

= Cy Seymour =

James Bentley " Cy " Seymour ( December 9 , 1872 ? September 20 , 1919 ) was an American center fielder and pitcher in Major League Baseball ( MLB ) . From 1896 through 1913 , Seymour played for the New York Giants ( 1896 ? 1900 , 1906 ? 1910 ) , Baltimore Orioles ( 1901 ? 1902 ) , Cincinnati Reds ( 1902 ? 1906 ) and Boston Braves ( 1913 ) . He batted and threw left @-@ handed .

Primarily a center fielder , Seymour retired with 1 @,@ 724 hits and a lifetime batting average of .303 . He was a pitcher for his first five seasons , ending his MLB career with a 61 ? 56 win ? loss record and a 3 @.@ 76 earned run average in 140 games pitched ( 123 as a starting pitcher ) . Only Babe Ruth retired with more combined wins and hits . Seymour is the Reds ' career leader in batting average ( .332 ) and holds the Reds ' single @-@ season record for batting average ( .377 in 1905 ) .

= = Career = =

= = = Early career = = =

Seymour played semi @-@ professional baseball in Plattsburgh , New York , receiving a monthly salary of \$ 1 @,@ 000 ( \$ 28 @,@ 444 in current dollar terms ) . He began his professional career in minor league baseball with Springfield Ponies of the Class @-@ A Eastern League and New York Metropolitans of the Class @-@ A Atlantic League in 1896 .

= = = Major League Baseball = = =

= = = = New York Giants ( 1896 ? 1900 ) = = = =

Seymour signed with the New York Giants of the National League ( NL ) during the 1896 season , making his Major League Baseball ( MLB ) debut on April 22 . A sometimes wild pitcher , The New York Times described him as having a " \$ 10 @,@ 000 arm and a \$ 00 @,@ 000 head " . Seymour set a MLB record with three errors in one inning , a record later tied by Tommy John . However , he pitched to an 18 ? 14 win ? loss record in 1897 , with a 3 @.@ 37 earned run average ( ERA ) , while recording 149 strikeouts , good for second in the NL .

In 1898 , he won 25 games , had a 3 @.@ 18 ERA , and led the NL in strikeouts with 239 , while leading the team in wins and games started ( 43 ) . During the season , Seymour pitched three games in two days against the Baltimore Orioles . Orioles manager John McGraw later said that Seymour deserved the title of " Iron Man " more than Joe McGinnity .

Seymour held out from the Giants for the first month of the 1899 season in a contract dispute , eventually signing for \$ 2 @,@ 000 ( \$ 56 @,@ 888 in current dollar terms ) , a \$ 500 raise ( \$ 14 @,@ 222 in current dollar terms ) over his 1898 salary . He finished second in the NL in strikeouts with 142 . Seymour was briefly demoted to the minor leagues after walking 11 batters in a victory against the St. Louis Perfectos on June 7 , 1900 . Due to injuries and the ineffectiveness of the Giants ' outfielders , the team began to play Seymour in the outfield , though they insisted that Seymour would not shift positions on a permanent basis . Seymour last pitched for the Giants that season , at which point he converted into an outfielder full @-@ time due to injury from throwing the screwball .

= = = = Baltimore Orioles ( 1901 ? 1902 ) = = = =

With the formation of the American League ( AL ) as a competitor to the NL , Seymour joined many fellow NL players who jumped to the AL . McGraw , remembering Seymour 's toughness in previous

seasons , signed Seymour to his team , the Baltimore Orioles , before the 1901 season . Seymour batted .303 with the Orioles that year . By 1902 , the franchise began to fall into significant debt . Joe Kelley , star player for the Orioles and son @-@ in @-@ law of part @-@ owner John Mahon , reported that the team owed as much as \$ 12 @,@ 000 ( \$ 328 @,@ 200 in current dollar terms ) . Unable to afford that debt , Mahon purchased shares of the team from Kelley and player @-@ manager McGraw , who had resigned from the team and signed with the Giants . With this , Mahon became the majority shareholder . On July 17 , 1902 , Mahon sold his interest in the Orioles to Andrew Freedman , principal owner of the Giants , and John T. Brush , principal owner of the Cincinnati Reds , also of the NL . That day , Freedman and Brush released Seymour , McGraw , Kelley , McGinnity , Roger Bresnahan , Jack Cronin , and Dan McGann from their Oriole contracts . Brush then signed Seymour and Kelley to the Reds , while Freedman signed McGinnity , Bresnahan , Cronin , and McGann , joining McGraw , his new player @-@ manager , on the Giants .

== == Cincinnati Reds ( 1902 ? 1906 ) == ==

Reds owner Garry Herrmann added \$ 100 per month ( \$ 2 @,@ 735 in current dollar terms ) to Seymour 's \$ 2 @,@ 800 annual salary ( \$ 76 @,@ 580 in current dollar terms ) when he acquired him from Baltimore , and made him the team 's starting center fielder . He set a record with four sacrifice bunts in one game on July 25 , 1902 ; this mark was tied by Jake Daubert on August 15 , 1914 . Seymour continued to bat above .300 with the Reds in each season through 1905 , when he led the NL in batting average ( .377 ) , hits ( 219 ) , runs batted in ( RBI ) ( 121 ) , doubles ( 40 ) , triples ( 21 ) , and slugging percentage ( .559 ) . He would have won the Triple Crown but he finished second in home runs with eight , behind Fred Odwell 's nine . His .377 batting average set the single @-@ season record for the Reds , and his 325 total bases that season were an NL record through 1919 . Seymour had a .333 batting average during his tenure with the Reds , which remains a franchise record .

== == New York Giants ( 1906 ? 1910 ) == ==

The Giants purchased Seymour from the Reds on July 12 , 1906 for \$ 10 @,@ 000 ( \$ 263 @,@ 370 in current dollar terms ) , the largest monetary transaction in baseball to date . Seymour attempted to hold out from the Giants in order to obtain a portion of this transfer fee , claiming that Herrmann had promised him this money if the sale was completed . McGraw convinced Seymour not to hold out , which could have set a precedent for players obtaining money in player transactions . He batted .286 in 1906 for the Reds and Giants , finishing eighth in the NL .

Seymour finished fifth in the NL in batting average ( .294 ) for the 1907 season . However , an ankle injury prematurely ended his season . His batting average declined to .267 for the 1908 season . That year , he participated in one of baseball 's most infamous plays , known as Merkle 's Boner , in which the Giants lost the pennant to the Chicago Cubs . In the replayed game between the Giants and Cubs , Giants pitcher Christy Mathewson reportedly waved Seymour to move further back in the outfield ; Seymour refused , only to see the ball hit over his head , allowing the Cubs to score three runs on their way to the win . Mathewson later denied waving Seymour back , saying Seymour " knew the Chicago batters as well as [ he ] did and how to play them . "

As there were no full @-@ time base coaches at the time , players took turns in the role . While coaching at third base , Seymour tackled teammate Moose McCormick as he rounded third base and headed for home plate , in an attempt to keep McCormick at third . McCormick overpowered Seymour and scored . When McGraw asked why , Seymour made an excuse about having the sun in his eyes . This led McGraw , now realizing the need for a full @-@ time coach , to hire Arlie Latham for the role , the first full @-@ time coach in MLB . Seymour got into an altercation with Latham in March 1909 at the team 's hotel , prompting McGraw to seek a buyer for Seymour . Seymour apologized to McGraw , who responded by suspending Seymour for eight weeks . However , Seymour injured his right leg in his first game back from the suspension . This injury limited his effectiveness for the rest of his career . As a part @-@ time player that season , he

batted .311 , best among NL reserves . He again played a reserve role for the Giants in 1910 , batting .265 in 79 games .

= = = Later career = = =

The minor league Baltimore Orioles of the Class @-@ A Eastern League purchased Seymour from the Giants on August 24 , 1910 . After playing for the Orioles in the 1911 season , they sold him to the Newark Indians of the Class @-@ AA International League , where he played during the 1912 season . Seymour became property of the Los Angeles Angels of the Class @-@ A Pacific Coast League after the 1912 season , but he secured his release from the Angels without playing a game for them ,

Seymour subsequently signed as a free agent with the Boston Braves on February 25 , 1913 . After playing sparingly for the Braves during the 1913 season , the Braves released him on July 19 , 1913 , as they were carrying 26 players on their roster , though league rules permitted a maximum roster of 25 . Seymour played for the Buffalo Bisons of the Class @-@ A International League after being released by the Braves . He returned to professional baseball in 1918 , playing in 13 games for the Newark Bears of the International League .

= = After baseball = =

Seymour was declared physically unfit for service in World War I. However , he worked in wartime jobs in the Speedway shipyards and Bush terminal . While working in the shipyards , he contracted tuberculosis , and died at his home on September 20 , 1919 . He was interred in Albany Rural Cemetery .

= = Career perspective = =

Few players enjoyed as much success as Seymour as both a pitcher and hitter ; only Babe Ruth recorded more combined pitching victories and hits . As a pitcher , Seymour threw a fastball , a curveball , and a screwball . Orioles catcher Wilbert Robinson said that he had never caught a pitcher as wild as Seymour , as opposing batters did " not know whether their head or feet were in most danger . "

In his 16 @-@ year MLB career , Seymour hit 52 home runs with 799 RBI , 1 @,@ 723 hits , 222 stolen bases , and a .303 batting average . He also won 61 games as a pitcher . Seymour was posthumously inducted in the Cincinnati Reds Hall of Fame in 1998 .

The New York World listed Seymour as one of the best players in baseball , along with Mathewson , Ed Walsh , Honus Wagner , Nap Lajoie , and Roger Bresnahan . Elmer Flick insisted that Seymour was the toughest pitcher he batted against , saying he " was practically unhittable " and that Seymour " had a wonderful control of his curve ball . "

According to a formula for evaluating baseball players developed by Bill James , Seymour ranks above Hall of Famers Lloyd Waner , Jimmy Collins , and Joe Tinker .