

= Dan Brouthers =

Dennis Joseph " Dan " Brouthers (/ ˈbruːˈrʊz / ; May 8 , 1858 ? August 2 , 1932) was an American first baseman in Major League Baseball whose career spanned the period from 1879 to 1896 , with a brief return in 1904 . Nicknamed " Big Dan " for his size , he was 6 feet 2 inches (1 @. @ 88 m) and weighed 207 pounds (94 kg) , which was large for 19th @-@ century standards .

Recognized as the first great slugger in baseball history , and among the greatest sluggers of his era , he held the record for career home runs from 1887 to 1889 , with his final total of 106 tying for the fourth most of the 19th century . His career slugging percentage of .519 remained the Major League record for a player with at least 4 @, @ 000 at bats until Ty Cobb edged ahead of him in 1922 . At the time of his initial retirement , he also ranked second in career triples (205) , and third in runs batted in (1 @, @ 296) and hits .

A dominating hitter during the prime of his career , he led (or was in the top of) the league in most offensive categories , including batting average , runs scored , runs batted in (RBI) , on @-@ base percentage and hits . He led the league in batting average five times , the most by a 19th @-@ century player , and his career .342 batting average still ranks ninth all @-@ time . Brouthers is one of only 29 players in baseball history to date who have appeared in Major League games in four decades .

He was also an active players ' union member , and was elected vice president of the Brotherhood of Professional Base Ball Players . Brouthers was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1945 by the Veterans Committee .

= = Early career = =

Born in Sylvan Lake , New York , he played organized baseball from the time that he was a child , from playing in the local sandlots to the semi @-@ professional Actives of Wappingers Falls , New York . On July 7 , 1877 , while running the bases , he collided at home plate with a catcher , named Johnny Quigley , of the Clippers of Harlem . Quigley was knocked unconscious , having suffered a traumatic head injury , and later died from these injuries on August 12 . The 19 @-@ year @-@ old Brouthers was cleared of any wrongdoing by the authorities .

= = Major League career = =

= = = Troy = = =

Brouthers made his Major League debut on June 23 , 1879 , for the Troy Trojans , and contributed a single in a come @-@ from @-@ behind victory against the Syracuse Stars . Although he was a first baseman , he was called upon to pitch that season with the Trojans in three games , one of which was on August 21 against Tommy Bond and the Boston Red Caps . Brouthers lost 16 ? 0 , and within two weeks he was released from the club . He hit .274 that first season , with four home runs , and had 17 RBIs in 39 games played .

After his release , Brouthers played for a minor league team in Rochester , New York , and on one occasion in 1880 , he hit a game @-@ winning home run in an exhibition game versus the Buffalo Bisons , off future Hall of Fame pitcher Pud Galvin . He hit well enough in the minors to get another shot with the Trojans , which lasted just three games when he had only two hits in 12 at bats , and he was released again .

= = = Buffalo = = =

He got his first chance to be an everyday player in 1881 , when he was signed by the Bisons , the team that he did well against the previous year . That season he batted .319 , and played with them until the team folded after the 1885 season . In his first season with the Bisons , he led the National

League (NL) in home runs and slugging percentage . Brouthers , along with teammates Jack Rowe , Hardy Richardson and Deacon White , became known as the " Big Four " . In 1882 and 1883 he won his first two batting titles , posting .368 and .374 averages , respectively . Along with his two batting titles , during his time in Buffalo he also led the NL in slugging five times , hits and total bases twice each , and triples and RBIs once each , with his 1883 total of 97 RBIs setting a new Major League record ; Cap Anson had set the previous mark of 83 the year before , and retook the record the following year with a total of 102 . On July 19 , 1883 , Brouthers went 6 @-@ for @-@ 6 with two doubles in a 25 ? 5 defeat of the Philadelphia Quakers .

= = = Detroit and The Brotherhood = = =

At the end of the 1885 season , Buffalo was going through financial trouble and were forced to sell off their players , so " The Big Four " were sold to the Detroit Wolverines of the NL for US \$ 7 @,@ 000 . In 1886 , his first season in Detroit , he again led the league in slugging percentage , the sixth year in a row , and led the league in total bases and doubles and claimed his first home run title . He finished within the top 10 in most offensive categories , including a third @-@ place finish in the batting race with a lofty .370 average . On September 10 , 1886 , Brouthers hit three home runs ? along with a double and a single , to set the NL record with 15 total bases in one game . This mark tied the Major League record at the time , as Guy Hecker of the Louisville Colonels totaled 15 the previous month in the American Association .

The Detroit team was filled with stars from the era , including future Hall of Famers Sam Thompson and Ned Hanlon , as well as second baseman Fred Dunlap , the " Big Four " , and the pitching of Lady Baldwin and Charlie Getzien . The team finished with a record of 87 wins and 36 losses , but finished in second place behind the Chicago White Stockings by 2 1 ? 2 games .

During the off @-@ season , on November 11 , 1886 , The Executive Council of the Brotherhood of Professional Base Ball Players ? formed in 1885 as the first organized players ' union , met and re @-@ elected John Montgomery Ward as president , and elected Brouthers as vice president .

In 1887 , with the 1886 roster intact , the Wolverines finished in first place , besting the Quakers by 3 1 ? 2 games . Brouthers batted .338 , and led the league in runs scored with 153 , doubles with 36 , and on @-@ base percentage , while again finishing in the top 10 in most offensive categories . The Wolverines , behind the bats of Brouthers , Thompson and Richardson , led the League in batting , runs scored and slugging , and went on to face the St. Louis Browns in a best @-@ of @-@ 15 post @-@ season tournament , the " World 's Series " . The Wolverines sealed a series championship with their eighth victory in 11 games ; however , the two teams finished the series anyway , with Detroit winning 10 games to the Browns ' five . Brouthers only played in one of those games , getting two hits in three at bats .

Following the season , on November 17 , 1887 , members of the NL officially recognized the Brotherhood and met with a Brotherhood committee that consisted of three players ? Ward ? Hanlon and Brouthers .

The 1888 Detroit team did not fare as well , finishing in fifth place with a record of 68 ? 63 , which was a full 16 games behind the first @-@ place New York Giants . Brouthers ' numbers declined as well , as he did not produce at the same level of his previous seasons . Even with the lower numbers , he still led the league in runs scored with 118 , and doubles for the third year in a row . The team 's decline is attributed to prolonged injuries sustained by key players , while turmoil that unfolded concerning veteran stars ' salary demands , and with falling attendance numbers , the club was forced to fold at the season 's end . Brouthers was then purchased by the Boston Beaneaters of the NL on October 16 .

= = = Boston = = =

In 1889 , his only season with the Beaneaters , he batted a league @-@ leading .373 , along with 105 runs scored and 118 runs batted in ; he struck out only six times . The first strikeout occurred on June 11 , when he fell victim to Mickey Welch of the Giants .

After the season , he ? along with many Major League players ? jumped to the Players ' League , a league established by the Brotherhood which competed against the two other Major Leagues already in existence . Brouthers signed with the Boston Reds , and batted .330 while leading the league in on @-@ base percentage and slugging . The Reds , behind the talents of Brouthers , Harry Stovey , Hardy Richardson , Charles Radbourn and player @-@ manager King Kelly , finished in first place , 6 1 ? 2 games ahead of the Brooklyn Ward 's Wonders .

The Players ' League lasted just the one season , and the Reds merged into the American Association , carrying many of the championship team 's previous players . Again , the team won the league 's championship , finishing 8 1 ? 2 games ahead of the St. Louis Browns . Brouthers led the league in batting average (.350) , on @-@ base percentage and slugging , while finishing second in triples with 19 , sixth in doubles with 26 , and third in RBIs with 109 .

= = = Late career = = =

After the American Association folded following the 1891 season , Brouthers was sent to the Brooklyn Grooms of the NL , where he played two seasons . Most of his success came in that first season , when he led the league in batting average , hits , RBIs and total bases . For the 1893 season , he played in only 77 of the team 's games , but did well , hitting .337 . After the season , Brouthers was traded along with Willie Keeler to the Baltimore Orioles for Billy Shindle and George Treadway .

This trade brought in two future Hall of Fame players , which added to the already established Orioles core of players including third baseman John McGraw , catcher Wilbert Robinson , shortstop Hughie Jennings , and center fielder Joe Kelley , all future Hall of Fame members . The Orioles won the league 's championship that season , and it was Brouthers ' last full season in the majors , as he again produced great numbers , batting .347 , finishing seventh in total bases , fifth in RBIs (128) , fourth in doubles (39) , and fifth in triples (23) .

During his career , and most notably during his time in Baltimore , he was known to always have his dog , an Irish setter named Kelly , and had him sit in the players ' area . It is claimed that the players never minded much , as he was very well @-@ behaved and never left the area to run out on the field or made very much noise .

Early in the 1895 season , Baltimore sold Brouthers to the Louisville Colonels for \$ 500 , as his skills seemed to have diminished , and he only played in 24 of Louisville 's games that season ; he came back to hit .309 for them , ending the year with a .300 overall mark . Following the season , Louisville sold him to the Philadelphia Phillies for \$ 500 , where he played in 57 games in 1896 , batting .344 . It was his last season in the majors until he appeared for the 1904 New York Giants , where he was hitless in a two @-@ game stint before retiring .

Brouthers is still among the all @-@ time leaders in many offensive categories . His .342 batting average ranks ninth , 205 triples ranks eighth , and his .423 on @-@ base percentage ranks 15th . He is tied with Mike Tiernan for fourth among 19th @-@ century home run hitters with a total of 106 , behind Roger Connor (138) , Sam Thompson (127) and Stovey (122) .

= = Post @-@ career = =

Brouthers played minor league baseball for the 1898 Toronto Maple Leafs of the Eastern League , where he won a batting title with a .415 average . Later he played for the Poughkeepsie , New York , team of the Hudson River League , batting a league @-@ leading .373 at age 46 .

He remained near baseball for many years , working for his former teammate and New York Giants manager John McGraw , who placed him in charge of the Polo Grounds press gate . He was with the Giants for nearly 20 years in this and other capacities .

Brouthers died at the age of 74 of a heart attack in East Orange , New Jersey , and is interred at Saint Mary 's Cemetery in Wappingers Falls , New York . There is a statue dedicated to him located in Veteran 's Park in this small village . In 1945 , Brouthers and several other stars of the era prior to 1910 were elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame by the Veterans Committee . In honor of his

achievements in Buffalo , he was inducted into the newly formed Buffalo Baseball Hall of Fame in 1985 . In 1999 , a survey of the Society for American Baseball Research ranked him as the sixth @-@ greatest player of the 19th century .