



Joseph Paul "Joe" DiMaggio (November 25, 1914 – March 8, 1999), nicknamed "**Joltin' Joe**" and "**The Yankee Clipper**", was an Italian American Major League Baseball center fielder.

He played his entire 13-year baseball career for the New York Yankees. He was elected into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1955. He was the middle of three brothers who each became major league center fielders, the others being Vince and Dom.

DiMaggio was a 3-time MVP winner and 13-time All-Star (the only player to be selected for the All-Star Game in every season he played). In his thirteen year career, the Yankees won ten pennants and nine world championships.

At the time of his retirement, he had the fifth-most career home runs (361) and sixth-highest slugging percentage (.579) in history. He is perhaps best known for his 56-game hitting streak (May 15–July 16, 1941), a record that still stands. A 1969 poll conducted to coincide with the centennial of professional baseball voted him the sport's greatest living player.

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DiMaggio was born in Martinez, California, the eighth of nine children born to Sicilian immigrants from Isola delle Femmine (PA), Giuseppe (1872–1949) and Rosalia (Mercurio) DiMaggio (1878–1951). He was delivered by a midwife identified on his birth certificate as Mrs. J. Pico. He was named after his father; "Paolo" was in honor of Giuseppe's favorite saint, Saint Paul. The family moved to San Francisco, California, when Joe was one year old.

Giuseppe was a fisherman, as were generations of DiMaggios before him. DiMaggio's brother, Tom, told biographer Maury Allen that Rosalia's father, also a fisherman, wrote to her that Giuseppe could earn a better living in California than in their native Isola delle Femmine.

After being processed on Ellis Island, he worked his way across America, eventually settling near Rosalia's father in Pittsburg, California. After four years, he was able to earn enough money to send for her and their daughter, who was born after he had left for the United States.

It was Giuseppe's hope that his five sons would become fishermen. DiMaggio recalled that he would do anything to get out of cleaning his father's boat, as the smell of dead fish nauseated him. Giuseppe called him "lazy" and "good for nothing".

DiMaggio was playing semi-pro ball when older brother Vince DiMaggio, playing for the San Francisco Seals, talked his manager into letting DiMaggio fill in at shortstop. He made his professional debut on October 1, 1932.

From May 27 – July 25, 1933, he got at least one hit in a PCL-record 61 consecutive games: "Baseball didn't really get into my blood until I knocked off that hitting streak. Getting a daily hit became more important to me than eating, drinking or sleeping."

In 1934, his career almost ended. Going to his sister's house for dinner, he tore the ligaments in his left knee while stepping out of a jitney.

The Seals, at the time were hoping to sell DiMaggio's contract for \$100,000. Scout Bill Essick of the New York Yankees was convinced the Joe could overcome his knee injury and pestered the club to give DiMaggio another look. After DiMaggio passed a test on his knee, he was bought on November 21 for \$25,000 and 5 players, with the Seals keeping him for the 1935 season. He batted .398 with 154 RBIs and 34 HRs, led the Seals to the 1935 PCL title, and was named the League's Most Valuable Player.

DiMaggio made his major league debut on May 3, 1936, batting ahead of Lou Gehrig. The Yankees had not been to the World Series since 1932, but they won the next four Fall Classics. In total, DiMaggio led the Yankees to nine titles in 13 years.

DiMaggio, a heavy smoker for much of his adult life, was admitted to Memorial Regional Hospital in Hollywood, Florida, on October 12, 1998, for lung cancer surgery, and remained there for 99 days. He returned to his Florida home on January 19, 1999, where he died on March 8.

DiMaggio's funeral was held on March 11, 1999 at Sts. Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church in San Francisco. DiMaggio's son died that August at age 57. DiMaggio is interred at Holy Cross Cemetery in Colma, California.

Source Wikipedia