

= Ned Williamson =

Edward Nagle " Ned " or " Ed " Williamson (October 24 , 1857 ? March 3 , 1894) was an American Major League Baseball player for 13 seasons from 1878 until 1890 . He played for three different teams : the Indianapolis Blues of the National League (NL) for one season , the Chicago White Stockings (NL) for 11 seasons , and the Chicago Pirates of the Players ' League for one season .

From 1883 and 1887 , Williamson held the single @-@ season record for both doubles and home runs . Although his record for doubles was surpassed in 1887 , he held the home run record until 1919 , when it was topped by Babe Ruth of the Boston Red Sox . Statistically , he was one of the best fielders of his era . During the first eight years of his career , he led the league at his position in both fielding percentage and double plays five times , and he also led his position in assists six times . Later , when he moved to shortstop , he again led the league in both assists and double plays .

His career was shortened by a knee injury that he suffered in Paris during a world @-@ tour organized by Albert Spalding . After he left organized baseball , his health declined rapidly . He contracted tuberculosis and ultimately died at the age of 36 of dropsy .

= = Career = =

Born in Philadelphia , Williamson began his major league career on May 1 , 1878 for the Indianapolis Blues of the National League . That season he played in all 63 of the team 's games as the starting third baseman , leading the league in that category . He umpired his only game on August 12 , calling a game between the Chicago White Stockings and the Providence Grays . His season @-@ ending statistics included a .232 batting average , one home run , and 31 runs scored .

The Blues were only a major league team for the 1878 season , resulting in Williamson joining the Chicago White Stockings for the 1879 season . He was their regular third baseman , leading the league in multiple fielding categories for his position , including fielding percentage , assists , putouts , and double plays . As a hitter , his numbers improved . He finished second in the league with 13 triples , and eighth in doubles with 20 , while also raising his batting average to .294 . During the next three seasons , his batting statistics fluctuated from year to year . His batting average rose from .251 in 1880 to .282 in 1882 ; likewise , his 20 doubles in 1880 were good for seventh in the league , but dropped to 12 in 1881 . He followed that season with 27 in 1882 , which was fourth in the league . During this time period , when his level of hitting had dropped , his play in the field did not . He led the league in fielding percentage from 1880 to 1882 , and in assists in 1881 and 1882 .

In 1883 , Williamson set the major league record for doubles in a single season by hitting 49 , surpassing King Kelly 's 37 set the previous year . Williamson 's record for doubles stood until Tip O 'Neill of the St. Louis Browns hit 52 in 1887 . Williamson 's doubles achievement was attributed to the short dimensions of Chicago 's Lakeshore Park ; the distances were 186 feet (57 m) in left field , 300 feet (91 m) in center field , and 190 feet (58 m) in right field . Balls that were hit over the fence were counted as doubles until 1884 , when they became home runs . On September 6 , Chicago scored a record 18 runs in one inning during a 26 ? 6 victory over the Detroit Wolverines . Williamson contributed three hits , and scored three runs in that inning , setting individual records in both categories . Other than runs scored , the other team records set that day included the most hits and total bases in one inning .

During this time period , the establishment of the ground rules of each park rested with the home team . In 1884 , team captain and on @-@ field manager Cap Anson decided that balls hit over the fence were to be home runs . Williamson used these short dimensions and new ground rules to set the single @-@ season home run record by hitting 27 in a 112 @-@ game season , surpassing the record of 14 set by Harry Stovey the previous year . Of the 27 home runs he hit that year , 25 of them were hit at home . This record stood for 35 years until it was broken in 1919 by Babe Ruth , who hit 29 for the Boston Red Sox in a 140 @-@ game schedule . The first three of Williamson 's 27 home runs came on May 30 , in the second game of a doubleheader against the Detroit Wolverines

. Williamson became the first major league baseball player to hit three home runs in one game . During these two record @-@ breaking seasons , his fielding prowess did not recede . He did not lead the league in fielding percentage in either 1883 or 1884 , but did lead in assists , capping off a streak of five consecutive years in which he did so , while also leading the league in double plays for the second and third consecutive years .

After the 1884 season , the White Stockings moved to West Side Park , and Williamson 's power numbers dropped . Without the short fences , his home run total dropped to three , his doubles went down to 16 , and his batting average dropped to .238 , his lowest average since he became a White Stocking . Despite his low hitting numbers , he did lead the league in games played with 116 , bases on balls with 75 , and yet again , led his position in assists , double plays , and for the fifth and last time , fielding percentage . Chicago won the National League championship that season , and agreed to play the American Association champions , the St. Louis Browns in a seven @-@ game " World Series " . Before game one began , the players of both teams held a field day which included contests of skill , and Williamson won the long throw with a toss that traveled 400 feet , four inches . The 1885 series ended in a tie when each team won three games , and one game ended in a tie . Williamson collected two base hits in 23 at bats , for a .087 batting average , and scored one run .

Beginning in 1886 , Williamson switched his fielding position to shortstop , while the Chicago White Stockings again won the National League championship , their fifth in seven years . The team 's success did not coincide with Williamson 's slide in seasonal numbers . His batting average dropped to his career low of .216 , and his strikeouts jumped up to a career high of 71 , in 430 at bats , although he did finish third in bases on balls . The White Stockings met the St. Louis Browns following the season and agreed to play a best of seven " World Series " for the second consecutive year . The Browns won the series , four games to two , and Williamson 's statistics for the series did not improve . In fact , they were worse than in 1885 . He gathered one base hit in 18 at bats , for a .056 batting average , and scored two runs .

1887 was Williamson 's second season at shortstop , his last full season in the majors , and his numbers began to climb back to what they were during the early part of his career . His batting average jumped back up to .267 , hit 20 doubles , 14 triples , 73 base on balls , and nine home runs . In 1888 , his batting average dipped again , this time to .250 , but he did finish fourth in the league in both RBIs with 73 , and base on balls with 65 . In the field , he led the league in assists and double plays .

= = Spalding 's world tour = =

At the completion of the 1888 baseball season , Albert Spalding organized an around @-@ the @-@ world tour to promote the game of baseball . The two teams Spalding selected were the White Stockings and a collection of players from other National League teams . The tour departed on October 20 , 1888 to play exhibition games throughout the western United States for a month , before departing to Hawaii . The tour visited several foreign countries , such as Australia , Egypt , Ceylon (Sri Lanka) , France , Italy , and England . It was during a game played on at the Parc Aristotique in Paris , France on March 8 , 1889 , when Williamson suffered a torn knee cap which forced him to be bedridden in England on doctor 's orders , missing the tour through Britain . Though players in the 19th century were responsible for their own medical care , Williamson asked Spalding to help him financially with the mounting medical costs . Spalding refused , citing that he was not obligated to assist , and Williamson never forgave him for this . Williamson , among his baseball contemporaries , wrote the most colorful articles to newspapers as the tour was unfolding . Williamson , an 1880s teammate of Anson in Chicago , had a knack for roasting ? poking fun at ? his teammates while always coming across as good @-@ natured . A testament to the letters ' significance is that they are a dominant source of one recent book 's World Tour presentation . Williamson is portrayed by Charlie Crabtree in the 2015 movie " Deadball " which depicts his life and journaling of the world tour .

= = Late career and death = =

The injury to Williamson 's knee caused his career to suffer , as he played in 47 games during the 1889 season . He batted .237 , and of his 41 hits that season , only five of them were extra base hits . He joined the Chicago Pirates of the Players ' League for the 1890 season , his final major league season , and played in 73 games , hitting .195 .

In the spring of 1894 , Williamson traveled to Hot Springs , Arkansas , in hopes that he could recover from a liver ailment and lose some weight as well , but the treatments did not work . Williamson died on March 3 of that year , at the age of 36 in Willow Springs , Arkansas , of dropsy (edema) complicated by consumption (tuberculosis) . He is interred in an unmarked grave at Rosehill Cemetery in Chicago .