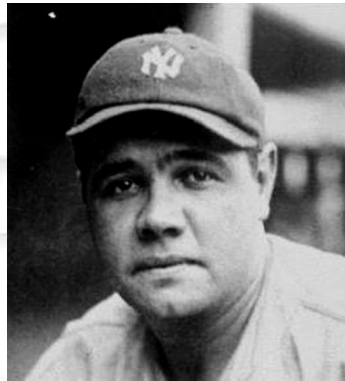


SPORTING LEGENDS: BABE RUTH

SPORT: BASEBALL

COMPETITIVE ERA: 1914 - 1935

George Herman Ruth (February 6, 1895 - August 16, 1948), better known as Babe Ruth, also commonly known by the nicknames The Bambino and The Sultan of Swat, was an American baseball player and United States national icon.



He was one of the first five players elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame, and he was the first player to hit over 30, 40 and 50 homeruns in one season.

His record of 60 homeruns in the 1927 season stood for 34 years until it was broken by Roger Maris in 1961. He was a member of the original American League All-Star team in 1933.

In 1969, Ruth was named baseball's Greatest Player Ever in a ballot commemorating the 100th anniversary of professional baseball.

In 1998, The Sporting News named Ruth as Number One in its list of "Baseball's 100 Greatest Players."

In 1999, Ruth was elected to the Major League Baseball All-Century Team in a fan balloting. In several ways, he changed the nature of the game itself. His exploitation of the "power game" compelled other teams to follow suit, breaking the monopoly of the "inside game" that had been the primary strategy for decades. Ruth was the focal point of the start of what has become statistically the greatest sports dynasty in history, the New York Yankees.

His international fame helped to fuel the rising interest in sports during the roaring twenties as the fan base expanded significantly and triggered the major expansion of nearly all of the ballparks in the major leagues.

SPORTING LEGENDS: BABE RUTH



Ruth's legendary no.3 jersey was retired in his honour by the New York Yankees.

Ruth's impact on American culture still commands attention. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest baseball players in history. Many polls place him as the number one player of all time.

Films have been made featuring Ruth, or a Ruth-like figure ("The Whammer" in *The Natural*, for example). As a sidelight to his prominent role in changing the game to the power game, the frequency and popularity of Ruth's home runs eventually led to a rule change pertaining to those hit in sudden-death mode (bottom of the ninth or later inning).

Prior to 1931, as soon as the first necessary run to win the game scored, the play was over, and the batter was credited only with the number of bases needed to drive in the winning run. Thus, if the score was 3-2 with the bases loaded in the bottom of the ninth, and the batter smacked an "over the fence home run", the game would end at 4-3, with the batter only allowed a double, and the runners officially stopped on 2nd and 3rd (since they weren't needed to win the game).

The new rule allowed the entire play to complete, justified on the grounds that the ball was dead and that all runners could freely advance, thus granting the full allotment of HR and RBI to the batter, as we know it today. Several players lost home runs that way, including Ruth, whose career total would have been changed to 715 if historians during the 1960s had been successful in pursuing this matter. Major League Baseball elected not to retrofit the records to the modern rules, and Ruth's total stayed at 714.

Ruth's 1919 contract that sent him from Boston to New York was sold at auction for \$996,000 at Sotheby's on June 10, 2005. The most valuable memorabilia item relating to Ruth was his 1923 bat which he used to hit the first home run at Yankee Stadium on April 18, 1923. Ruth's heavy Louisville Slugger solid ash wood bat sold for \$1.26 million at a Sotheby's auction in December 2004, making it the second most valuable baseball memorabilia item to date, just behind the famous 1909 Honus Wagner baseball card.

SPORTING LEGENDS: BABE RUTH



Scott Burton's Final Thought

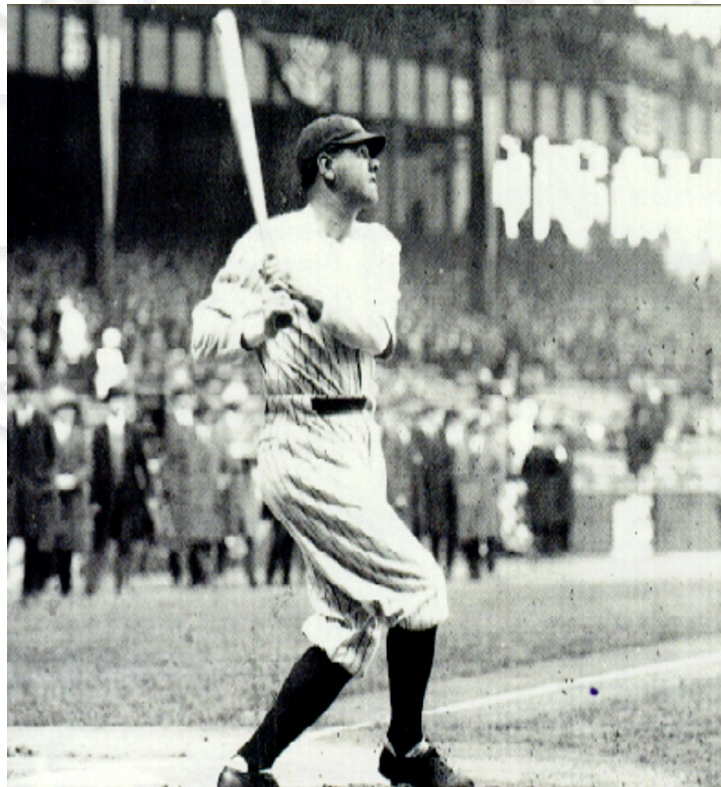
Babe Ruth established a legacy in the sport of baseball that is still talked about more than 50 years after he retired.

Not many athletes can ever achieve what this guy did.

Whilst not recognised as a particularly-gifted athlete, Ruth's strength and power could never be questioned

Ruth's career statistics are incredible, and enjoyed success during what was considered the golden-age of 20th Century baseball

Many modern-day New Yorkers still chant the "You Can't Hit Homers Like Babe Ruth" song with alarming regularity at Yankee Stadium. This speaks volumes for how highly his legacy is regarded.



Babe Ruth could swing, and hit hard!