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Mookie Wilson



Mookie Wilson will forever be remembered for one World Series at-bat lasting ten pitches. With the Red Sox one strike away from clinching the 1986 world Series in the bottom of the tenth inning of Game Six, Wilson fouled off pitch after pitch with last second swings. Mookie then hit a slow grounder to first baseman Bill Buckner, playing well behind the base. The speedy Wilson would have been safe anyway, but the ball eluded Buckner, allowing Knight to score the winning run. With drama quite different from a game-winning home run, the accumulated excitement of the slowly building rally capped by the tension of Wilson's at-bat made the game one of the most exciting in Series history.

For most of his career, Wilson was a hustling fan favorite whose at-bats were greeted at home with cries of Mooooooo-kie! He was a good base stealer, with highs of 58 in 1982 and 54 in 1983. Although he had wild swings between hot and cold during the season, from year to year he was a model of consistency. He hit .276 three years in a row (1983-85). After hitting .248 in his first call-up, he hit between .271 and .299 from 1981 through 1988.

Wilson's speed helped him outrun mistakes in the outfield as he led the NL outfielders with six double plays in 1984. Arm surgery in 1985 weakened his arm and reduced Mookie to a platoon player. His career was threatened by a freak eye injury suffered in spring training in 1986 when he was hit in the glasses by a throw during an infielders' rundown drill. Upon his return to play after five weeks on the DL, he had trouble judging fly balls, especially during day games. That persisted for the rest of his career.

As the senior member of the team in the second half of the 1980's, Wilson was an important clubhouse influence. His hustle, even when the Mets had been notorious non-contenders, set an example for younger players. He was an unselfish team leader until he was traded to Toronto in the second half of 1989. He sparked the Blue Jays to the 1989 Division Title and fittingly scored the run that clinched First Place.



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