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Oscar Gamble



Oscar began his major league career with the Chicago Cubs in 1969 but was traded to the Philadelphia Phillies after on a brief trial with the Cubs. In Philly, Oscar had the distinction of getting the last hit and last RBI in vaunted old Connie Mack Stadium before it was torn down.

After the 1972 season, Oscar was traded to the Cleveland Indians. It was here that Oscar finally got the playing time to show off his talents. In his first season with the Tribe, he clobbered 20 home runs in only 390 at bats. He spent 3 productive seasons on the shores of Lake Erie before being traded to the New York Yankees – for the first time – for Pat Dobson. In this go-round in the Big Apple, Oscar hit 15 home runs and 57 RBI while once again being limited in playing time. At the start of 1977 Oscar was on the move again, this time to the Chicago White Sox in exchange for Red Sox-slayer, Bucky Dent.

In Chicago, Oscar finally got enough at bats to show his awesome power and he clouted 31 home runs to go with 83 RBI and a .297 batting average. He led the American League in home runs per at bat that season and garnered some MVP votes for his strong season. He parlayed this success into a new contract as a free agent and signed with the San Diego Padres where he spent the 1978 season. But, ever on the move, Oscar was traded to the Texas Rangers for Mike Hargrove. After half a season and with a .335 batting average, he was moved back to the Yankees – time number two – for Mickey Rivers. For once, Oscar got to unpack his bags as he spent the next 5 and a half seasons with the Bronx Bombers. As usual, he was forced into a platoon role as George Steinbrenner always had a plethora of outfielders. Yet Oscar continued to show his power stroke and had a high ratio of home runs to at bats. He spent his last season with the Chicago White Sox.

For his career, Oscar averaged only 265 at bats per season for his 17 years in the big leagues, and yet hit 200 homers and drove in 666 runs. But what will Oscar always be remembered for? He had the biggest Afro in the history of baseball! When he squished a baseball cap onto his head, his 'fro popped out the sides making him look like he was auditioning for the Mickey Mouse Club. And often his cap would simply pop off his head due to the copious amount of hair coiled underneath it. Yes, Oscar was loved by his fans and his afro made him instantly recognizable to all.



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