

= Frenchy Bordagaray =

Stanley George " Frenchy " Bordagaray ( January 3 , 1910 ? April 13 , 2000 ) was an American professional baseball player . He played in Major League Baseball ( MLB ) as an outfielder and third baseman for the Chicago White Sox , Brooklyn Dodgers , St. Louis Cardinals , Cincinnati Reds , and New York Yankees between 1934 and 1945 . He had a .283 batting average for his career .

Bordagaray gained publicity through the press through his colorful personality and various gimmicks . He appeared in bit parts in movies and grew a mustache in a time when baseball players were expected to be clean shaven . He has been inducted into the Brooklyn Dodgers Hall of Fame , and the Fresno and Ventura County Sports Halls of Fame .

= = Early life = =

Bordagaray was born in Coalinga , California on January 3 , 1910 to Dominique and Louise Bordagaray , who were original settlers of the San Joaquin Valley . Bordagaray was the middle of seven children .

Of Basque and French descent , Bordagaray got his nickname from his mother . His father wanted him to become a violinist . He lettered in baseball , football , and track and field at Fresno State College .

= = Professional career = =

= = = Early career ( 1931 ? 1933 ) = = =

Bordagaray made his professional baseball debut in minor league baseball with the Sacramento Senators of the Pacific Coast League ( PCL ) during the 1931 season . They originally gave him a three @-@ week tryout without pay , so that he could retain his amateur status ; at the end of the tryout , the Senators offered Bordagaray his first professional contract . At only 20 years of age , Bordagaray 's father needed to provide his consent . Though his father initially refused and threatened to take the Senators to court , he changed his mind after visiting his son . Fresno State 's football coach , Stan Borleske , attempted to negotiate Bordagaray 's release , but Senators owner Lewis Moreing refused .

Bordagaray led the PCL in batting average ( .373 ) during the 1931 season . He publicly held out from the Senators for more money during the offseason , which became an annual tradition for Bordagaray . In the 1932 season , he batted .322 in games played . He followed this up by batting .351 in 117 games during the 1933 season .

While with the Senators , Bordagaray raced a horse in a 100 yard dash , losing by a few feet . During a game , Bordagaray reportedly went to use the toilet during the ninth inning . While he was off the field , the pitcher threw the ball , unaware he had no right fielder . The batter hit the pitch to right field , leading to a double . Manager Earl McNeely did not criticize Bordagaray , rather telling the pitcher to make sure his fielders were in place before throwing .

= = = Major League Baseball = = =

= = = = Chicago White Sox and Brooklyn Dodgers ( 1934 ? 1936 ) = = = =

The Chicago White Sox bought Bordagaray 's contract from Sacramento for \$ 15 @,@ 000 ( \$ 265 @,@ 336 in current dollar terms ) in the spring of 1934 . He batted .322 with a .344 on @-@ base percentage ( OBP ) and .379 slugging percentage ( SLG ) , with no home runs , two runs batted in in 29 games for the 1934 Chicago White Sox . Evar Swanson reclaimed the role he held in 1933 as starting right fielder for Chicago , and Bordagaray was returned to Sacramento in June , reclaiming

their money . He spent the rest of 1934 with the Senators , batting .321 with 34 doubles and a .433 slugging percentage . After the 1934 season , the Senators traded Bordagaray to the Brooklyn Dodgers for Johnny Frederick , Art Herring and cash . He hit .282 with a .319 OBP and .363 SLG with 18 steals and 69 runs scored for the 1935 Dodgers . He was third in the National League ( NL ) in steals , four behind leader Augie Galan and two behind Pepper Martin .

Bordagaray showed up at spring training in 1936 with a mustache , which he grew for a bit role in *The Prisoner of Shark Island* , filmed during the offseason . This was scandalous , as baseball players were expected to be clean shaven at the time ; the last player believed to have worn a mustache was Wally Schang during the 1914 season . Looking for stories to write about , sportswriters for the Dodgers encouraged Bordagaray to grow out his mustache and goatee . The Brooklyn Eagle hosted a contest to determine what sort of beard Bordagaray should grow . After a few months , Dodgers manager Casey Stengel made him shave . Mustaches would not be seen in MLB again until Oakland Athletics owner Charlie O. Finley paid his players to grow facial hair in the 1970s . Finley hosted a " mustache day " , and invited Bordagaray to serve as master of ceremonies .

Heading into the 1936 season , Stengel decided to use Bordagaray as his starting third baseman . For the year , Bordagaray batted .315 with a .346 OBP and .419 SLG for the Dodgers , finishing ninth in the NL with 12 steals . He was third among the team 's regulars in average , behind Babe Phelps and Joe Stripp . His .991 fielding percentage was second among outfielders in the NL , trailing only teammate Johnny Cooney . That season , however , he received a \$ 500 fine and 60 @-@ day suspension for spitting at an umpire . When asked about it , Bordagaray replied , " The penalty is a bit more than I expectorated . "

== == St. Louis Cardinals and Cincinnati Reds ( 1937 ? 1939 ) == ==

With Burleigh Grimes succeeding Stengel as the Dodgers ' manager after the 1936 season , the Dodgers sold Bordagaray , Jimmy Jordan and Dutch Leonard to the St. Louis Cardinals as part of an off @-@ season shakeup ; it was seen as the completion of an August 1 trade in which the Dodgers acquired Tom Winsett from the Cardinals . With the Cardinals , Bordagaray batted .293 with a .331 OBP and .367 SLG during the 1937 season . His 11 stolen bases were eighth best in the NL . With the 1938 Cardinals , Bordagaray was used mostly as a bench player , as Enos Slaughter joined the team , playing in the outfield with Joe Medwick , Terry Moore , and Martin , and Art Garibaldi was set to play third base . Bordagaray batted .282 with a .325 OBP and .327 SLG with only two steals in 1938 . While a member of the Cardinals , Bordagaray played the washboard in Martin 's " Mudcat Band " .

Upon the conclusion of the 1938 season , the Cardinals assigned Bordagaray to their farm team in Rochester . They traded Bordagaray to the Cincinnati Reds for Dusty Cooke and cash later in the offseason . In 63 games with the Reds in 1939 , his batting average declined to .197 , as did his OBP ( .252 ) and SLG ( .254 ) . In the 1939 World Series , he pinch ran twice for Ernie Lombardi , but did not play in the field or have a plate appearance .

== == New York Yankees and return to the Dodgers ( 1940 ? 1945 ) == ==

Bordagaray was sent with Nino Bongiovanni to the New York Yankees after the 1939 season , completing an earlier trade made on August 5 in which the Reds sent players to be named later and \$ 40 @,@ 000 ( \$ 680 @,@ 478 in current dollar terms ) to the New York Yankees for Vince DiMaggio . Bordagaray spent the 1940 season in the minor leagues , with the Kansas City Blues of the American Association . The Yankees promoted Bordagaray in 1941 . He hit .260 with a .325 OBP and .274 SLG in 36 games during the regular season , and appeared in one game during the 1941 World Series as a pinch runner for Bill Dickey .

Before the 1942 season , the Dodgers purchased Bordagaray from the Yankees . He hit .241 with a .279 OBP and .276 SLG in 48 games with the 1942 Dodgers , and .302 with a .379 OBP and .384 SLG in 89 games during the 1943 season . As Brooklyn 's primary third baseman and leadoff hitter

in 1944 , Bordagaray hit .281 with a .331 OBP and .385 SLG with 85 runs in 501 at bat , topping 100 games played for the first time since 1936 . During the 1945 season , he batted .256 with a .328 OBP and .355 SLG , fielding only .886 at third base , and coming in third in the league in errors , despite playing in only 57 games .

== Later career ( 1946 ? 1948 ) ==

The Dodgers released Bordagaray before the 1946 season . Returning to minor league baseball , he spent 1946 with the Trois Rivières Royals of the Class C Canadian ? American League as a player ? manager , winning both the league 's Most Valuable Player ( MVP ) and Manager of the Year awards . In 1947 , he was player manager of the Greenville Spinners of the Class A South Atlantic League . Bordagaray was suspended 60 games for fighting an umpire , leading the Spinners to hire Martin to replace him . He attempted to return to MLB with the Dodgers in 1948 , but retired before the season .

== Post playing career ==

After his baseball career , Bordagaray owned restaurants and clubs in St. Louis and Kansas City and developed land as cemeteries in the Midwestern United States . He sold graveyard plots in Coalinga , California . He moved to Ventura , California in 1961 , where he was supervisor of youth sports and recreation programs in the Ventura Recreation Department .

Bordagaray was named to the Fresno County and Ventura County Sports Halls of Fame , as well as the Brooklyn Dodgers Hall of Fame . Proud of his publicity , he kept newspaper clippings in a scrapbook that weighs 15 pounds ( 6 @ 8 kg ) .

Bordagaray died in a nursing home in Ventura at the age of 90 . He was survived by his wife of 52 years , Victoria , two sons , two daughters , seven grandchildren , and six great grandchildren . He is interred at Pleasant Valley Cemetery in Coalinga .