly because it's the first collection of Ohio Conference records under one cover, at least in "modern" times.

When the conference sports publicity directors first discussed the record book project a couple of years ago, it seemed an impossible task. They had enough trouble collecting statistics on last week's games without delving into the ancient history of a conference operated for years with no central record agency.

Armed with a personal set of record books to rival that of any newspaper, Denison sports publicist Jim Myers turned out the finished product. He studied old records, newspaper and college publication files; sweated over conflicting accounts of the same deed and interviewed players, coaches and sports writers of the past and present.

The result may not be 100 per cent accurate, probably isn't. But it's a start. About the only contribution I made was to advise Myers "If you're in doubt about a record, list it. You'll hear soon enough from anyone who thinks you're wrong. Besides, some of the records will be out of date by the time you get them printed."

Sure enough, the book lists Wittenberg's 10 fumbles against Akron in 1952 and Ohio Wesleyan's 106 yards in penalties against Wittenberg in 1951 as conference records. In last Saturday's opener against Ohio Northern, Otterbein tied one mark by fumbling 10 times and broke another with 125 yards in penalties.

And that's the way it goes. To be completely unoriginal, "Records are made to be broken." But the next time you quote Mickey Mantle's batting average, Rocky Marciano's knockout record or statistics from the "blizzard bowl" game, give a mental nod of appreciation to the figure filberts, like Myers, who make record books possible.

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