

Hamilton's feat stirs old memories

Written by Bob Brooks

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On this Mother's Day weekend, let's touch a few bases while we wish Mom the best.

Josh Hamilton's four home runs Tuesday night showed that there's still a man around with Ruthian possibilities. Only six players in the history of the American League have had four-homer games, and two of the six had a history in Cedar Rapids.

One of them is Rocky Colavito, who hit four home runs in a Major League appearance for the Cleveland Indians on June 10, 1959. Rocky started to hone his skills as a member of the Cedar Rapids Indians, reporting here from Daytona Beach spring training and starting in left field.

Alas, he was here only a couple of weeks, because Rocky either hit a home run or struck out. Consequently, the young man was sent back to Class D for seasoning. Later on, he got a second chance with Cedar Rapids and made the most of it, climbed the ladder and became one of the Cleveland Indians' all-time favorite players.

Next up is Pat Seerey, who hit four home runs for the Chicago White Sox on July 18, 1948 in the first game of a doubleheader that went 11 innings. Seerey played left field in Cedar Rapids under the banner of the Cleveland Indians, and he showed his home-run power at dear old Hill Park, right below Roosevelt Middle School.

Seerey was a rolly-polly guy with great power, but did not possess abundant Major League tools. But that power paid off when he wound up in the White Sox farm system and was sent to their Triple-A club at Colorado Springs. In the thin air, and with his power, he became a 60 homer guy.

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The White Sox had to take a look, brought him to Old Comiskey Park and "Fat Pat" had his day in the sun with his four homers in that long-ago game in 1948.

Hamilton joined Colavito, Seerey, Carlos Delgado, Mike Cameron and Lou Gehrig as the only American League players to hit four home runs in a single game.

Where was Babe Ruth when we needed him?

NOTE: Best wishes to the Iowa Conference baseball teams that are playing in the league tournament this weekend at Perfect Game Field. It's great college baseball and well worth a look-see.

(Bob Brooks is sports director at KMRY and has been one of the leading voices of college and prep sports in Eastern Iowa for more than 65 years. He is a 10-time winner of the Iowa Sportscaster of the Year Award, and was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in South Bend, Indiana in 2004. His sports reports can be heard weekday afternoons at 4:30 and 5:30, and Saturdays at 6:40 for the Hawkeye football wrap-up.)