

= Arthur Irwin =

Arthur Albert Irwin (February 14 , 1858 ? July 16 , 1921) , nicknamed " Doc " , " Sandy " , " Cutrate " or " Foxy " , was a Canadian @-@ American shortstop and manager in Major League Baseball (MLB) during the late nineteenth century . He played regularly in the major leagues for eleven years , spending two of those seasons as a player @-@ manager . He played on the 1884 Providence Grays team that won the first interleague series to decide the world champions of baseball . Irwin then served as a major league manager for several years .

Irwin occupied numerous baseball roles in the later years of his career . He spent time as a college baseball coach , a major league scout and business manager , a minor league owner and manager , and a National League umpire . For most of Irwin 's career , the collegiate and professional baseball schedules allowed him to hold positions at both levels in the same year . Irwin also produced several innovations that impacted sports . He took the field with the first baseball fielder 's glove , invented a type of football scoreboard , promoted motor @-@ paced cycling tracks and ran a short @-@ lived professional soccer league .

Irwin became terminally ill with cancer in the last weeks of his life . Shortly after his death from an apparent suicide , Irwin made headlines when it was discovered that two wives and families survived him in separate cities . He had been married to one woman since the 1880s and to the other since the 1890s . He was posthumously elected to the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame in 1989 .

= = Early life = =

Arthur Irwin was born in 1858 in Toronto , Ontario , to an Irish blacksmith and a Canadian mother . As a child , he moved with his family to Boston and attended school there . He played local amateur baseball from 1873 until he was recruited by the Worcester Ruby Legs of the National Association in 1879 . In late 1879 , manager Frank Bancroft took Irwin and most of the other Worcester players on a baseball tour that included visits to New Orleans and Cuba . The team , which traveled under the name of the Hop Bitters , returned to the United States after only a few days due to financial and contractual difficulties . The team may have played as few as two games in Cuba .

= = Baseball career = =

= = = Playing days = = =

Irwin 's major league career began when the Ruby Legs moved into the National League (NL) in 1880 . He led the league in assists in his rookie season , and remained with the team through 1882 , when it folded due to poor attendance . Irwin spent three seasons with the Providence Grays , and was captain and starting shortstop of the 1884 Providence team that became world champions . The 1884 Grays featured star pitchers Charles Radbourn and Charlie Sweeney ; the two hurlers did not get along well , and Sweeney left the team in the middle of the season . The club folded after a fourth @-@ place finish in 1885 .

Irwin moved on to the newly formed Philadelphia Quakers in 1886 . Tragedy struck the Philadelphia squad in 1888 when pitcher Charlie Ferguson developed typhoid fever ; he died at Irwin 's home . During the 1889 season , Irwin went to the Washington Nationals for his first opportunity as player @-@ manager , but the team folded at the end of the season . He played for the Boston Reds in the Players ' League in 1890 . That same year , Irwin coached the baseball team at Dartmouth College . While Irwin served as a player @-@ manager for Boston in 1890 , he was able to focus on the managerial role for the team in 1891 . That year the team signed his brother , John Irwin , on May 21 . Newspapers brought accusations of nepotism and criticized John 's mediocre play . John Irwin was released by Boston on July 16 , and his major league playing career was over by the next month .

Although Irwin 's regular playing career ended after the 1890 season , he appeared in six games

while managing the Boston team after it moved to the American Association in 1891 . He also played in one game while managing the 1894 Philadelphia Phillies . A left @-@ handed hitter , Irwin finished his playing career with 1 @,@ 015 games played and batted .241 in 4 @,@ 190 plate appearances . He tallied 396 runs batted in and 552 runs scored . Stolen bases were not awarded until 1886 , but Irwin tallied 93 stolen bases in his last 532 games . He recorded an .878 career fielding percentage , committing 647 errors in 5 @,@ 317 fielding chances . Irwin played 947 games at shortstop and 56 games at third base . He also appeared at second base , pitcher and catcher .

= = = Early non @-@ playing roles = = =

Irwin coached at the University of Pennsylvania between 1893 and 1895 , and he managed the Philadelphia major league club during those last two seasons . In 1894 , he angered Penn supporters when a talented first baseman named Goeckle nearly signed with Irwin 's major league team just prior to a series of collegiate championship games . Nonetheless , by 1895 , Irwin 's coaching role at Penn included the selection of players and other duties that traditionally fell to the team captain . Irwin left Philadelphia in 1896 to manage the New York Giants . Relieved of his duties after one season in New York , he was subsequently recruited to manage in Milwaukee . However , he returned to coach the minor league team in his native Toronto instead .

Irwin coached Toronto during 1897 and 1898 . He faced arrest on a libel charge in 1898 , which stemmed from comments made by Irwin about the actions of the Philadelphia ownership during his time there . Though Irwin turned himself in , it appears that he was never arrested . In 1898 , Irwin traded some of his best players to the Washington major league team . The moves were seen as particularly suspect when Irwin was named the Washington manager shortly thereafter . After 1899 , Irwin did not return to the major leagues as a coach . He returned for a subsequent term as Penn 's coach in 1900 , but he left in 1902 . In August 1902 , Irwin was signed as an NL umpire for the remainder of that season . Irwin , who had previously only filled in for one three @-@ day umpiring stretch in 1881 , umpired his first NL game on August 7 , 1902 . His last umpiring appearance came with the end of the 1902 season on October 3 . In fifty games as an umpire , Irwin ejected nine players , including future Hall of Fame inductees Roger Bresnahan and Fred Clarke . Irwin , who had retained partial ownership of the Toronto club , then returned to manage that team for a couple of seasons .

By 1906 , Irwin was manager of the Altoona Mountaineers in the Tri @-@ State League . In July 1907 , Irwin resigned as manager of the Mountaineers after fans became disgruntled . Even after entering baseball scouting , Irwin briefly managed the 1908 Washington club in the short @-@ lived Union Professional League . The league was plagued by financial problems ? including the inability to pay players at times ? and it folded less than two months after play began . He was rehired to the Penn coaching staff in 1908 .

= = = Scouting = = =

In the summer of 1907 , Irwin became a scout for the New York Highlanders . In 1909 , New York manager George Stallings rented an apartment overlooking Hilltop Park and sent Irwin up to steal signs from the opposing team . Using a system of binoculars and mirrors , Irwin read the signs and flashed them back to Stallings so they could be relayed to the batter . By 1912 , almost the entire Highlanders roster had been scouted by Irwin . In a newspaper interview covering his scouting career , Irwin asserted that he preferred signing young prospects over expensive stars . " The chances are better with a young player , for by getting him early you can gradually break him into the style of play the team is using " , he said .

In December 1912 , New York president Frank J. Farrell promoted Irwin from scout to business manager . Upon his promotion , a statement from the team said , " He has been of such service to the club in numerous ways that Mr. Farrell has invested him with full power to look after business details in future . " The poor relationship between Irwin and New York manager Frank Chance was a factor in the manager 's 1914 resignation after two years of a three @-@ year contract . The New

York Times said that Chance " did not think it was possible to collect so many mediocre players on one major league club . " Irwin remained with the Highlanders until Farrell sold the team to Jacob Ruppert and T.L. Huston . Upon the sale of the team , Irwin and several other Highlanders personnel submitted their resignations .

= = = Later coaching career = = =

Irwin became part @-@ owner of the Lewiston Cupids in 1915 and managed that club in the final season of the original New England League . The 1915 Cupids featured 16 @-@ year @-@ old Cuban pitcher Oscar Tuero , who won 17 games in his third professional season . The team did not win the pennant that year , but the race came down to the final days of the season . Irwin and Christy Mathewson were considered for a coaching position at Harvard College that year , but former Highlanders catcher and professional scout Fred Mitchell was ultimately selected . In 1916 , Irwin publicly accused Philadelphia 's Connie Mack of underhanded dealings in obtaining third baseman Jim Ritter from Baltimore . He said that Mack convinced the New England League 's Baltimore club to draft Ritter so that Mack could later obtain him cheaply . Mack was outraged at the accusations and immediately severed all connections with the player . Ritter never appeared in a major league game .

Irwin managed the Rochester Hustlers between 1918 and 1920 . Rochester was not successful under Irwin ; the 1920 Hustlers finished with 45 wins and 106 losses . Cray L. Remington of the Rochester Evening Journal later wrote , " Local fans used to pan Arthur Irwin in the old days when Arthur was as innocent of wrong as the little sparrows on the limbs . Arthur 's job was to win ball games minus talent . He couldn 't do it . " While managing the Eastern League 's Hartford Senators in 1921 against a New York semi @-@ pro team , Irwin noticed the play of Lou Gehrig and convinced him to sign his first professional contract with Hartford . Gehrig had already committed to play at Columbia University and professional experience would affect his collegiate eligibility , so he began playing for Hartford using assumed names like Lou Lewis . However , Columbia found out about Gehrig 's play and the slugger was forced to sit out of college baseball for a year .

= = Sports innovations = =

While playing with Providence in 1883 , Irwin broke the third and fourth fingers of his left hand . Not wanting to miss any games , he obtained an oversized buckskin driving glove , padded it and sewed the third and fourth fingers together to allow space for bandages . He used the glove even after his fingers healed . John Montgomery Ward of New York soon took the field with a similar glove . By the following season , almost every professional player was using the " Irwin glove . " Prior to 1884 , use of gloves was limited to first basemen and catchers . In 1882 , Irwin committed a league @-@ high 78 errors in 84 games . He committed 66 errors in 98 games the following year . Over his next two seasons with the glove , Irwin committed 98 errors in 163 games .

Irwin was president of the American League of Professional Football (ALPF) for its lone season in 1894 . The organization represented the first American professional soccer league . Teams in the league were named after their MLB counterparts in the same cities . Some of the active baseball managers served as coaches for the soccer teams , and fans were sometimes enticed by the rumor of MLB players who might participate in the league . Irwin was also involved in an attempt to popularize roller polo .

Irwin developed and patented a football scoreboard , which was in use in the Ivy League by the 1890s . The large scoreboard featured a miniature representation of a football field , and the ball moved along the board to report each play . By 1915 , Irwin 's scoreboards were featured at each end of the field for the Army @-@ Navy game at the Polo Grounds .

= = Other influence = =

Irwin owned athletic facilities in Atlantic City , New Jersey , and negotiated with baseball officials

about bringing organized baseball there in 1900 . Irwin opened a motor @-@ paced bicycle racing track in the city in July 1902 . His focus on the bicycle track enterprise had been a factor in his resignation from the Penn coaching staff in 1902 . He also became involved with the Hartford Avenue Colosseum Company and oversaw its Philadelphia bicycle track .

= = Death = =

On June 21 , 1921 , Irwin gave up his managerial role with the Hartford club in the Eastern League due to health concerns . He was experiencing abdominal trouble and severe nervous attacks . Irwin was diagnosed with stomach cancer ; he had lost 60 pounds in two weeks . While in the hospital , he was told that he only had a few days to live . While traveling from New York City to Boston on the vessel Calvin Austin , Irwin was lost overboard in an apparent suicide on July 16 . Shortly after his death , a theory emerged that Irwin had been robbed for \$ 5 @,@ 000 and then murdered aboard the ship . This theory was discounted when it was learned from family members that Irwin had taken only \$ 35 on the trip . When Irwin was last seen aboard the ship around midnight on July 16 , he told a friend that he was " coming home to his brother John 's to die . "

During the investigation into Irwin 's disappearance and death , two widows emerged ; one lived in Boston and the other lived in New York . He first married Elizabeth , the woman in Boston , in 1883 . Together they had three children , including a son who was 37 at the time of Irwin 's death , and nine grandchildren . In the 1890s he married again , this time in Philadelphia to May , a woman he met while coaching baseball at the University of Pennsylvania . They settled in New York and had a son who was 24 when Irwin died .

In his final days , Irwin sold his rights from his scoreboard business for \$ 2000 . Though he sent \$ 1500 to May and only \$ 500 to Elizabeth , his Boston widow was surprised at the gesture since Irwin rarely visited Boston and provided almost no financial support to their family . In fact , May said that he had not been away from New York for more than a few days at a time in 27 years . She said that his only long trips were baseball @-@ related , when he would scout players in other cities . Before he left New York for the final time , he told May that he was going to say goodbye to friends in Boston and that he would return to New York . Though neither woman knew of the other , Irwin 's New York son Harold learned about an unknown brother while he was visiting his father in the hospital just before Irwin 's death .

In 1989 , Irwin was posthumously inducted into the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame .