

# Jerry Remy - A Red Sox Player Profile

Advanced metrics may not be kind to the Rem Dawg, and perhaps he wasn't the greatest player in Red Sox history. But, without the injuries he suffered that took away three of his prime seasons, he would've been more than likely a league-average regular for the vast majority of his Red Sox career. Traded to the Red Sox by the California Angels before the 1978 season for starting pitcher Don Aase, the Boston-area native Remy was thrilled to play for his hometown team. In fact, he'd make his first and only All-Star team in 1978, despite a brutal first half with the bat, as a reserve. Unfortunately, Jerry would not appear in that game.

From a WAR standpoint, Remy only posted 6.5 WAR over his 7 seasons with Boston. However, that is a bit misleading, as he only played in 710 games, a little over 4 seasons worth of games (4.38 seasons). If you take Remy's WAR on a 162-game basis, that's about 1.48 WAR per 162 games. He played just 80 games in 1979, 63 games in 1980, and 88 games in the strike-shortened 1981 season, plus only 30 games in his final year in the bigs in 1984. So, while he never panned out to be the above-average regular that he was on the West Coast, Remy was still a plenty useful player.

Unfortunately, advanced metrics show that Remy was only league average with the bat just once, in his resurgent 1981 season. After playing a +22 run second base for the Angels in 1975 and 1976, he settled into being a roughly average fielder at the keystone for the rest of his career. As far as WPA (Wins Probability Added), Remy was negative -3.1 WPA in his career, although -2.1 of that came with the Angels. So, with the Red Sox, Remy was perfectly OK, didn't cost his team games either with the bat or in the field. The Red Sox were better with him than without him, for sure.

The guy he was traded for, Aase, was an OK starting pitcher for the Angels before converting to the bullpen full-time in the midst of the 1980 season. The Anaheim native (he was drafted by the Red Sox out of an Anaheim, CA high school) would be a strong arm out of the pen for the Angels before getting hurt and missing the entire 1983 season. Aase would have a nice come-back in 1984 and hang on for a few more years with the Orioles, making the 1986 All-Star Team. Unlike Remy, Aase not only played in the All-Star game, he picked up the save for the American League in his two-thirds of an inning worth of work. He'd have a couple stints with the Mets and Dodgers at the end before retiring.

All told, though, Aase amassed 15 WAR in his Major League Career. Remy collected 14.6 WAR, and that's even being hurt. From a pure Wins Above Replacement perspective, Remy was nearly as valuable to his teams as Aase, although in both cases, their best years were in Orange County California. In both cases, in that 1978 trade, they got to go home, too.

But, the Red Sox gained something in Remy that Aase never brought the Angels, perhaps one of the greatest color commentators in baseball history. While I'm extremely biased, having grown up with Remy as the TV color commentator for Red Sox games since I started seriously following the team in 1999, I'd have to say he's objectively the best I've heard.

Keep in mind that Remy was considered for managerial jobs from multiple organizations, but found managing a ball-club simply wasn't for him, thanks to having an intensity that made it difficult for him to keep a cool head in the dugout. That's how he played the game, after all. As it turned out, the booth was better for Remy's health, and gave baseball fans the gift of his vast baseball knowledge.

Don Aase has had a second career as a project manager and estimator for a friend's commercial construction company. Sure, that's a great career that most people would be proud to have. But, Remy became one of the most beloved figures in Red Sox history, far beyond his contributions as a ballplayer. Clearly, Remy was born to be a color commentator in the broadcast booth, and he got to do what he was best at for his hometown team.

While Jerry is no longer with us, his valiant battles against cancer, beating it multiple times in order to stick around, shows you that the intensity he had as a ballplayer was carried on through life. Around the 2003 and 2004 seasons, I was actually able to participate in chats with him on the website he had at the time. I don't think I've ever met a more knowledgeable baseball person in my life, and a lot of what I know about the game I know from those chats and his insights on the Red Sox broadcasts.

I'm sure teams tried to poach him away from the Sox broadcast booth, but that was never going to be successful. He got to be home, stay close to the game he loved more than anything – other than his family, of course – and gave Red Sox fans his all till his dying day. You can't ask anything more from anybody. The Red Sox may have given up a useful pitcher than may have been a fixture in the bullpen, but instead, they gained a perfectly useful ballplayer and an absolute legend.

~ Amelia Desertsong