

= Eddy Furniss =

Wilburn Edward " Eddy " Furniss III (born September 18 , 1975) is an American retired professional baseball first baseman and designated hitter . A standout college baseball player for Louisiana State University (LSU) , Furniss has been inducted into the College Baseball Hall of Fame , the LSU Athletic Hall of Fame , and the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame .

With the LSU Tigers , Furniss was a two @-@ time College World Series champion and a two @-@ time All @-@ American . He won the Dick Howser Trophy as college baseball 's best player in 1998 , and set Southeastern Conference (SEC) records in numerous offensive categories , including home runs and runs batted in (RBIs) . He was among the National Collegiate Athletic Association 's all @-@ time leaders in home runs and RBIs at the time he graduated from college .

Drafted by the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1998 , Furniss played in their minor league system through 2000 . He played for the Oakland Athletics organization in 2001 and the Texas Rangers organization in 2002 . Unable to advance beyond Class AA , Furniss decided to retire from baseball and attend medical school . He graduated from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and completed his residency at John Peter Smith Hospital . He practices family medicine in his native Nacogdoches , Texas .

= = Baseball career = =

= = = Amateur career = = =

Furniss attended Nacogdoches High School in Nacogdoches , Texas , where he played for the school 's baseball team . In his senior season , Furniss had a .430 batting average , and was named to the All @-@ State team . He had no intention of playing college baseball , expecting to study medicine in college . Following the persistence of college coaches who tried to recruit him , Furniss agreed to continue his baseball career in college .

After graduating from high school in 1994 , Furniss enrolled at Louisiana State University (LSU) , where he played college baseball for the LSU Tigers baseball team in the Southeastern Conference (SEC) of the National Collegiate Athletic Association 's (NCAA) Division I. Furniss batted .326 as a freshman with the LSU Tigers in 1995 , and was named to the All @-@ Tournament Team in the 1995 SEC Baseball Tournament . As a sophomore , Furniss was named the SEC Player of the Year , as he batted .374 and hit 26 home runs with 103 RBIs , the most in the nation . He was also named a first @-@ team All American as a designated hitter , as the Tigers won the 1996 College World Series (CWS) .

As a junior , Furniss batted .378 with 17 home runs and 77 RBIs . The Tigers repeated , winning the 1997 CWS . The SEC presented Furniss with their Sportsmanship Award after the season . Furniss sought to improve his physical shape for the 1998 season , and after losing weight , Furniss batted .403 average in 1998 with 27 doubles , three triples , 28 home runs , 85 runs scored , and 76 RBIs . He also set a career @-@ high with 72 walks and a career @-@ low in strikeouts with 40 . He earned first @-@ team All @-@ America and All @-@ SEC honors , and won the Dick Howser Trophy as the top collegiate baseball player . He was also a semifinalist for the Golden Spikes Award , though the award was won by Pat Burrell .

Furniss had a .371 batting average in his four years at LSU , and set SEC career records for hits (349) , doubles (87) , home runs (80) , runs batted in (309) , and total bases (689) . At the end of his career , he was among the NCAA 's all @-@ time leaders in various offensive categories , ranking third in total bases , fourth in home runs and doubles , and fifth in RBIs .

= = = Professional career = = =

Selected in the 14th round of the 1997 Major League Baseball (MLB) Draft by the Minnesota Twins , Furniss opted to return to LSU for his senior season , rather than sign for the signing bonus

typically given to a player selected in that round . After his senior season , Furniss was drafted by the Pittsburgh Pirates in the fourth round of the 1998 MLB Draft .

Furniss made his professional debut with the Augusta GreenJackets of the Class A South Atlantic League . After a strong showing with Augusta , batting 40 @-@ for @-@ 86 (.465) with seven doubles , nine home runs , 31 RBIs and 32 runs scored in 24 games , the Pirates promoted Furniss to the Carolina Mudcats of the Class AA Southern League in mid @-@ July , bypassing the Lynchburg Hillcats of the Class A @-@ Advanced Carolina League . Furniss struggled in Carolina , and the Pirates demoted Furniss to Lynchburg on August 4 . He batted .193 in 36 games with Lynchburg to close the season .

The Pirates assigned Furniss to Lynchburg in 1999 , where he batted .261 with 23 home runs and 87 RBIs , and was honored as the Carolina League 's All @-@ Star first baseman . He also set a Hillcats franchise record for walks with 94 . The Pirates sent Furniss to play in the Arizona Fall League after the 1999 regular season . He played for the Altoona Curve of the Class AA Eastern League , the Pirates ' new Class AA affiliate , in 2000 , where he batted .239 in 121 games played .

Signed as a free agent by the Oakland Athletics organization after the season , Furniss started the 2001 season with the Midland RockHounds of the Class AA Texas League , but was demoted to the Visalia Oaks of the Class A @-@ Advanced California League in April . The Athletics promoted him back to Midland later in the season . Joining the Texas Rangers organization for the 2002 season , he played for the Tulsa Drillers , also in the Texas League , where he played in 26 games and batted .143 .

= = = Honors = = =

In honor of his LSU career , Furniss has been inducted into three halls of fame ; the LSU Athletic Hall of Fame in 2007 , the College Baseball Hall of Fame in 2010 , and the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame in 2012 . During his 2012 induction speech , Furniss quoted the character based on Moonlight Graham from Field of Dreams . Graham played in one MLB game before he retired to practice medicine . On April 22 , 2016 the LSU baseball team retired Furniss ' No. 36 jersey .

= = Medical career = =

Furniss graduated LSU with an academic major in zoology on a pre @-@ medical track , and grade point averages above 3 @.@ 5 in each of his last three years . He took his laboratory courses during the fall semester , so they did not distract from the baseball season in the spring semester .

After the 2002 season , Furniss retired from baseball , as he promised himself he would if he found himself unable to advance beyond Class AA . He enrolled in medical school at University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston , and completed his residency at John Peter Smith Hospital in Fort Worth , Texas . Furniss practices in the Nacogdoches Medical Center , the same building where his father practices .

= = Personal life = =

Furniss was raised in Nacogdoches , Texas , on a 36 @-@ acre (15 ha) ranch . His father , a medical doctor who practices family medicine , built Eddy a batting cage so that he could take 200 to 300 practice swings a day as a child .

Furniss married his high school girlfriend , Crystal , with whom he has two sons and a daughter .