

Mattingly gets a perfect score in rankings

NEW YORK (AP) — The New York Yankees' Don Mattingly, widely regarded as the best player in baseball, is the first to receive a perfect score in statistical rankings used to determine compensation for free-agent signings.

The New York Yankees first baseman received a perfect 1.000 in the Elias Sports Bureau rankings, which were established seven years ago as part of the settlement of the players' strike.

The rankings are based on performance in at least five categories over a two-year period. After being ranked by position, players are divided into five groups: outfielders, first basemen and designated hitters; second basemen, third basemen and shortstops; catchers; starting pitchers; and relievers.

Mattingly received a perfect score because he was top-ranked in every category used to evaluate first basemen — plate appearances, batting average, on-base percentage, home runs and runs batted in.

The best, or lowest, score before this year was the 1.400 Mattingly received last year and Eddie Murray, of Baltimore, received in 1984.

"It's nice to see that, but you have to put it in perspective," Mattingly said Wednesday of the rankings. "They've only been doing these rankings for seven years and baseball has been going for 100. But you like to be ranked first amongst your peers."

'It's nice to see that, but you have to put it in perspective.'

—Don Mattingly

The runner-up in this year's American League rankings was Baltimore shortstop Cal Ripken Jr. at 3.143. The top-rated player in the National League was Philadelphia third baseman Mike Schmidt with 2.429.

Schmidt has been the top-rated NL third basemen every year the rankings have been compiled. The only other player to be No. 1 at his position all seven years is New York Mets catcher Gary Carter.

Mattingly has been the top-ranked AL first basemen for three consecutive years, while Ripken led AL shortstops for the fourth straight time. Texas designated hitter Larry Parrish was the only other player in the league to repeat as No. 1 at his position.

"It's especially rewarding being ranked among all the other first basemen because first base is one of the top positions in baseball right now," Mattingly said at a dinner at which he was honored by the Boys Club of New York. "You're talking about Jack Clark, Kent Hrbek, the (Wally) Joyner, Willie Upshaw, Darrell Evans. You're talking about some pretty



New York Yankees first baseman Don Mattingly received a perfect score in the Elias Sports Bureau's statistical rankings yesterday.

great first basemen. There are so many good first basemen in the league, it's a compliment to be categorized with these fellows."

Other top-rated AL players were California second basemen Johnny Ray, Boston third basemen Wade Boggs, Toronto outfielder George

Bell and Toronto catcher Ernie Whitt. Boston's Roger Clemens was the highest-ranked starting pitcher and Toronto's Mark Eichhorn was the top reliever.

In the National League, Dale Murphy of Atlanta was the highest-ranked outfielder for the fifth straight

year. Three players — Mets first basemen Keith Hernandez, Chicago second basemen Ryne Sandberg and St. Louis shortstop Ozzie Smith — were No. 1 at their positions for the fourth year in a row.

Houston's Mike Scott was the NL's top-rated starting pitcher, while Todd Worrell of St. Louis was the No. 1 reliever.

Free agents are divided into groups which determine the compensation their former teams will receive if the players sign with another club. The teams are compensated with additional draft choices in the June amateur draft.

A players are in the top 30 percent of the ranking statistics, B players in the top 30 to 50 percent and C players between 50 and 60 percent. Teams losing A players would receive the most compensation.

Five members of the World Series champion Minnesota Twins were among 29 possible free agents placed in the A group. They are pitchers Bert Blyleven, Juan Berenguer and Jeff Reardon, third basemen Gary Gaetti and designated hitter Don Baylor.

Detroit is the only other team with more than two A players eligible for free agency. The Tigers have three A players — catcher Mike Heath and pitchers Jack Morris and Frank Tanana.

Seventeen potential free agents were placed in the B group and nine in the C category.

Schmidt definitely plans to play in 1988

By RALPH BERNSTEIN
AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA — Any doubts that Mike Schmidt playing another year have been erased, Phillies President Bill Giles said yesterday.

"He wants to play one more year, probably two," Giles said. "It's just a matter of dollars."

Schmidt last season completed a six-year contract worth \$2.13 million annually. In the past, he has said he expects a raise and will retire if the Phillies fail to deliver.

Schmidt has until Nov. 10 to file for free agency, and Giles said he hopes to have a deal before the deadline.

Giles said Schmidt and his agent have not indicated whether they will declare for free agency before completion of negotiations with the Phillies.

"I'd just as soon they don't," Giles said.

Giles said he will meet with Schmidt's agent, Arthur Rosenberg, in Florida next Tuesday and Wednesday, but he said he doubted they will reach an agreement next week. He declined to reveal the exact location of the meetings.

"I don't know how close we are on dollars," Giles said. "Neither side has made an offer."

"Right now we're talking theory," Giles said. "The kind of deal. Whether the second year is guaranteed in full or partially."

Schmidt has said, and Giles at one point agreed, that the contract might best be solved in arbitration.

In discussing the possibility of arbitration as last season ended, Schmidt cited his .296 average, 35 home runs and 113 RBI and said he didn't think the Phillies had much of a case to deny him a raise.

Schmidt, with tongue in cheek, once suggested he might look good in a New York Mets' uniform. Later he said he wanted to finish his career where he started, in Philadelphia.

The NL All-Star third baseman now has 530 career home runs, just four behind Jimmy Foxx for ninth place on the all-time career home run list.



AP Laserphoto

Mike Schmidt

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