

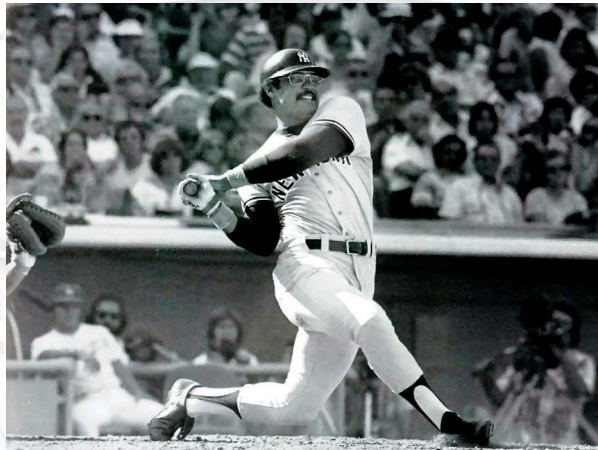
## SPORTING LEGENDS: REGGIE JACKSON

**SPORT: BASEBALL**

**COMPETITIVE ERA: 1967 - 1987**

Reginald Martinez "Reggie" Jackson (born May 18, 1946), nicknamed "Mr. October", is a former right fielder in Major League Baseball who played from 1967 to 1987.

Reggie Jackson was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1993 in recognition of his talents.



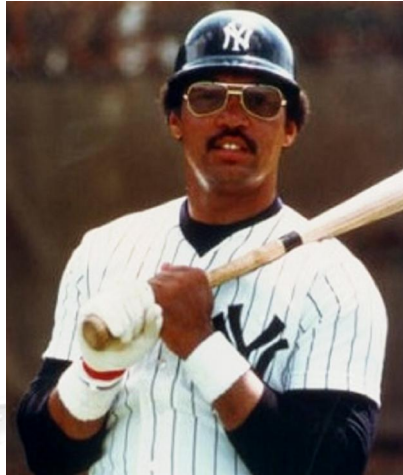
Jackson debuted in the major leagues with the A's on June 9, 1967, a 6-0 A's victory over the Cleveland Indians in Cleveland. Following that season, the Athletics moved to Oakland. Jackson hit 47 home runs in 1969.

Jackson hit a memorable home run in the 1971 All-Star Game at Tiger Stadium in Detroit. Batting for the American League against Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher Dock Ellis, the ball he hit soared above the right-field stands, striking the transformer of a light standard on the right field roof. In 1984, he would hit a home run over that roof.

He helped the A's win the pennant again in 1973, and they defeated the Mets in seven games. This time, he was not only able to play, but his performance led to his being awarded the Series' Most Valuable Player award.

The A's won the World Series again in 1974, defeating the Los Angeles Dodgers in five games. This Series marked the first time that two teams from the State of California played each other for a sport's World Championship, and, through 2005, the only time a team other than the New York Yankees has won three consecutive World Series.

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Reggie Jackson played 21 seasons at the highest level, and was always consistent.

The A's won the Division again in 1975, but the loss of pitcher Catfish Hunter, baseball's first modern free agent, left them vulnerable, and they were swept in the ALCS by the Boston Red Sox. With the coming of free agency after the 1976 season, and A's owner Charlie Finley being unwilling to pay the higher salary that Jackson would ask for, Finley traded Jackson to the Baltimore Orioles just before the start of the season.

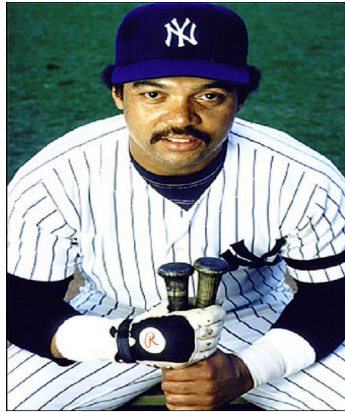
Both his new team, the Orioles, and his former team, the Athletics, finished second. But Finley's unwillingness to re-sign his stars at higher salaries led to the breakup of one of baseball's greatest teams, some dismal seasons, and very nearly the loss of the Oakland franchise. Finley nearly sold the team to buyers who would have moved them to Denver for the 1978 season and New Orleans for 1979 before selling them in 1980 to a group that kept them in Oakland.

The Yankees signed Jackson to a five-year contract, totaling \$2.96 million, on November 29, 1976.

Jackson became the first player to win the World Series MVP award (named for Babe Ruth, the only other player to hit three home runs in a World Series game) for two different teams. In 27 World Series games, he amassed 10 home runs, including five in a row during the 1977 Series (three of them on consecutive pitches), 24 RBI and a .357 batting average.

In 1980, Jackson batted .300 for the first and only time in his career, and his 41 home runs tied with Ben Oglivie of the Milwaukee Brewers for the American League lead. In 1981, the last year of his Yankee contract, Jackson hit a key home run in the strike-forced Division Series with the Brewers, and the Yankees went on to win the pennant again.

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Jackson was inducted into the Baseball Hall Of Fame in 1993.

This time they lost the World Series to the Dodgers. Because of various disagreements, Steinbrenner chose not to re-sign Jackson. The owner of the California Angels, legendary entertainer Gene Autry, had heard of Jackson's desire to return to California to play, and signed him to a five-year contract.

In 1982, the Angels won the American League West, and would do so again in 1986, but lost the American League Championship Series both times. On September 17, 1984, on the 17th anniversary of the day he hit his first home run, he hit his 500th, at Anaheim Stadium off Bud Black of the Royals. (By a twist of fate, Black would become the Angels' pitching coach, helping them to a pennant and a World Series win in 2002, something Jackson could not do with that team.)

In 1987, he signed a one-year contract to return to the A's, wearing the number 44 with which he was now most associated rather than the number 9 he previously wore in Oakland. He announced he would retire after the season, at the age of 41. In his last at-bat, at Comiskey Park in Chicago on October 4, he collected a broken-bat single up the middle, but the A's lost to the White Sox, 5-2.

Jackson played 21 seasons and reached the postseason in 11 of them, winning six pennants and five World Series. His accomplishments include winning the both the regular-season and World Series MVP awards in 1973, hitting 563 career home runs (sixth all-time at the time of his retirement), maintaining a .490 career slugging percentage, being named to 14 All-Star teams, and the dubious distinction of being the all-time leader in strikeouts with 2,597.

During the spare time of his active career, Jackson worked as a field reporter and color commentator for ABC Sports. During the 1980s (1983, 1985, and 1987 respectively), Jackson was given the task of presiding over the World Series Trophy presentations.

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### Scott Burton's Final Thought

Reggie Jackson earned the nickname Mr. October for his World Series heroics with both the A's and Yankees.

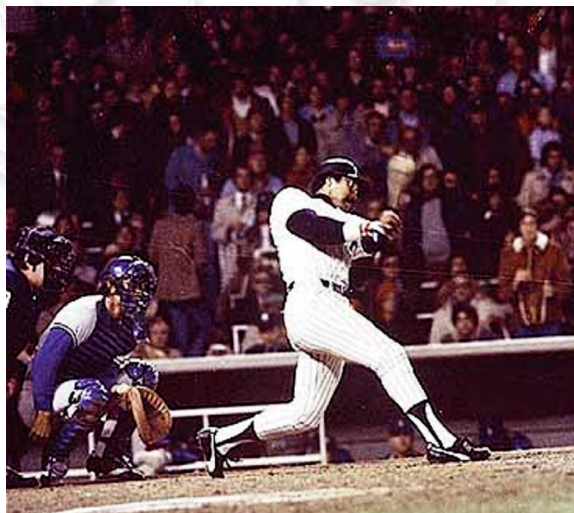
In 27 Fall Classic games, he amassed 10 home runs - including four in consecutive at-bats - 24 RBIs and a .357 batting average. As one of the game's premier power hitters, he blasted 563 career round-trippers. A terrific player in the clutch and an intimidating hitter, for sure.

Jackson compiled a lifetime slugging percentage of .490 and earned American League MVP honors in 1973.

Jackson sometimes revealed surprising humility. He once admitted that he'd settle for being "one half the player Willie Mays is."

Jackson became the first player to have a candy bar named after him, predicting that this would happen if he played in New York. Reggie could talk and Reggie could hit: a sportswriter's dream.

The peak of his career came in a boisterous five-year stint with the Yankees, which he began by asserting that he was "the straw that stirred the drink," a statement that drew the ire of new teammate Thurman Munson and manager Billy Martin. But the outspoken, flamboyant, muscular outfielder was a winner wherever he went.



Jackson's muscular hitting power earned him many home runs during his career.