



Mickey Mantle's 500th home run on May 14, 1967 at Yankee Stadium.

# MICKEY JOINS THE CLUB

By Charles Apple | THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Mickey Mantle is regarded as one of the greatest hitters ever to play Major League Baseball. A three-time American League most valuable player Mantle helped lead the Yankees to 12 AL pennants and seven World Series trophies over his 18 seasons.

Mantle became the sixth player to join baseball's exclusive 500 home run club 55 years ago with a dinger courtesy of Baltimore's Stu Miller in a 6-5 win over the Orioles in Yankee Stadium.



The legendary Mantle was “a superstar who never acted like one,” said his equally legendary New York Yankees teammate Whitey Ford. The native Oklahoman “was a humble man who was kind and friendly to all his teammates, even the rawest rookie. He was idolized by all the other players.”

Mantle was also a party animal, a heavy drinker, a serial philanderer and prone to injuries — including a high school football

mishap that nearly cost him a leg but later earned him an exemption from military service in Korea.

Mantle's dad, a lead and zinc miner, was determined to help his son escape a similar vocation. He taught Mickey to play baseball and, more importantly, how to switch-hit — a fairly rare ability at the time.

Mantle began playing semipro ball at age 15,

caught the attention of a Yankees scout and signed a contract as soon as he finished high school. He hit .315 for the Independence Yankees in his first season in the Kansas-Oklahoma-Missouri League.

When Yankees star Joe DiMaggio announced 1951 would be his final season, manager Casey Stengel announced Mantle would be DiMaggio's successor.

## MANTLE'S MAJOR LEAGUE STATS

YEAR	TEAM	G	AB	R	H	HR	RBI	BA	OBP	SLG
1951	Yankees	96	341	61	91	13	65	.267	.349	.443
1952	Yankees	142	549	94	171	23	87	.311	.394	.530
1953	Yankees	127	461	105	136	21	92	.295	.398	.497
1954	Yankees	146	543	<b>129</b>	163	27	102	.300	.408	.525
1955	Yankees	147	517	121	158	<b>37</b>	99	.306	<b>.431</b>	<b>.611</b>
1956	Yankees	150	533	<b>132</b>	188	<b>52</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>.353</b>	.464	<b>.705</b>
1957	Yankees	144	474	<b>121</b>	173	34	94	.365	.512	.665
1958	Yankees	150	519	<b>127</b>	158	<b>42</b>	97	.304	.443	.592
1959	Yankees	144	541	104	154	31	75	.285	.390	.514
1960	Yankees	153	527	<b>119</b>	145	<b>40</b>	94	.275	.399	.558
1961	Yankees	153	514	131	163	54	128	.317	.448	<b>.687</b>
1962	Yankees	123	377	96	121	30	89	.321	<b>.486</b>	<b>.605</b>
1963	Yankees	65	172	40	54	15	35	.314	.441	.622
1964	Yankees	143	465	92	141	35	111	.303	<b>.423</b>	.591
1965	Yankees	122	361	44	92	19	46	.255	.379	.452
1966	Yankees	108	333	40	96	23	56	.288	.389	.538
1967	Yankees	144	440	63	108	22	55	.245	.391	.434
1968	Yankees	144	435	57	103	18	54	.237	.385	.398
18 seasons		<b>2,401</b>	<b>8,102</b>	<b>1,676</b>	<b>2,415</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>1,509</b>	<b>.298</b>	<b>.421</b>	<b>.557</b>

**BOLD** indicates led the league

Mantle was known for his power hitting. He is said to be the only player to nearly hit a fair ball out of Yankee Stadium during a game — his home run against the Kansas City Athletics on May 23, 1963, was still rising when it hit the third-deck facade.

But Mantle's career was also hampered by injuries. Playing in his first World Series as a 19-year-old rookie, Mantle tore the cartilage in his right knee trying to catch a Willie Mays fly ball. During the 1957 World Series, Red Schoendienst of the Milwaukee Brewers collided with Mantle at second base. For the rest of his career, Mantle would have problems hitting from his left side.

In addition to his tendency to party and drink hard, the highly-paid Mantle tended to fritter away his earnings. After his retirement in 1968, Mantle worked as a representative for a life insurance company and then a casino — drawing the ire of

baseball Commissioner Bowie Kuhn. He became a regular on the baseball memorabilia circuit.

Both Mantle's grandfather and father had died at early ages. “I'm almost 50,” Mantle told a reporter in 1978. “If I knew I was gonna live this long, I'd have taken better care of myself.”

In 1994, a doctor told Mantle his liver was badly damaged from years of alcohol abuse. Mantle checked into the Betty Ford Clinic, only to find he also suffered from liver cancer. In June 1995, Mantle was given a liver transplant, which became controversial when critics said it seemed like Mantle's fame had boosted him ahead of other needy patients on the waiting list for a new liver.

But it was too late: Mantle's cancer had turned aggressive and had spread to the rest of his body. He died on Aug. 13, 1995.

## THE 500 HOME RUN CLUB

<b>Barry Bonds</b>	1986-2007	<b>762</b>
<b>Hank Aaron</b>	1954-1976	<b>755</b>
<b>Babe Ruth</b>	1914-1935	<b>714</b>
<b>Alex Rodriguez</b>	1994-2016	<b>696</b>
<b>Albert Pujols</b>	2001-Present	<b>681</b>
<b>Willie Mays</b>	1951-1973	<b>660</b>
<b>Ken Griffey Jr.</b>	1989-2010	<b>630</b>
<b>Jim Thome</b>	1991-2012	<b>612</b>
<b>Sammy Sosa</b>	1989-2007	<b>609</b>
<b>Frank Robinson</b>	1956-1976	<b>586</b>
<b>Mark McGwire</b>	1986-2001	<b>583</b>
<b>Harmon Killebrew</b>	1954-1975	<b>573</b>
<b>Rafael Palmeiro</b>	1986-2005	<b>569</b>
<b>Reggie Jackson</b>	1967-1987	<b>563</b>
<b>Manny Ramirez</b>	1993-2011	<b>555</b>
<b>Mike Schmidt</b>	1972-1989	<b>548</b>
<b>David Ortiz</b>	1997-2016	<b>541</b>
<b>Mickey Mantle</b>	1951-1968	<b>536</b>
<b>Jimmie Foxx</b>	1925-1945	<b>534</b>
<b>Willie McCovey</b>	1959-1980	<b>521</b>
<b>Frank Thomas</b>	1990-2008	<b>521</b>
<b>Ted Williams</b>	1939-1960	<b>521</b>
<b>Ernie Banks</b>	1953-1971	<b>512</b>
<b>Eddie Mathews</b>	1952-1968	<b>512</b>
<b>Mel Ott</b>	1926-1947	<b>511</b>
<b>Gary Sheffield</b>	1988-2009	<b>509</b>
<b>Eddie Murray</b>	1977-1997	<b>504</b>
<b>Miguel Cabrera</b>	2003-Present	<b>502</b>

STILL ACTIVE