

Rogers McKee, "Teenage Tar Heel Twirler"

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When it comes to legacies, Rogers Hornsby McKee doesn't rank up there with several of the more notable diamond stars from the Tar Heel State, but on the afternoon of October 3, 1943, in a nearly empty Forbes Field in Pittsburgh, the lanky (6-1, 160) teenager accomplishes something that no one else in baseball's modern era has been to match either before or since.



Rogers McKee
1943 Philadelphia Phillies

Starting the second game of a double-header on the final day of the season against the fourth-place Pirates, the youthful left-hander teams with Andy Seminick on a five-hit complete game, winning 11-3 and becoming the youngest player (17 years, 17 days) in the 20th century to win a major league game ... the losing pitcher is Arthur (Cookie) Cuccurullo who is also making his major league debut.

The highly-regarded McKee allows three earned runs on five hits - two each by shortstop Tony Ordana and right fielder Tommy O'Brien and one by pinch hitter Pete Coscarat - five walks and one strikeout (Vince DiMaggio).

For the Shelby, North Carolina native, the victory will be his first and only major league decision ... his entire major league career (1943-1944) consists of five games with a 1-0 record and a 5.87 ERA ... McKee pitches his final major league game on September 26, 1944, against the Chicago Cubs.

October 3, 1943
Forbes Field, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

PHILADELPHIA					PITTSBURGH				
	AB	H	O	A		AB	H	O	A
Ad.ms.cf	5	3	2	0	Ord'ana.ss	4	3	2	5
May.3b	3	1	1	4	Russell.1b	4	0	11	0
Triplet.t.if	1	1	1	0	O'Brien.rf	4	2	3	0
Culp.c	3	1	2	0	DiMag'o.cf	4	0	1	0
North'y.rf	5	3	0	0	Elliott.3b	3	0	1	1
Wasdell.1b	5	1	11	0	Barrett.if	3	0	3	0
Stewart.2b	5	3	5	2	Gustine.2b	4	0	1	0
Sem'ck.c.if	5	1	4	0	Camill.c	3	0	4	1
Hamrick.ss	4	1	1	4	Cuccu'llo.p	0	0	1	2
McKee.p	3	1	0	2	Coscarat	1	1	0	0
					Brandt.p	0	0	0	1
Totals	39	15	27	12	Totals	30	5	27	10

Coscarat batted for Cuccurullo in 7th.
Philadelphia 1 1 1 0 0 0 4 2 2-11
Pittsburgh 0 2 0 0 1 0 0 0 0-3

Runs—Adams 2, May 2, Culp 2, Northey, Stewart, Seminick, Hamrick, McKee (Philadelphia 11), Barrett, Camill, Cuccurullo (Pittsburgh 3). Errors—Cuccurullo, DiMaggio, Adams, Elliott. Runs batted in—Northey, McKee, Ordenana 3, Wasdell, Culp 2, Adams, May, Stewart. Two-base hits—Stewart, O'Brien. Three-base hits—Triplet, Adams. Sacrifices—Hamrick, May 2, McKee. Double plays—Cuccurullo, Ordenana and Russell, May, Stewart and Wasdell, May and Wasdell. Left on bases—Philadelphia 8, Pittsburgh 5. Bases on balls—Off McKee 5, Cuccurullo 3. Strikeouts—By Cuccurullo 3, Brandt 1. Hits—Off Cuccurullo, 10 in 7 innings; Brandt, 5 in 2 innings. Wild pitches—McKee 2. Losing pitcher—Cuccurullo. Umpires—Stewart, Magerkurth and Dunn. Time—1:48. Attendance—5430.

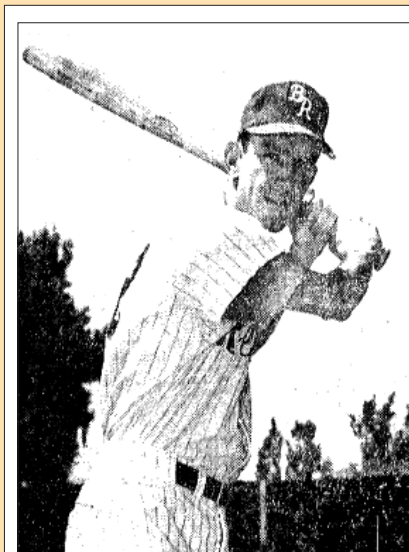
Ex-Legion Hurler, 16, Signs with Phillies

Philadelphia, Pa. (AP)—Rogers Hornsby McKee, 16-year-old pitcher from Shelby, N. C., was signed by the Phillies Thursday. A former American Legion tourney star with an average of 14 strikeouts per game in Legion play, he will remain with the Phillies for the rest of the season to benefit from major league coaching.

McKee suffers an arm injury during the 1944 season and will play first base and outfield for the remainder of his career ... in 12 minor league seasons (1944, 1946-57), he hits .287 with 177 doubles, 82 triples, 117 home runs and 702 RBIs ... McKee does not play baseball in 1945, serving with the U.S. Navy in the Pacific and participating stateside in the funeral for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

McKee's best season comes as a 27-year-old in 1954 when he hits .321 for the Baton Rouge Red Sticks of the Evangeline (C) League and establishing career highs in doubles (29), triples (12), home runs (33) and RBIs (130).

McKee earns all-star honors three times in his career, first in 1948 while playing for his hometown Shelby Farmers in the Western Carolina (D) League and then in back to back years in the Evangeline League in 1953 and 1954 ... at the age of 30, he finishes his 13-year professional baseball career in 1957, hitting a combined .313 while splitting time between the Baton Rouge Rebels and the Topeka Hawks.



Rogers McKee
1954 Baton Rouge Red Sticks

Rogers McKee [2 of 3]:

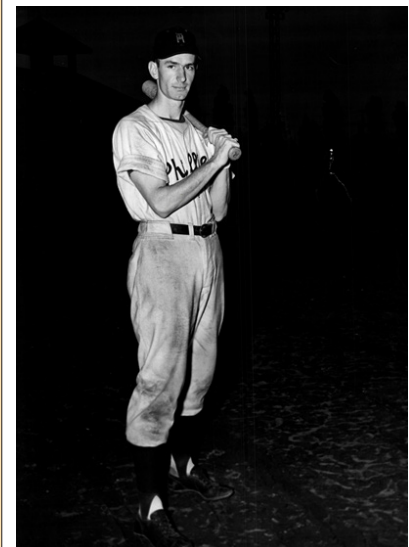
When the St. Louis Cardinals defeated the New York Yankees in 1926 World Series, McKee's father (a former sandlot player good enough to be offered a minor league contract) is so excited he names his child Rogers Hornsby McKee in honor of the victorious Cardinals manager ... McKee later drops the "s" when he enters school.

An outstanding high school and American Legion pitcher, McKee is 9-0 in two years on the Shelby varsity and 22-4 for the town's American Legion team (12-3 in 1942 and 10-1 in 1943).

In 1943, he pitches Shelby High School to the Western Conference championship as a senior ... latter that summer McKee hits .500 and averages 14 strikeouts per game leading the legion team to the state finals and drawing the attention of several major league scouts, including Philadelphia's Cy Morgan who says, "I've looked all over the world for this kid and I'm staying here 'till get him."



Rogers McKee
1943 Philadelphia Phillies



Rogers McKee
1943 Philadelphia Phillies

Rogers McKee Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Lev	AB	HT	2B	3B	HR	RBI	AVG	W-L	INN	SO	ERA	
1943	Philadelphia Phillies	NATIONAL	ML	5	1	0	0	0	0	.200	1-0	13.1	1	6.08	
1944	Philadelphia Phillies	NATIONAL	ML	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	0-0	2.0	0	4.50	
1944	Wilmington Phillies	Interstate	B	151	34	4	2	3	14	.225	6-8	106.0	-	4.25	
1945	US Navy														
1946	Terre Haute Phillies	Three-I	B	280	89	15	10	6	75	.318	1-0	8.0	-	---	
1947	2 Teams	2 Leagues	B/AAA	227	51	10	2	3	17	.225	-	-	-	-	
	Columbus Red Bird	American Assoc.	AAA	77	18	5	0	2	6	.234	-	-	-	-	
	Lynchburg Cardinals	Piedmont	B	150	33	5	2	1	11	.220	-	-	-	-	
1948	Shelby Farmers	Western Carolina	D	343	93	22	5	9	68	.271	-	-	-	-	
1949	2 Teams	2 Leagues	D/B	377	119	11	9	10	61	.316	-	-	-	-	
	Charlotte Hornets	Tri-State	B	148	37	1	1	1	12	.250	-	-	-	-	
	Newton-Conover Twins	Western Carolina	D	229	82	10	8	9	49	.358	-	-	-	-	
1950	Tampa Smokers	Florida International	B	451	116	10	4	5	55	.257	-	-	-	-	
1952	3 Teams	2 Leagues	A/B	337	84	6	7	8	34	.249	-	-	-	-	
	Augusta Tigers	South Atlantic	A	3	0	0	0	0	0	.000	-	-	-	-	
	St. Petersburg, Tampa	Florida International	B	334	84	6	7	8	34	.251	-	-	-	-	
1953	2 Teams	2 Leagues	C/B	393	127	23	12	14	92	.323	-	-	-	-	
	St. Petersburg Saints	Florida International	B	74	13	3	0	1	11	.176	-	-	-	-	
	Baton Rouge Red Sticks	Evangeline	C	319	114	20	12	13	81	.357	-	-	-	-	
1954	Baton Rouge Red Sticks	Evangeline	C	495	159	29	12	33	130	.321	-	-	-	-	
1955	2 Teams	2 Leagues	B/AA	401	115	26	8	8	65	.287	-	-	-	-	
	Shreveport Sports	Texas	AA	0	0	0	0	0	0	---	-	-	-	-	
	Rock Hill Chiefs	Tri-State	B	401	115	26	8	8	65	.287	0-0	-	-	---	
1956	2 Teams	2 Leagues	C/A	341	99	13	9	10	61	.290	-	-	-	-	
	Charlotte Hornets	South Atlantic	A	113	29	5	3	4	15	.257	-	-	-	-	
	Baton Rouge Rebels	Evangeline	C	228	70	8	6	6	46	.307	-	-	-	-	
1957	2 Teams	2 Leagues	C-A	201	63	7	2	6	30	.313	-	-	-	-	
	Baton Rouge Rebels	Evangeline	C	190	56	7	2	6	30	.295	-	-	-	-	
	Topeka Hawks	Western	A	11	7	1	0	0	0	.636	-	-	-	-	
Minor League Totals				12 Seasons	3997	1149	177	82	115	702	.287	7-8	114.0	-	---
Major League Totals				2 Seasons	5	1	0	0	0	0	.200	1-0	15.1	1	5.87

ML Debut: August 18, 1943 at Philadelphia: relieved Jack Kraus at the start of the 7th inning in a 6-0 loss to Pittsburgh; allowed 1 run on 3 hits and 1 walk in 3 innings (no decision).

ML Finale: September 26, 1944 at Philadelphia: relieved Chet Covington at the start of the 8th inning in a 15-0 loss to Chicago; allowed 1 run on 2 hits and 1 walk in 2 innings; allowed 9th inning HR to Lou Novikoff (no decision).

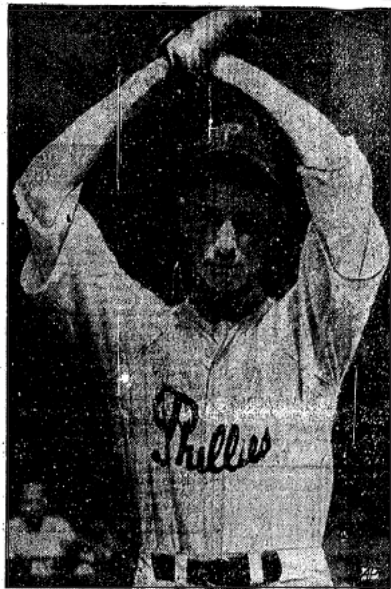
Honors: 1948 Western Carolina League; 1953 Evangeline League All-Star; 1954 Evangeline All-Star.

After winning the state title in 1942, the legion team is eliminated the following year in the semifinals ... on the night that the team is eliminated, McKee and his father meet with Morgan in a Shelby hotel and sign a major league contract calling for a \$3,000 bonus.

Morgan tells McKee that he is to report directly to the Phillies where he is expected to pitch some batting practice, maybe pitch in an exhibition game and make the team's final road trip.

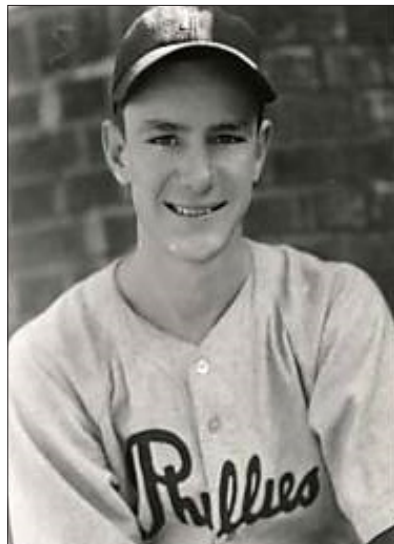
Following his playing days, McKee returns to Shelby and works 30 years for the U.S. Postal Service as well as serving on the baseball coaching staff at Shelby High School and the American Legion team.

Rogers McKee [3 of 3]:



From Carolina to the Phillies

Rogers Hornsby McKee, 16, from Shelby, N. C., winds up at Shibe park at Philadelphia where he recently joined Philadelphia National league club as a pitcher. Young McKee, born in 1926, the year Rogers Hornsby managed the world's champion St. Louis Cardinals, received the Rajah's name through the baseball enthusiasm of his father, Broadus McKee. The youngster attracted the attention of the Phillies as a pitcher for the American Legion team at Shelby.



Rogers McKee
1943 Philadelphia Phillies

August 18, 1943
Rogers McKee Major League Debut
Shibe Park, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

ST. LOUIS—					PHILADELPHIA—						
	A	B	R	H	O		A	B	R	H	O
Klein 2b	5	2	2	4		Murt'gh 2b	4	0	0	3	
Walker cf	5	0	3	2		Adams cf	3	0	1	1	
Musial rf	3	0	1	2		Da'lgren 1b	4	0	1	1	
W. Cooper c	5	1	1	5		Wasdell rf	3	0	0	4	
Kur'ski 3b	5	0	2	2		Triplet t	1	0	1	2	
Litwhiler lf	3	1	1	1		Finley c	3	0	0	2	
Sanders 1b	2	1	0	7		Stewart ss	3	0	1	2	
Marlon ss	3	1	1	4		May 3b	3	0	0	2	
Krist p	4	0	2	0		Kraus p	1	0	0	0	
						xRowe	1	0	1	0	
Totals	35	6	13	27		McKee p	1	0	0	0	
						Totals	27	0	5	27	

x—Batted for Kraus in sixth.

Score by innings:

St. Louis	.....	230	000	010	—6
Philadelphia	.....	000	000	000	—0

Errors—Murtaugh 2. Runs batted in—Walker 2, Litwhiler, Klein 2, Krist. Two base hits—Litwhiler, Krist. Three base hits—Klein 2. Sacrifices—Musial, Sanders. Double plays—Kurowski, Klein and Sanders 2, Klein, Marlon and Sanders; Kurowski and Sanders; May, Murtaugh and Dahlgren. Losing pitcher—Kraus.

McKee's Legion record of 12 wins in 1942 is later broken by his younger brother Harry who goes 18-1 in 1945 ... Harry will pitch two seasons (1948, 1952) in the minors finishing 7-10 with a 5.96 ERA.

McKee dies on September 1, 2014, in Shelby at the age of 87.

May 8, 1890
Brotherhood Park, Cleveland, Ohio

CLEVELAND VS. BUFFALO AT CLEVELAND MAY 8.—The home team gave young McGill a trial and he proved too much for the visitors, ten of whom struck out. The Clevelands hit the ball hard all through the game, and, added to that, Haddock was wild. The feature of the game was a magnificent running catch by Hoy, which cut off at least three runs from the Clevelands' score. The score:

CLEVELAND	A	B	R	E	P	A	E	BUFFALO	A	B	R	E	P	A	E
Stricker, 2b	5	1	2	3	4	0		Irwin, 3b	3	1	1	0	5	2	
Delehanty, 1b	6	2	3	2	2	0		Hoy, cf	4	2	0	4	0	0	
Browning, lf	5	3	2	2	0	0		Rowe, ss	4	1	2	2	4	0	
Twitchell, rf	5	2	3	0	0	1		Wise, 2b	5	0	1	1	5	2	
Tobean, 3b	6	2	0	2	0	0		White, 1b	4	0	2	16	1	0	
Larkin, 1b	5	2	2	9	0	0		Beccher, lf	5	0	1	2	0	0	
Radford, cf	2	2	1	2	0	0		Mack, c	1	0	2	0	1		
Snyder, c	4	0	0	9	2	0		Carney, rf	4	0	0	0	1	0	
McGill, p	4	0	1	0	1	0		Haddock, p	4	0	0	0	3	0	
Total	42	14	14	27	11	1		Total	34	4	7	27	19	5	
Cleveland	.....	0	3	3	0	1	3	1	0	3	—14				
Buffalo	.....	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	—4				

Earned run—Cleveland 7, Buffalo 2. Two-base hits—Delehanty, Browning. Three-base hits—Twitchell, Hoy. Bases stolen—Twitchell, Tobean, Radford, Irwin, Hoy 2, Wise, Beccher, Mack. First on base—By Metz 7, by Haddock 7. Struck out—By McGill 10. Hit by pitcher—Radford, Browning, Irwin. Passed balls—Snyder 3, Mack 3. Wild pitch—McGill. Umpires—Knight and Jones. Attendance, 700.

WILLIE MCGILL

The youngest player to win a game at the major league level is Cleveland Infants' left-hander Willie McGill, who in his major league debut on May 8, 1890, hurls a complete game 14-4 win over the visiting Buffalo Bisons in a Players League contest before 700 fans in Cleveland's Brotherhood Park.

The Atlanta-born McGill is only 16 years, five months & 28 days old when he strikes out 10 and walks seven in besting Buffalo's George Haddock ... McGill will finish the season 11-9 with 19 complete games and 183 and 2/3rd innings pitched.



Willie McGill
1897 St. Paul Saints