

Frosty Kennedy "The Greatest Player Ever"

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"I think I'm the greatest player ever. Babe Ruth hit 60 homers but never batted .400. Ted Williams and a lot of other guys hit .400 but never hit 60 homers. I did both."

- Frosty Kennedy in a 1985 interview

On September 6, 1956, Forrest (Frosty) Kennedy writes his name into the record book when the Plainview Ponies' first baseman becomes only the 10th player in organized baseball history to hit as many as 60 home runs in a single season.

In Plainview's final game of the Southwestern (B) League season against the San Angelo Colts, Kennedy hits a solo home run in the third inning off of right-hander Jorge Lopez that home plate umpire Al Martin rules just fair inside the left field foul pole.

Despite being only 30 years old, the bulky Californian will hit only seven more home runs before leaving organized baseball for good the following season, opting to play for the Pasadena (Calif.) Tigers of the Triple A Winter League.

Born on March 21, 1926, Kennedy, playing in cozy Jaycee Park (358 feet to center field), is the last of three minor league hitters to reach the 60 home run plateau during the 1956 season. Dick Stuart had already hit 66 home runs for the Lincoln Chiefs of the Western (A) League, while Ken Guettler of the Texas (AA) League's Shreveport Sports has 62 with three games left to play. Guettler will go homerless in his final three games and finish with 62.

A standout in both football and baseball at El Monte (Calif.) High School, Kennedy, a Navy veteran, plays semipro baseball and softball for three years prior to signing his first professional baseball contract for \$200 per month on June 3, 1947, with the Riverside Dons of the Sunset (C) League. He goes 1-for-1 in his only game for the Dons before being suspended on June 8.

Over the next two seasons, he hits .331 in 1948 and a league-leading .411 with 11 home runs and 123 RBIs in 1949, earning Sunset League All-Star honors both years.

Kennedy will play 11 years in the minors with 14 different teams in 12 different leagues. The right-handed hitting power hitter fashions a .342 career batting average with 246 doubles, 228 home runs and 1,083 RBIs. Six times Kennedy will hit 25-or-more home runs and on eight occasions he will drive in 100 or more runs.

Plainview Player Blasts 60th Homer

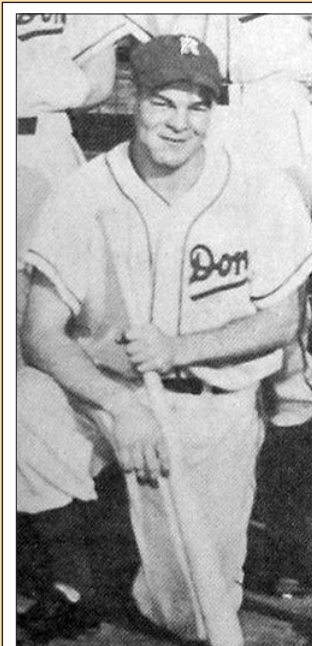
SAN ANGELO, Tex. (UP) — Mickey Mantle is having his troubles with No. 60, but that magic mark has been clouted around like never before in the minor leagues this season.

No less than three musclemen have turned the trick.

Frosty Kennedy of the Plainview Ponies of the Southwestern League clouted his 60th home run in the final game of the season last night. He was the 10th player in organized baseball history to ever hit 60 or more homers.

Dick Stuart of the Lincoln Chiefs of the Western League wound up with 66 homers and Ken Guettler of Shreveport in the Texas League has hit 62 with three games still to play.

The home run record of organized baseball is 72 set by Joe Bauman of Roswell, N. M., in the Longhorn League in 1954.



Frosty Kennedy
1949 Riverside Dons

Frosty Kennedy Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Lev	AB	HT	2B	3B	HR	RBI	AVG	
1946	Grand Prairie Naval Air Station	softball	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---	
1947	Dallas Lofland	softball	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---	
1947	Riverside Dons	Sunset	C	1	1	0	0	0	0	1.000	
1948	Riverside Dons	Sunset	C	605	200	28	19	8	112	.331	
1949	Riverside Dons	Sunset	C	472	194	19	17	11	123	.411	
1950	3 Teams	3 Leagues	A/B/AA	150	48	9	0	5	23	.320	
	Pensacola Fliers	Southeastern	B	42	18	2	0	3	8	.429	
	Atlanta Crackers	Southern	AA	4	0	0	0	0	0	.000	
	Hartford Chiefs	Eastern	A	104	30	7	0	2	15	.288	
1951	Miami Beach Flamingos	Fla. International	B	482	148	24	5	7	63	.307	
1952	Lamesa Lobos	West Texas-New Mexico	C	548	186	32	7	25	128	.339	
1953	Plainview Ponies	West Texas-New Mexico	C	549	225	43	4	38	169	.410	
1954	3 Teams	3 Leagues	C/B/AA	535	187	31	8	37	133	.350	
	Oklahoma City Indians	Texas	AA	35	9	2	0	1	2	.257	
	Burlington Bees	Three-I	B	65	16	1	0	1	11	.246	
	Amarillo Gold Sox	West Texas-New Mexico	C	435	162	28	8	35	120	.372	
1955	Yuma Sun Sox	Arizona-Mexico	C	541	163	25	6	30	123	.301	
1956	Plainview Ponies	Southwestern	B	562	184	28	5	60	184	.327	
1957	2 Teams	2 Leagues	A-C	170	43	7	1	7	25	.253	
	Savannah Redlegs	South Atlantic	A	104	28	3	1	6	14	.269	
	Boise Braves	Pioneer	C	66	15	4	0	1	11	.227	
1958	Pasadena Tigers	Triple A Winter League	S-Pro	-	-	-	-	-	-	---	
Minor League Totals				11 Seasons	4614	1578	246	72	228	1083	.342

Frosty Kennedy [2 of 4]:

Batting Champion

With four days left in the 1949 season, Kennedy is leading the Sunset League in hitting with a .412 average. On September 1, upset with recent divorce proceedings initiated by his 18-year-old wife Ramona, Kennedy attempts to commit suicide by slashing his wrists. The police characterize his injuries as "minor."

Returning to the lineup one day later with both wrists taped, Kennedy goes 2-for-5 with two RBIs in a 8-6 loss to San Bernardino. Kennedy will eventually capture the league's hitting crown that season with a .411 average, out-distancing El Centro first baseman Frank Stinson by a comfortable 37 points.

In 1953, Kennedy is named to the West Texas-New Mexico League All-Star team after hitting .410 with 43 doubles, 38 home runs and 169 RBIs. In addition he sets a league record by hitting in 40 consecutive games, breaking the existing record set by Lubbock's Ray Newsome earlier in the same season. Kennedy is named to the all-star team as a second baseman, despite playing only 70 of his 142 games at that position.

Kennedy dies of a heart attack on June 5, 1998 in Covina, California, at the age of 72.

Minor League Home Run Leaders

Joe Bauman, Roswell.....	1954	72
Joe Hauser, Minneapolis	1933	69
Bob Crues, Amarillo	1948	69
Dick Stuart, Lincoln.....	1956	66
Bob Lennon, Nashville.....	1954	64
Joe Hauser, Baltimore	1930	63
Moose Clabaugh, Tyler	1930	62
Ken Guettler, Shreveport	1956	62
Frosty Kennedy, Plainview	1956	60
Tony Lazzeri, Salt Lake City	1925	60

KENNEDY CHRONOLOGY

Frosty Kennedy - First Career Home Run
Stark Field, El Centro, California
June 28, 1948

Riverside Wallops El Centro, 12 to 7

EL CENTRO, June 28 (UP)—Led by the batting of Frosty Kennedy and Hank Bartolomei, Riverside defeated El Centro 12-7, in a Sunset League baseball game here tonight. Kennedy, centerfielder, hit a homer in the ninth with one man on and Bartolomei, second baseman and the next man at bat, socked another one out of the park to put the game on ice. Score:

Riverside 202 040 004—12 7 1
El Centro 000 000 000—7 11 1
Lorenz and Holmes! Stinson and
Bartolomei

home off of reliever Earl Wilshire with the winning run that evens the Dons record at 26-26 ... Kennedy will go on to set a team record with 26 stolen bases.

July 27-July 30, 1949

Kennedy misses a four-game series with Mexicali after he is suspended by Riverside President George Jackson for "failure to suit up and play."

September 1, 1949 ►

Upset with recent divorce proceedings initiated by his 18-year-old wife Ramona, Kennedy attempts to commit suicide by slashing his wrists ... officers characterize his injuries as "minor."

June 3, 1947

Kennedy signs his first professional baseball contract for \$200 per month with the Riverside Dons of the Sunset (C) League.

June 8, 1947

After playing only one game with the Dons, Kennedy is suspended for the remainder of the season (possibly for being under contract with the Dallas Lofland softball team).

◀ June 28, 1948

Kennedy hits his first career home run, a two-run shot in the ninth inning, in a 12-7 win over the El Centro Imperials in a Sunset League game.

September 4, 1948

Kennedy steals home with the bases loaded in the bottom of the ninth giving Riverside a 8-7 win over the San Bernardino Pioneers ... opening the final frame with a triple, Kennedy steals

Sunset Loop Star Attempts Suicide

RIVERSIDE, Cal., Sept. 2 (AP)—Sheriff's officers Friday disclosed a suicide attempt by Frosty Kennedy, 23, leading batter in the class C Sunset Baseball league.

Kennedy, center fielder for the Riverside Rubes, tried to slash his wrists Thursday, Deputies said. Officers were summoned to his home by his 18-year-old wife, Ramona. His injuries were reported minor.

Deputies said the episode was probably motivated by Mrs. Kennedy's recent divorce action. He has been trying to effect a reconciliation.

Frosty Kennedy [3 of 4]:

September 2, 1949

One day after slashing his wrists in a failed attempt to commit suicide, Kennedy returns to the Riverside lineup with both wrists taped and goes 2-for-5 with two RBIs in Riverside's 8-6 loss to San Bernardino.

Bad Bus Day in the Sunset

On the same day that Kennedy is named as the Sunset League Player of the Year, two league teams experience bus trouble.

First, mechanical troubles cause the postponement of El Centro at Reno game ... then south of the border, the Tijuana's sheriff's department impounds the Tijuana Colts' team bus for the second time in a month, for failure to pay a \$285.86 hotel bill.

Team officials raise the money to pay the bill and the team then travels to Porterfield, California, where money-strapped Colts drop an 11-3 decision to the homestanding Packers.

◀ September 4, 1949

In the fifth inning of game with Las Vegas, Kennedy is presented with a trophy for being named the Sunset League Player of the Year ... Kennedy responds by hitting a three-run home run in the same inning as the trophy presentation, pacing the Dons to a 22-5 win over the pennant-winning Wranglers.

May 29, 1952 ▶

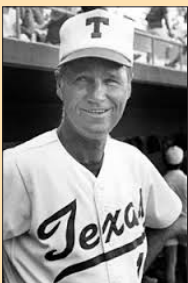
West Texas-New Mexico League President Ray Winkler fines Kennedy \$50 and indefinitely suspends the second baseman for shoving, pushing and cursing umpire Jack Carouso in the first game of a doubleheader a day earlier ... Kennedy, upset with a called strike, is charged with a delay of the game and ejected.

August 6, 1952

West Texas-New Mexico League President Ray Winkler fines Kennedy \$30 for body-bumping umpire Al Rosenthal during the Lamesa-Lubbock two days earlier.

April 29, 1953

Kennedy has three home runs and drives in eight runs in Plainview's 20-4 win over the Clovis Pioneers.



May 11, 1953

Plainview pounds out 17 hits in a 12-4 win over the Pampa Oilers before 1,178 Jaycee Park fans and moves into a first-place tie with the Lubbock Hubbers ... Kennedy and rookie shortstop Cliff Gustafson each have two hits in four at bats ... Gustafson (pictured at left) will go to become the winningest baseball coach in Division I history at the University of Texas with 1,427 victories and two NCAA championships in 29 seasons as the Longhorns coach.

September 29, 1953

Kennedy, the "tobacco chewing" Plainview infielder is sold to the Texas League's Oklahoma City Indians.

1954

Kennedy hits 15 home runs in his first 20 games for the Amarillo Gold Sox.

March 1, 1956 ▶

Yuma trades Kennedy, its all-star third baseman, to Plainview for left-handed pitcher Ray Grund.

March 18, 1957

Kennedy is released by the Plainview Ponies as part of the organization's youth movement put into place with their working agreement with Sacramento of the Pacific Coast League.

Frosty Kennedy Draws Suspension

LUBBOCK — (AP) — Forrest (Frosty) Kennedy, Lamesa second baseman, has been fined \$50 and given an indefinite suspension by Ray Winkler, West Texas-New Mexico League president.

The fine and suspension, the latter the first in the league this year, was for pushing and shoving Umpire Jack Carouso, use of profane and abusive language and for delay of the game, Winkler said.

The incident took place in the first game of a doubleheader at Lamesa Wednesday night. Kennedy was ejected from the game for his part in the proceedings. The burly Lobo protested a called strike too vehemently.

Winkler said that he was deadly serious about abuse of umpire shoving and pushing and delay of the game. He warned that other stiff fines and suspensions would follow unless the practices ceased.

Really Bad Trade

After the completion of the 1955 season, in one of the most lopsided trades in minor league history, Kennedy, who hit .301 with 30 home runs for the Yuma Sun Sox, is traded to Plainview for 23-year-old left-hander Ray Grund, coming off a 2-1 season with a 6.06 ERA in 15 games for the Ponies.

Sun Sox General Manager John Carleton, who makes the trade tells *The Yuma Sun*, "I felt Ray could help us more than Kennedy because he is a limited service player and Frosty a veteran."

The rest is history, Kennedy hits .327 with 60 home runs for the Ponies in 1956, while Grund does not pitch another inning in professional baseball.

Frosty Kennedy [4 of 4]:

September 30, 1957

Playing for the Boise Braves of Pioneer (C) League, Kennedy hits the 228th, and final, home run of his 11-year minor league career in the eighth inning of an 8-5 loss to the Magic Valley Cowboys.

October 1, 1957

One day after hitting his final minor league home run, Kennedy signs to play with the Pasadena Tigers ... he is slated to be in the starting lineup in that afternoon's game.

November 23, 1958

Playing for Pasadena, Kennedy hits a grand slam in an 18-8 win over Compton in a California Winter A League game.

March 23, 1962

Making one last comeback attempt with the Hawaii Islanders of the Pacific Coast (AAA) League, a 36-year-old Kennedy is given his release after the Islanders acquire former major leaguer Herbie Plews.



June 5, 1998

Kennedy dies of a heart attack in Covina, California, at the age of 72.

Minor league slugger dies at 72

COVINA, Calif. — Forrest "Frosty" Kennedy, a minor league slugger who was one of 11 baseball players to hit 60 home runs in a season, has died. He was 72.

Kennedy died Friday night of a heart attack, the Pasadena Star News, reported Saturday.

Kennedy hit 60 home runs in a 144-game season while playing for Plainview, Texas, in the Class B Southwestern League of 1956.

He hit his 60th homer in his final at-bat on the final day of the season.

He hit .327 that year, with 184 RBIs, and scored 151 runs. He averaged .342 during a 10-year minor league career that began in 1948.

His photo and statistics are displayed in the Babe Ruth Wing at the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y.