



# Ralph Kiner: A Baseball Biography

*Robert P. Broadwater*

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## **Ralph Kiner: A Baseball Biography** Robert P. Broadwater

Ralph Kiner (1922-2014) was one of the most feared power hitters of his era. Babe Ruth predicted Kiner would be the slugger most likely to break Ruth's single season home run record. While the left fielder from New Mexico missed that mark, he did break one of the Babe's records, leading his league in home runs for seven consecutive seasons--a record unbroken since.

Kiner set his records while playing for some of the worst teams ever to take the field. With little support in the Pittsburgh Pirates lineup, pitchers were often able to work around Kiner, walking him dozens of times per season. Despite this, Kiner made them pay for their mistakes, sending towering flies over the fences. After just 10 years in the league, Kiner's career on the field was cut short by chronic back pain. At retirement, his 369 home runs placed him sixth on the all-time list. He didn't leave baseball, however, serving as general manager of a minor league team and later announcing for the newly formed New York Mets in 1962, where he would be the voice of the team for more than fifty years. This is his story.

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