

Kenny Williams, Browns' Batting Star of '20s, Dies

Won Homer Title With 39 in '22; Served 14 Years as Outfielder in Big Time

Kenneth Roy (Kenny) Williams, one of the American League's top sluggers during the roaring '20s, died at his home in Grant's Pass, Ore., January 22. The 65-year-old former outfielder had been under treatment for a heart condition.

Williams gained his greatest batting glory with the Browns, for whom he played from 1918 through 1927. He won the American League home-run title in 1922 when he collected 39, surpassing such a slugger as Babe Ruth.

A righthanded thrower and a left-handed hitter, Williams consistently hit over .300. His lifetime batting average was .319 and his home-run total was 196. His major league career covered 14 years, starting with Cincinnati and ending with the Red Sox.

His last chance to stay in the Big Time occurred in 1930 when he was signed by the Yankees, who were having salary trouble with Ruth. The Bombers were using Williams, then 37 years old, as a buffer against Ruth, but Kenny was given his unconditional release before the start of the season.

After three years in the minors, Cincinnati purchased Williams in 1935 and he played with the Redlegs that season and the next. But Williams didn't see eye-to-eye with Buck Herzog, the Cincy pilot, and was sent back to the minors.

Bought by Browns for \$3,500 The Reds, who paid Spokane \$4,000 for Williams, returned him to that club. He went to Portland later in 1916-17 and then was purchased by the Browns for about \$3,500 in 1918. It was one of the old St. Louis Americans' greatest bargains.

Williams spent most of 1918 in military service, resuming his career in 1919. He hit .300 that season in 65 games and was a regular with the Browns for the next nine seasons.

The year, 1922, when he walloped his 39 homers, was also one of the greatest in Brownie history. They finished second, losing the pennant to the Yankees in a fight right down to the wire. Williams also contributed 155 runs batted in, tops in the league, as well as 34 doubles and 11 triples.

Other feats for Kenny that season were three homers in one game, two homers in one inning and six homers in six games. His batting average in '22 was .332, a surprising 15-point decline from his 1921 performance.

For his entire major league career Williams had only one season under .300. That was in 1926 when he hit .280. Three times he had 100 or more RBIs.

Beaten in Game With Indians One of the greatest blows to the Browns and Williams took place in August, 1925, when he was beaten by Byron Speece, a pitcher for the Indians.

Kenny was taken to the clubhouse and a bag of cracked ice applied to his head. "Ice is generally pretty cold," Williams recalled a few years ago, "but it didn't feel that way to me. In fact, I didn't feel a thing. My head was numb."

"Besides, it seemed kinda silly lying there, so I decided to take a cold shower and go back to the hotel."

Just then, Chick Fewster, a Cleveland player who almost lost his life in an earlier beanball incident, strolled into the clubhouse to offer Williams his sympathy.

"Don't take a cold shower," Fewster warned. "It's the worst thing you can do. It might put you out for good."

Williams took the advice and later realized how good it was. He read where a minor league player, who had suffered a similar injury, took a cold shower and died, possibly of shock.

After the 1927 season, a year in which

Former Swat King



KEN WILLIAMS
When He Was Brownie Belter

he batted .323, the Browns sold Williams to the Red Sox for \$10,000. He played for Boston in 1928 and 1929 and closed out his O. B. career in 1930 and 1931 with Portland.

Williams was honored last year by St. Louis members of the Baseball Writers' Association, who named him to the all-time St. Louis All-Star team.

George (Hooks) Wiltse

George LeRoy (Hooks) Wiltse, south-paw pitching star for the Giants in the early part of the century, died, January 21, at Long Beach, N. Y.

The 78-year-old Wiltse, who won 147 and lost 91 in his 11 years with the Giants, hurled many a thrilling game, but his best was a ten-inning no-hitter that almost was a perfect contest.

It took place on July 4, 1908, against the Phillies. The first 26 batters who faced Wiltse were retired without a man reaching base. The twenty-seventh was George McQuillen, the Phillie pitcher.

The first two pitches were strikes and the third one, called a ball by the umpire, was so close that Catcher Roger Bresnahan put up a long and futile beef. The next offering was a curve that didn't break and it hit McQuillen on the shoulder, sending him to first.

The Giants won in the tenth, 1 to 0, but Wiltse had missed his perfect game by the narrowest of margins.

Wiltse, who roomed with Christy Mathewson during seven of his years with the Giants, won 20 or more games twice during his career, once in 1908 when he posted 23, and again the following year when he bagged 20.

A native of Hamilton, N. Y., Wiltse joined the Giants in 1904 and stayed with them until the 1915 season when he moved to the Brooklyn club in the Federal League. He had been picked by John McGraw to manage the Jersey City club in 1915, but he figured he could still pitch, so he snapped up the Federal League offer.

Wiltse had the respect of McGraw, who frequently used him as a coach during the late stages of his career. On several occasions, Wiltse's name has come up for Hall of Fame voting. Again this year he is on the list of candidates that will be presented to the Hall of Fame Committee on Veterans, a group headed by J. G. Taylor Spink, publisher of THE SPORTING NEWS.

When Wiltse called it a career in the majors after 1915, he turned to managing and directed such clubs as Al-

Cepeda, Brandt, Wagner of Giants in Bat King-Row

Puerto Rico

Orlando and Jackie Finished One-Two in Final Figures; Leon Pacesetter in RBIs

By MIGUEL J. FRAU
SAN JUAN, P. R.

Three members of the San Francisco Giants punished Puerto Rican League pitching severely during the recently-concluded regular season. The most feared batsman in the loop was Orlando Cepeda, who also enjoyed a banner rookie year as the Giants' first baseman in 1958.

Orlando emulated his father, the late Peruchito Cepeda, by winning the batting crown with a .362 figure on 75 hits in 207 at-bats. Orlando's father attained the highest average ever recorded by a native batter in the Puerto Rican League, .464 with Guayama in the 1938-39 campaign. He also won the title with .385 the following season. Josh Gibson set the loop record with a .479 mark in 1940-41.

Orlando, who led second-place Santurce's offensive, also was tops in runs scored with 49. He finished second to the runs-batted-in champ, Leon Wagner of Ponce, who drove in 49 to Cepeda's 48. Wagner, who batted .317, will be competing for a berth in the Giant outfield this spring.

Jackie Brandt, another Giant outfield candidate, finished second in the batting race with a .349 average for Santurce. Johnny Powers, Pittsburgh outfielder, took the home-run crown with 17 for Caguas. Joe Christopher (Pittsburgh) stole 16 bases for Mayaguez to lead the circuit and batted .315. Vic Power (Cleveland) was the circuit's third ranking batter with a .339 mark for Caguas.

Santurce's Ruben Gomez was the circuit's leading pitcher on a won-lost basis. The Philadelphia Phil righthander compiled a 12-3 record. Lloyd Merritt (Houston) was the earned-run king on a 1.63 mark for Caguas, and Juan

bany, Buffalo and Reading. His last year in the game was 1926 when he was a coach with the Yankees.

Brian P. Burnes

Brian P. Burnes, father of Sports Editor Robert L. Burnes of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, died, January 20, several hours after he had been beaten and robbed in an alley behind his home in St. Louis. He was 71.

Burnes was a well-known commercial artist and advertising illustrator. One of his last works was the design of the program for the annual dinner of the St. Louis chapter of the Baseball Writers' Association of America, held the evening before he died. His son, one of the leaders in promoting the dinner, was among the speakers at the event.

Police said Burnes apparently was beaten and robbed of his wallet after parking his car in the garage of his home. He lay unconscious in the alley, slushy due to frozen rain, for about two hours before he was found by a neighbor. He died later in the evening at a hospital of a fractured skull.

In addition to his wife and Robert L. Burnes, he is survived by three other sons, Brian, Jr., Donald and James Burnes, three brothers, John, Edward and Msgr. James F. Burnes, and ten grandchildren.

Mrs. Juanita Cecilia Hagan, wife of A. Edward Hagan, former assistant sports editor of the East St. Louis (Ill.) Evening Journal and now press relations director of the Falstaff Brewing Corp., died in St. Mary's Hospital in East St. Louis of a heart ailment, January 30. She was 33.

Mrs. Hagan, a native of San Antonio, Tex., is survived, in addition to her husband, by three sons, James Edward, 10; Michael Joseph, 8, and Kevin Douglas, 6.

Clarence G. Durocher, brother of Leo Durocher, former National League manager and now an executive of the National Broadcasting Company, died of a heart attack in Memorial Hospital in Hollywood, Fla., January 14. He was 62.

Durocher was employed by the Gil-

Plate Champ



Orlando Cepeda

Puerto Rican Parade

(Final Unofficial)

LEADING BATTERS

Player-Club	AB.	H.	Pct.
Orlando Cepeda, Santurce	207	75	.362
Jackie Brandt, Santurce	189	66	.349
Vic Power, Caguas	233	79	.339
Leon Wagner, Ponce	199	63	.317
Joe Christopher, Mayaguez	216	68	.315

LEADING PITCHERS

Pitcher-Club	W.	L.	Pct.
Ruben Gomez, Santurce	12	3	.800
Lloyd Merritt, Caguas	7	3	.700
Ray Rippelmeyer, San Juan	11	5	.688
Chris Nicolosi, San Juan	10	5	.667
Pete Burnside, Mayaguez	9	5	.643

Pizarro (Milwaukee) led the loop in strikeouts, whiffing 138 for Caguas.

While pennant-winning San Juan boasted no individual leaders, the club

A. H. Kirksey, Former Head of Waco Club, Dead at 66

WACO, Tex.—A. H. Kirksey, 66, long prominent in Southwest sports circles and former president of the Waco club in the now defunct Big State League, died at his home, January 18. He had been bothered by a weakened heart the past few years.

Kirksey was known nationally as one of the leading sporting goods men. As president of W. A. Holt Co. in Waco, he opened a major branch in Houston in 1941 and later a wholesale outlet, Texas Sporting Goods Co. A few years ago he built the Fab-Knit Co. in Waco. He had been active in sporting goods for 45 years, helping launch the National Sporting Goods Association 30 years ago.

bert & Barker Manufacturing Company in West Springfield, Mass., for 40 years before he retired three years ago and operated a dress shop there until six months ago.

In addition to his wife, Mrs. Violet St. Martin Durocher, and Leo, he is survived by two daughters, Mrs. James Lator and Mrs. Richard Lavin; three sons, Robert C., Bernard C. and Roland G. Durocher; two other brothers, Raymond B. and Armand Durocher, and six grandchildren.

Thomas M. Yates, former business manager and secretary of Henderson and Tyler in the East Texas and Big State leagues, died at Memorial Hospital in Henderson, Tex., January 19. He was 60.

Yates at one time also served as secretary of the West Texas-New Mexico league.

Mrs. Murray B. Joy, widow of the former official of the Memphis (Southern) Chicks, died in Memphis, January 17, following a long illness. She was 71 years old.

Her husband, who was associated with the club for three decades, was assistant business manager when he died in 1955.

Puerto Rican League

Final Standing

Club	W.	L.	Pct.	G.B.
San Juan	39	24	.619	—
Santurce	36	27	.571	3
Caguas-Guayama	30	34	.469	9½
Mayaguez	28	36	.438	11½
Ponce	26	38	.406	13½

had two of the most effective hurlers in the circuit in Ray Rippelmeyer (Wichita) and Chris Nicolosi (Victoria). Rippelmeyer, who had a 1.67 ERA, hurled the pennant clincher, subduing Ponce, 2 to 0, for his eleventh win against five losses. Nicolosi compiled a 10-5 record and a 1.86 ERA.

Mayaguez Clinches Fourth

Mayaguez clinched fourth place and the final playoff berth on January 18, the last day of the season, by conquering Ponce, 4 to 3, on a sixth-inning double by Oscar Rodriguez (Yucatan). Southpaw Pete Burnside (Detroit) was credited with his ninth win, but needed two innings of excellent relief hurling by Bob Bruce (Detroit).

Puerto Rican Patter: San Juan's Guillermo Rivera, for whom the Los Angeles Dodgers paid a reported \$30,000, hurled his first pro triumph on January 18, defeating Caguas, 2 to 1, on Escalera Day at Escobar Stadium in San Juan. Nino Escalera (Cubans), popular San Juan first baseman, received more than \$2,000 in gifts and money, as well as a tremendous ovation. . . . Semi-final playoffs opened on January 20. San Juan won its first two games from third-place Caguas, while fourth-place Mayaguez scored two quick wins over second-place Santurce. Both series are best-four-out-of-seven. The winners will meet in a best-five-of-nine series to determine the Puerto Rican representative in the Caribbean Series opening in Caracas on February 8. . . . Caguas' Lloyd Merritt (Houston) dropped a 5 to 3 decision to San Juan in the thirteenth inning of the first playoff game on January 20. Merritt was relieved in the thirteenth after hurling 12 complete innings.

Dominican

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25)

unveiling of an addition to its mound staff, January 14, when Joe Stanka (Sacramento) scattered five safeties to beat Aguilas Cibaenas, 4 to 2. Stanka had been pitching in the Venezuelan Association until recently. After blanking Lacey for six innings, Bennie Daniels (Pittsburgh) wilted in the seventh when the victors pushed over all their runs.

Daniels gained sweet revenge, January 18, in a 3 to 2 conquest of Lacey. With the victory the Aguilas righthander gained the distinction of becoming the league's first ten-game winner. His victim, Don Choate (St. Louis) also was seeking his tenth victory but wound up with his fourth loss instead. Daniels had lost six times.

Choate, Chittum Win Twin-Bill Choate and another St. Louis Cardinal rookie, Nelson Chittum, both turned in brilliant performances for a doubleheader sweep over Estrellas Orientales, January 13. In the opener Choate choked off the Stars on three singles, 2 to 0. Chittum then took the windup, 5 to 2.

Dominican Doings: Jim McDaniel (Pittsburgh), outfielder with Aguilas Cibaenas, has set a league record by striking out 52 times through January 18. This erased the old mark of 48 whiffs compiled by Dick Stuart (Pittsburgh) last season. . . . Lacey released infielder Jim McKnight (St. Louis) last week after Elmo Plaskett (Lincoln) joined the club from Ponce of the Puerto Rican League. . . . Outfielder Art Schult (Minneapolis) made an auspicious debut with Aguilas Cibaenas, collecting two hits in three trips during a 5 to 4 victory over Estrellas Orientales. . . . Other recent additions include Southpaw Bob Smith (Pittsburgh) by Aguilas and Outfielder Earl Hersh (Detroit) by Lacey. . . . Charles Kolakowski (Cleveland), righthander with Estrellas Orientales, has established a league record for defeats in a season with 13 setbacks compared to six wins through January 18.

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