

= Don Black (baseball) =

Donald Paul Black (July 20 , 1917 ? April 21 , 1959) was an American right @-@ handed pitcher in Major League Baseball who played for six seasons in the American League with the Philadelphia Athletics and Cleveland Indians . In 154 career games , Black pitched 797 innings and posted a win @-@ loss record of 34 ? 55 , with 37 complete games , four shutouts , and a 4 @.@ 35 earned run average (ERA) .

Born in Salix , Iowa , he played minor league baseball in Fairbury , Nebraska , and Petersburg , Virginia , before signing with the Philadelphia Athletics . He played with them for three seasons before being released . Black signed with the Cleveland Indians at the end of 1945 , and after a season with them joined Alcoholics Anonymous . After completing the program , he played two more seasons with Cleveland , pitching a no @-@ hitter on July 10 , 1947 . On September 13 , 1948 , Black suffered a cerebral hemorrhage on the field , which marked the end of his professional career . After a comeback attempt , Black went on to become a sports announcer and salesman . He died in 1959 .

= = Early life and minor leagues = =

Black was born in Salix , Iowa . He had his first taste of professional baseball in 1937 , when he was signed by the Fairbury Jeffs of the Nebraska State League . The Jeffs were the rookie @-@ level minor league team of the St. Louis Browns farm system . He played alongside two others who would later make the major leagues , George Bradley and Johnny Lucadello . Black pitched in 26 games for the Jeffs , posting a 5 @-@ 11 record , 154 innings pitched , and a 4 @.@ 85 ERA . He spent the next three years out of professional baseball , then signed a contract with the Petersburg Rebels of the Virginia League .

Black spent the 1941 and 1942 seasons with the Rebels . In 1941 , he pitched in 19 games , starting 16 of them . He won 11 games , lost five , and had an ERA of 2 @.@ 35 . He also threw the first no @-@ hitter of his career that season . The following season , Black pitched in 34 games for the rebels , tying for the team lead with Lou Knerr . He pitched 235 innings , winning 18 games , losing 11 , and finishing with an ERA of 2 @.@ 49 . Black was selected for the 1942 Virginia League all @-@ star game , but did not attend . Instead , he was at the hospital where his wife gave birth to his second child , a daughter . He also threw the second no @-@ hitter of his career , which led to a tryout with the Philadelphia Athletics .

= = Philadelphia Athletics = =

When he was called up by the Athletics , Black worked to earn a spot on the roster in spring training . After performances which included a 2 ? 0 victory over the University of Delaware baseball team where he struck out three in an inning , he was awarded a spot on the Athletics ? roster for the 1943 Philadelphia Athletics season . That pitching rotation featured many other rookie pitchers including Jesse Flores . Black made his major league debut on April 24 , 1943 and was in the Athletics ? starting rotation most of the season . He had some early success in his career , pitching a one @-@ hitter on May 30 against the St. Louis Browns in a 3 ? 0 victory . Black finished the season with a 6 ? 16 record , a 4 @.@ 20 ERA , and 208 innings pitched . He also pitched 110 bases on balls , and hit six batters with pitches ; both numbers were second highest in the American League . Black remained in the starting rotation at the beginning of the 1944 Philadelphia Athletics season , despite possibility of him being drafted into the United States Army for World War II . He was rejected for military service after a physical examination on June 22 , and remained with the team throughout the season . His win total improved from last season ; however , he went a span of about a month , from June 28 until late July , without a victory . He finished the season with a 10 ? 12 record , a 4 @.@ 06 ERA , and 27 games started , second highest on the team behind Bobo Newsom . At the end of the season , there were rumors that manager Connie Mack was planning to trade Black and Frankie Hayes to Cleveland for Jim Bagby , Jr. and Jeff Heath , though Mack stated that there was no

substance to the rumors .

The following season , Black was part of an optimistic Athletics team , so much so that coach Earle Mack felt that Black , Newsom , Flores , and Russ Christopher were the best quartet of starting pitchers in the league . He started the season being considered the ace of the staff , as the others in the rotation were either battling injury or not yet conditioned . His third season in the majors , however , ended with little success . Early on in the season , Black missed some playing time as a result of a badly bruised finger . He was later suspended for a month for violation of team rules . Upon his return , Connie Mack noted that it would be Black 's " last chance " to avoid trouble . He finished the season with a 5 ? 11 record and a 5 @.@ 17 ERA . This was Black 's final season on the Athletics . At the conclusion of the season , he was sold to the Cleveland Indians for an undisclosed amount . Connie Mack later stated that he regretfully fired him due to his alcohol use , leading to him not being dependable as a pitcher .

= = Cleveland Indians = =

Black began the 1946 Cleveland Indians season as a member of the roster , looking to get playing time in an established starting rotation . His season began inauspiciously when he was hit on the chin with a ball , causing him to miss a week during spring training . The 1946 season marked the first time that Black did not finish on the major league roster . After pitching in 18 games for the Indians , he was sent to the Milwaukee Brewers of the American Association . While with the Brewers , Black failed to win any games , and at one point was suspended after he disappeared during a road trip . At the conclusion of the season , Indians owner Bill Veeck had a talk with Black , who admitted he had a problem with drunkenness . He agreed to spend the winter with Alcoholics Anonymous with Veeck 's help , and by the time the 1947 Cleveland Indians season began , Black was sober .

The year 1947 became a career year for the now @-@ sober Black . There was optimism in the Indians clubhouse regarding his talent , with manager Lou Boudreau saying that Black was " a leading candidate for one of our starting jobs . " In his first pitching appearance of the season against the Detroit Tigers , a tough 5 ? 3 victory , someone in the press box said , " I wonder what he ? d give for a slug of bourbon " , to which he replied , " All I wanted in that situation was a fresh stick of chewing gum . Bourbon doesn ? t even tempt me . " He followed this with a 1 ? 0 shutout win against the Chicago White Sox . A game against his former team , the Philadelphia Athletics , became the highlight of his career . On July 10 , 1947 , Black no @-@ hit the Athletics 3 @-@ 0 at Cleveland Stadium , allowing six walks and five strikeouts in besting Bill McCahan ? himself a no @-@ hit pitcher on September 3 of that 1947 season . Only Eddie Joost came close to getting a hit on Black , hitting a ball in the eighth inning that just barely went foul . On top of his no @-@ hit performance , Black had two singles and a squeeze bunt that day . He was modest about his performance afterwards , saying " My control was pretty bad . I got behind on a lot of hitters , but they didn 't seem to hit me . " Black finished the season with ten wins , 12 losses , a 3 @.@ 92 ERA , eight complete games , and three shutouts . At the end of the season , he was planning to play in the Cuban Winter League along with fellow Indians Bob Feller and Al Lopez , though this did not eventuate . During the off @-@ season , Black returned to his hometown of Salix , where he was given a key to the city and made honorary mayor for a day .

The 1948 Cleveland Indians season began with Black maintaining a spot in the starting rotation . He had spent the off @-@ season selling tickets for the Indians in Hot Springs , Arkansas . After signing a new contract , Black earned his first victory of 1948 on May 23 in a doubleheader against the New York Yankees , winning 5 ? 1 in the second game . Early on in the season , due to the Indians ' pitching depth , Black , along with Al Gettel and Bob Muncrief , lost their starting jobs and were moved to the bullpen , though there were plans to still use Black occasionally as a starter . He missed some playing time in June as the result of a bone chip in his left big toe , suffered during batting practice . He pitched for the Indians for most of the rest of the season , making ten starts in 18 total appearances , finishing the season with two wins and losses , a 5 @.@ 37 ERA , and 52 innings pitched .

About a month before the end of the season , Black pitched his final professional baseball game . During the height of the 1948 pennant race , on September 13 in Cleveland , Black suffered a cerebral hemorrhage while batting in the second inning during a home game against the St. Louis Browns . He had fouled off a pitch into the upper deck of the stadium , and then collapsed holding onto his neck . He was able to walk to the dugout under his own power , but had lost consciousness by the time an ambulance arrived . Black was taken to St. Vincent Charity Hospital and was conscious for a time , but lapsed into a coma . His doctor noted that he was likely to make a full recovery , though he was " through with baseball for this year and possibly for good . " After a few days in critical condition , he had begun to recover and his condition was reported to have improved greatly .

In response to Black 's injury , the Indians hosted a " Don Black Night " on September 23 in a game against the Boston Red Sox to help raise money for his medical bills . In a game watched by 76 @, @ 772 fans , the Indians raised \$ 40 @, @ 370 for Black as they won the game , 5 ? 2 . The Indians went on to defeat the Red Sox in a one @-@ game playoff for the American League pennant and the Boston Braves in six games in the 1948 World Series as Black recovered in the hospital . After the Indians won the World Series , Lou Boudreau said that the Indians won the title in his honor .

= = Later life = =

After a stay of six weeks , Black was released from the hospital in late October 1948 . He continued to suffer from headaches , however , and had to have further surgery done in December to remove a weak spot in an artery near his head . He was released from the hospital shortly afterward , but by the start of 1949 his time with the Indians was over , as Bill Veeck stated he would not accept the responsibility of allowing Black to pitch again , though said " If Black is determined to try it again , I won 't stand in his way . " This statement , however , did not keep Black away , as he signed a contract in late January with the Indians for the same amount as the previous season . After pitching with the Indians in Florida for spring training , he returned to Cleveland and decided to retire temporarily , citing that he felt too weak to be effective . He made one final pitching appearance before retiring in an exhibition game against the Pittsburgh Pirates on July 13 , pitching two innings for the Indians in a 1 ? 0 loss .

After his retirement from baseball , Black went on to become a sportscaster , automobile salesman , and insurance salesman . He lived with his wife , Joyce , and his two daughters , Stevie and Donna , in Cuyahoga Falls , Ohio . In December 1957 , Black was injured in a car accident in Virginia , leaving him in critical condition . He recovered and spent the following summer teaching for the city recreation department . The following year , on April 21 , 1959 , Black died in Cuyahoga Falls while watching an Indians game at his home .