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Lou Gehrig

Henry Lewis (Lou or Iron Horse) Gehrig the son of German immigrants, was the only one of four children to survive childhood. He was preparing to enter Columbia University when he was encouraged by Giants Manager John McGraw to play summer professional baseball under an assumed name ("Henry Lewis"). "Everyone does it," McGraw explained, even though the illegal ball playing jeopardized Gehrig's collegiate sports career. Gehrig was discovered after playing a dozen games for Hartford of the Eastern League. As a result, Gehrig was banned from intercollegiate sports during his freshman year, 1921-22.

Gehrig returned to collegiate sports to play fullback during Columbia's 1922 football season, and then pitched and played first for the Columbia Nine in 1923. Signed by Yankee scout Paul Krichell in 1923, Gehrig returned to Hartford and hit .304. Called up to the majors in September, he hit .423 in 26 at-bats.

Ruth and Gehrig began dominating the baseball headlines in 1927, in a way two players had never done before. That year Ruth hit 60 homers, breaking his old record of 59, and Gehrig clouted 47, more than anyone other than Ruth had ever hit. As late as August 10th, Gehrig had more homers than the Babe, but Ruth's closing kick was spectacular. Together they out-homer'ed every team in baseball except one.

Gehrig played every game for more than 13 years despite numerous injuries along the way, including a broken thumb, a broken toe, and back spasms. Later in his career Gehrig's hands were X-rayed, and doctors were able to spot 17 different fractures that had "healed" while Gehrig continued to play. Gehrig played the first eight games of the 1939 season, but he managed only four hits. On a ball hit back to pitcher Johnny Murphy, Gehrig had trouble getting to first in time for the throw. When he returned to the dugout, his teammates complimented him on the "good play." Gehrig knew when his fellow Yankees had to congratulate him for stumbling into an average catch it was time to leave. He took himself out of the game.

The next day, as Yankee captain, he took the lineup card to the umpires, as usual, but his name was not on the roster. Babe Dahlgren was stationed at first. The game announcer intoned, "Ladies and gentlemen, Lou Gehrig's consecutive streak of 2,130 games played has ended."

"Fans, for the past two weeks you have been reading about a bad break I got. Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth. I have an awful lot to live for." Lou Gehrig at Yankee Stadium for Lou Gehrig Appreciation Day.

Doctors at the Mayo Clinic diagnosed Gehrig as having a very rare form of degenerative disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. There was no chance he would ever play baseball again. Despite this tragic ending to a brilliant career, Lou Gehrig had left an indelible mark on the game he loved to play.

Lou Gehrig's consecutive game streak, one of the greatest records in the history of sport, was never so much as approached until Baltimore Orioles' shortstop Cal Ripken Jr. surpassed it in 1995. The occasion generated a great deal of much-needed publicity of the illness, and was marked by the founding of a research fund in Mr. Ripken's name.



Birth name: Ludwig Heinrich Gehrig or Henry Louis Gehrig

Nickname: The Iron Horse

Birth date: June 19, 1903

Birth place: New York City

Death date: June 2, 1941

Death place: Riverdale, New York

Burial location: Kensico Cemetery in Valhalla, New York.

Source: [Fast Facts](#)