

= David Clyde =

David Eugene Clyde ( born April 22 , 1955 in Kansas City , Kansas ) is a former left @-@ handed Major League Baseball pitcher who played for five seasons with the Texas Rangers ( 1973 ? 1975 ) and Cleveland Indians ( 1978 ? 1979 ) . He is noted for his once promising baseball career , which ended at age 26 because of arm and shoulder injuries .

Billed as the next Sandy Koufax , Clyde had a stellar high school career at Westchester High School . He was drafted with the first overall pick in the 1973 Major League Baseball draft . The Rangers planned to have Clyde pitch his first two professional games in the major leagues before moving him down to the minor leagues , but Rangers owner Bob Short decided to keep him in the roster for monetary purposes , where he had a 5 @.@ 01 earned run average in 18 starts . Journalists criticized the Rangers for promoting Clyde too soon , and after an uneventful 1974 campaign , he developed shoulder trouble and was sent down to the minor leagues in 1975 , where he pitched three seasons . He was traded to the Cleveland Indians in 1978 , and played two seasons before being demoted . Clyde attempted to make a comeback with the Houston Astros but was unsuccessful .

Clyde 's career made him the " poster @-@ boy " for bringing up young players prematurely and dealing with arm injuries . He was named by journalist Randy Galloway as among the worst cases of " mishandling " a young player in baseball history . He is considered by many as a savior of the Texas Rangers franchise because of the significant attendance boost that Clyde 's hype brought to the team , preventing it from a possible bankruptcy or American League takeover .

= = Early life = =

The son of a telephone executive , Clyde was born in Kansas City , Kansas , the oldest of four brothers . After living for a time in New Jersey , his family moved to Houston , Texas in 1969 . He played football and baseball at Westchester High School in Houston where he became known as a perfectionist and was an excellent student . During his senior year at Westchester , Clyde had a stellar record of 18 ? 0 , giving up only three earned runs in 148 innings pitched , while pitching five no @-@ hitters and setting 14 national high school records . His dominance at the high school level attracted the attention of many MLB team scouts , many of whom billed Clyde as the " next Sandy Koufax " and others called him the " best pitching prospect they had ever seen " .

Clyde was praised by national publications such as Sports Illustrated and Newsweek prior to the 1973 MLB draft , and was the consensus among scouts as the best player available in the draft . That year the Texas Rangers held the first overall pick , having the worst record in baseball the previous year at 54 ? 100 . He was the first player selected in the 1973 draft by the Rangers . He received a \$ 125 @,@ 000 ( \$ 666 @,@ 323 today ) signing bonus , the highest bonus ever given to a draft pick at the time , and a free college education . After signing his contract , Clyde stated that his career goal was to " become the greatest pitcher ever " .

= = Major League career = =

Prior to the draft , the Texas Rangers held the second lowest attendance in the American League , ahead of only the Cleveland Indians despite having Baseball Hall of Famer Ted Williams as manager at one point . They had moved from Washington , D.C. , two years prior , and owner Bob Short expanded Arlington Stadium an extra 20 @,@ 000 seats . Short was looking for some sort of way to boost attendance , and found it using fellow Texas native Clyde . When Clyde agreed to sign his rookie contract , part of the deal was to make his first two professional starts with the Rangers at their home field before heading to the minors to develop .

Twenty days after pitching his last high school game , Clyde won his first ever Major League start before over 35 @,@ 000 fans in Arlington Stadium , the first sellout in stadium history . After a poor start in which he walked the first two batters he faced , he settled down , pitched five innings , giving up only one hit ( a home run to Mike Adams ) while striking out eight batters in a 4 ? 3 victory over

the Minnesota Twins . Clyde later called it his most memorable game in his Major League career .

Clyde then pitched well in his second start against the Chicago White Sox , pitching six innings before a blister in his finger forced him out of the game . However , with his performance in the two starts , the Rangers dropped all plans to send him to the minors . The youngest player to play in a major league game in 1973 , Clyde pitched a total of eighteen games ( all starts ) that season , finishing with a record of 4 ? 8 , with a 5 @. @ 01 earned run average ( ERA ) . Questioned about the difference between high school or professional baseball , Clyde stated that MLB hitters " see the ball better , thus they make contact more often " .

Clyde began 1974 season with a 3 ? 0 record , but became embroiled in controversy following a dispute between new manager Billy Martin and general manager Bobby Brown . Martin and Brown argued about what was the best way on handling Clyde 's future development , which led to Brown 's resignation and forced Clyde caused to miss a month before remaining in the Rangers roster for the rest of the year . He played in 28 games ( 21 starts ) and finished with 3 ? 9 record , and a 4 @. @ 38 ERA . He started one game in 1975 ( a loss ) before injuring his shoulder and was demoted to the Pittsfield Rangers of the Eastern League . He stayed in the minors for three seasons , having a shoulder operation in 1976 . The Rangers organization lost so much faith in Clyde 's ability that he was left unprotected in the 1976 Major League Baseball expansion draft , but was not chosen . He played for the Sacramento Solons in 1976 , and the Tucson Toros of the Pacific Coast League in 1977 where he had 5 ? 7 record with a 5 @. @ 84 ERA . When the season ended , the Rangers traded Clyde and veteran Willie Horton to the Cleveland Indians for Tom Buskey and John Lowenstein on February 28 , 1978 .

Clyde started for the Indians that year , playing in 28 games and finished with a record of 8 ? 11 , with a 4 @. @ 28 ERA and 83 strikeouts . In his first start with the Indians , he gave up four hits in a 3 ? 2 complete game victory against the Oakland Athletics . Clyde also finished fourth in the American League with 11 wild pitches . He pitched in nine games with the Indians in 1979 ( 3 ? 4 , 5 @. @ 91 ERA ) before tearing his rotator cuff and was demoted to the minors , playing in what would be his last Major League game on August 7 , 1979 . He was traded back to the Rangers after the 1979 season , but injured his shoulder for the second time , and was released prior to the 1980 season with the Rangers claiming that Clyde was " damaged goods " .

In 1981 , Clyde tried to restart his career with the Houston Astros , but he spent the season in the minor leagues splitting time between the Columbus Astros and Tucson Toros . He dominated for Columbus , having a 6 ? 0 record with a 0 @. @ 76 ERA , but struggled with the Toros , having a 6 @. @ 85 earned run average . Clyde retired from professional baseball on February 5 , 1982 , while participating in an instructional league .

In his five @- @ year career , Clyde had an 18 ? 33 win ? loss record with a 4 @. @ 63 earned run average and 228 strikeouts in 84 games pitched .

= = Legacy = =

Named a " sensation " , " phenomenon " , or other hyped up words in his first two years in the league , most of Clyde 's troubles were attributed to the rush to get him into the majors before he was ready . This was due to the fact the Rangers finances were weak at the time . The Rangers averaged a near @- @ capacity crowd in Clyde 's six home starts , but 6 @, @ 000 fans for the other 75 home dates . Prior to Clyde 's debut , the highest crowd in Rangers history was 24 @, @ 000 . At the end of the 1973 season , Clyde drew nearly a third of all fans in attendance for Rangers home games throughout the year . According to journalist Randy Galloway , Clyde put baseball on the map in Dallas , as the city started to get interested on the sport , even after Clyde 's inconsistency forced him out of the league . Longtime Rangers coach Jackie Moore agreed with Galloway , stating that Clyde and Corbett buying the team " went a long way toward saving the franchise " . Using Clyde success of bringing attendance up as an example , Short sold the Rangers to Brad Corbett in 1974 , which prevented the American League from taking over the team , thus potentially saving the franchise .

Clyde 's unsuccessful career made him the " poster @- @ boy " for bringing up young players . In

his autobiography White Rat his first big league manager , future Baseball Hall of Famer Whitey Herzog stated that he was often forced to leave Clyde in the game much longer than usual because fans wanted to see the 18 @-@ year @-@ old " phenom " pitch . It led to Clyde 's arm burning out at an early age , Herzog argued . In a 2003 interview with The New York Times , Herzog criticized Bob Short , stating that " ( Short ) sure wasn 't going to send him down without getting some people in the ballpark to see him . The kid should have gone to the minors after two starts . " He also said that Clyde " was one of the best young left @-@ handed pitchers I 've ever seen . " Former teammate Tom Grieve said that keeping Clyde in the roster was the " dumbest thing you could ever do to a high school pitcher . "

In a 2003 interview with the Associated Press , Clyde looked back on his career , recognizing that he was rushed too early , calling his career " a classic case not to handle a young talent " , and stating that his case had a " black side " to it but that he made a contribution to the sport . One week before the thirtieth anniversary of his first career game , Clyde threw the ceremonial first pitch to his ex ? teammate Ken Suarez during an Rangers @-@ Astros game .

= = Personal life = =

Following the problems Clyde had during the 1974 and 1975 seasons , he became dependent on alcohol , which he later called " the lowest point of my life " . He had two failed marriages , the first one with his high school sweetheart , before settling down with his third wife , Robin , having two boys , Ryan and Reed , and a daughter , Lauren . He worked in his father @-@ in @-@ law 's lumber business in Tomball , Texas for 20 years , which he called one of the best periods of his life , giving him a " peace of mind " . He retired in 2003 as vice president of the company and worked as a coach for a local youth baseball team . He is now a caregiver for his elderly father .