

= Ben Paschal =

Benjamin Edwin " Ben " Paschal (October 13 , 1895 ? November 10 , 1974) was an American baseball outfielder who played eight seasons in Major League Baseball from 1915 to 1929 , mostly for the New York Yankees . After two " cup of coffee " stints with the Cleveland Indians in 1915 and the Boston Red Sox in 1920 , Paschal spent most of his career as the fourth outfielder and right @-@ handed pinch hitter of the Yankees ' Murderers ' Row championship teams of the late 1920s . Paschal is best known for hitting .360 in the 1925 season while standing in for Babe Ruth , who missed the first 40 games with a stomach ailment .

During his time in baseball , Paschal was described as a five @-@ tool player , who excelled at running , throwing , fielding , hitting for average and power . However , his playing time with the Yankees was limited because they already had future Baseball Hall of Famers Ruth and Earle Combs , and star Bob Meusel , in the outfield . Paschal was considered one of the best bench players in baseball during his time with the Yankees , and sportswriters wrote how he would have started for most other teams in the American League . He was one of the best pinch hitters in the game during the period , at a time when the term was still relatively new to baseball .

= = Early career = =

The son of farmers , Paschal was born in Enterprise , Alabama and grew up in nearby Sanford . He played collegiate sports at the University of Alabama , before beginning his professional career with Dothan of the Georgia State League , where he played with future Hall of Fame player Bill Terry . Paschal played in 64 games , with a .280 batting average , and his ability attracted the attention of scouts in the area . Signed as a pinch hitter for the Cleveland Indians at age 19 , Paschal appeared in nine games , collecting one hit on August 16 , which broke up a no @-@ hitter by Bernie Boland with two outs in the ninth inning . The Indians declared Paschal too inexperienced , and he was sent to the Muskegon Reds of the Central League . The league disbanded in the middle of the 1917 season , and Paschal became a free agent .

After a two @-@ year break from baseball because of World War I , Paschal moved on to the Charlotte Hornets of the South Atlantic League , where he played from 1920 to 1923 . He finished third in the league in batting average in 1920 . While in the Southern League , he was nicknamed " the man who hits sticks of dynamite " .

At the conclusion of 1920 season , Paschal was purchased by the Boston Red Sox , with an option to keep him if he met certain playing expectations . He appeared in nine games for the Red Sox ; his first game brought three hits against pitcher José Acosta of the Washington Senators , and in total he batted .357 with five runs batted in (RBI) , but the Red Sox believed he lacked fielding experience and he returned to Charlotte . In August 1921 , Paschal was sold to the Rochester Red Wings . However , while sliding in a match on August 20 , 1921 , he suffered a broken leg which sidelined him for the rest of the season and voided the contract with the Red Wings . He was hitting .317 at the time of the injury . In 1922 , Paschal played in 142 games , hitting .326 with 18 home runs and improved these figures in 1923 , achieving 200 hits , 22 triples and 26 home runs in 141 games for a batting average of .351 , the fourth best in the league . Paschal began the 1924 season with the Atlanta Crackers of the Southern Association . He scored 136 runs , while batting .341 and stealing 24 bases .

= = Yankees career = =

The New York Yankees bought Paschal from the Crackers near the end of the 1924 season and he played in four games . His only three hits , as well as three RBI , came in a defeat by Detroit Tigers on September 19 .

During spring training , Paschal narrowly escaped serious injury while travelling on a bus . The vehicle rolled backwards down a hill and Paschal , along with several other teammates , jumped off the bus before it hit a tree at high speed . The media expected Paschal to be Babe Ruth 's

understudy prior to the 1925 season , but Ruth collapsed at an Asheville , North Carolina train station just before the regular season 's start . Emergency surgery for a " intestinal abscess " left him hospitalized for six weeks . Originally , Paschal was only to be used against left @-@ handed pitchers , but Yankees manager Miller Huggins named him as Ruth 's temporary replacement in the outfield . In the first game of the year , Paschal hit a home run in a 5 ? 1 win against the defending World Series @-@ champion Washington Senators . After another game @-@ winning home run against the Senators two weeks later , the New York press noted that he was " making fans forget about Babe Ruth " . Paschal 's weakness against right @-@ handed pitchers prompted the Yankees to acquire veteran outfielder Bobby Veach , but his declining skills allowed Paschal to retain his position in the team , and another game @-@ winning home run against the Cleveland Indians on May 23 . At the time , Paschal was fifth in the league in batting average at .403 , behind Sammy Hale , Ty Cobb , Tris Speaker , and teammate Earle Combs . His six home runs in May were an equal record (with Joe Gordon) for the most home runs hit by a rookie in a month until Shane Spencer achieved nine in September 1998 .

Ruth returned to the lineup on June 1 , relegating Paschal to the bench . In July , an injury to Combs allowed Paschal to start several games in center field , and a further injury to Joe Dugan allowed Paschal to start throughout the majority of August and all of September , as Bob Meusel moved to third base to cover Dugan . He hit two home runs during a September 8 game against the Red Sox , but his season ended when he was hit on the leg with a pitch on September 12 against the Philadelphia Athletics . In 89 games , Paschal 's batting average for the season was .360 , 70 points higher than Ruth , with 12 home runs and 56 RBI .

Paschal began the 1926 season as the fourth outfielder . He was sent a new contract for the 1926 season , but after threatening to hold out for more money . Paschal signed the new contract on February 17 for an estimated \$ 7 @,@ 000 (94 @,@ 000 today) . He began the season as a pinch hitter , but injuries quickly took their toll on the Yankees . Paschal started most of July and August , replacing an injured Meusel , who broke a bone in his right foot . Paschal hit an inside @-@ the @-@ park home run in a victory against the Indians on July 9 . With the Yankees in a close pennant race in mid @-@ August , Paschal hit a home run in a loss to the Detroit Tigers . Further successes came with a vital pinch @-@ hit double in a win against the Athletics on September 6 and a home run on September 8 . The Yankees clinched the pennant on September 15 , and Paschal scored the game @-@ winning single . The Yankees faced the St. Louis Cardinals in the 1926 World Series , and Paschal , pinch @-@ hitting for Joe Dugan , singled in Lou Gehrig tying the contest at 2 ? 2 in the ninth inning of Game 5 . Tony Lazzeri hit a sacrifice fly in the tenth to win the game for the Yankees , but they lost the next two games and the Series . He had played in 96 games , hitting seven home runs with 32 runs batted in .

Before the 1927 season , Paschal returned his playing contract unsigned because of a salary dispute . By that time , the Yankees were forming the nucleus of what became the Murderers ' Row teams of the late 1920s . He signed for an estimated \$ 8 @,@ 000 (109 @,@ 000 today) , a 13 % raise . In the season @-@ opening win against the Athletics , right field starter Babe Ruth struck out twice and popped out , forcing Huggins to replace him with Paschal in the sixth inning . As the last man ever to pinch @-@ hit for Ruth , Paschal singled . In one of his few starts of the 1927 season , Paschal was a single short of hitting for the cycle , and almost had three home runs . Replacing the injured Bob Meusel , Paschal hit two home runs , a triple that was yards shy of a home run , and a double which bounced off the right @-@ field stands during an 11 ? 2 rout of the Indians . Paschal did not play in the Yankees ' 1927 World Series victory over the Pittsburgh Pirates . Overall he played in 50 games , primarily as a pinch hitter . After the season , Paschal was discussed as a trade for Boston Red Sox pitcher Red Ruffing , but discussions fell apart (Ruffing was later acquired in a proposed trade during the 1930 season) .

Paschal was used heavily as a pinch hitter during the 1928 season . Huggins credited Paschal 's timely pinch @-@ hitting as part of the Yankees ' success that season . One of the few highlights of his season was his RBI pinch @-@ hit double in the 10th inning that helped the Yankees beat the Chicago White Sox on August 4 . Paschal played in 65 games that season , having a .316 batting average . He shared center field duties with Cedric Durst for an injured Earle Combs during the

Yankees' win over the Cardinals in the 1928 World Series . He started the first and last games of the series on a platoon situation ; Paschal faced left @-@ handed pitchers and Durst faced right @-@ handed pitchers .

Before the 1929 season , Paschal and Durst were mentioned in several trade rumors , and Paschal was rarely used , appearing in only 42 games as a sixth outfielder in the season . A rare start came on June 1 against the White Sox , when he scored a run . On July 2 , Paschal hit a pinch @-@ hit home run for Herb Pennock in the seventh inning of a game against the Red Sox to give the Yankees a 3 ? 2 win . He played in 42 games in his final season in the majors , posting a .208 batting average in 81 at @-@ bats .

During his time with the Yankees , Paschal was considered a quiet player with a colorless personality . His appearances were limited by the presence of future Hall of Famers Ruth and Combs , and star Bob Meusel in the outfield . He was part a group including Lou Gehrig and Mark Koenig which preferred watching a film to partying after a game ; they were dubbed the team 's " movie crowd " .

= = Later career = =

After the 1929 season , Paschal was part of a trade for catcher Bubbles Hargrave , with Wilcy Moore and Johnny Grabowski , to the St. Paul Saints of the American Association (AA) . In one 1930 game against the Toledo Mud Hens , Paschal had four hits and four RBI in a 23 ? 4 win that broke the AA record for most runs scored in a game . In 144 games , Paschal finished the 1930 season with 204 hits , 10 home runs and a .350 batting average . The following season , Paschal played 121 games to hit .336 , while his average in 1932 was .325 in 147 games . During one game in the 1932 season , Paschal had three doubles and three singles , tying the AA record for most hits in a game . His skills declined during the 1933 season ; in 130 games he hit just .272 with seven home runs . He left St. Paul and signed as a free agent with the Knoxville Smokies on December 30 , 1933 . The St. Petersburg Evening Independent reported a few months later that Paschal was " struggling to keep his job " in the minors . He was released by Knoxville and signed with the Scranton Miners of the New York ? Penn League . After a few games with the Miners , Paschal returned home to North Carolina , where he accepted a managerial job for a semi @-@ professional baseball team in Catawba County .

Paschal was married with a child , Ben Jr . He died in Charlotte , North Carolina at the age of 79 , and is interred at Sharon Memorial Park .