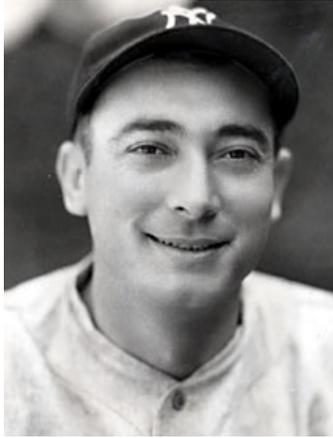


TONY LAZZERI, Yankee Legend



Anthony Michael "Tony" Lazzeri was born on December 6, 1903. He was an Italian/American Major League Baseball player during the 1920s and 1930s. He played predominantly with the New York Yankees. The native of San Francisco, California, was a member of the original American League All-Star team in 1933.

Lazzeri, a second baseman, first gained notice in the Pacific Coast League as a member of the Salt Lake City Bees, where he slugged 60 home runs and knocked in 222 RBI in 1925.

He entered the major leagues in 1926 as a member of the New York Yankees. In his rookie season he belted 18 homers and drove home 114 RBI, impressive numbers which would become his annual trend. He was an important member of "Murders Row" the tough Yankee Linup of the late 1920s. He was seen as a hero by his Italian- American fans in the Bronx, who nicknamed him "Poosh 'Em Up" because of his powerful clutch hitting.

As a member of the Yankees until 1937, he averaged 79 runs, 14 home runs, 96 RBI and 12 stolen bases including seven seasons with over 100 RBI and five seasons batting .300 or higher (including a high of .354 in 1929). During this time the Yankees won six American League pennants (1926, 1927, 1928, 1932, 1936 and 1937) and five World Series championships (1927, 1928, 1932, 1936 and 1937).

After the Yankees released Lazzeri following the 1937 season, Lazzeri signed with the Chicago Cubs in 1938 but saw minimal playing time. The Cubs won the National League championship and Lazzeri got to face his old team in the World Series. Any hopes of sweet payback, however, were squashed as the Yankees swept the series.

After brief stints with the Brooklyn Dodgers and New York Giants in 1939, Lazzeri retired. He finished his career with a .292 batting average, 986 runs, 178 home runs, 1191 RBI and 148 stolen bases. Despite his hitting 60 home runs in an extended PCL season in 1925, Lazzeri never hit more than 18 home runs in a major league season (which he did 4 times).

Lazzeri holds the American League record for most RBI in a game with 11, set May 24, 1936. That same day he became the first major league player to hit two grand slams in one game. He holds the major league record of 15 runs-batted-in in consecutive games (one more than Rudy York in 1946 and Sammy Sosa in 2002). He also set major league records of six home runs in three consecutive games, and seven in four consecutive games. Both consecutive-game home run records still have a share of the American League record - but the three-game record was topped by Shawn Green of the Dodgers (seven in 2002) and the four-game mark was broken by Ralph Kiner of the Pittsburgh Pirates (eight in 1947). Lazzeri is also the only player in major league baseball to hit a natural cycle with the final home run being a grand slam on June 3, 1932

(over)

In a 1976 *Esquire* magazine article, sportswriter Harry Stein published an "All Time All-Star Argument Starter", consisting of five ethnic baseball teams. Lazzeri was the second baseman on Stein's Italian team.

Lazzeri died on August 6, 1946, at age 42 from a fall caused, according to the coroner, by a heart attack in his Millbrae, California, home. He was elected to the Italian- American Sports Hall of Fame in 1976. He was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1991.

Although his offensive production was overshadowed by the historic accomplishments of teammates such as Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig and Joe DiMaggio, Lazzeri is still considered one of the best hitting second basemen of his era. He was truly one of the great Yankee Legends.

**Adapted from various Internet sources,
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