

= Bullet Rogan =

Charles Wilber " Bullet " Rogan , also known as " Bullet Joe " (July 28 , 1893 ? March 4 , 1967) , was an American pitcher and outfielder for the Kansas City Monarchs in the Negro baseball leagues from 1920 to 1938 . Renowned as a two @-@ way player who could both hit and pitch successfully , one statistical compilation shows Rogan winning more games than any other pitcher in Negro leagues history and ranking fourth highest in career batting average . He was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1998 .

Rogan 's early baseball career took place in the U.S. Army , where he played for a famous team in the all @-@ black 25th Infantry . After joining the Kansas City Monarchs , he was the top pitcher and one of the best hitters on a team that won three pennants from 1923 to 1925 and the Negro League World Series in 1924 . He became a playing manager in 1926 and led his team to another league title in 1929 .

" Charleston was everything ? but Rogan was more " , said William " Big C " Johnson , one of Rogan 's Army teammates . " Rogan could do everything , everywhere . " " He was the onliest pitcher I ever saw , I ever heard of in my life , was pitching and hitting in the cleanup place " , said Satchel Paige . According to Rogan 's longtime catcher Frank Duncan , " If you had to choose between Rogan and Paige , you 'd pick Rogan , because he could hit . The pitching , you 'd as soon have Satchel as Rogan , understand ? But Rogan 's hitting was so terrific . Get my point ? " Casey Stengel called Rogan " one of the best ? if not the best ? pitcher that ever lived . "

= = Early life = =

Wilber Rogan was born in Oklahoma City , Oklahoma . After the death of his mother and his father 's remarriage , he moved with his family to Kansas City , Kansas . He began his baseball career there in 1911 as a catcher with Fred Palace 's Colts , a semipro team composed mostly of teenagers . Also joining the Colts that season was Dick Whitworth , who would , like Rogan , go on to pitch for many years in the Negro leagues .

Friction with his stepmother and unhappiness with the segregated high school he attended led Rogan to drop out of school before graduation and enlist in the Army on October 19 , 1911 . He lied about his age to do so . This would cause later confusion about Rogan 's age , as some records (along with his Hall of Fame plaque) give his birth year as 1889 , others as 1893 ; recent histories , such as Phil Dixon 's , conclude that the latter date is correct .

= = U.S. Army and the 25th Infantry Wreckers = =

Rogan served in the Philippines with the 24th Infantry , an all @-@ black regiment , for three years . He was honorably discharged in 1914 . Before returning to the United States , Rogan reenlisted , this time with the 25th Infantry , another African American unit , at that time stationed at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii . He was specifically recruited to play for the regiment 's famous baseball team , known as the " Wreckers . " He made his debut with the Wreckers on July 4 , 1915 .

His Army teammates included a number of later Negro league stars , such as Dobie Moore , Heavy Johnson , Bob Fagan , Lemuel Hawkins , and William " Big C " Johnson . Over the next three seasons , the Wreckers won the Post League championship , the United States Army Series , and the Oahu League . In February 1917 Rogan twice defeated the Portland Beavers of the Pacific Coast League , who were visiting the islands for spring training . On furlough for several months in 1917 , Rogan played professionally for the Los Angeles White Sox , the Kansas City , Kansas , Giants , and J. L. Wilkinson 's All Nations Club , but returned to the army for three more years .

In August 1918 Rogan and the rest of the 25th Infantry were moved to Camp Stephen D. Little in Nogales , Arizona . Researchers John Holway and James Riley report that in 1919 , Casey Stengel played against Rogan in Arizona , and subsequently recommended him to Wilkinson for his new Negro National League team , the Kansas City Monarchs . However , Rogan had already played in the California Winter League and for Wilkinson 's All @-@ Nations team in 1917 , and had already

been noted by Negro sports reporters as early as 1916 .

= = Professional career = =

In July 1920 , Rogan and Dobie Moore joined the Monarchs . Rogan quickly became the premier pitcher and biggest box office draw in the young league . By his third season with the Monarchs , 1922 , he hit .390 , and his 13 home runs were good for second in the league . On August 6 , 1923 , Rogan combined with teammate and manager José Méndez to pitch a no hitter against the Milwaukee Bears , Méndez pitching the first five innings and Rogan the last four . That season he hit .364 with a league leading 16 wins and 151 strikeouts to lead the Monarchs to their first pennant .

In 1924 Rogan hit .395 while compiling an 18 ? 6 record and leading the Monarchs to their second league title . He starred in the first Black World Series , leading the Monarchs with 13 hits and winning two games as Kansas City defeated the Eastern Colored League champion Hilldales . That winter he led the 1924 / 25 Cuban League with nine victories for the champion Almendares club .

Rogan may have reached his peak in 1925 , leading Kansas City to its third straight league championship with a 17 ? 2 record and a .381 batting average . In the playoffs against the St. Louis Stars he hit .450 and won three more games , including one shutout . However , before the World Series rematch with Hilldale , Rogan suffered a knee injury while playing with his young son . Forced to undergo surgery , he missed the series . Without their star , the Monarchs went down to defeat in six games .

The following season , Rogan took over from José Méndez as manager of the Kansas City Monarchs . In that season 's NNL playoffs against the Chicago American Giants , he pitched and lost both games of a series deciding doubleheader to the younger Bill Foster . As late as 1928 at the age of 34 , Bullet Rogan was the best hitter (.358) and arguably the best pitcher (10 ? 2) on the Monarchs . That year he slammed three home runs in a game against the Detroit Stars .

Rogan continued at the Monarchs ' helm in 1929 when they won their fourth NNL championship and recorded the best record (62 ? 17) in the history of the league . On April 29 , 1930 , in Enid , Oklahoma , Rogan played for the Monarchs in baseball 's first night game . In August he was hospitalized with an undisclosed illness . He remained out of the lineup for more than a year , finally returning on September 28 , 1931 .

When Wilkinson did not organize a Kansas City Monarchs team for 1932 , Rogan joined a white independent team in Jamestown , North Dakota , where he played until August . He batted .315 and went 20 ? 3 as a pitcher before returning to the reorganized Monarchs in September . In the winter of 1933 and 1934 , Rogan returned to Hawaii and the Philippines as a member of the Philadelphia Royal Giants , a black all star team . The Royal Giants toured Japan and China as well . In 1936 , at the age of 43 , Rogan appeared in the East @-@ West All @-@ Star Game .

= = Rogan as player and manager = =

Relatively small (5 foot 7 , 180 pounds (82 kg)) , Rogan was solidly built and strong , with thin legs and a narrow waist but broad shoulders . He threw and batted right @-@ handed , and used an unusually heavy bat . " You saw Ernie Banks hit in his prime , then you saw Rogan " , said Buck O 'Neil . " He could hit that ball ... He was the type of guy that stood a long way from the plate . Not too close , because they 'd jam you . " According to his longtime teammate Frank Duncan , " Rogan was one of the best low @-@ ball hitters I ever saw , and one of the best curve @-@ ball hitters . Rogan taught Bob and Irish Meusel how to hit curve balls . " While not extremely fast , he ran the bases well and stole when necessary .

As a pitcher , Rogan used a no @-@ windup delivery and both overhand and sidearm motions , and relied on an array of curveballs , a spitball , a palmball , a forkball , and the fastball that gave him his nickname . According to the sportswriter A.S. " Doc " Young , " Joe Rogan possessed as much natural ability as Smokey Joe or Satch , but his control was not up to theirs . " Frank Duncan , who caught both Paige and Rogan , said ,

Satchel was easier to catch . He could throw it in a quart cup . But Rogan was all over the plate ? high , low , inside , outside . He 'd walk five @-@ six men , but he didn 't give up many runs . Bullet had a little more steam on the ball than Paige ? and he had a better @-@ breaking curve . The batters thought it was a fastball heading for them and they would jump back from the plate and all of a sudden , it would break sharply for a strike . I would rank him with today 's best . I have never seen a pitcher like him , and I have caught some of the best pitchers in the business .

Another Monarchs teammate , George Carr , said ,

Rogan was the greatest pitcher that ever threw a ball . He had not only an arm to pitch with but a head to think with . Rogan was a smart pitcher with a wonderful memory . Once Rogan pitched to a batter , he never forgot that batter 's weaknesses and strong points . And don 't think Rogan was nicknamed " Bullet " for nothing . That guy had a ball that was almost too fast to catch . He would really burn ' em in there .

As a manager , he was a strict disciplinarian , possibly a result of his military background . Carroll " Dink " Mothell maintained that " Rogan wanted to run the ball club like they did it in the army . He liked to give orders too much , even before he was managing . He used to bawl players out for different things . I could take it , but we had ball players , when he 'd get on them , they 'd go into a shell , resented it , and didn 't give him their best . " Another Monarchs pitcher , Chet Brewer , said that " Rogan wasn 't the best manager because he was such a great ball player himself . He couldn 't teach pitchers much , because he 'd say , ' All you have to do is go out and throw the man what I threw ' . " According to historian Phil Dixon , " In Rogan 's first few years as manager he was reluctant to pinch @-@ hit for many of the veterans on his roster because they were his friends . " He didn 't trust younger players , often inserting himself to pitch or pinch @-@ hit for them . He sometimes treated rookies harshly . Eventually Rogan " discarded his distant approach " and became increasingly known for teaching and developing less experienced players .

= = Personal life = =

On October 22 , 1922 , Wilber Rogan married Kathrine McWilliams , a Colorado farm girl . Their son Wilber Rogan , Jr . , was born right after the 1924 World Series . Between the 1923 and 1924 seasons , it was reported that Rogan spent the winter writing life insurance . After his retirement as a player , Rogan became an umpire in the Negro American League until 1946 , then worked in the post office . He died in Kansas City , Missouri on March 4 , 1967 at age 73 . The Baseball Hall of Fame first admitted Negro league players in the 1970s , but did not honor Bullet Rogan until 1998 , 31 years after his death .

= = Career statistics = =

= = = Negro leagues = = =

Negro league baseball statistics and player information from Seamheads.com , or Baseball @-@ Reference (Negro leagues)

= = = California Winter League = = =

Batting

Pitching

Rogan spent five seasons in the integrated California Winter League between 1920 and 1930 against teams of white major and minor leaguers . Rogan 's team won the championship every year .

= = = Cuban (Winter) League = = =

Source :

= = = Against all competition = = =

Historian Phil Dixon puts Rogan 's lifetime totals against all competition , including semipro and Army teams , at more than 350 games won , 2000 strikeouts , 2500 hits , 350 home runs , and 500 stolen bases .