

R.C. Stevens, "Quite a Start"

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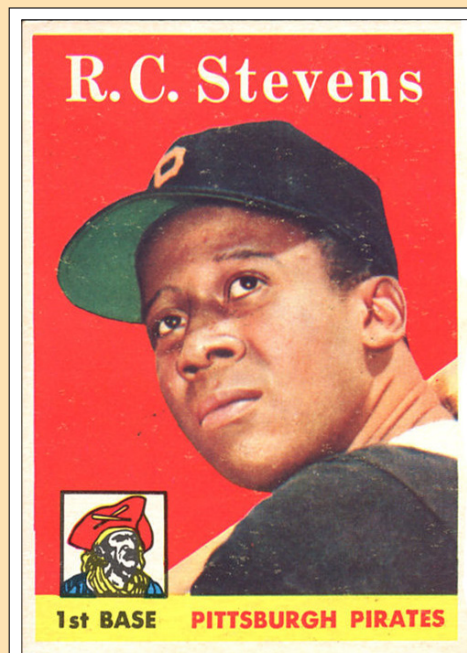
R.C. Stevens, a 6-foot-5 first baseman for the Pittsburgh Pirates has one of the more memorable starts in major league history ... in his major league debut against the Milwaukee Braves on April 15, 1958, Stevens comes off the bench and goes 2-for-2 and drives home the winning run with a 14th inning single off of Gene Conley of a 4-3 Corsair win.

Four days later (April 19), Stevens hits his first major league home run, a two-run pinch-hit job off Harvey Haddix in a 9-6 loss to the Cincinnati Reds ... the following afternoon, pinch-hitting for Ted Kluszewski, Stevens delivers a two-out "walk-off" homerun off of Reds' reliever Willard Schmidt giving the Pirates a 4-3 victory.

In his first three major league games, Stevens is 4-for-4 with two home runs and four RBIs ... unfortunately for the Moultrie, Ga., native, the downside of his career arrives quickly as he hits just .190 (30-for-158) for the remainder of his four years in the major leagues with the Pirates (1958-1960) and the Washington Senators (1961).

In 1954, Stevens and Herb Bush are the first black players to play for the Burlington-Graham franchise of the Carolina (B) League ... Bush will hit .343 in limited service (70 at bats) for Burlington-Graham while Stevens will lead the team in walks (100), home runs (25) and RBIs (115)

Promoted to the Hollywood Stars of the Pacific Coast League in 1955, Stevens loses out to former Pittsburgh "Bonus Baby" pitcher-turned first baseman Paul Petit in the battle for the starting first base spot.



R.C. Stevens's 1958 Topps Rookie Card (#470) is worth \$36.00 in near-mint condition

R.C. Stevens Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Lev	AB	R	HT	2B	3B	HR	RBI	AVG
1952	Batavia Clippers	Penn-Ontario-New York	D	414	-	102	14	3	6	-	.246
1953	St. Jean Canadiens	Provincial	C	448	-	140	26	5	12	-	.313
1954	Burlington-Graham Pirates	Carolina	B	509	-	149	31	3	25	115	.293
1955	Hollywood Stars	Pacific Coast	Opn	316	32	76	13	0	9	44	.241
1956	Hollywood Stars	Pacific Coast	Opn	427	70	112	15	2	27	72	.262
1957	2 Teams	2 Leagues	AAA	437	61	112	25	3	19	68	.256
	Hollywood Stars	Pacific Coast	Opn	240	40	54	10	1	11	32	.225
	Columbus Jets	International	AAA	197	21	58	15	2	8	36	.294
1958	Pittsburgh Pirates	NATIONAL	ML	90	16	24	3	1	7	18	.267
1958	Salt Lake City Bees	Pacific Coast	AAA	239	44	66	9	2	12	51	.276
1959	2 Teams	2 Minor Leagues	AAA	403	60	114	15	1	19	77	.283
	Salt Lake City Bees	Pacific Coast	AAA	383	58	110	15	1	19	75	.287
	Pittsburgh Pirates	NATIONAL	ML	7	2	2	0	0	1	1	.286
	Columbus Jets	International	AAA	20	2	4	0	0	0	2	.200
1960	Salt Lake City Bees	Pacific Coast	AAA	533	84	147	18	0	37	109	.276
	Pittsburgh Pirates	NATIONAL	ML	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	.000
1961	Washington Senators	AMERICAN	AL	62	2	8	1	0	0	2	.129
1961	Toronto Maple Leafs	International	AAA	239	35	58	10	0	12	32	.243
1962	Toronto Maple Leafs	International	AAA	58	7	14	2	1	1	4	.241
1963	2 Teams	2 Leagues	A-AAA	218	3	50	5	1	12	2	.229
	Toronto Maple Leafs	International	AAA	26	3	3	0	0	0	2	.115
	Quad Cities Angels	Midwest	A	192		47	5	1	12	-	.245
Major League Totals				4 Years	162	21	34	4	1	8	.210
Minor League Totals				12 Years	4241	396	1140	183	21	191	.269

1960 - Led Pacific Coast League in Home Runs (37); 1960 - Pacific Coast League All-Star

On December 16, 1960, the Pirates trade Stevens, first baseman Harry Bright and pitcher Bennie Daniels to the expansion Washington Senators for former American League MVP (1952) Bobby Shantz.

On April 10, 1961, in Washington's season opener against the Chicago White Sox, Stevens becomes the first pinch-hitter in team history, replacing catcher Pete Daley in the ninth inning and grounding out against Dick Donovan in a 4-3 loss.

Stevens is hitting just .129 in 33 games, when on June 13, the Senators sell him outright to the Toronto Maple Leafs of the International (AAA) League on June 13.

Stevens will play two more seasons in the minor leagues before retiring after the 1963 season.