

= Roger Bresnahan =

Roger Philip Bresnahan (June 11 , 1879 ? December 4 , 1944) , nicknamed " The Duke of Tralee " , was an American player and manager in Major League Baseball (MLB) . As a player , Bresnahan competed in MLB for the Washington Senators (1897) , Chicago Orphans (1900) , Baltimore Orioles (1901 ? 02) , New York Giants (1902 ? 08) , St. Louis Cardinals (1909 ? 12) and Chicago Cubs (1913 ? 15) . Bresnahan also managed the Cardinals (1909 ? 12) and Cubs (1915) . He was a member of the 1905 World Series champions .

Bresnahan opened his MLB career as a pitcher . He also served as an outfielder , before becoming a regular catcher . For his MLB career , Bresnahan had a .279 batting average in 4 @, @ 480 at bats and a 328 ? 432 managerial win @-@ loss record . Bresnahan popularized the use of protective equipment in baseball . He introduced shin guards to be worn by a catcher in 1907 . He also developed the first batting helmet .

After retiring as a player , Bresnahan remained active in professional baseball . He owned the minor league Toledo Mud Hens and coached for the Giants and Detroit Tigers . He was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1945 by the Veterans Committee .

= = Early life = =

Bresnahan was born on June 11 , 1879 in Toledo , Ohio . He was the seventh child of Michael and Mary Bresnahan , who had immigrated to the United States from Tralee , Ireland . Bresnahan used to claim that he was also from Tralee , and early in his life , he earned the nickname " The Duke of Tralee " .

Bresnahan began playing baseball in grade school , becoming one of the best known sandlot baseball players . He continued to play baseball at Toledo 's Central High School .

= = Career = =

= = = Early career (1895 ? 1902) = = =

At 16 , Bresnahan signed with a semi @-@ professional team from Manistee , Michigan . After he graduated high school , Bresnahan signed with Lima of the Ohio State League , where he played primarily as a pitcher , but also as a catcher in 1895 and 1896 .

On August 10 , 1897 , the Washington Senators of the National League (NL) in Major League Baseball (MLB) purchased Bresnahan from Lima . He began his MLB career as a pitcher , throwing a six @-@ hit shutout in his MLB debut against the St. Louis Browns on August 27 , 1897 , recording three strikeouts and walking two batters . He had six hits in 16 at bats (a .375 batting average) and had a 4 ? 0 win ? loss record for the 1897 Senators . However , the Senators released Bresnahan after the season over a salary dispute , when he attempted to hold out for more money . The Senators offered Bresnahan \$ 2 @, @ 000 (\$ 56 @, @ 888 in current dollar terms) , but Bresnahan wanted \$ 2 @, @ 400 (\$ 68 @, @ 266 in current dollar terms) .

Bresnahan played for the Toledo Mud Hens of the Interstate League and the Minneapolis Millers of the Western League in 1898 , and the Millers and Buffalo Bisons of the Western League in 1899 . Bresnahan appeared in two games at catcher for the Chicago Orphans of the NL in 1900 , which served as a tryout .

With the formation of the American League (AL) as a competitor to the NL , Bresnahan , among others , jumped to the AL from the NL . John McGraw , manager of the Baltimore Orioles of the AL saw Bresnahan pitch for Chicago , and decided to sign him for the Orioles before the 1901 season . For the Orioles , Bresnahan filled in at catcher behind Wilbert Robinson , and also appeared in the outfield . A faster baserunner than the average catcher , Bresnahan had two inside @-@ the @-@ park home runs on May 30 , 1902 .

== = New York Giants (1902 ? 08) == =

With the Orioles reportedly in significant debt , part @-@ owner John Mahon purchased shares of the team from star players Joe Kelley and John McGraw , who had resigned from the team and signed with the New York Giants of the NL , becoming the majority shareholder . On July 17 , 1902 , he 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 Bresnahan , Kelley , Joe McGinnity , Jack Cronin , Cy Seymour , and Dan McGann from their contracts . Brush then signed Kelley and Seymour to the Reds , while Freedman signed McGinnity , Bresnahan , Cronin , Gilbert , and McGann , joining McGraw , his new player @-@ manager , on the Giants .

With Frank Bowerman and Jack Warner established as the Giants ' catchers , McGraw played Bresnahan as the center fielder for the Giants . In 1903 , Bresnahan batted .350 , trailing Honus Wagner 's .355 average atop the NL . Bresnahan batted .284 in the 1904 season , playing 96 games in the outfield , ten games at first base , four games at shortstop , and one game apiece at second base and third base , as the Giants were champions of the NL .

Bresnahan shifted to catcher full @-@ time in 1905 , as Bowerman became less effective and Warner left the Giants . Christy Mathewson preferred pitching to Bresnahan . Bresnahan caught all five games in the 1905 World Series , including three shutouts by Mathewson , and one shutout thrown by Joe McGinnity . Bresnahan led the Giants with a .313 batting average in the World Series .

On Opening Day in 1907 , Bresnahan began to experiment with protective gear . Though Negro league catcher Chappie Johnson wore protective gear and Nig Clarke wore similar gear in MLB in 1905 , most catchers did not wear any protective equipment . Bresnahan practiced in shin guards that are worn in cricket during spring training , and debuted them on April 11 , 1907 . Fans , used to seeing catchers play without protective equipment , threw snowballs on the field , and without police at the game , umpire Bill Klem called off the game , with the Giants forfeiting to the Philadelphia Phillies . The press also criticized the use of shin guards . However , other catchers began to adopt Bresnahan 's idea . Though Pittsburgh Pirates manager Fred Clarke protested Bresnahan 's gear to the league , the protest was denied and the equipment was approved . Bresnahan caught a career @-@ high 138 games in 1908 , batting .283 and leading the NL in walks .

Bresnahan also developed the first batting helmet . He was hit in the head with a pitch by Andy Coakley of the Cincinnati Reds on June 18 , 1907 . Bresnahan was unconscious , and a Catholic priest read him his last rites . Bresnahan was hospitalized for ten days , during which time he developed schematics for a plastic batting helmet , though this piece of equipment did not become commonplace until the 1940s . Bresnahan was also the first catcher to wear a padded facemask while catching .

== = St. Louis Cardinals (1909 ? 12) == =

The Giants obtained younger and faster players in 1909 ; McGraw had Chief Meyers ready to succeed Bresnahan at catcher . Stanley Robison of the St. Louis Cardinals became interested in hiring Bresnahan to be a player @-@ manager . As McGraw did not want to block Bresnahan from the opportunity , the Giants traded Bresnahan to the Cardinals for Red Murray , Bugs Raymond and Admiral Schlei after the 1908 season . Bresnahan led the Cardinals , who won only 49 games in 1908 , to 54 wins in 1909 and 63 wins in 1910 . Attendance increased from 205 @,@ 000 fans in 1908 to 299 @,@ 000 fans in 1909 , and 355 @,@ 000 fans in 1910 .

Grateful for the improvement at the box office , Robison signed Bresnahan to a five @-@ year contract to manage the team for a salary of \$ 10 @,@ 000 per season (\$ 253 @,@ 964 in current dollar terms) , plus ten percent of the club 's profits . Robison died in March 1911 , and ownership of the team transferred to Helene Hathaway Britton , his niece .

On July 11 , 1911 , with the Cardinals only three games out of first place , the team was involved in a train wreck while riding the Federal Express from Philadelphia to Boston . Fourteen passengers

were killed after the train derailed and plunged down an 18 @-@ foot (5 @.@ 5 m) embankment outside Bridgeport , Connecticut . None of the Cardinals were seriously injured , due to a fortuitous pre @-@ trip change in the location of their Pullman car , requested by Bresnahan . The Cardinals helped remove bodies and rescue the injured .

Bresnahan and Britton feuded publicly in 1912 , as the Cardinals fell to sixth place in the NL . The Cardinals fired Bresnahan after the 1912 season due to various arguments Bresnahan had with Britton , including over Bresnahan 's desire to sell Miller Huggins to another franchise . Britton cited decreased profits as a sign that Bresnahan was uninterested in the job . Huggins succeeded Bresnahan as Cardinals ' manager , as she preferred Huggins ' " gentlemanly " manner , as opposed to Bresnahan 's rougher personality . Bresnahan hired an attorney to obtain the remainder of his salary . He eventually settled the lawsuit against Britton for \$ 20 @,@ 000 (\$ 490 @,@ 414 in current dollar terms) .

== Later career (1913 ? 31) ==

Following his termination by the Cardinals , the NL declared Bresnahan a free agent . He signed a three @-@ year contract with the Cubs , receiving \$ 10 @,@ 000 (\$ 239 @,@ 428 in current dollar terms) per season with a \$ 25 @,@ 000 signing bonus (\$ 598 @,@ 569 in current dollar terms) . He served as player @-@ manager for the Cubs in 1915 , but was released when his batting average slipped . As the rival Federal League collapsed and the Cubs merged with the Chicago Whales of the Federal League , the Cubs decided to replace Bresnahan with Whales manager Joe Tinker .

The Cubs paid Bresnahan for the remaining two years on his contract and aided Bresnahan in purchasing the Toledo Mud Hens , then in the American Association , in 1916 . The club had moved to Cleveland to block the Federal League from placing a team there , but returned to Toledo under Bresnahan 's control . Bresnahan played for the team until 1918 , when he announced his retirement . He played for a semi @-@ professional team in 1919 , and appeared in five games for the Mud Hens in 1921 . Bresnahan worked to add lights to Toledo 's stadium , so that they could play night games .

Bresnahan sold the Mud Hens before the 1924 season . McGraw then hired Bresnahan as a coach for the Giants , a position he held from 1925 through 1928 . He coached for the Detroit Tigers in 1930 and 1931 .

== Post @-@ baseball career ==

During the offseasons , Bresnahan returned to Toledo . He worked as a hotel detective at the Boody House , which he later purchased . Bresnahan lost much of his money in the stock market crash of 1929 . He worked as a manual laborer , as a guard at the Toledo Workhouse , and as a salesman for Toledo 's Buckeye Brewing Company .

Bresnahan ran for sheriff of Lucas County as a member of the Democratic Party in 1932 . He lost , and endorsed the victorious candidate in his reelection bid two years later . Bresnahan ran for county commissioner in 1944 , winning the Democratic Party nomination , but losing in the general election by a few hundred votes out of 140 @,@ 000 votes cast .

Bresnahan died of a heart attack at his home in Toledo on December 4 , 1944 at the age of 65 . He was survived by his wife , Gertrude , and his daughter , Marian . He was buried in Calvary Cemetery in Toledo .

== Profile and legacy ==

In 1 @,@ 446 games , he had a batting average of .279 in 4 @,@ 480 at @-@ bats . His overall managerial record was 328 ? 432 . Miller Huggins named Bresnahan the catcher on his all @-@ time team .

Bresnahan stood approximately 5 feet 9 inches (1 @.@ 75 m) . He was described as " highly

strung and almost abnormally emotional " by a reporter . Bill James wrote that Bresnahan " was one of those guys that if you were on his team and played hard he was as nice to you as could be , but if you got on his bad side you 'd think he was the Breath of Hell . "

Bresnahan was known for baiting umpires . He and McGraw were often ejected from games , suspended , and on a few occasions escorted from the field by police . A 1911 directive by NL president Thomas Lynch , compelling umpires to prevent catchers from antagonizing batters with verbal abuse , mentioned only Bresnahan by name .

Bresnahan was elected to the Hall of Fame the year after his death . He had received 47 votes of the 226 electors in the 1936 Hall of Fame balloting , and between 43 and 67 votes each time from 1937 through 1942 . In the 1945 balloting , occurring one month after Bresnahan 's death , he received 133 votes , still falling short of enshrinement . However , the Permanent Committee noticed the surge in votes and elected him in April 1945 .

Regarding his Hall of Fame induction , James has criticized the election , saying that Bresnahan " wandered in the Hall of Fame on a series of miscalculations " , and regarding his election , that " the Hall of Fame had , for the first time , selected a player who clearly had no damn business being there " .

= = Commemorations = =

Bresnahan was mentioned in the poem Line @-@ Up for Yesterday by Ogden Nash :