

= George Kelly (baseball) =

George Lange Kelly (September 10 , 1895 ? October 13 , 1984) , nicknamed " Long George " and " High Pockets " , was a Major League Baseball (MLB) first baseman . He played most of his MLB career for the New York Giants (1915 ? 1917 , 1919 ? 1926) , but also played for the Pittsburgh Pirates (1917) , Cincinnati Reds (1927 ? 1930) , Chicago Cubs (1930) , and Brooklyn Dodgers (1932) .

Kelly is a two @-@ time World Series champion (1921 and 1922) . He led the National League in home runs once (1921) and runs batted in twice (1920 and 1924) , and was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1973 . However , his selection is regarded as controversial , as many believe he is undeserving of the recognition and was only elected by the Veterans Committee because it consisted of his former teammates .

= = Career = =

Kelly began his professional career for the Victoria Bees of the Class @-@ B Northwestern League in 1914 and 1915 . During the 1915 season , he was purchased by the New York Giants from Victoria for \$ 1 @,@ 200 (equal to \$ 28 @,@ 070 today) . The Giants were rebuilding their team , and they saw Kelly as a possible replacement for Fred Merkle . However , he played sparingly for the Giants in his first MLB seasons , appearing in only 17 games in 1915 and 49 games in 1916 . He was selected off waivers by the Pittsburgh Pirates on July 25 , 1917 to back up Honus Wagner , but did not hit sufficiently . The Pirates waived Kelly , and he was reclaimed by the Giants from the Pirates on August 4 , 1917 . The Giants optioned Kelly to the Rochester Hustlers of the Class @-@ AA International League , where he played the rest of the 1917 season . Kelly did not play professionally in 1918 due to his military service . The Giants sold Kelly to Rochester before the 1919 season to acquire Earl Smith .

Finding success in Rochester , Kelly was purchased by the Giants in 1919 when Hal Chase was suspended . He became a regular in the Giants line @-@ up in 1920 , when he had a league @-@ leading 94 runs batted in (RBIs) . He led the league in assists and putouts in 1920 and 1921 ; his 1 @,@ 759 putouts in 1920 remains a league record . Kelly batted in 100 or more runs for four consecutive seasons and hit for a batting average of .300 or higher six consecutive seasons . He opened the 1921 season with at least one hit and one RBI in eight consecutive games , a record that stood until it was broken by Jorge Cantú in 2010 . The Giants appeared in the World Series in 1921 , 1922 , 1923 , and 1924 , winning in 1921 and 1922 . Kelly set a National League record with seven home runs in six consecutive games in 1924 , which has since been matched by Graig Nettles , Walker Cooper , and Willie Mays .

In the final series of the 1924 season , the Giants were playing the Philadelphia Phillies at the Polo Grounds and battling for the pennant with the Brooklyn Dodgers . Jimmy O 'Connell offered Phillies shortstop Heinie Sand \$ 500 to intentionally lose the games . Sand rejected the bribe and reported it to Phillies manager Art Fletcher . It eventually led to the lifetime suspension of O 'Connell and Giants coach Crazy Dolan by Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis . O 'Connell implicated Kelly , Frankie Frisch , and Ross Youngs as co @-@ conspirators . However , Commissioner Landis cleared Kelly , Frisch and Youngs of any wrongdoing .

That following offseason , Kelly , Sam Bohne and other Major League Baseball (MLB) players agreed to play professional basketball with O 'Connell . National League (NL) president John Heydler insisted that anyone who played with O 'Connell could be suspended . The Giants were also displeased with Kelly 's arrangement , as they were concerned about the chance he could injure himself in non @-@ baseball activity . However , Kelly had not played in any games at that point . He was removed from the roster and thus avoided suspension by MLB .

Kelly , naturally a first baseman , saw regular time as a second baseman in 1925 when Frisch injured his hand , while backup Bill Terry began playing first base . With the emergence of Terry , who requested a trade so that he could receive more playing time , and Giants manager John McGraw desiring an improvement in the outfield , Kelly was traded to the Cincinnati Reds prior to

the 1927 season for Edd Roush . The Reds traded Roush due to a contract dispute . With Wally Pipp at first base for the Reds , Kelly was slated to play center field . The Reds released Pipp before the 1929 season , and Kelly returned to first base .

Kelly was released by the Reds on July 10 , 1930 , and signed by the minor @-@ league Minneapolis Millers of the Class @-@ AA American Association . The Millers traded Kelly to the Chicago Cubs for Mal Moss and a player to be named later (Chick Tolson) late in the 1930 season to fill in for the injured Charlie Grimm . Kelly he was released by the Cubs in February 1931 . He returned to the Millers for the 1931 season , and participated in a tour of Japan along with Frisch , Lou Gehrig , Mickey Cochrane , Al Simmons , Lefty Grove , and Rabbit Maranville , among others .

In April 1932 , the Millers traded Kelly to the Brooklyn Dodgers for Pea Ridge Day . With the Dodgers , he filled in for the injured Del Bissonette . Kelly played his final MLB game on July 27 , 1932 . He returned to the International League to finish the 1932 season with the Jersey City Skeeters , and played the 1933 season for the Oakland Oaks of the Pacific Coast League before retiring .

= = Player profile = =

Kelly was known as an excellent defensive first baseman . His positioning and footwork on hits to the outfield became the standard method for teaching future first basemen to handle relays . Frisch considered Kelly the finest first baseman he had seen .

Kelly also had a reputation as a clutch hitter . McGraw said there was no player he preferred to have bat in a big situation . Waite Hoyt considered him dangerous in clutch situations .

= = Hall of Fame induction = =

To be inducted in the National Baseball Hall of Fame , a player must receive at least 75 % of the vote from the Baseball Writers ' Association of America (BBWAA) or the Veterans Committee . Kelly was on the BBWAA ballot seven times , never coming close to being elected , and never garnering more than 1 @.@ 9 % of the vote . By year , voting results for Kelly were : 1947 (one vote , 0 @.@ 6 %) , 1948 (two votes , 1 @.@ 7 %) , 1949 (one vote , 0 @.@ 7 %) , 1956 (two votes , 1 @.@ 0 %) , 1958 (two votes , 0 @.@ 8 %) , 1960 (five votes , 1 @.@ 9 %) , and 1962 (two votes , 0 @.@ 6 %) . Despite the lack of support from the BBWAA , he was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1973 by the Veterans Committee . At the time of Kelly 's election , the writers ' ballot was voted on by approximately 400 writers , while the Veterans Committee had a membership of twelve former players and executives .

The selection of Kelly was controversial , as many felt Kelly was not worthy of enshrinement in the Hall . According to the BBWAA , the Veterans Committee was not selective enough in choosing members . Charges of cronyism were levied against the Veterans Committee . When Kelly was elected , the Veterans Committee included two of his former teammates , Bill Terry and Frankie Frisch , who also shepherded the selections of Giants teammates Jesse Haines in 1970 , Dave Bancroft and Chick Hafey in 1971 , Ross Youngs in 1972 , Jim Bottomley in 1974 , and Freddie Lindstrom in 1976 . This led to the Veterans Committee having its powers reduced in subsequent years . Baseball historian Bill James , while ranking Kelly as the 65th greatest first baseman of all @-@ time , also cites Kelly as " the worst player in the Hall of Fame " .

= = Coaching career = =

Kelly served as a coach for the Cincinnati Reds , managed by former teammate Chuck Dressen , from 1935 to 1937 . Former teammate Casey Stengel hired Kelly to coach the Boston Braves from 1938 to 1943 . He returned to the Reds ' coaching staff in 1947 and 1948 . He coached the Oakland Oaks of the Pacific Coast League in 1949 . In 1954 , Kelly managed the independent Wenatchee Chiefs in the Western International League .

= = Personal life = =

A native San Franciscan , Kelly remained in the San Francisco Bay Area , living in Millbrae , California following his playing career . Kelly 's brother , Ren Kelly , uncle , Bill Lange , and cousin , Rich Chiles , also played in MLB .

Kelly suffered a stroke on October 5 , 1984 and died on October 13 at Peninsula Hospital in Burlingame , California . He is interred at the Holy Cross Cemetery in Colma , California .