

Don Aase: The Guy the Red Sox Traded for Jerry Remy

Don Aase is best known to Boston Red Sox baseball fans as the guy the Boston Red Sox traded for second baseman Jerry Remy. Technically, this trade netted the Red Sox negative WAR, as Aase would go on to be a shutdown relief pitcher for a few years. Remy, while being a positive himself, suffered many injuries that torpedoed his playing time over the next seven years. Of course, Boston ended up with a legendary broadcaster in the long run. *Rest in peace, Jerry.*

Still to be completely objective, in terms of how players were evaluated back then, this could be seen as a fairly even trade. While Remy only posted 6.4 WAR in total for the rest of his career, he only played in about four worth of games.

Interestingly, this trade made for a homecoming of sorts for both players. Aase actually was drafted by the Boston Red Sox out of an Anaheim, California high school. Remy was originally from Somerset, Massachusetts. Funny enough, Remy was probably seen as the more valuable player at the time as a strong keystone defender with speed on the basepaths. After all, Aase's professional career didn't start out all that well.

[Aase began his minor league career by losing ten straight decisions as a starting pitcher](#) over 12 starts in the New York-Penn League. He did right the ship, as he'd inevitably spend 13 seasons in the Major Leagues, but it took five years for him to make the Majors. When Aase did make his debut in 1977, the Orange, CA native would have just 13 starts, but made a huge impact, owning a 3.12 ERA (45 percent better than league average) and 2.4 WAR. That's an All-Star level starting pitcher beginning what looked like the start of a Hall of Fame career. In fact, his second career start was in front of his family and friends in Anaheim, and it was a complete game shutout.

After the 1977 season, in December, Aase would find himself back in Orange County, as the Red Sox needed a full-time second baseman. Yes, Remy was from the Boston area, but as it turns out, there were no geographical considerations made in the trade. Perhaps, it was just coincidence, but more likely, it was to be fate. Remy would go on to be a league-average starter for the 1978 Sox and Aase would be fine but not spectacular in his first go-around in the Angels rotation (1.5 WAR in 1978).

On a per 162 game basis, Remy wasn't that far behind Aase in per season value. The Sox basically gave up 4 WAR over the course of 6 years, negligible in terms of long term impact on the diamond. Of course, no statistic can provide context for the value Remy provided Red Sox Nation as a legendary color commentator in the TV booth. Remy would prove to be one of the smartest baseball people alive and deserves all the accolades he'd receive.

Aase was never again what made him the Rookie of the Year contender in Boston as a starter in his only season with the Sox. Yes, Aase was an OK starting pitcher for two seasons, but he didn't come into his own until becoming a full time reliever by his third season in Anaheim. In fact, Aase was not happy about the demotion to the bullpen during the 1980 season. In retrospect, it was the best thing that ever happened to him, as Aase himself would later admit. His inconsistencies as a starter faded and his stuff played up out of the pen.

In retrospect, Aase may have been too much of a price for the Red Sox to pay. At the time, though, in terms of raw talent, this was a pretty even trade. In fact, for the first two year Aase was basically a barely league average starter for the next two seasons, this looked like a major win for the Red Sox. From a traditional standpoint, despite Remy getting plowed down by injuries in the third and fourth years of his Red Sox tenure, I don't think Red Sox fans did or should feel bad about this trade at all.

Yes, Aase went on to have a few exceptional seasons out of the Angels' bullpen. But in 1982, his elbow which had been cranky ever since 1976, finally required one of the first Tommy John surgeries. He missed almost two seasons. Fortunately for Aase, the surgery was successful in getting him back on the mound. He returned in 1984, and had sparkling numbers, before leaving on a four-year deal to Baltimore.

Unfortunately, Aase would need shoulder surgery early on in the 1987 season, and was never quite the same after that. Aase would hang on for a couple more seasons with the Mets and Dodgers, although he wasn't effective with either ball-club. In retirement, he'd teach pitching lessons for a few years, before moving on to a completely different career as a commercial construction project manager and estimator.

While Aase didn't really hang around the game, he has made appearances every so often, including appearing for Fenway Park's 100th anniversary in 2012. As of 2020, he was still working in his second career, enjoying time with his family, well deserved after years on the road. Aase had a solid career, collecting 15 Wins Above Replacement. He even had an All-Star appearance in 1986 and picked up the save for the American League!

In the end, Aase and Remy probably needed that trade to reach their full potential not just as players, but as people. They both got to go home, and heck, Remy never even left. Both Red Sox and Angels fans should be happy that their teams made this trade, even if the Angels ended up with more value according to advanced metrics. I think if you asked both teams if they'd make the same trade again, knowing how both of them would turn out, I guarantee you that they would still make it.

~ Amelia Desertsong