

= Bob Lemon =

Robert Granville " Bob " Lemon (September 22 , 1920 ? January 11 , 2000) was an American right @-@ handed pitcher and manager in Major League Baseball (MLB) . Lemon was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame as a player in 1976 .

Lemon was raised in California where he played high school baseball and was the state player of the year in 1938 . At the age of 17 , Lemon began his professional baseball career in the Cleveland Indians organization , with whom he played for his entire professional career . Lemon was called up to Cleveland 's major league team as a utility player in 1941 . He then joined the United States Navy during World War II and returned to the Indians in 1946 . That season was the first Lemon would play at the pitcher position .

The Indians played in the 1948 World Series and were helped by Lemon 's two pitching wins as they won the club 's first championship since 1920 . In the early 1950s , Cleveland had a starting pitching rotation which included Lemon , Bob Feller , Mike Garcia and Early Wynn . During the 1954 season , Lemon had a career @-@ best 23 ? 7 win ? loss record and the Indians set a 154 @-@ game season AL @-@ record win mark when they won 111 games before they won the American League (AL) pennant . He was an All @-@ Star for seven consecutive seasons and recorded seven seasons of 20 or more pitching wins in a nine @-@ year period from 1948 ? 1956 .

Lemon was a manager with the Kansas City Royals , Chicago White Sox and New York Yankees . He was named Manager of the Year with the White Sox and Yankees . In 1978 , he was fired as manager of the White Sox . He was named Yankees manager one month later and he led the team to a 1978 World Series title . Lemon became the first AL manager to win a World Series after assuming the managerial role in the middle of a season .

= = Early life = =

Bob Lemon was born in San Bernardino , California . Lemon 's father , Earl Lemon , ran an ice business and later moved the family to Long Beach , California . There , Lemon attended Wilson Classical High School and played shortstop on the school 's baseball team . He was recognized as the state baseball player of the year by the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Southern Section in 1938 .

Later that same year , at the age of 17 , Lemon began his professional baseball career in the farm system of the Cleveland Indians as a member of the Oswego Netherlands of the Canadian ? American League and later that year , the Middle Atlantic League 's Springfield Indians . In 75 games with the Netherlands he recorded a .312 batting average . The following season he played 80 games with Springfield , and hit .293 , and then joined the New Orleans Pelicans of the Southern Association , where Lemon hit .309 . He spent the next two seasons at the Class A level with the Eastern League 's Wilkes @-@ Barre Barons as he hit .255 in 1940 and .301 in 1941 . In his final stint in the minors , Lemon hit .268 with 21 home runs for the 1942 Baltimore Orioles of the International League .

= = Major League career = =

= = = Making it as a utility player = = =

Lemon 's major league debut came as a third baseman as a late season call @-@ up on September 9 , 1941 . He appeared in five games and collected one hit in five plate appearances . He was joined by catcher and fellow rookie Jim Hegan . He repeated the same number of games in the 1942 season and failed to record a hit . Lemon served in the United States Navy during World War II and missed the next three seasons . Before leaving for tour duty in 1943 , Lemon married Jane McGee .

Lemon was the Indians ' center fielder for Opening Day in 1946 . On April 30 , Indians pitcher Bob

Feller no @-@ hit the New York Yankees ; Feller later wrote that Lemon 's " daring catch " and " throwing to and doubling a man off second base " were key in " saving my " no @-@ hitter . By season 's end , however , Lemon had entered more games as a pitcher than a utility player . Before that season , Lemon had only pitched one inning while with Oswego and another while with Wilkes @-@ Barre . Birdie Tebbetts of the Detroit Tigers and Johnny Pesky of the Boston Red Sox had played against Lemon in Navy baseball games , and they spoke to Indians player @-@ manager Lou Boudreau about switching Lemon from the outfield to the pitching mound .

Boudreau discussed the potential move to pitcher with Yankees catcher Bill Dickey , who had also played in the Navy with Lemon . " I knew Lemon had a strong arm , and once I realized he was not going to hit with consistency as an outfielder , I thought it would be worthwhile to look at him as a pitcher " , Boudreau later wrote . Lemon resisted the idea at first , but he agreed to the change after he learned that his salary could be higher as a pitcher . Lemon credited Indians coach Bill McKechnie with helping him to adjust to his new position . Indians pitching coach Mel Harder taught Lemon how to throw a slider , a key pitch in his repertoire . That same year , Indians owner Bill Veeck said that Lemon " some day will become the best pitcher in the American League . " Lemon finished the 1946 season with a losing record (4 ? 5) , the only one he would have until 1957 , and a career @-@ low 2 @. @ 49 ERA . He followed up his inaugural season as a pitcher with an 11 ? 5 record . He appeared in 19 games before August , largely as a relief pitcher , but he made his first start in July against the Boston Red Sox . During the last two months of the season , Lemon went 9 ? 3 and pitched six complete games , including two 11 @-@ inning outings .

= = = Full @-@ time pitcher to World Series champion = = =

Before the 1948 season started , team president Bill Veeck doubled Lemon 's contract amount . It would be Lemon 's first full season as a pitcher . Lemon was the Indians ' number @-@ two pitcher in the starting rotation , behind Bob Feller . On June 30 , 1948 , Lemon pitched a no @-@ hitter against the Detroit Tigers in a 2 ? 0 win , earning his 11th win and fifth shutout of the season . He became the ninth Indians pitcher to record a no @-@ hitter and ended the season with an AL @-@ best 20 complete games . His ten shutouts on the season were the most in the majors . Lemon would go on to win the 1948 AL Pitcher of the Year Award . With three games remaining in the regular season , 20 @-@ game winner Lemon started the first game of their final series against Detroit . Lemon allowed three runs on seven hits and the Indians lost the game . Cleveland lost two games of the three @-@ game series , forcing a one @-@ game playoff with the Boston Red Sox . Speculation built up around which Indians pitcher Boudreau would send to the mound against the Red Sox on October 4 ; the choices were largely narrowed down to Lemon and Satchel Paige . Lemon was listed as Cleveland 's " probable pitcher " by United Press International in morning newspapers the day of the game , even though he would be working on two days of rest . Instead , Boudreau went with Gene Bearden , who would be pitching on one day of rest , and the choice was solidified when veteran second baseman Joe Gordon spoke up in support of Boudreau at a team meeting . The Indians won the game at Fenway Park by a score of 8 ? 3 and prepared to face the Boston Braves in the World Series .

Boudreau started Feller in game one , which Cleveland lost . Lemon was the starter in the second game . Lemon faced Warren Spahn , and Cleveland won 4 ? 1 . Lemon was named the starter for game six in Boston with the Indians leading the series 3 ? 2 . He allowed three earned runs on eight hits and Cleveland had the lead when Lemon was replaced by Bearden . The Braves scored two runs in the bottom of the eighth inning but the Indians won the game , 4 ? 3 , to clinch the franchise 's first World Series title since 1920 . Lemon was the only pitcher from either club to win two games in the Series . He finished the Series with a 1 @. @ 65 ERA .

Lemon 's hitting skills began to get attention as well . By August 1949 , Lemon was batting .295 with 11 extra @-@ base hits and six home runs , prompting Yankees manager Casey Stengel to comment , " Well , I see where the Indians have nine hitters in the lineup instead of eight . " Columnist Milton Richman wrote , " Lemon 's fine work at the plate has also conspired to tire him more . When the Indians get behind and Lemon is pitching , he rarely is yanked for a pinch hitter in

the early innings . It 's a tough price he 's paying for batting fame . " In 1950 , Lemon led the major leagues in pitching wins (23) for the first time and he would win his second AL Pitcher of the Year Award . He pitched a six @-@ hit complete game over the Detroit Tigers in his last start of the season on September 29 . When Lemon signed a new contract before the 1951 season , the Indians made him the highest paid pitcher in baseball . At the beginning of the 1951 season , columnist Oscar Fraley pointed out that Lemon was one of only 12 active pitchers who had earned a winning record in four consecutive seasons . He finished the season with a 3 @.@ 52 ERA , lower than the 1950 season mark of 3 @.@ 84 when he led the majors with 23 wins , and a 17 ? 14 record . The loss total was the most in the AL . He did not record his first shutout of the season until well into August , when he earned a three @-@ hit win over the Chicago White Sox . Upon completion of the 1952 season , Lemon recorded the second @-@ lowest ERA of his career , 2 @.@ 50 , and went 22 ? 11 . His 28 complete games were a career @-@ high and led the AL . He joined teammates Early Wynn (23) and Mike Garcia (22) as part of a Cleveland starting rotation which featured three 20 @-@ game winners .

On Opening Day of the 1953 season , Lemon pitched a one @-@ hitter against the Chicago White Sox and earned a win . He finished the season with a 21 ? 15 record , 3 @.@ 36 ERA and led the AL in innings pitched for the fourth and final time of his career .

= = = Second World Series appearance = = =

In 1954 he was 23 ? 7 and won his third AL Pitcher of the Year Award as Cleveland won the pennant . The Indians set an AL record with 111 wins . (The record stood until major league seasons were lengthened to 162 games , and it has been surpassed twice since then .) Lemon was named Cleveland 's starter for game one of the 1954 World Series . After nine innings , the Indians and Giants were tied 2 ? 2 . Lemon stayed in the game to pitch the tenth and final inning , but he surrendered a three @-@ run home run to pinch hitter Dusty Rhodes and the Indians lost , 5 ? 2 . Indians manager Al López went with Lemon again in the fourth game after only two days rest . " He hasn 't worked that close together all year because we had a good bunch of other pitchers , but a year ago , he and Wynn and Garcia pitched every third day for practically a month . Bob will be all right " , Lopez said . Lemon and the Indians lost the game , 7 ? 4 , as the Giants swept the Series four games to none . In his two appearances , he went 0 ? 2 with a 6 @.@ 75 ERA , allowed eight walks and recorded 11 strikeouts .

Lemon began the 1955 season with a 5 ? 0 record in April , but he was the only Cleveland starting pitcher with a winning record that month . His 18 wins tied for the most in the AL that year . He recorded five complete games through May 30 but none after that date . Indians general manager Hank Greenberg got Lemon to agree to his first reduction in contract salary since joining the organization . Lemon earned his 200th career win against the Baltimore Orioles on September 11 , 1956 , and he also hit a home run that day . He finished the season with a 20 ? 14 record , the last of his seven career 20 @-@ win seasons , and led the AL in complete games (21) . On August 13 , 1957 , it was announced that Lemon would not finish the season due to continued irritation to his elbow after bone chips were found earlier in the season . Lemon ended the season with a record of 6 ? 11 , his first losing record since 1946 .

In 1958 , Lemon was the oldest Indian on the roster at age 37 . Lemon pitched 3 @.@ 1 innings over the span of two games before he was put on the Indians ' disabled list and sent to the Triple @-@ A San Diego Padres . There he continued physical conditioning and mentored the pitching staff of the Indians ' top farm club . He appeared in 12 games with the Padres , going 2 ? 5 , with a 4 @.@ 34 ERA , 22 walks , and 19 strikeouts . He returned to pitch for the Indians on May 25 in a relief role , but he appeared in only nine games that season . He earned just one decision that year , a loss , which brought his career pitching record to 207 ? 128 . The club put him on waivers in July .

= = = Retirement = = =

At 38 , Lemon went to Tucson in 1959 to attend Indians ' spring training camp . He told manager

Joe Gordon that he was willing to become a relief pitcher , but he retired as a player on March 5 , stating , " I just couldn 't keep up with the young fellows anymore . " He accepted a scouting role with the Indians .

Lemon retired in 1958 with 207 wins , all but ten of them occurring in a ten @-@ year span . He recorded 274 hits in 1 @,@ 1883 at @-@ bats (.232) , and his 37 career home runs are second on the all @-@ time career list for pitchers (behind Wes Ferrell 's 38) . In 1951 , Ted Williams had written of Lemon : " I have to rate Lemon as one of the very best pitchers I ever faced . His ball was always moving , hard , sinking , fast @-@ breaking . You could never really uhmmph with Lemon " . The Indians organization retired Lemon 's jersey number , 21 , in 1998 , making him the sixth Indian to receive the honor .

On January 22 , 1976 , Lemon was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame by the Baseball Writers ' Association of America on the twelfth ballot on which he appeared . He received 75 percent of the vote . On August 8 , one day before his induction ceremony , Lemon said , " It 's a great thrill . My mother is 83 but she is making the trip from California . She says she can die happy now that I 've been elected to the Hall of Fame . " Lemon 's dominant slider has been cited as a key reason for his election to the Hall of Fame .

= = Post @-@ playing career = =

= = = Coaching = = =

In 1959 , Lemon became a scout for Cleveland . The next season he became a coach with the Indians . In 1961 , he joined the Philadelphia Phillies coaching staff . The California Angels hired him as their pitching coach for 1967 ? 1968 . In 1976 , Lemon served as pitching coach for the AL champion New York Yankees . The Yankees were owned by Cleveland @-@ area native George Steinbrenner and they had been the chief antagonists of the Cleveland Indians during Lemon 's pitching years . In recognition of his election to the Hall of Fame , Lemon was named honorary captain of the AL team for the All @-@ Star Game .

= = = Managing = = =

Lemon 's first managerial role came with the Triple @-@ A Hawaii Islanders of the PCL . His next appointment was in the same league with the Seattle Angels , where he managed from 1965 ? 1966 and won the 1966 championship . He was named the PCL 's Manager of the Year by The Sporting News for the 1966 season . He returned to the PCL as the manager for the Vancouver Mounties for one season in 1969 . Lemon said he used Indians manager Al López as a model for his managing style :

" Lopez always handled his players like I 'd want to be handled . He treated men like men . He made them feel relaxed . That 's the only way to play this game ... by being relaxed . You can 't be worried about the manager getting on you . All the time I was at Cleveland , I saw Lopez get mad only twice . He never showed anybody up . I don 't do it either . "

= = = = Kansas City Royals = = = =

Lemon became pitching coach of the Royals for the 1970 season , and got his first major league managing position when the Kansas City fired manager Charlie Metro on June 7 , 1970 . By August , Lemon received a one @-@ year contract extension with the club :

" I know many major league owners are against hiring a former pitcher as manager and I 've always wondered why . Pitching is 75 per cent of the game . If it 's so important , why not have a former pitcher as manager ? He can always have someone else run the other 25 per cent of the club . "

In 1971 , Lemon guided the Royals to their first winning season since the franchise began as an expansion team in 1969 . Lemon finished second in the Associated Press AL Manager of the Year

voting . Before the 1972 season , Lemon talked about the team 's chances , saying " Five clubs could win it , including ourselves . " However , the Royals finished 76 ? 78 in Lemon 's last year with the club . Royals owner Ewing Kauffman fired Lemon as manager and stated that he wanted a younger person to fill the position and " did not want to lose Jack McKeon " , who was named as Lemon 's replacement . Royals outfielder Lou Piniella was one of several players who disagreed with Kauffman 's decision , saying , " ... Lemon deserved to manage the club next year . "

His third and final stint in the PCL was with the Sacramento Solons in 1974 . His last minor league managerial position came the following season with the International League 's Richmond Braves .

= = = = Chicago White Sox = = = =

Bill Veeck hired Lemon to succeed Paul Richards as the Chicago White Sox manager on November 16 , 1976 . Lemon took over a Chicago team that finished in last place in the AL West in 1976 . " Bob is the type of manager we need at this stage of the game " , Veeck said . During spring training of 1977 , Lemon said , " I think we 'll surprise a few people . " White Sox shortstop Alan Bannister quickly noticed a difference . Comparing Richards to Lemon , Bannister said , " He 'd post the lineups 10 minutes before the game , and only then we 'd find out who was playing and where . Lemon 's made it a serious operation . " As late as August 14 , the White Sox were in first place in the AL West . The White Sox finished with a 90 ? 72 record , a 26 @-@ game improvement . The team finished third in AL West and Lemon won his second Manager of the Year Award . " The fans got behind us after about three weeks . They had a lot to do with our success " , Lemon said after being winning the award .

Lemon was fired the following season on June 30 , 1978 , by Veeck after Chicago posted a 34 ? 40 record in the first half of the 1978 season . He was replaced by former Indians ' teammate Larry Doby . " This change is not meant as any commentary on Lemon 's ability but rather was the result of unusual circumstances which seemed to make a change necessary " , said Veeck .

= = = = New York Yankees = = = =

Yankees manager Billy Martin resigned on July 24 , 1978 , and team president Al Rosen called Lemon to offer him the vacant position . He was announced as the new manager the next day . At their 1978 Old Timers Day five days after the Martin ? Lemon changeover , the Yankees divulged that Lemon would be moved in 1980 to general manager , and they said that Martin would then return as field manager . The announcement was made by public @-@ address announcer Bob Sheppard after the Old Timers had been announced and it was accompanied by Martin 's dramatic entrance from the Yankee dugout . Martin received a long standing ovation from fans . Lemon responded to his new job ? and to the newspaper strike that helped calm down the atmosphere in the Yankees clubhouse ? by guiding the Yankees to the 1978 pennant . The Yankees , who trailed the Red Sox by 14 games at one point in July , pulled even with the Red Sox by defeating them in a four @-@ game September series known as the " Boston Massacre . " The Yankees pulled ahead by three and a half games , but the Red Sox rallied to tie the Yanks by the final day of the season . A one @-@ game playoff would determine the AL Eastern Division winner .

Ron Guidry was named the Yankees ' starting pitcher for the October 2 playoff game at Fenway Park . Guidry was able to pitch " because of Lemon 's good planning . " The Yankees defeated Boston for the division title in the tie @-@ breaker game , punctuated both by a dramatic three @-@ run home run by Bucky Dent in the seventh inning , and an eighth @-@ inning homer by Reggie Jackson that proved the game 's winning run . Lemon became the third manager in MLB history to replace another mid @-@ season and win the pennant . Lemon 's Yankees then beat the Royals in the ALCS and defeated the Los Angeles Dodgers to win the World Series title . With the Series win , Lemon became the first AL manager and third MLB manager to take over a team mid @-@ season and win a World Series . Before the World Series , one columnist wrote , " ... many observers feel that Lemon 's low @-@ keyed approach with the Yankees ' temperamental millionaires as compared to the combativeness of Martin served to mold a spirit of togetherness among the

Yankees that did not even exist last year when they won it all . " Lemon and his handling of the season was described in The New York Times as " an island of calm in a stormy summer . " Changes Lemon made during the season included returning Thurman Munson to the team 's every day catcher (he had been playing in the outfield) , putting Jackson in the clean @-@ up spot in the batting order and becoming the regular right fielder , and pitching Ed Figueroa every fourth day (instead of fifth) . In October , Lemon was named the Associated Press ' AL Manager of the Year , the second time he received such an award .

Lemon 's 26 @-@ year @-@ old son , Jerry , was killed in an automobile accident in the fall of 1978 , 10 days after Lemon won the World Series . The following season with the Yankees at 34 ? 31 , Lemon was fired in June by Steinbrenner and replaced by Martin , but he remained with the organization as he had a contract through the 1982 season . Speaking of Martin , Lemon said , " He 's a very likeable guy , a free spirit . Where maybe I keep things inside , he lets them come out . There 's nothing wrong with that . " The Yankees finished in fourth place in the AL East (89 ? 71) . Lemon worked as a scout for the Yankees and received " several offers " from other teams to serve as manager . One offer came in 1979 from the Indians , but Lemon refused it as well as the others .

= = = = Second stint with Yankees = = = =

Steinbrenner named Lemon the team 's field manager a second time on September 6 , 1981 , the sixth Yankees ' manager change since 1978 . Lemon moved on to the post @-@ season and dispatched the Milwaukee Brewers and the Billy Martin @-@ led Oakland Athletics , and won the first two games of the 1981 World Series against the Dodgers , only to lose four straight and the Series . Lemon survived just a few weeks into the 1982 season (the Yankees were 6 ? 8) before Steinbrenner dismissed him one last time , despite a promise for Steinbrenner he would manage the season " no matter what . " Of the agreement between Lemon and Steinbrenner , Steinbrenner said , " Lem and I talked . He said it was O.K. He said he didn 't take it as a promise anyway . " Gene Michael succeeded Lemon as manager . He had managed just over one full season of games (172) for the Yankees , winning 99 games for a .576 winning percentage .

= = = = Managerial record = = = =

= = Highlights and awards = =

7 x All @-@ Star (1948 , 1949 , 1950 , 1951 , 1952 , 1953 , 1954)
7 x 20 @-@ plus wins in a season (1948 ? 1950 , 1952 ? 1954 , 1956)
5 x AL leader in complete games (1948 , 1950 , 1952 , 1954 , 1956)
Led MLB in shutouts (10 , 1948)
5 x led MLB or AL in putouts (1948 ? 1949 , 1952 ? 1954)
6 x led MLB or AL in assists (1948 ? 1949 , 1951 ? 1953 , 1956)
3 x finished fifth in MVP voting (1948 , 1950 , 1954)
World Series Champion , player (1948)
Led AL in strikeouts (170 , 1950)
3x AL Pitcher of the Year Award (1948 , 1950 , 1954)
2 x MLB leader in wins (1950 , 1954)
Major league record for pitcher 15 double plays in one season (1953)
Led AL in wins (1955)
World Series Champion , manager (1978)
21 number retired by Cleveland Indians

= = Death = =

Lemon suffered a stroke in his later years . Lemon died in 2000 in Long Beach , California , where

he had been a permanent resident since his career as a player . Former teammate Bob Feller said ,
" Bob had a good curve , a good slider , and a vicious sinker pitch . He wasn 't overly fast , but he
always stayed ahead of the hitters and he didn 't walk many batters , which is the key to success in
the majors . "