

Kingman Is All Hit, No Talk

By MURRAY CHASS

Dave Kingman probably would rather talk about the effect of gamma rays on man-in-the-moon marigolds than home-run records. Kingman wants nothing to do with discussions of home-run records. The records he'll take. But the discussions, leave out.

Kingman knows who Hack Wilson, Babe Ruth, and Roger Maris were. He just cringes at the mention of their names and the thought of what they did.

What they did was set home run records, Wilson in the National League with 56 and Ruth and Maris in the major leagues with 60 and 61, respectively.

Kingman has 27 home runs and had a chance to tie or set a different record last night, but the Mets' game with St. Louis was rained out. The Mets waited for an hour 45 minutes during a steady rain before calling the game and rescheduling it as part of a twilight-night double header on Sept. 15.

The Mets play the Cardinals this afternoon, but Kingman can't tie or set that record because it was Willie Stargell's National League record of 28 home runs through June 30 and today is July 1. The major league mark for that period is 30, held by Ruth.

Ahead of Wilson, Ruth

With that bit of pressure out of the way, Kingman can now get serious about the bigger records. He still has three months and more than half the schedule to hit the other homers that would create for him an image other than that of a bumbling outfielder who often has difficulty catching a ball cleanly.

When anyone hits a lot of home runs in the first half of the season, people immediately want to make comparisons. The temptation should be resisted this early, but the Mets don't figure to have a magic number in the late stages of the pennant race, so they may as well have another kind of number.

When Kingman hit his 27th homer against the Cardinals Tuesday night, a hit that gave the Mets and Mickey Lolich a 2-0 victory, he was playing in the Mets' 76th game. Wilson, whose record generally is overshadowed by the feats of Ruth and Maris, hit his 27th homer in the Chicago Cubs' 88th game in 1930. Ruth hit his 27th in the Yankees' 78th game in 1927 and Maris connected for his 27th in the Yankees' 66th game in 1961.

That means Kingman is 12 games ahead of Wilson's pace and 2 ahead of Ruth's, but 10 behind Maris's.

The 6-foot-6-inch Kingman has been a home run hitter—his 36 were two short of Mike Schmidt's league high last season—but he has something new going for him this season: he is striking out proportionately less this year than in the past. He entered the season of one strikeout every three times at bat, but this year he has struck out 72 times in 300 times at bat, an average of one in four.

"That comes along with knowing he's going to play every day. It instills more confidence in himself," explained Phil Cavaretta, the Mets' hitting instructor who was a 14-year-old Cubs' fan when Wilson hit his 56.

Exhibition Stirs Fight

TOLEDO, Ohio, June 30 (AP)—Manager Frank Robinson of Cleveland was ejected from the exhibition game for fighting tonight in the Indians' 13-1 victory over their Class AAA Toledo farm club of the International League. Robinson was thrown out because he decked the Toledo pitcher, Bob Reynolds, with two punches after Reynolds's first pitch to Robinson sailed about six feet over everyone's head at the plate.

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