

# Whammy Douglas "BEYOND THE SCOREBOOK"

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On July 29, 1957, St. Louis Cardinal lefthander "Vinegar Bend" Mizell comes within two batters of pitching a perfect game as the Red Birds (57-40) stay two percentage points ahead of the Milwaukee Braves (58-41) for possession of first place in the National League with a 4-0 victory over the Pittsburgh Pirates before 10,302 at Busch Stadium.

Mizell's mound opponent that afternoon is "Whammy" Douglas, a slender one-eyed 22-year-old rookie from Saxapahaw, North Carolina ... making his major league debut after being called up from the Columbus Jets the previous afternoon, Douglas walks seven and allows five hits in five innings, but yields only one earned run.

Douglas spends the remainder of the 1957 season with the Pirates, finishing with a 3-3 record and a 3.26 ERA ... plagued by control problems for most of his career, Douglas strikes out 28 but issues 30 walks in 47 innings in his only season at the major league level.

In his eight starts for the Corsairs that season, Douglass pitches into the fifth inning five times, including three appearances of seven innings or more ... he picks up his first major league win on August 11, against the Brooklyn Dodgers in only his second start, allowing one earned run in seven innings on eight hits and one walk in a 6-2 win.

## Pirates Topple Giants by 4-2 Behind Rookie

Face Saves Game for Douglas With Clutch Relief Stint in Ninth

On September 5, Douglass comes within one out of a complete game victory in a 4-2 decision over the New York Giants ... Douglas takes a 2-run lead into the ninth inning before giving up a leadoff single to Willie Mays (his only hit in five at bats) ... Douglas retires the next two batters, but is "sent to the showers" after walking Whitey Lockman, in favor of ace reliever Roy Face, who retires catcher Valmy Thomas to secure the victory ... in his eight and 2/3 innings, Douglas strikes out eight Giants, including Willie Mays once and Bobby Thomson three times.

In two games against the Giants, Douglas fans Mays twice, allowing the future Hall of Famer only two singles in 11 at bats (.182) ... in 47 innings pitched that summer, Douglas yields five solo home runs, including four to a trio of future Hall of Famers - Ernie Banks (2), Eddie Mathews and Hank Aaron ... Aaron (755), Banks (512) and Mathews (512) combine for 1,779 career home runs in their stellar careers.

Douglas loses his right eye at the age of 13 while playing with other boys in his home town of Saxapahaw ... according to a story posted on [mlb.com](http://mlb.com), Douglas acquires his unique nickname while pitching for a local American Legion team.

"I was striking everyone out, so they just started calling me 'Whammy,'" he relates in the story. "They couldn't hit the ball and it just stuck with me. I don't know how, but it did. Some people still call me that now."

Following an outstanding American Legion season, an 18-year-old Douglas signs a free agent contract in the summer of 1953 with the National League's Pittsburgh Pirates ... Douglas is assigned to the nearby Burlington-Graham Pirates of the Carolina (B) League and pitches one inning before being assigned to Tar Heel (D) League's Lexington Indians of the Tar Heel (D) League where he goes 9-7 record with a 3.56 ERA.

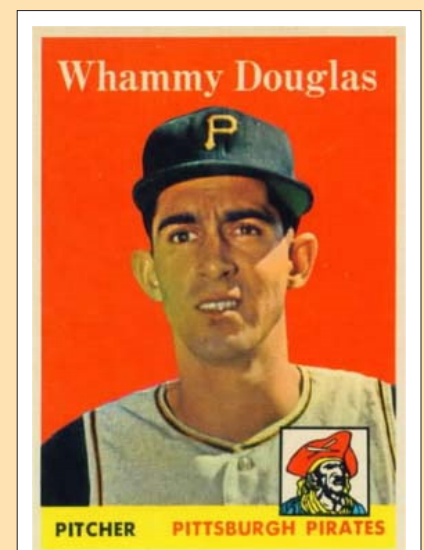
It's the following year that the hard-throwing right hander catches the eye of the Pirate brass ... assigned to the Brunswick Pirates of the Georgia-Florida (D) League, Douglas wins 27 games while losing six ... in 28 starts, he goes the distance 27 times and strikes out a league-high 273 batters in 271 innings, leading the young Bucs to the league pennant ... his outstanding season earns him an invitation to the Pirates' spring training camp in 1955.

Charles (Whammy) Douglas  
Major League Baseball Debut  
July 29, 1957

## NEAR PERFECT

PITTSBURGH				ST. LOUIS			
	ab	h	a	ab	h	a	a
Clemente rf	4	0	1	Bias'ame 2b	4	1	0
Maz'roski 2b	4	0	2	Dark ss	5	1	0
Groat ss	3	1	2	Musia! 1b	3	1	1
Thomas 1b	3	1	1	Moon lf	4	1	6
Mejias lf	3	0	3	Boyer cf	4	2	0
Baker 3b	3	0	1	Cun'gham rf	2	1	1
Virton cf	3	0	1	Landrith c	2	0	5
Peterson c	2	0	2	Kasko 3b	4	0	0
O'Brien p	1	0	1	Mizell p	2	0	2
Douglas p	1	0	1				
aFolles c	2	0	2				
Totals	29	2	24	Totals	30	7	27

a—Struck out for Douglas in 6th.  
Pittsburgh ..... 000 000 000—0  
St. Louis ..... 001 012 00x—4  
R—Blasingame, Dark, Moon, Mizell, E—Thomas, Groat, RB—Moon 2, Cunningham, (Blasingame stole home in 6th). 2B—Thomas, SB—Blasingame 2. DP—Peterson, Baker, Mazeroski and Baker. Left—Pittsburgh 2. St. Louis 12. BB—Douglas 7, O'Brien 3. SO—Douglas 2, O'Brien 2, Mizell 6. HO—Douglas 5 in 5, O'Brien 2 in 3. R-ER—Douglas 2-1, O'Brien 2-2, Mizell 0-0. WP—O'Brien, W—Mizell (4-7). L—Douglas (0-1). U—Delmore, Smith, Conlan, Donatelli. T—2:32 A—10,302.



Douglass' 1958 Topps Rookie card is worth \$5.99 in near mint condition.