

= Jimmy Lavender =

James Sanford " Jimmy " Lavender (March 25 , 1884 ? January 12 , 1960) was an American professional baseball player who played in Major League Baseball as a pitcher from 1912 to 1917 . He played a total of five seasons with the Chicago Cubs of the National League from 1912 to 1916 ; after being traded to the Philadelphia Phillies , he played an additional season in 1917 . During his playing days , his height was listed at 5 feet 11 inches (1 @. @ 80 m) , his weight as 165 pounds (75 kg) , and he batted and threw right @- @ handed . Born in Barnesville , Georgia , he began his professional baseball career in minor league baseball in 1906 at the age 22 . He worked his way through the system over the next few seasons , culminating with a three @- @ season stint with the Providence Grays of the Eastern League from 1909 to 1911 .

Lavender primarily threw the spitball , and used it to win 16 games as a 28 @- @ year @- @ old rookie in 1912 . In July 1912 , he defeated Rube Marquard , ending Marquard 's consecutive win streak at 19 games , which at the time tied the record for the longest win streak for a pitcher in MLB history . Lavender 's early success as a rookie soon turned to mediocrity as his career progressed , winning no more than 11 games in any season afterward . On August 31 , 1915 , he threw a no @- @ hitter against the New York Giants .

He was traded to the Phillies before the 1917 season , and he played one season for the team , winning six games before retiring from major league baseball . Lavender returned to Georgia , worked on his farm in Montezuma , Georgia , and played professional baseball in an independent league . He died in Cartersville , Georgia at the age of 75 .

= = Early life = =

James Sanford Lavender was born on March 25 , 1884 in Barnesville , Georgia into a wealthy family . He attended public schools until the age of 15 , when he was enrolled at Gordon College , a military academy located in Barnesville . He played little baseball while there , but he did enjoy participating in football . He later attended Georgia Tech and studied mechanical engineering ; he played a few games for his class ' baseball team as well .

= = Minor league career = =

In 1906 , at the age of 22 , he began his professional baseball career with the Cordele team in the class @- @ D Georgia State League . The following season , he was promoted to the Danville Red Sox of the class @- @ C Virginia League . On May 15 , he pitched the Red Sox to a 6 ? 2 victory over the Portsmouth Truckers , allowing just one hit . With Danville , he had a 13 ? 16 win ? loss record in 307 innings pitched . It was during this time period that a scout who worked for Connie Mack discovered Lavender , who then sent him through a training camp and assigned him to the Holyoke Papermakers of the class @- @ B Connecticut League in 1908 ; he finished with a 21 ? 17 win ? loss record . From 1909 to 1911 , he played with the Providence Grays of the class @- @ A Eastern League for three seasons , winning a career @- @ high 19 games in 1911 .

It was reported on September 1 , 1911 that Lavender was drafted by the Chicago Cubs in the Major League Baseball (MLB) draft . Charles Murphy , the Cubs ' owner , drafted him with intent of then trading him to a Montreal minor league team as compensation for an earlier trade that brought Ward Miller to the Cubs . The Providence team owner , Frank Navin (who also owned the Detroit Tigers of the American League (AL)) , appealed the transaction to the National Commission , forerunner to the modern @- @ day Commissioner of Baseball . The commission ruled that Murphy had to either keep Lavender for one year , or return him to Providence . Murphy chose to keep Lavender , and his contract was approved on February 9 , 1912 by NL president Thomas Lynch .

= = Major league career = =

== = Chicago Cubs == =

== = 1912 ? 1913 seasons == =

Lavender made his MLB debut on April 23 , 1912 as a relief pitcher in a 5 ? 3 loss to the Pittsburgh Pirates . On June 28 , versus the Pirates , he threw a one @-@ hit shutout in a 3 ? 0 win , and collected three hits as a hitter . On July 1 , he shutout Pittsburgh once more , this time in a 12 @-@ inning , 1 ? 0 victory . He threw his third consecutive complete game shutout on July 5 , a 4 ? 0 victory over the St. Louis Cardinals . Lavender took a 33 @-@ inning consecutive scoreless inning streak into his next start , a home game against the New York Giants and pitcher Rube Marquard . He gave up five hits and defeated the Giants 7 ? 2 , ending Marquard 's consecutive win streak at 19 games , which at the time tied the record for the longest streak in baseball history . The loss appeared to affect Marquard for the remainder of the season , though he regained his form in the 1912 World Series . During the 1913 season , upon the ending of an 11 @-@ game winning streak by Washington Senators pitcher Joe Boehling , Marquard commented , " I know just how Boehling feels . I know how I felt after Lavender beat me in Chicago last year after I had won nineteen straight , and I can sympathize with the Washington youngster . " Lavender would have continued success against the Giants throughout his career .

Lavender 's primary pitch was the spitball , and his method of preparation was to lick the ball . In a game on July 19 , Lavender was about to load the ball when he smelled a liniment on the ball . He reported this to the home plate umpire , who then ejected the Phillies manager , Red Dooen , from the game . Dooen had been caught doing this to another spitballer , Marty O 'Toole , a few days earlier . On September 26 , Lavender and the Cubs were ahead 9 ? 0 in the top half of the ninth inning versus Cincinnati , when the Reds scored 10 runs against Lavender and two other pitchers to take the lead 10 ? 9 . The Cubs ultimately prevailed and gained the victory by scoring two runs in the bottom half of the ninth . Lavender started just one more game in 1912 , a 3 ? 2 victory on October 5 against St. Louis . Following the season , the Cubs played a series of exhibition games with the Chicago White Sox of the American League called the City Series . Lavender started the first game against Ed Walsh , and the game ended after nine innings with a scoreless tie . Lavender gave six hits and Walsh just one . After the two teams played to a 12 @-@ inning tie two days later , Lavender pitched the Cubs to victory in game three . Two additional victories gave the Cubs a 3 ? 0 series lead , but the White Sox were able to win four straight games , twice defeating Lavender , including in the series finale . He completed his rookie season with his career @-@ high 16 victories , against 13 losses , and a 3 @. @ 04 earned run average (ERA) in 2512 ? 3 innings pitched .

To begin the 1913 season , Lavender was the team 's opening day starting pitcher in a 5 ? 3 loss to St. Louis on April 12 . After his successful rookie season , he was largely ineffective in the first half of 1913 season ; so much so that manager Johnny Evers was contemplating putting Lavender on waivers if he had not regained his form from the previous season . Lavender showed signs of improvement , surrendering just three hits in a 12 ? 2 victory over the Pittsburgh Pirates on June 30 , followed by a 5 ? 1 win over the Reds on July 3 . This rebound was short @-@ lived , however ; Chicago lost his next four starts before a 6 ? 5 win over the Boston Braves on July 27 . He pitched in 40 games , half of which were in relief , and had a 10 ? 14 win ? loss record . His ERA increased to 3 @. @ 66 , and he led the NL in hit batsmen with 13 .

== = 1914 ? 1916 seasons == =

His initial appearance of the 1914 season was in relief on April 17 , a game in which he pitched 42 ? 3 innings , and gave up three runs in 6 ? 5 victory over the Reds . He followed that with two consecutive strong games as the starting pitcher , allowing just one unearned run in each game ; the second was a complete game against the Reds . On June 12 , he started the game against New York , only to be injured in the third inning when he was hit in the hand by a ball batted by Fred Merkel , and had to leave the game . The injury did not cause Lavender to lose much playing time .

He pitched a four @-@ inning relief appearance on June 19 , followed by a complete game shutout on June 27 against the Reds . On August 17 , he pitched a second shutout during the season , a 3 @-@ 0 victory over the Brooklyn Robins .

Lavender created a controversy in a game on September 23 , when he was caught altering the baseball by rubbing it against an emery board that he had attached to his uniform 's pant leg , an illegal act . At the time , the fine for such an infraction was a five @-@ dollar fine . The Phillies players noticed that the pitcher was constantly scratching the side of his leg . They asked the umpire to search the pitcher . Lavender refused to be searched and ran into the outfield , and the umpire refused to chase Lavender . Eventually , a particularly fast Phillies player , Hans Lobert , was able to catch up with him and grab the offending item . As a result of this incident , AL president , Ban Johnson , decreed that any pitcher in his league caught using sandpaper to alter the baseball , would be suspended for 30 days and fined \$ 100 . This rule became the forebearer of the rule banning other pitches as well , including the spitball . In his 37 games pitched in 1914 , 28 were as the starting pitcher . His win ? loss record was 11 ? 11 , and he lowered his ERA down to 3 @. @ 07 in 2141 ? 3 innings pitched .

Lavender got off to quick start in 1915 , pitching a complete game victory against St. Louis on April 16 . He then missed time due to suffering a broken rib attempting to climb out of a bathtub . His next appearance was not until May 7 , when he pitched two innings in relief . He regained his starting role on May 21 , hurling his second complete game victory of the season , this time against Boston . In the first game of a doubleheader on August 31 , Lavender threw a no @-@ hitter against the New York Giants , a 2 ? 0 victory . He struck out eight batters and walked just one . At the conclusion of the season , the Cubs played the Chicago White Sox of the American League in an exhibition series . Lavender pitched a shutout in game two , but the White Sox were declared victors after winning four games to the Cubs ' one . His totals for the 1915 season included 41 games pitched , a 10 ? 16 win ? loss record , a career @-@ low 2 @. @ 58 ERA , and a career @-@ high 117 strikeouts .

Though Lavender seemed to pitch well to begin the 1916 season , his record of 1 ? 6 though June 10 was a direct contrast to his low 2 @. @ 89 ERA . In his next start , against the Giants on June 14 , he allowed only an infield single to Benny Kauff . The New York Sun noted that Kauff 's single was as a result of a ground ball that took a bad hop and bounced away from the fielder . Lavender continued to pitch well throughout the season , both starting and in relief , culminating with a complete game shutout against Pittsburgh on September 9 , his fourth shutout of the season . However , in his last four appearances , he was credited with the loss in three , and his ERA rose from 2 @. @ 05 to 2 @. @ 83 . His season win ? loss record was 10 ? 14 in 36 games and 188 innings pitched .

= = = Philadelphia Phillies = = =

= = = 1917 season = = =

On December 19 , 1916 , it was reported that during the NL meetings , Chicago had traded Lavender 's rights to the Phillies for pitcher Al Demaree . However , it was not official until April 2 , 1917 , with Chicago sending an additional \$ 5 @, @ 000 to complete the deal . In March , Lavender signed with Philadelphia . He made his Philadelphia debut on April 27 , pitching a complete game victory against the Giants , allowing five hits and one run . Lavender faced his former club , the Cubs , for the first time on May 19 , and pitched the last three innings for the victory . At this point in the season , he was pitching well , his ERA was 1 @. @ 57 and he had a 2 ? 1 win ? loss record .

He soon began to falter , giving up four earned runs in four innings against the Cubs on May 22 and losing consecutive starts against New York and Pittsburgh . Then in a start against Cincinnati , he surrendered 15 hits and seven earned runs ; his ERA had now risen to 3 @. @ 29 . He had regained his form over the course of the months of July and August , lowering his ERA to 2 @. @ 69 after his game on September 8 . He lost much of his effectiveness later , however , allowing 14 hits and 10 earned runs against Boston on September 10 , and three more runs against Brooklyn in five relief

innings on September 13 . After a short one @-@ inning appearance on September 25 , he started the game on October 3 against the Giants . He gave up five earned runs in five innings pitched and received the loss . It was his last major league appearance . In his one season with Philadelphia , he pitched in 28 games , and had a 6 ? 8 record . His final career record was 63 @-@ 76 , with a 3 @.@ 09 ERA and 547 strikeouts in 1 @,@ 207 innings pitched .

During the off @-@ season , Philadelphia planned to trade or sell Lavender , even though he had earlier announced his retirement from the game . Philadelphia 's asking price for his rights was \$ 1 @,@ 000 , but they received no offers . Christy Mathewson , manager of the Reds , was reported to have had interest in Lavender , the pitcher 's success against the Giants still fresh in Mathewson 's mind . Though Philadelphia had a meeting with Cincinnati , Mathewson was unable to attend , and no trade discussions materialized . The San Francisco Seals of the Pacific Coast League expressed interest in Lavender , but he stressed that he was retired and that he would only consider a trade to Atlanta of the Southern Association so that he could be near his farm in Montezuma . In 1922 , it was reported that he signed with Atlanta after playing well for an independent team in Dawson , Georgia .

= = Post @-@ baseball life = =

After his playing career ended , Lavender returned to Georgia and worked on his farm in Montezuma , Georgia . He died on January 12 , 1960 , at the age of 75 , in Cartersville , Georgia , and is interred at Felton Cemetery in Montezuma .

= = In popular culture = =

Author Vincent Starrett , who penned The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes , created a series of short stories featuring a gentlemanly , cultured detective named " Jimmie Lavender " . Starrett stated that the name was perfect for his character , and received permission from the former pitcher for use of the name . A collection of these stories were featured in the 1944 book The Case Book of Jimmie Lavender .