

= Bob Meusel =

Robert William Meusel (July 19 , 1896 ? November 28 , 1977) was an American baseball left and right fielder who played in Major League Baseball (MLB) for eleven seasons from 1920 through 1930 , all but the last for the New York Yankees . He was best known as a member of the Yankees ' championship teams of the 1920s , nicknamed the " Murderers ' Row " , during which time the team won its first six American League (AL) pennants and first three World Series titles .

Meusel , noted for his strong outfield throwing arm , batted fifth behind Baseball Hall of Famers Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig . In 1925 , he became the second Yankee , after Ruth , to lead the AL in the following offensive categories : home runs (33) , runs batted in (138) and extra base hits (79) . Nicknamed " Long Bob " because of his 6 @-@ foot , 3 inch (1 @.@ 91 m) stature , Meusel batted .313 or better in seven of his first eight seasons , finishing with a .309 career average ; his 1 @,@ 005 RBI during the 1920s were the fourth most by any major leaguer , and trailed only Harry Heilmann 's total of 1 @,@ 131 among AL right @-@ handed hitters . Meusel ended his career in 1930 with the Cincinnati Reds . He hit for the cycle three times , and was the second of four major leaguers to accomplish this feat as many as three times during a career .

His older brother , Emil " Irish " Meusel , was a star outfielder in the National League (NL) during the same period , primarily for the New York Giants .

= = Early life = =

Meusel was born in San Jose , California , the youngest of Charlie and Mary Meusel 's six children . At an early age he moved to Los Angeles , where he attended Los Angeles High School . Meusel started his career with the Vernon Tigers of the Pacific Coast League in 1917 . He joined the US Navy during World War I and played for the Navy baseball team . He went back to the Tigers for the 1919 season , batting .330 . He also played third base in the minors .

On December 14 , 1921 Meusel married Edith Cowan , with whom he had one daughter .

= = Professional career = =

Meusel 's contract was purchased by the New York Yankees in early 1920 . After a productive spring training , Meusel replaced future Hall of Famer Frank Baker at third base . He played his first game on April 14 , 1920 . In his rookie season , Meusel had a .328 batting average with 11 home runs and 83 runs batted in over 119 games . He finished fourth in the league in doubles with 41 while sharing time with Duffy Lewis in left field .

In the 1921 season , Meusel started in 149 out of 154 games , primarily playing right field . He batted .318 , finishing second in the league in home runs with 24 and third in the league with 136 runs batted in . He hit for the cycle in a win against the Washington Senators on May 7 . In the second game of a September 5 doubleheader , he tied a major league record for outfielders (previously accomplished by nine others) by recording four assists . He broke a club record and tied Jack Tobin of the St. Louis Browns for the league lead in outfield assists with 28 ; he was considered to be one of the league 's best all @-@ around players . Meusel 's brother , Irish , was acquired by the New York Giants from the Philadelphia Phillies mid @-@ season , and helped lead the Giants to the pennant . The two brothers played against each other in the 1921 World Series where the Giants faced their tenants (the Yankees played their home games in the Polo Grounds , the ball park owned by the Giants) . Bob Meusel stole home in Game 3 of the Series . He doubled in Babe Ruth for the winning run in Game 5 for a one @-@ game lead , but the Yankees lost the next three games and the Series (the last best @-@ of @-@ nine in World Series history) . His batting average in those eight games was a mere .200 .

At the same time , Meusel , Bill Piercy , and Ruth signed up to play in a barnstorming tour . It was a violation of baseball rules at the time , and Meusel and Ruth had previously been warned about playing with the tour . As punishment , Commissioner of Baseball Kenesaw Mountain Landis suspended them for the first five weeks of the 1922 season and fined them their World Series cash

share of \$ 3 @, @ 362 (\$ 47 @, @ 529 today) each . That season Meusel only played in 121 games , hitting .319 with 16 home runs and 84 runs batted in as he gradually shifted to left field to allow Ruth to instead play right field . Meusel occasionally played right field in Yankees games away from home to protect Ruth from the sun , as the sun affected Ruth 's skill as an outfielder . Despite the games he missed , he again led the AL in assists with 24 . He hit for the cycle for the second time of his career in a win against the Detroit Tigers on July 21 . The Yankees managed to win the American League pennant for the second year in a row , but they were again beaten by the Giants , this time in five games . Meusel had the highest batting average of the Yankees at the end of the Series with .300 .

In 1923 , Meusel hit .313 with 9 home runs and 91 runs batted in as the Yankees moved into their new Yankee Stadium . Meusel helped lead the team to their first World Series title , in their third consecutive matchup with the Giants . Meusel had the most runs batted in (eight) of any player in the Series . He hit a two @-@ run triple in the second inning to help the Yankees win Game 4 at the Polo Grounds , drove in five runs in Game 5 and had a key two @-@ run single that gave the Yankees the lead for good in Game 6 .

Before the 1924 season started , Meusel 's close friend Tony Boeckel , shortstop for the Boston Braves , was killed when the car in which he was riding flipped over in San Diego . Meusel was a passenger in the vehicle but escaped unhurt . That year Meusel hit .320 with 12 home runs and 120 runs batted in , playing in 143 games . In a game against the Tigers on June 13 , Meusel was involved in one of the most notorious brawls in baseball history . With the Yankees leading 10 ? 6 in the top of the ninth inning , Ty Cobb , the star and manager of the Tigers , gave pitcher Bert Cole the signal to hit Meusel with a pitch . Ruth saw the signal and warned Meusel , who was hit in the back and rushed to fight Cole . Both teams rushed onto the field to brawl , and Cobb and Ruth started fighting as well . Over a thousand fans also rushed onto the field , and a riot erupted . The police managed to control the brawl and arrested several fans . The umpire of the game , Billy Evans , pushed Meusel and Ruth out of Navin Field to safety . American League President Ban Johnson punished Meusel and Cole by fining them and issuing a ten @-@ day suspension .

Meusel had a breakout year in 1925 . He led the American League in home runs (33) , runs batted in (138) , games played (156) and extra base hits (79) . Despite this , he finished merely tied for 18th position overall for the AL 's Most Valuable Player award , far behind winner (and former Yankee) Roger Peckinpaugh of the Washington Senators . The Yankees had their worst season of the decade , finishing seventh in the league with a 69 ? 85 record . In the following 1926 season , Meusel only played in 108 games , batting .315 with 12 home runs and 81 runs batted in . In the 1926 World Series against the St. Louis Cardinals , Meusel dropped a key fly ball with one out and the bases loaded in the fourth inning of Game 7 , allowing the Cardinals to tie the game 1 @-@ 1 ; the next batter singled to drive in two more runs . Meusel had chance to redeem himself later in the game , but made infield outs in both the fifth and seventh innings , each time with two men on base . In the bottom of the ninth inning , with New York trailing 3 @-@ 2 , Cardinals starting pitcher Grover Cleveland Alexander retired the first two batters and then walked Ruth . Meusel was up to bat when Ruth tried to steal second base , and catcher Bob O 'Farrell threw him out , ending both the game and the Series ; Meusel only hit .238 .

Meusel was a key member of the 1927 New York Yankees team , which many consider to be one of the greatest baseball teams ever . That season Meusel played in 135 games , hitting .337 with 8 home runs and 103 runs batted in , and finished second in the league with 24 stolen bases ; on May 16 he stole second , third and home in one game . In the 1927 World Series , Meusel batted only .118 and broke the record for the most strikeouts in a four @-@ game series with seven , but the Yankees swept the Pittsburgh Pirates in four games . In 1928 Meusel played in 131 games , hitting .297 with 11 home runs and 111 runs batted in . He hit for the cycle a record @-@ tying third time on July 26 against the Tigers . The Yankees reached the World Series for the third year in a row , playing the Cardinals in a rematch from two years previously . In Game 1 of the Series , Meusel hit the only home run in his World Series career as the Yankees won the game and went on to sweep the series 4 ? 0 .

Prior to the start of the 1930 season , the Yankees sold Meusel to the Cincinnati Reds , and he

played in 110 games , hitting .289 with 10 home runs and 69 runs batted in . The Reds released Meusel after the season , and he went on to the Minneapolis Millers of the American Association where he played the 1931 season , hitting .283 . He went back to the Pacific Coast League in 1932 , where he played 64 games with the Hollywood Stars , batting .329 with four home runs before retiring .

Meusel 's major league career ended with 368 doubles , 94 triples , 156 home runs , a .497 slugging percentage , 1 @,@ 067 runs batted in , 826 runs scored and 140 stolen bases . Most of his various Yankee career records for right @-@ handed hitters were broken by Tony Lazzeri in the mid @-@ 1930s ; Joe DiMaggio broke his marks for batting average , slugging average and doubles in the late 1940s .

= = Retirement and death = =

After retiring from baseball , Meusel worked as a security guard at a US Navy base for 15 years . He was in attendance when his former teammate Lou Gehrig made his famous ' Luckiest Man on the Face of the Earth ' speech on July 4 , 1939 . He also appeared in the 1942 film The Pride of the Yankees , as well as the 1948 film The Babe Ruth Story , as himself in a cameo role on both occasions .

Meusel died of natural causes at his home in Downey , California in 1977 , and was buried at Rose Hills Memorial Park in Whittier .

= = Legacy = =

Meusel received the most recognition for being a member of the " Murderers ' Row " teams of the mid @-@ 1920s , which included Ruth , Gehrig , second baseman Tony Lazzeri and center fielder Earle Combs . He shares the record for the most times hitting for the cycle with three , tying the mark set by Long John Reilly in 1890 ; Babe Herman later tied the mark in 1933 ; 82 years later , Adrián Beltré also achieved the feat in 2015 . Meusel had one of the strongest arms of the era ; in his obituary , The New York Times called his throwing arm " deadly accurate " . Hall of Fame manager Casey Stengel , who played on the 1921 through 1923 Giants teams , said that he had never seen a better thrower .

Harvey Frommer described Meusel as a heavy drinker and womanizer who did not get along with his teammates . His manager Miller Huggins called him " indifferent " . He was quiet and reserved , rarely giving newspaper interviews until his career was winding down . He was also known for his lazy attitude , such as refusing to run out ground balls , which many said kept him from achieving greatness . Regularly among the league leaders in strikeouts , his 24 career strikeouts in the World Series were a record for right @-@ handed hitters until Yankees Hank Bauer and Gil McDougald surpassed it in 1958 .

Meusel was considered for election to the Baseball Hall of Fame by its Veterans Committee in 1982 , but the committee instead selected former commissioner Happy Chandler and former Giants shortstop Travis Jackson in its balloting .

In 1925 Bob Meusel joined Philadelphia Athletics outfielder Tilly Walker (1918) , St. Louis Browns outfielder Ken Williams (1922) and later Lou Gehrig (1931) as the only players other than Babe Ruth to win the AL home run title between 1918 and 1931 . Both Walker and Gehrig won the title jointly with Ruth while Williams and Meusel won the title individually .