



## **Tito Fuentes**

Tito was a second baseman who played for 13 seasons in the Major leagues between 1965 and 1978. Fuentes played for most of his career with the San Francisco Giants. He was one of the last baseball players signed directly out of Cuba before the United States embargo against Cuba. Originally debuting in the majors as a late-season call-up in '65, Tito split time between second base and shortstop as a rookie in 1966. He batted .261 in his rookie year while playing soled defense at both positions, earning votes for the Rookie of the Year Award in the process. He slumped to .209 the following year, and subsequently spent all of 1968 in the minor leagues. He returned to the Giants in 1969 and spent the next two seasons as a utility infielder before regaining his starting spot at second base in 1971. He appeared in the postseason during the 1971 season as his Giants won the NL West title. Tito continued to be the Giants' second baseman for 3 more seasons. In 1973, he set a National league record for fielding by recording a .993 fielding percentage, the highest for any regular second baseman in league history. Ironically, he led all NL second basemen in errors during the previous two seasons before setting the record. His record stood for 13 seasons before Hall of Famer Ryne Sandberg recorded a .994 percentage at second base in 1986.

After the 1974 season, San Francisco traded Fuentes and future Rookie of the Year Butch Metzger to the San Diego Padres. He played two seasons in San Diego before leaving as a free agent to join the Detroit Tigers.

In 1977, Tito played with the Tigers and had a career-best .309 batting average. Despite having his best season at the plate, he was not brought back the following year as the Tigers had a young Lou Whitaker waiting in the wings. In 1978, Tito signed with the Oakland A's but was released after batting .140 in 13 games. He retired shortly thereafter.

Fuentes returned to the Giants as a broadcaster in 1981, the team's first year of Spanish language radio broadcasts. He served in this role until 1992 and in 1004 was brought back as an analyst.

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