

# The Mattingly Reader

JUNE-OCTOBER, 1998

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

Welcome to the Fourth issue!!!

I hope everyone is enjoying each issue. I know I enjoy making them for you!

## Don Mattingly And The Hall Of Fame

The Mattingly  
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The (Un) Official  
Don Mattingly  
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official home of  
"The Mattingly  
Reader"

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Don Mattingly was a great player who was injured midway through his career and who continued to play after that. You can say he was mediocre at best during the latter years, and there wouldn't be a large argument. But he accomplished far too much in the first half of his career to be dismissed as mediocre at best during his entire career.

Although his career numbers don't appear to be Hall Of Fame material, the point is that a look at the overall numbers only tells part of the story. I'm not trying to argue that Don belongs in the HOF (although I think excluding him would be a travesty), I'm saying that it's a mistake to look at his career numbers and then simply dismiss him as "mediocre at best".

He may never make the HOF, but it's obvious that he did something special enough that this debate keeps coming up over and over again. Based on the numbers, you'd conclude that his career was similar to Kent Hrbek, but for some reason, it's Mattingly, not Hrbek, that has people passionately arguing for his inclusion in the HOF. Yes, Yankee fans are more 'die-hard' than Twins' fans, but I doubt that this sort of debate comes up very often between Twins' fans regarding Hrbek.

Mattingly stands out in peoples' mind for a reason. He was a great player, and he was well on the road to an HOF career before the injury struck. Even after the injury, when he put up average offensive numbers, he not only stood out defensively, but he also had



recurring flashes of the old offensive brilliance in between his recurring injuries. His numbers for the final four years would look a lot better if his manager(s) had made the decision to take him out of the lineup when his injuries became re-aggravated.

In 1993, he was the Mattingly of old from late June through the end of August, only to go 0-for-September while playing with a wrist injury. Not coincidentally, the Yankees pulled into pennant contention during July and August, only to fall apart in September. Even with a slow start that year, by the middle of August, he was on a pace to hit 26 homes for the season. He didn't hit any at all in September.

See 'HOF Debate, Continued' on page 5

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# Donnie Baseball News

By **Joseph L. Riccitelli, Jr.** (JoeMoose@donniebaseball.com)

Lots of news to report this time around. First of all, I hope all of you had a chance to catch Don Mattingly's interview on AOL on May 9. A transcript will appear on my site sometime in the future, so if you missed it you can still read it!!

Don's Official Site is still growing and improving! Gary is doing an excellent job with it. In May, they started another auction where you can pick up some great items that once belonged to the Mattingly's 23 restaurant in Indiana. The next radio show with Don and Gary should be online by the time you read this.

On Saturday, June 13, Don Mattingly is scheduled to appear at his first pay-per-item autograph signing at Bally's in Atlantic City, NJ. Hours are 11 am until 2 pm. Prices are as follows: Flats/Balls

\$65. Other Equipment \$75. Bats/Jerseys \$125. It is sponsored by National Pastime Promotions.

Don Mattingly will participate in the 1998 Heroes In Pinstripes Fantasy Camp that will be held November 1-8, 1998 at the Fort Lauderdale Spring Training Complex. Don will be one of many former Yankees participating, including a reunion of the 1961 World Champion's Yankees' infield!!

On a sadder note, one of Don's horses from the Diamond Five Farms, "Oh My! B.S." has passed away. Our deepest condolences go out to Don and his family.

Keep Checking The (Un) Official Don Mattingly Tribute Site For All The Latest Don Mattingly News!



The (Un) Official Don Mattingly Tribute Site

'82

www.donniebaseball.com

'95



## We Need Your Help!

Would you like to help *The Mattingly Reader*? Just send in your articles, photos, and anything else that you may have.

Did you see a Mattingly article in your local newspaper? Or how about a new Mattingly sighting on the Internet? All items are welcome and encouraged. Submissions become the property of *The Mattingly Reader* and cannot be returned. All contributors will be recognized for their assistance!

Send your contributions to the postal address located elsewhere or e-mail them to me at: Joe-

## Ideas Requests Needed

What would you like to see in each issue of *The Mattingly Reader*? Remember this is YOUR newsletter so send in all your ideas and requests. All submissions become the property of *The Mattingly Reader* and cannot be returned.

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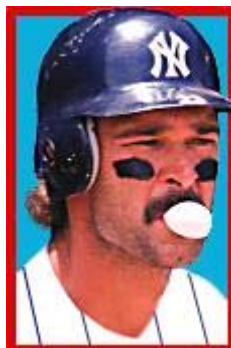
This issue of "The Mattingly Reader" was made with the following hardware & software:

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- HP 870se Printer
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- Microsoft Publisher
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## IMPORTANT NOTICE

I will not be publishing any issues during the summer. I have taken a job at Walt Disney World and will not have access to my computer or my email. My Mattingly Web Site and this newsletter will resume regular operations upon my return in early September.

Thank you and enjoy the summer!



## THE MATTINGLY GUIDE

The most complete Don Mattingly Checklist/Priceguide of cards and other collectibles is now available. EVERY Don Mattingly card and collectible from 1979-1997 is included, over 2900 items and over 60 pages. It is published twice a year so the list and prices are up-to-date. A two issue subscription is only \$14.00. That represents a \$12.00 savings over the former 1 issue price of \$13.00. You can still get a one issue subscription for \$7.00.

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# A Mattingly Memory

I'm a 38 year old guy who has never written a fan letter in his life, but here goes! By the time you made it to the bigs, I was old enough not to have an idol. My youth was spent reading books about the Babe and the Iron Horse....listening to my Dad ramble on about Old Reliable, Scooter, The Mick and of course, his favorite....The Yankee Clipper.

When I was 8-10 years old, growing up in rural NJ, WPIX was the channel of choice for New York Yankees' Baseball. Sometimes back then you had to go up on the roof to adjust the antenna between games of a double header as the reception changed between 12:00 and 5:00. Although the reception was never that great on the TV, one day, almost by miracle, the reception cleared up as Mickey Mantle, who was near the end of his career, strolled to the plate. My Dad had described his swing so vividly, that I knew what had to come next. You guessed it...Bang, 15 rows back over the low black right center wall. I was only 9 years old, but I could feel the pain he must have felt limping around the bases.

The following year I went with my Dad to my first big league game.....the day they retired # 7. The red, white and blue buntings were all in place. The championship banners were hanging from the 2nd level and off the face of the old facade, the grass was so green...so big....I thought I was in heaven. Between games that day they held the ceremony. The ovation was deafening to this 10 year old boy. I looked at my Dad and saw something I had never seen before, he was crying. I didn't really understand. I grew up in the time of the Miracle Met's, the Jets with Joe Willie, Clyde, Bradley, Willis

and Dave from the corner, yet after that "special" moment my team was the Yankees. Baseball was the game.

My Dad and I shared baseball like no other sport. Endless hours of catch, fielding and batting practice were to follow. The Yank's were back in the World Series with Thurman and Reggie. I played the big 3 sports all through High School making All County in football and baseball. I always knew if I had a game, somewhere in the stands was my Dad. My senior year in H.S., I hurt my neck pretty badly playing football. I dedicated my winter to be in shape for baseball in the spring. Dad was getting older now and his fastball was easily hit, but he threw to me just the same. "Keep the bat level. Watch the ball hit the bat Don't over stride. Your opening up to early. " Patience and perseverance were his motto. Practice the way you play was his creed and finally "the harder you work the luckier you'll be" was his ethic.

I went off to school and continued to play ball. During the summer of 1979 I was playing in a semi pro summer league in NJ. Of course my Dad was in the stands. I went 2 for 4 with a tweeter and an RBI. I had my car and he had his. Needless to say, that was the last time I saw him alive. He died of a heart attack that night. That also was the evening that my love for the game appeared to weaken.

A few years later at the age of 23 I was done with my competitive baseball. Major League Baseball was just a business and it was time for me to get on with my life. One Saturday afternoon a couple of friends from H.S. and Legion ball were over for a few cold ones. We had on the Yankee game and were on-again off-again paying attention. A new player, young looking guy came to the plate. He was a lefty, nicely balanced stance. Good arm extension on his warm-up swing.

Head steady. Level swing....appeared focused. What the heck let's see what he does. The first swing.....what was I looking at....was the swing my Dad had been preaching to me since I was 8. I don't remember if you got a hit in that at bat....but boy do I remember that swing. I knew with that swing, this guy was going to be around a long time.

Of course I followed your career from then on. And your arm wasn't that bad!!!! I enjoyed every minute of it. During those dog days I could see and feel your pain. I was lucky enough to be there the day that your number was retired. My sons were not quite old enough (still aren't) to appreciate what was going on...but I took them anyway. If they had been old enough, they probably would have said the same words I had said to my dad two decades ago.....Dad, why are you crying?

Thank you Donnie Baseball. I have seen the swing my Dad tried to teach me. I in turn will teach my boys. Love to you and your family.

**Tom Hart**  
**February 22, 1998**

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This article above originally appeared in the "What The Fans Say Guestbook" section of Don Mattingly's Official Web Site (<http://www.don-mattingly.com>). I thought it was emotional enough to share with everyone.

**RANDOM QUOTE:** The silliest (thing) would have to be taking the kid's popcorn...I don't know what came over me. I think we were like 50-90, or something, and maybe that was it. It was kind of silly, I reached into that kid's bag and ate his snack. -- Don Mattingly, 1996, when asked what was the silliest thing he ever did was.

# High School Days

Hello, this is my story about my favorite baseball player of all time. . . Don Mattingly!

I have been a fan of Don Mattingly's for as long as I can remember (I'm only 15 years old). I collect his cards, and I have a lot of stuff autographed by him , including a personal autograph I got when I bumped into him in Washington, D.C.

It was an exhibition game at RFK Stadium vs. the Mets on April 1, 1992 (April Fool's Day!). It was going to be the first time I would ever see Don Mattingly play in person (I'm from Louisville, KY, and there aren't any American League teams nearby). Anyway, the game was cancelled due to rain, but on my way out, I bumped into Don Mattingly and got his autograph. It was pretty cool.

In the past few years, I haven't collected many Don Mattingly cards or memorabilia, but I have been researching his career, even his high school years, bit by bit. You see, my grandparents live in Henderson, KY (across the Ohio River from Evansville, IN, where Don grew up. In fact, my grandfather went to Memorial High School with Don Mattingly's father!

Whenever I visit my grandparents now, I go over to Evansville and look up microfilm of the "Evansville Courier." I've learned a lot about Don Mattingly's past, and his high school years are especially interesting.

I have a lot of info on his high school years which you might be interested in. For example, in 1978 (his junior year), he led Memorial to a 30-0 record and the state champi-

onship (a 7-1 win over Blackford in the title game). The next year as a senior, Memorial went 29-1, losing the state title game to the Logansport Berries, 6-5 in 10 innings)

Don was, of course, All-City in baseball, but was also All-City in basketball, where he was Memorial's point guard, wearing #43 --- in baseball he wore #21).

He was also the quarterback and halfback on Memorial's football team! He played four years of baseball and basketball and three years of football.

By the way, I visited your web site and I loved it! Keep up the great work and I hope to talk to all of you later!

**HTTP://WWW.DONNIEBASEBALL.COM**

*"The Mattingly Reader"* is a product of Joseph Riccitelli, Jr. It is a newsletter for fans of Don Mattingly and the New York Yankees. It is in no way affiliated with Mr. Mattingly or the New York Yankees Baseball Club in any way.

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## RANDOM THOUGHTS

Joseph L. Riccitelli, Jr. ([JoeMoose@donniebaseball.com](mailto:JoeMoose@donniebaseball.com))

If you are reading this, chances are you are a fan of Don Mattingly. Who wouldn't be?! For 14 seasons, Don patrolled the area around first base for the New York Yankees and excelled like no other! He was on his way not just to a fantastic career, but to a trip to Cooperstown!

Along the way, there were some obstacles to overcome. From his back injury, the turmoil's of life in the Bronx under George Steinbrenner through the not-so-stellar Yankee teams of the late 1980s/early 1990s. But, through it all, the man they call Donnie Baseball gave 100% no matter what! He was the heart and soul of the Yankees and was looked upon with awe by not only Yankee fans, but baseball fans in general!

During his pre-injury years,

Don had no equal. He was the best player in the game, bar none! Then fate intervened and cut his power and offense, but never his heart and dedication to the game he loved. Without him, I don't know how seriously I would have followed those 'inferior' Yankee teams of the early '90s. But, I never would have abandoned my team, because Don never did.

Even through all the 'soap opera' stories that played themselves out in the daily papers (remember the haircut incident?), Don never gave less than his all. He was truly a leader well before he was appointed captain!

Without the injury, I doubt there would be anyone who didn't think Don Mattingly belonged in the Hall. He was a sure thing from day one, and now, almost 3 years since his last ball

game, there is no doubt in my mind that Don will make the Hall one day! Sure, he may not be a first-ballot pick, the injury saw to that. But, to not include one of the classiest men to ever play the game would be a horrible injustice on the part of the voters!

I would like to hear what everyone else thinks about Don's chances at making the Hall.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This article was originally written by me and posted to the Baseball Message Board on Don Mattingly's Official Site. I thought I would include it here because not everyone has access to the Internet or reads those messages regularly.

**RANDOM QUOTE:** 23 came from not wanting 46 at all, my first number. I turned 23 the year I got the number, so that was also a part of it. Also, it was half of 46, so that made it work. At that point of my career, though, any number would have been OK. -- Don Mattingly, April 23, 1997, when asked why he chose #23.

### HOF Debate, Continued from Page 1

In '94, he was hitting well, having raised his batting average from the mid .200's in June to over .300 in August, a period during which the Yankees built a 10-game lead over 2nd place Baltimore. Then the season got canceled.

In '95, the Yanks went on a roll that put them in first place at the end of July. Not coincidentally, Mattingly hit .350 in July of '95 and was the AL Player of the Month. He re-injured his back in early August and went 0-for-the-rest-of-the-month, while the Yankees dropped hopelessly out of contention. But the Yanks went on a miracle run in September that got them into the playoffs. Surprise! Mattingly was healthy again and was hit .330 during the streak! Oh, and he hit .417 in the playoff series against Seattle with one home run.

If he'd sat on the bench during Sept. '93 and August '95, he'd have ended those years with pretty impressive numbers in injury-shortened seasons, like many HOF players have had in their careers. But instead, they

kept him in the lineup, so his numbers came out looking mediocre. Does that make him a mediocre player, or just an injured player? People would make a better point with Ron Guidry. Guidry had a short career since he came up late (27 or 28). He won less than 200 games. Yet he has an incredible winning percentage, won 20 games three times, had an excellent ERA. His career was too short, but much more productive throughout the "whole career".

Overall, Don would make a fine addition to the Hall of Fame. He certainly wouldn't be an embarrassment to it! Although the fans will continue to argue about this for years to come, the answer won't come until Don is eligible for election early in the next century!

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This article was produced from a variety of posts in the [alt.sports.baseball.ny-yankees newsgroup](http://alt.sports.baseball.ny-yankees.newsgroup) during a heated debate in early April 1998. Several people contributed to it, including myself!

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# The Mattingly Reader

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If you only visit 2 sites on the World Wide Web make sure they are these:

*The Official Don Mattingly Site (<http://www.don-mattingly.com/>)*

*The (Un) Official Don Mattingly Tribute Site (<http://www.donniebaseball.com/>)*

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# Fan Letters

Joe:

Just wanted to tell you that you have a really cool site. Keep up the good work! I've been a fan of Donnie's for many years and collect a lot of Mattingly memorabilia. I'm also an avid fan of his own website. Gary's doing a great job with it. Donnie deserves it, he was all class!

John Spressler (02/17/98)

(Hitman307@aol.com)

Joe:

I just got a chance to look at your (Un) Official Don Mattingly page. The pictures of Don Mattingly Day were fantastic! I have been a loyal Donnie Baseball fan for many years, and was fortunate enough to see him play a few times. It was really difficult considering I'm from St Louis, Missouri and now live in Iowa but I have made it to Yankee Stadium twice in my life. Once I was 12 and saw Don blast two dingers over the short porch, and the second time was August 31. Being there that day was a dream come true for me, and I will always remember it. Let me just say thank you for sharing your memories on the web!

Brandon Keys (02/17/98)

(KeysBrandonG@JDCORP.deere.com)

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