

= Ross Youngs =

Royce Middlebrook " Ross " Youngs (April 10 , 1897 ? October 22 , 1927) was a professional baseball player . Nicknamed " Pep " , he played ten seasons in Major League Baseball for the New York Giants from 1917 through 1926 , playing right field almost exclusively . Youngs was a part of the Giants teams that won four consecutive National League pennants and the 1921 and 1922 World Series .

From Shiner , Texas , Youngs excelled at baseball and American football at the West Texas Military Institute . After beginning his professional career in minor league baseball , the Giants signed him in 1916 . Youngs had a lifetime .322 batting average with the Giants and batted over .300 nine times in his career , including eight consecutive seasons . His career was cut short by illness , however , as he died at the age of 30 of Bright 's disease .

Known for his defense and hitting , he was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1972 by the Veterans Committee . His election was not without controversy , however , as the Veterans Committee consisted of his former teammates , and charges of cronyism were leveled against the Veterans Committee .

= = Early life and minor leagues = =

Youngs was born in Shiner , Texas , the second of three children , all sons . His father was a railroad worker , but suffered disability and moved his family to San Antonio where he worked as a rancher . Youngs ' mother ran a small hotel in San Antonio and Youngs had a paper route .

Youngs was educated at West Texas Military Institute . He received offers for scholarships to play college football but passed on these , as he preferred baseball . He made his professional baseball debut for the Austin Senators of the Texas League in 1914 . Appearing in 17 games , he hit just .145 for the class @-@ B Senators and , in 1915 , found himself down in the Class @-@ D leagues , playing for Brenham of the Middle Texas League and the Waxahachie Athletics of the Central Texas League ; both leagues disbanded during the season . In 1916 , playing in the infield for the Sherman Lions of the Class @-@ D Western Association , he hit .362 as a switch @-@ hitter , drawing the attention of the New York Giants , who purchased his contract in August for \$ 2 @,@ 000 (\$ 43 @,@ 492 in current dollar terms) .

= = New York Giants = =

Youngs reported to spring training in Marlin , Texas with the Giants in 1917 . They initially assigned him to the Rochester Hustlers , a team in the International League with which the Giants had a working relationship . Giants manager John McGraw told Mickey Doolan , the manager of the Hustlers , " I 'm giving you one of the greatest players I 've ever seen . Play him in the outfield . If anything happens to him , I 'm holding you responsible . " In 140 games with Rochester , Youngs hit .356 , earning himself a late @-@ season promotion to the big league club . McGraw gave Youngs the nickname " Pep " due to his hustle and soon began to groom Youngs to become his successor as Giants ' manager .

Youngs made his major league debut on September 25 and played in seven of the last nine games of the season for the eventual National League (NL) pennant @-@ winners : six in center field and one in right . In those seven games he went 9 @-@ for @-@ 26 (.346) with two doubles and three triples . In 1918 regular Giants right fielder Dave Robertson left the team to manage a local military ballclub , and Youngs was given the full @-@ time job out of spring training . Batting exclusively left @-@ handed , Youngs responded by batting .302 in 121 games , finishing sixth in the league . It would be the first of seven straight seasons in which he hit .300 as a regular , and the second of eight overall counting his brief stint in 1917 . He also finished sixth in the NL with a .368 on @-@ base percentage (OBP) . The next season Robertson was traded to the Chicago Cubs for pitcher Phil Douglas , leaving Youngs to become a fixture in right field for the Giants . Youngs finished third in the NL in 1919 with a .311 batting average . His .351 batting average in 1920 was second in the

NL to Rogers Hornsby .

Youngs batted .327 in 1921 , good for ninth in the NL . In Game 3 of the 1921 World Series Youngs became the first player to record two hits in the same inning of a World Series game . The Giants defeated the New York Yankees as Youngs batted .280 in the series . Youngs hit for the cycle on April 29 , 1922 . He finished the regular season ninth in the NL in OBP (.398) and tied for ninth in stolen bases (17) , proceeding to hit .375 in the 1922 World Series as the Giants again defeated the Yankees . Youngs led the NL in runs scored in 1923 , with 121 , and his .348 batting average was the eighth best in the league . Youngs batted .356 in the 1923 World Series , which the Giants lost to the Yankees .

Youngs batted .356 during the 1924 season , finishing third in the NL . In the final series of this season , the Giants were playing the Philadelphia Phillies at the Polo Grounds and battling for the pennant with the Brooklyn Dodgers . Jimmy O 'Connell , an outfielder for the Giants , offered Phillies shortstop Heinie Sand \$ 500 to intentionally lose the games (\$ 6 @, @ 904 in current dollar terms) . Sand rejected the bribe and reported it to Phillies manager Art Fletcher . It eventually led to the lifetime suspension of O 'Connell and Giants coach Crazy Dolan by Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis . O 'Connell implicated teammates Youngs , George Kelly , and Frankie Frisch as co @-@ conspirators ; Landis , however , cleared the trio of any wrongdoing .

Youngs slumped to a .185 batting average during the 1924 World Series , which the Giants lost to the Washington Senators . Continuing to struggle in 1925 , Youngs batted .264 , his only season with a batting average below .300 , but improved to .306 in 95 games during the 1926 season . Toward the end of his career , Youngs taught Mel Ott , his eventual successor , how to play right field in the Polo Grounds .

= = Illness and death = =

Youngs 's career was abruptly cut short in 1926 when he was diagnosed with the kidney disorder that , at the time , was called Bright 's disease . He had been exposed to streptococcal infection in 1924 . Too ill to play after August 10 , 1926 , Youngs returned home on McGraw 's insistence and received a blood transfusion in March 1927 .

Youngs died of Bright 's disease on October 22 , 1927 at the age of 30 . He went from weighing 170 pounds (77 kg) during his playing career to 100 pounds (45 kg) by the time of his death . In The New York Times obituary , Giants manager John McGraw called Youngs the greatest outfielder he 'd ever seen , as well as " the greatest fighter I ever saw on a baseball field " and " the easiest man I ever knew to handle . " The Giants honored Youngs with a bronze plaque on the right field wall of the Polo Grounds ; although the Giants intended to pay for it , fans expressed their desire to contribute and , even though contributions were limited to \$ 1 per person , donations paid for the plaque entirely .

= = Legacy = =

Over his abbreviated ten @-@ year career , Youngs posted 812 runs , 42 home runs , 592 runs batted in (RBI) , 153 stolen bases , a .322 career batting average , and .399 career on @-@ base percentage . He batted .300 or higher in every season until 1925 , and higher than .350 twice . Youngs scored 100 or more runs three times and posted a career high 102 RBI in 1921 and 10 home runs in 1924 . During his tenure with the team , the Giants went to the World Series four consecutive years (1921 ? 1924) and won twice (1921 , 1922) . Youngs was a favorite of McGraw , who kept only two pictures in his office : one of Christy Mathewson and one of Youngs . Rosy Ryan , a teammate with the Giants , and Burleigh Grimes , who played against Youngs as a member of the Brooklyn Dodgers , considered Youngs the best player they ever saw .

Youngs was included in the inaugural balloting for the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1936 , but received less than 5 % of the vote from the Baseball Writers ' Association of America (BBWAA) . Youngs remained on the ballot every year through 1956 , receiving his highest vote total in 1947 with 22 % . Ford C. Frick , Commissioner of Baseball , and former teammate Bill Terry both

championed Youngs ' candidacy .

Former Giants teammates Terry and Frankie Frisch joined the Veterans Committee in 1967 and aided the elections of several of their former teammates , including Youngs in 1972 . In addition to Youngs , Terry and Frisch shepherded the selections of Giants teammates Jesse Haines in 1970 , Dave Bancroft and Chick Hafey in 1971 , George Kelly in 1973 , Jim Bottomley in 1974 , and Freddie Lindstrom in 1976 . Youngs died at the earliest age of any current Hall of Famer . Youngs is the only member of the National Baseball Hall of Fame from San Antonio and was inducted into the San Antonio Sports Hall of Fame in 1998 . Shiner , the town in which Youngs was born , hosted a baseball tournament in his honor at Clipper Field from 2001 through 2003 .

Youngs ' selection , along with some of the other selections made by Terry and Frisch , has been considered one of the weakest in some circles . According to the BBWAA , the Veterans Committee was not selective enough in choosing members , and charges of cronyism were later leveled against the committee . This led to the Veterans Committee having its powers reduced in subsequent years . Baseball statistician Bill James recognized this and wrote that Youngs does not belong in the Hall of Fame . In 1981 , however , Lawrence Ritter and Honig included Youngs in their book The 100 Greatest Baseball Players of All Time . They explained what they called " the Smoky Joe Wood Syndrome " , where a player of truly exceptional talent but a career curtailed by injury or illness should still ? in spite of not owning career statistics that would quantitatively rank him with the all @-@ time greats ? be included on their list of the 100 greatest players .

= = Personal life = =

Youngs married Dorothy Pienecke , a woman from Brooklyn who he met while vacationing in the Berkshires , in October 1924 . Their daughter Caroline was born in December 1925 . Dorothy feuded with Youngs ' mother , however , and the couple separated before the birth of Caroline , whom he never met . Youngs was considered friendly and generous , loaned money constantly , and was reportedly owed \$ 16 @,@ 000 at the time of his death (\$ 217 @,@ 962 in current dollar terms) . Youngs enjoyed playing golf and was considered the best golfer in the major leagues .