

Cal Ripken's Story

Baseball fans will recall the phenomenal feat when Cal Ripken Jr. broke the baseball record that many believed would never be broken: Lou Gehrig's iron-man feat of playing in 2,131 consecutive games.

A former Major League baseball shortstop and third baseman, Ripken played his entire 21-year baseball career for the Baltimore Orioles, from 1981 to 2001. Ripken surpassed the 56-year-old record when he played his 2,131st consecutive game on Sept. 6, 1995, between the Orioles and the California Angels in front of a sold-out crowd in Oriole Park at Camden Yards. To make the feat even more memorable, Ripken hit a home run in the previous night's game that tied Gehrig's record, and another home run in his 2,131st game, which fans later voted as Major League Baseball's Most Memorable Moment in MLB history. Ripken played in an additional 502 straight games over the next three years, and his streak ended at 2,632 games when he voluntarily removed his name from the lineup for the final Orioles home game of the 1998 season.



Cal Ripken Jr. rounds third base after hitting a memorable homerun while playing his 2,130th consecutive game.

A 19-time All-Star and member of the 3,000-hit club, Ripken is considered one of the best shortstops and third basemen to ever play the game. When inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 2007, he was a first-ballot inductee with the third highest voting percentage (98.53 percent) in Hall of Fame history, behind Tom Seaver (98.84 percent) and Nolan Ryan (98.79 percent).

Ripken gives much of the credit for his accomplishments to the example and teaching of his father, Cal Ripken Sr., who played minor league baseball, and coached and managed for the Orioles. During the 1996 season, Ripken Sr. was inducted into the Orioles Hall of Fame. After he gave his acceptance speech, the son came to the microphone, an emotional moment recalled in his book, *The Only Way I Know*:

It was difficult. I wasn't certain I could say what I wanted about my father and what he means to me. So I told a little story about my two children, Rachel, 6 at the time, and Ryan, then 3. They'd been bickering for weeks, and I explained how one day I heard Rachel taunt Ryan, "You're just trying to be like Daddy."

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After a few moments of indecision, I asked Rachel, “What’s wrong with trying to be like Dad?”

When I finished telling the story, I looked at my father and added, “That’s what I’ve always tried to do.”

It is a moving account of the relationship between a son and his father.

What could be more right than to try to be like our heavenly Father? It brings true and lasting greatness.

– Beecher Hunter



Cal Ripken Jr. (right) chats with his father, Orioles manager Cal Ripken Sr.