

= George Nicol (baseball) =

George Edward Nicol (October 17 , 1870 ? August 4 , 1924) was an American baseball pitcher and outfielder who played three seasons in Major League Baseball (MLB) . He played for the St. Louis Browns , Chicago Colts , Pittsburgh Pirates and Louisville Colonels from 1890 to 1894 . Possessing the rare combination of batting right @-@ handed and throwing left @-@ handed , he served primarily as a right fielder when he did not pitch .

Signed by the Browns without having previously played any minor league baseball , Nicol made his debut on September 23 , 1890 , and pitched ? what was then considered to be ? a no @-@ hitter . In the following season , he joined the Chicago Colts in July after starting in the minor leagues . After a two @-@ year sojourn away from the major leagues , he signed for the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1894 . In August of the same season , he was traded to the Louisville Colonels , with whom he played his final game on September 29 , 1894 .

= = Personal life = =

Nicol was born on October 17 , 1870 in Barry , Illinois . His father , Matthew Nicol , immigrated to the United States from Scotland in 1852 , while his mother , Eliza , was born in America . As a youngster , he played baseball for a semi @-@ professional club in nearby Mount Sterling . There , he rose to fame as a left @-@ handed pitcher ? probably due to rarity and valuableness of southpaws ? and eventually got the opportunity to play in the major leagues before he turned twenty .

After his professional baseball career ended , Nicol moved to Milwaukee , Wisconsin . In 1896 , he married his wife Lilian . Together , they had one son , George Jr . , who was born in 1908 . In order to support his new family , he became a machinist . During this time , he continued to play baseball ? albeit amateur baseball ? with the Milwaukee City League .

On the night of August 3 , 1924 , Nicol died in his sleep at the age of 53 . His death was treated as suspicious , as a post @-@ mortem examination found him to have four broken ribs that led to his death . He was interred at the Union Cemetery in Milwaukee .

= = Professional career = =

= = = St. Louis Browns (1890) = = =

Nicol was signed by the St. Louis Browns near the end of the 1890 season , even though he had no prior experience in minor league baseball . The team were in desperate need for players ; their situation was a microcosm of the American Association (AA) that already had few players with major league experience to begin with . The league 's precarious situation was not helped by the fact that they had to compete with both the well @-@ established National League (NL) and the newly formed yet highly popular Players ' League . Although the latter league lasted just one season , they were able to outdraw both the AA and NL in terms of attendance . This put a dent in the fortunes of the American Association , whose teams consequently struggled to pay the players ' salaries and thus , had to utilize amateur , semi @-@ professional or minor league players .

Nicol made his major league debut for the Browns on September 23 , 1890 , starting the game against the Philadelphia Athletics that resulted in a 21 ? 2 win . He did not allow a single hit to the Athletics through seven innings , after which the game was called off due to darkness . Although the game was previously considered a no @-@ hitter , a rule change made by the MLB 's Committee on Statistical Accuracy in 1991 redefined the definition of a no @-@ hitter ; a no @-@ hit game now had to span a minimum of nine innings . As a result , Nicol 's debut was one of fifty no @-@ hitters deleted from the official record books .

Three days after his debut , Nicol faced the Athletics again in his second major league start . He followed up his dazzling debut with another solid performance , giving up just one hit ? a single ? in

a 7 ? 3 win that ended after five innings . His subsequent starts were disappointing , most notably a 10 ? 3 loss against the Toledo Maumees , where his inability to hold baserunners was first exposed . He finished the season with a win ? loss record of 2 ? 1 , a 4 @.@ 76 earned run average (ERA) , had 16 strikeouts but walked 19 in three games started . After his contract expired at the end of the season , no major league team signed Nicol , so he began the 1891 season with the Davenport Pilgrims , a minor league baseball team that competed in the Illinois ? Iowa League .

= = = Chicago Colts (1891) = = =

Nicol 's tenure with the Pilgrims was successful , albeit brief . He compiled a 15 ? 8 record with a 1 @.@ 36 ERA in 23 games started and threw five shutouts . He soon demonstrated himself as the best pitcher in the league by holding opposing teams to three hits or less in four separate games . His pitching performances caught the eye of Chicago Colts ' manager Cap Anson , who offered him a \$ 225 a month contract . Nicol originally agreed to the deal , but subsequently wanted to renege , citing " a change of heart . " However , he was eventually forced to accept the offer when the Colts threatened to blacklist him . The Pilgrims , who were already struggling financially , received just \$ 300 from the Colts for their ace and folded soon after he left the team .

Nicol arrived in Chicago on July 20 and was penciled in to start on consecutive days against Charles Radbourn and Cy Young . Though he performed poorly in both games , the Colts still managed to win . He was shelled in the third inning by the Cincinnati Reds and on the next day , he gave up seven runs to the Cleveland Spiders in only two innings . Because of these starts , he did not appear in another game until August 14 , when he was used in relief to face the Brooklyn Dodgers . His control issues flared up and he had trouble holding the Dodgers ' baserunners . He was released one week later , having walked 10 batters in the 11 innings he pitched for the Colts . He ended the season playing for Marinette of the Wisconsin State League .

= = = Minor league sojourn = = =

After 1891 , Nicol went back to the Illinois ? Iowa League and joined the Rockford Hustlers . He pitched well throughout the 1892 season ? though his record was 16 ? 16 , he had a 1 @.@ 47 ERA , 230 strikeouts in 288 innings pitched and pitched five shutouts . He limited his opponents to two hits in five different complete games and threw a one @-@ hitter . The league , however , was struggling financially and after the end of the league 's postseason , his request for release was granted .

At the start of 1893 , Nicol signed with the Los Angeles Angels of the California League . A new rule was introduced stipulating that the pitcher 's mound be 60 feet 6 inches (18 @.@ 44 m) away from home plate . This increase of five feet in distance gave batters a greater advantage . Despite this , Nicol was noted for his ability to adapt to the new rule better than other pitchers in the league . This was evident as he was able to garner a 15 ? 8 record and 0 @.@ 86 ERA in 1881 ? 3 innings pitched . His control suffered , however , as he struck out just 64 batters and walked 125 , thus contributing to his 1 @.@ 66 WHIP that season . In early June , there was speculation that players would have their salaries cut in order to sustain the league , which was allegedly on the verge of collapsing . Several weeks after two of his teammates departed , Nicol himself left the team , joining the two in the Eastern League with the Erie Blackbirds . He continued his stellar pitching performances with a 13 ? 9 record and a 1 @.@ 80 ERA in 200 innings , while reducing the number of walks issued to 89 .

= = = Pittsburgh Pirates and Louisville Colonels (1894) = = =

Nicol signed for the Pittsburgh Pirates at the start of the 1894 season . His stint with the team was dismal , as he posted a 3 ? 4 record with a 6 @.@ 22 ERA , while his control and strikeout ability continued to diminish , evident with his 39 walks issued against a mere 13 strikeouts in 9 games pitched . On August 13 , he was traded to the Louisville Colonels in exchange for Jock Menefee and

\$ 1000 .

In his first game for the Colonels , Nicol was battered by the opposing team , giving up 19 hits and 15 earned runs in a complete game . He made just one more start for the team and finished with a 13 @. @ 76 ERA over 17 innings pitched . Because of his pitching struggles , he changed positions and played 26 games in the outfield during his time with the organization , making 43 putouts , 2 assists and committed 9 errors , resulting in a .791 fielding percentage . His overall statistics for the year were mixed . His pitching record was 3 ? 5 with an 8 @. @ 24 ERA , 17 strikeouts and 55 walks issued over 631 ? 3 innings pitched . However , his offensive numbers were impressive , as he posted a batting average of .351 and amassed 47 hits , 7 doubles , 4 triples , 22 runs batted in and a .463 slugging percentage in 141 plate appearances , while striking out just 5 times . At the conclusion of the season , he was released by the Colonels .

= = = Back to the minors = = =

Nicol returned to minor league baseball , joining the Indianapolis Hoosiers of the Western League . After spending just one month with the team , he moved within the league to the Milwaukee Brewers , where he played for five seasons and was utilized exclusively as an outfielder from 1896 onwards . In 1896 , he was at the centre of controversy when the Philadelphia Phillies drafted him and promised the Brewers that they would return him should they not be in need of his services . However , he was instantly outrighted to the Detroit Tigers , with the Phillies ' president acknowledging that they were assisting and collaborating with the Tigers , who had requested the transaction . The case went to an arbitral tribunal , which ruled in favour of the Brewers .

In 1900 , Nicol joined the Wilkes @-@ Barre Coal Barons of the Atlantic League . The league disbanded in June of that year , whereupon he joined the Detroit Tigers , who were now part of the American League . He was released at the end of the season , having batted .258 in 73 games . He returned to the now @-@ expanded Illinois ? Indiana ? Iowa League in 1904 and played there for two seasons . His career after 1906 is unclear , although the Society for American Baseball Research writes that he signed with a Wisconsin State League team based in Freeport , Illinois and played for them for the remainder of the year before retiring from professional baseball .