



## George Foster

George Foster was a hitter who struck fear into the hearts of his opposition when he stepped into the batter's box. His coiled, muscular frame held a 35 inch, 35 ounce black bat which lashed through the strike zone.

George was an integral part of the Cincinnati Reds Big Red Machine of the 1970's which won the World Series in both 1975 and 1976. This team also featured the likes of Johnny Bench, Tony Perez, Joe Morgan, Pete Rose, Dave Concepcion, Ken Griffey Sr. and Cesar Geronimo, collectively known as the Great Eight.

Foster began his MLB career with the San Francisco Giants and collected less than 150 at bats with the team over three seasons beginning in 1969. One of the most lopsided trades in baseball history sent him to the Reds where he slowly gained confidence and perfected his game under Sparky Anderson. By 1976, only his second season as a fulltime player, he led the National League in RBI with 121. That was but a taste of what was to come in 1977 when George went on a rampage and slammed 52 homeruns, cashed in 149 RBI and batted .320 to just narrowly missed winning the Triple Crown. However, he was voted as the National League's Most Valuable Player. His 52 homeruns were the most since Willie Mays hit the same number in 1965 and Foster remained the only player since Mays to have hit 50 until Cecil Fielder hit 51 in 1990, the most homeruns in a 25 year span! In 1978, George again led the NL in RBI with 120, his 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row leading the league and hit 40 homers to take that title for the 2<sup>nd</sup> season.

After the 1981, Reds ownership dealt Foster to the New York Mets as his contract was expiring within the next year. With the Mets, George won the 1986 World Series to capture his third career championship. In the Big Apple he averaged over 20 HR's and 70 RBI a season, but in 1986, he was released and played the final games of his career with the Chicago White Sox.

Over his career which spanned from 1969 to 1986, Foster was the NL MVP in 1977, won the Silver slugger Award in 1981, was a 5-time all star, led NL left fielders in fielding percentage 5 seasons in an 8 year span and capped it off with 3 World Series championships. He had 348 career HR, 1239 RBI and batted .274.

George was, and still is, an introspective man. "I've got to believe that Foster is the cleanest living athlete in sports," Sparky Anderson once said. He didn't drink alcohol, curse, smoke, chew tobacco or consume caffeine. He was a master in karate which taught him patience, discipline and balance. So did his faith in God; while teammates were out enjoying the nightlife in the city, George was usually in his hotel room reading the Bible.

George Foster is an all-time great in baseball and in life. Hire him to speak to your organization and share the wisdom he has collected over his lifetime.