

Pinch Hits, "Leaksville Fans Get Their Man"

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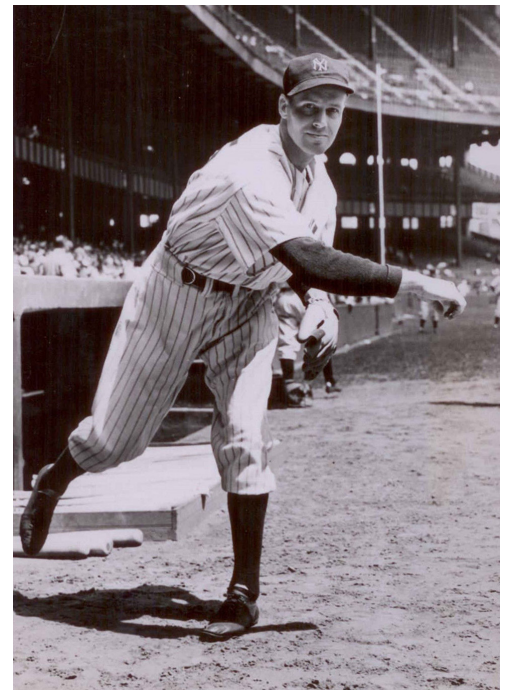
Wes Ferrell Will Manage Trips In Bi-State League

Vet Major Leaguer Makes Debut As Pilot. Will Pitch and Play Outfield.

On May 25, 1941, 17 days after being released by the National League's Boston Bees, Wes Ferrell signs with the Leaksville-Spray-Draper Triplets of the Bi-State (D) League to be the team's player/manager. Ferrell's hiring is announced by Triplets Business Manager P.W. Zigler, but the initial negotiations for his employment were started (without the knowledge of the team) by a group of "concerned" fans.

Learning that current Leaksville manager Tim Murchison is going to resign to take a job back in his hometown (Liberty, North Carolina), several car loads of Triplet fans drive to Martinsville, Virginia, (16 miles) to discuss with Martinsville Manufacturers' manager George Ferrell the possibility of his younger brother Wes managing the last-place Triplets.

George phones Wes at his Greensboro, North Carolina, home and discovers that he is indeed interested in both managing *and* playing for the Triplets. Encouraged, the fans "pile" into their two cars and drive to Greensboro (69 miles) that evening to continue "negotiations." Eventually the talk turns to salary and it is at the point that Ferrell realizes that he has been talking with interested fans, not actual team representatives.



Wes Ferrell
1938 New York Yankees

1941 Leaksville-Spray-Draper Triplets



Front row: Cecil "Zip" Payne, Cotton Powell, Harry Land, Charlie Cuellar, unidentified. **Back row:** Vinnie Fernandez, Lynwood "Hank" Tillotson, unidentified, Harold Scalpini, Al Letrick, Ken Rhyme, unidentified, Joe Frazier, unidentified.

Afraid that Ferrell might lose interest in the job, the fans hurry back to Leaksville (39 miles) where they find business manager Zigler at his house and inform him of their fruitful discussions with Ferrell. An energized Zigler is able to get the club officials together late that evening and by early next morning he is able to phone Ferrell with the terms of a proposed contract. Much to Zigler's and the fans delight, Ferrell accepts.

"They made me a pretty good proposition and I'm going over there to try my best to win," Ferrell tells the *Greensboro Daily News*. "No, I never was a manager before but I think we can get along. I'll take my turn pitching, playing the outfield, covering shortstop, or keeping the box score. I don't care what I have to do, so long as we win the ball games."

Leaksville Fans Get Their Man [1 of 2]:

Tri-City Wins First Game Under Wes Ferrell, 9 to 7

On May 26, at a 4 p.m., press conference in Leaksville, Ferrell assumes command of a Triplet team that shares last place with the Sanford Spinners with a 10-15 record and is a full seven games behind brother George's league-leading Martinsville Manufacturers.

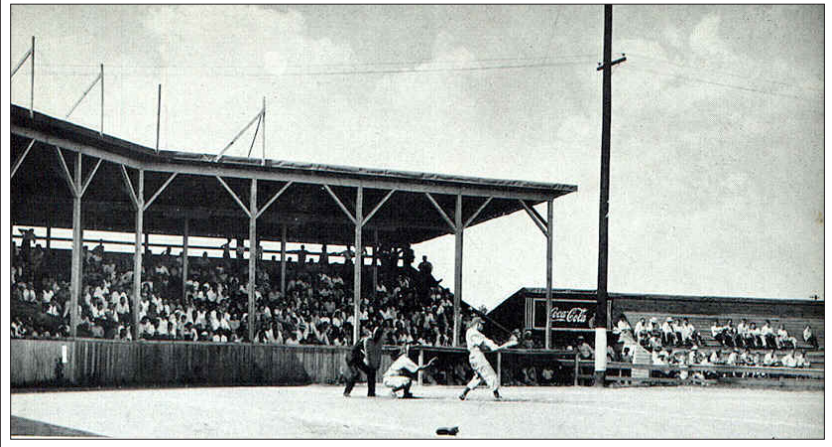
Interestingly enough, Wes make his Bi-State League debut that night against his brother's Martinsville team. Ferrell goes 1-for-1 with a run scored as a pinch hitter and then picks up his first save since 1934, pitching a scoreless ninth inning that includes picking brother George off second base.

The Triplets win six of their first seven games under Ferrell and one month (June 26) after his hiring they move into a first-place tie with Martinsville with a 1-0 win over the Manufacturers.

On July 15, Ferrell breaks a 1-1 tie with a three-run home run in the sixth inning leading his Triplets past the Sanford Spinners 7-1. The game is umpired by a pair of pitchers - Sanford's Andrew McIntyre and Tri-City's Charlie Cuellar - after league president J.P. Wells refuses to assign arbitrators to the game following a game in Leaksville two nights earlier with Danville when angry Triplet fans attack umpire Omar Kelly.

Keyed by Ferrell's pitching (3-1 & 1 save) and hitting (20 home runs, 70 RBIs, .332), Leaksville wins 20 of its last 22 games and clinches the Bi-State League pennant on the second-to-final day of the season with a 12-5 win over Martinsville. In 1942, as a player/manager for the Lynchburg Senators in the Virginia (C) League Wes hits .361 with 31 home runs and 99 RBIs in 123 games. In 1948, with the Marion Marauders in the Western Carolina (D) League, a 40-year-old Ferrell hits .425 with 30 doubles, 14 triples and 24 home runs and drives in 119 runs in 104 games.

Tri-City Baseball Park, Draper, North Carolina, "Home of the Triplets"



Wes (L) and Rick (R) Ferrell
1935 Boston Red Sox

Rick Ferrell hits .281 with 734 RBIs in 18 seasons with the St. Louis Browns, Washington Senators and Boston Red Sox. Considered by many to be the best defensive catcher of his era, Rick Ferrell is inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1984. Between 1929 and 1947 the Guilford College product throws out 44 percent of attempted base stealers and bats over .300 four times and is named to eight All-Star teams.

Wes Ferrell wins over 20 games six times, posting a 193-128 career mark in 15 seasons for an impressive 60 percent winning percentage. A two-time All-Star, Wes still holds the record for most home runs hit by a pitcher (37), including nine for the Cleveland Indians in 1931.

1941 Bi-State League - Final Standings

Team	W	L	Pct	GB	Manager
Leaksville-Draper-Spray Triplets	64	46	.582	--	Tim Murchison/Wes Ferrell
Martinsville Manufacturers	63	49	.563	2	George Ferrell
Danville-Schoolfield Leafs	64	50	.561	2	Elmer Yoter
Sanford Spinners	58	54	.518	7	Zeb Harrington
Mt. Airy Graniteers	42	70	.375	23	Jimmy Maus
*Mayodan Millers	25	47	.347	--	Taylor Sanford

*disbanded on July 18

Post-Season Playoffs (Best of 7):

Sanford d. Martinsville 4-3-1
Danville d. Leaksville-Draper-Spray 4-1

Finals (Best of 7):

Sanford d. Danville 4-2

Mayodan Demise

July 4: The owners of the Mayodan Millers "surrender" their club to league officials after a deal to transfer the struggling franchise to Reidsville, North Carolina, falls through; the Millers are in last place with a 25-38 record.

July 5: Two hours before a scheduled league meeting to discuss the transfer of the Mayodan franchise to Reidsville, Mayodan President J.V. Highfill meets with league President J.P. Wells and posts "sufficient" funds to continue operations ... it is reported that the Mayodan players have not been paid since the first week in June.

July 18: Hours after losing their 13th-straight game, a 9-4 decision to Danville, Mayodan finally officials "throw in the towel" and suspend operations.