

braves third baseman history

Braves third baseman history is a rich tapestry woven with the contributions of numerous talented players who have graced the diamond in Atlanta and its predecessors. The role of the third baseman is crucial in baseball, as this player is often tasked with fielding ground balls, making crucial plays, and contributing offensively. The Atlanta Braves, one of Major League Baseball's most storied franchises, have seen a variety of third baseman over the years, each leaving their unique mark on the team. This article will explore the history of Braves third basemen, notable players, statistics, and their impact on the team's legacy.

Early Years: The Milwaukee Braves Era

When discussing the Braves third baseman history, it's important to begin with the franchise's early years in Milwaukee, where the team played from 1953 to 1965. During this time, several players would establish themselves as significant contributors at the hot corner.

Key Players

1. Eddie Mathews (1952-1966)

- Mathews is perhaps the most iconic third baseman in Braves history. He was a 14-time All-Star and a key figure in the team's 1957 World Series championship. His combination of power and finesse made him a pioneer for future third basemen.

- Career Stats with Braves:

- Batting Average: .271

- Home Runs: 493

- RBIs: 1,453

2. Bob Buhl (1953-1966)

- Although primarily a pitcher, Buhl occasionally filled in at third base. His versatility and contributions as a pitcher helped solidify the team's early success.

The Atlanta Braves: The 1966-1990 Transition

After the team relocated to Atlanta in 1966, the Braves continued to see a rotation of third basemen. This period was marked by the search for stability at the position.

Notable Third Basemen

1. Clete Boyer (1966-1969)

- Boyer brought solid defense and was known for his strong arm. Though his offensive numbers were modest, he provided the Braves with reliable play during a transitional period.

2. Darrell Evans (1976-1980)

- Evans was a power-hitting third baseman who contributed significantly during his tenure. He was known for his ability to get on base and hit for power, making him a valuable asset during the late 1970s.
- Career Stats with Braves:
- Batting Average: .248
- Home Runs: 97
- RBIs: 346

3. Bob Horner (1978-1986)

- A former first overall pick, Horner was an exceptional hitter and became one of the Braves' most beloved players. His powerful swing and ability to drive in runs solidified his place in Braves lore.
- Career Stats with Braves:
- Batting Average: .277
- Home Runs: 218
- RBIs: 685

The Rise of the 1990s Dynasty

The 1990s marked a golden era for the Atlanta Braves, featuring a strong roster that included several Hall of Famers. The third base position was no exception during this championship-laden decade.

Featured Players

1. Terry Pendleton (1991-1994)

- Pendleton was instrumental in the Braves' success during the early 1990s. He won the National League MVP Award in 1991 and was recognized for his outstanding defense and leadership.
- Career Stats with Braves:
- Batting Average: .265
- Home Runs: 61
- RBIs: 390

2. Chipper Jones (1993-2012)

- Arguably the greatest third baseman in Braves history, Chipper Jones was a first-round draft pick who lived up to expectations and then some. Over his 19-year career, he became a fan favorite and a critical player for the franchise.
- Career Honors:
- 8-time All-Star
- 1999 National League MVP
- 1995 World Series Champion
- Career Stats with Braves:
- Batting Average: .303
- Home Runs: 468
- RBIs: 1,623
- Chipper's combination of batting prowess and defensive skill set a new standard for third basemen.

The Post-Chipper Era

Following Chipper Jones' retirement in 2012, the Braves faced the challenge of filling the void left at third base. The franchise experimented with various players in the position, aiming for a balance between offense and defense.

Recent Third Basemen

1. Juan Uribe (2015)

- Uribe provided veteran presence and experience, contributing solid defense and occasional offensive sparks during his short time with the Braves.

2. Adonis Garcia (2016-2017)

- Garcia emerged as a consistent performer, showcasing his ability to hit for average and power. His contributions were vital during the Braves' rebuilding phase.

- Career Stats with Braves:

- Batting Average: .269

- Home Runs: 22

- RBIs: 85

3. Austin Riley (2019-Present)

- A highly touted prospect, Riley has become a key player for the Braves. His offensive production, particularly in terms of home runs and RBIs, has made him an essential part of the lineup.

- Career Stats (as of 2023):

- Batting Average: .275

- Home Runs: 87

- RBIs: 275

The Impact of Braves Third Basemen

The contributions of third basemen to the Atlanta Braves cannot be overstated. Throughout the franchise's history, these players have played pivotal roles in the team's success, both in terms of individual accolades and team achievements.

Statistical Contributions

- Home Runs and RBIs:

Many of the Braves' third basemen have been power hitters, contributing significantly to the team's overall run production.

- Defensive Skills:

Players like Chipper Jones and Terry Pendleton have set defensive metrics that others aspire to reach, making crucial plays that have saved runs and won games.

Cultural Impact

- Fan Favorites:

Players like Chipper Jones have become icons in Atlanta, contributing to the culture and identity of Braves baseball.

- Legacy:

The legacy of Braves third basemen has influenced the team's strategies, development of young players, and the overall approach to the hot corner position.

Conclusion

The Braves third baseman history is a rich narrative filled with remarkable players who have left indelible marks on the franchise. From the early years in Milwaukee with Eddie Mathews to the modern era with Austin Riley, each third baseman has contributed to the Braves' legacy in unique ways. As the franchise continues to evolve, the hope is that future players will uphold the high standards set by their predecessors, ensuring that the hot corner remains a position of strength for the Atlanta Braves. The third base position, filled with talent and history, will always be a vital part of the Braves' story.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who was the first notable third baseman for the Atlanta Braves in their history?

The first notable third baseman for the Atlanta Braves was Eddie Mathews, who played for the team from 1952 to 1966.

Which Braves third baseman has the most career home runs with the team?

Eddie Mathews holds the record for the most career home runs as a third baseman for the Braves, with 493 home runs during his time with the team.

What impact did Chipper Jones have on the Braves as a third baseman?

Chipper Jones, who played from 1993 to 2012, is considered one of the greatest third basemen in Braves history, contributing to the team's success with his hitting, fielding, and leadership.

How many Gold Glove Awards did Braves third baseman Chipper Jones win?

Chipper Jones won two Gold Glove Awards during his career, in 2002 and 2003, recognizing his defensive skills at third base.

What year did the Atlanta Braves move to their current stadium, Truist Park, and how did it affect the third baseman position?

The Braves moved to Truist Park in 2017; while it didn't directly affect the third baseman position, it created a new environment for players to adapt to, including third basemen.

Which third baseman was known for his exceptional fielding and played for the Braves during the 1990s?

Terry Pendleton was known for his exceptional fielding and played third base for the Braves during the 1990s, contributing to their success in that decade.

What significant achievement did the Braves' third baseman accomplish in the 1995 World Series?

In the 1995 World Series, third baseman Terry Pendleton played a key role in helping the Braves win their first championship in Atlanta.

Which current Braves third baseman is making waves in Major League Baseball?

As of 2023, Austin Riley is the current third baseman for the Braves, known for his power hitting and solid defense.

How has the role of the third baseman evolved in Braves history?

The role of the third baseman in Braves history has evolved from primarily focusing on defense to being a significant offensive contributor, as seen with players like Chipper Jones and Austin Riley.

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