

# Cups of Coffee: Joe Rabbitt

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In the annals of baseball history there have been some unusual, but entirely appropriate, names that often reflect the player's abilities, or lack thereof.

"Muscle" Shoals hits 362 homers in 15 minor league seasons. Tony Suck really did, batting .151 and committing 32 errors in a 32-game major league career. Flame Delhi strikes out 187 and wins 27 games for the Pacific Coast League's Los Angeles Angels in 1911. "Creepy" Crespi? Check out the movie "The Creeper".

And then there is the aptly named Joe Rabbitt, one of the fastest players of his era who totals 450 career steals in 12 minor league seasons.

On September 21, 1922, Rabbitt gets his first major league plate appearance, collecting one hit in three at bats against Boston right hander Jack Quinn (348 career wins, including 247 in 23 major league seasons) in a 15-5 loss to the last-place Red Sox.

Rabbitt is one of 21 players, mostly rookies, used that afternoon by Cleveland manager Tris Speaker. Speaker later says that the use of so many players was, "An opportunity for the fans to see various minor league prospects."

Rabbitt does not play in the Indians' final six games of the season, concluding his major league career with a nifty .333 batting average.



Joe Rabbitt  
1902 Omaha Buffaloes

Born Joseph Patrick Rabbitt on January 16, 1900, the left-handed hitting outfielder plays 12 seasons in the minors, finishing with 1,900 hits, including 137 triples and a .299 career batting average.

Rabbitt will lead a league in stolen bases six times, including a career-high 55 thefts with the Southwestern League's Muskogee Mets in 1922.

On July 24, 1927, between games of a doubleheader, Rabbitt, playing for the Omaha Buffaloes, runs the bases in 13.25 seconds, tying the existing record set by Rochester Colts outfielder Maurice "Flash" Archdeacon in 1921

After graduating from high school in Hope, Arkansas, Rabbitt plays third base for the Hope Independents, the state amateur champions in 1920. Beginning his professional career in 1921 with the Pittsburg (Kansas) Pirates of the Southwestern (D) League, Rabbitt hits .299 with 15 doubles, nine triples and four home runs.

## All-Star Snub

A native of Frontenac, Kansas, Rabbitt enjoys a career season in 1927 with

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Joe Rabbitt  
1922 Cleveland Indians

## Joe Rabbitt - First Major League At Bat September 21, 1922

### ROOKIE INDIANS LOSE

After Red Sox Get Big Lead, Rookies Are Sent In For Cleveland

CLEVELAND, Sept. 21.—Boston defeated Cleveland 15 to 5 in the final game of the series here today. After Boston had taken a big lead, Manager Speaker sent in recruits and the game developed into a farce.

Score:

| Boston—          | AB    | R | H  | PO | A  | E |
|------------------|-------|---|----|----|----|---|
| Menonky, lf..    | .. 4  | 1 | 4  | 5  | 0  | 0 |
| Miller, cf..     | .. 5  | 1 | 2  | 3  | 0  | 1 |
| Burns, 1b..      | .. 5  | 2 | 3  | 13 | 1  | 0 |
| Pratt, 2b..      | .. 4  | 1 | 1  | 3  | 7  | 1 |
| O'Rourke, 3b..   | .. 4  | 1 | 1  | 1  | 3  | 0 |
| J. Collins, rf.. | .. 6  | 1 | 2  | 1  | 0  | 0 |
| Mitchell, ss..   | .. 6  | 1 | 0  | 0  | 3  | 1 |
| Chaplin, c..     | .. 4  | 4 | 1  | 2  | 1  | 0 |
| Quinn, p..       | .. 1  | 3 | 1  | 1  | 2  | 0 |
| Totals..         | .. 33 | 2 | 15 | 27 | 17 | 2 |

| Cleveland—       | AB    | R | H  | PO | A  | E |
|------------------|-------|---|----|----|----|---|
| Jamieson, lf..   | .. 3  | 1 | 1  | 2  | 0  | 0 |
| L. Sewell, c..   | .. 2  | 0 | 0  | 2  | 0  | 0 |
| Wamby, ss..      | .. 3  | 0 | 0  | 3  | 3  | 0 |
| Sorrels, ss..    | .. 1  | 0 | 0  | 0  | 3  | 0 |
| Summa, rf..      | .. 5  | 1 | 1  | 1  | 3  | 0 |
| Gardner, 3b..    | .. 3  | 0 | 2  | 0  | 2  | 0 |
| Kahlot, 3b..     | .. 1  | 0 | 0  | 1  | 1  | 0 |
| J. Sowell, 2b..  | .. 3  | 1 | 0  | 5  | 2  | 0 |
| Stephenson, 2b.. | .. 1  | 2 | 1  | 2  | 0  | 0 |
| McNulty, cf..    | .. 2  | 1 | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0 |
| McInnis, 1b..    | .. 3  | 0 | 1  | 6  | 1  | 0 |
| Clanton, 1b..    | .. 1  | 0 | 0  | 1  | 0  | 1 |
| O'Neill, c..     | .. 3  | 0 | 0  | 3  | 1  | 1 |
| Drake, p..       | .. 0  | 0 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0 |
| Middletown, p..  | .. 1  | 0 | 1  | 0  | 1  | 0 |
| Morton, p..      | .. 0  | 0 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0 |
| Haman, p..       | .. 0  | 0 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0 |
| Rabbitt, lf..    | .. 3  | 0 | 1  | 1  | 0  | 0 |
| Winn, p..        | .. 0  | 0 | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0 |
| zSpeaker..       | .. 1  | 0 | 1  | 3  | 0  | 0 |
| zzEvans..        | .. 0  | 0 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0 |
| Totals..         | .. 36 | 5 | 10 | 27 | 18 | 2 |

zBattel for Drake in 8th.  
zzRan for Speaker in 8th.  
Score by innings:  
Boston.. .. 002 330 106—15..  
Cleveland.. .. 100 002 020— 6



## Joe Rabbitt [2 of 2]:

the Omaha Buffaloes hitting .361 with 36 doubles, 26 triples and leading the Western (A) Association in at bats (696), runs scored (172), hits (251) and stolen bases (48). Nonetheless 26-year-old outfielder is denied a berth on the league's all-star team in lieu of Bloomington's Paul Easterling (.342-14-77), Springfield's Ted Menze (.314-23-111) and Peoria's William Mizeur (.354-23-128).

### Convicted

On July 9, 1925, Rabbitt, playing for the Shreveport Sports of the Texas (A) League, is convicted of assaulting Bob Tarleton, the team's business manager underneath the stands during a game with Fort Worth earlier in the week. Rabbitt is fined a total of \$20 and costs for both the city and state.



Joe Rabbitt.

Sent to the Little Rock Travelers two weeks

later, Rabbitt claims to have a \$75 bonus due him by the Sports. Tarleton tells the judge that Rabbitt is not due any money and that everything between the player and the team has been settled in full.

Rabbitt passes away on December 5, 1969, in Norwalk, Connecticut, at the age of 69.

## Joe Rabbitt Year by Year:

| Year                       | Team                     | League           | Lev             | AB          | HT          | 2B         | 3B         | HR         | SB         | AVG         |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| 1920                       | Hope (Ark.) Independents |                  | Ind.            | -           | -           | -          | -          | -          | -          | --          |
| 1921                       | Pittsburg Pirates        | Southwestern     | D               | 452         | 135         | 15         | 9          | 4          | 30         | .299        |
| 1922                       | Muskogee Mets            | Southwestern     | C               | 580         | 172         | 20         | 8          | 2          | <b>55</b>  | .297        |
|                            | Cleveland Indians        | AMERICAN         | ML              | 3           | 1           | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | .333        |
| 1923                       | Muskogee Mets            | Southwestern     | C               | 362         | 114         | 22         | 3          | 14         | <b>49</b>  | .315        |
| 1924                       | Beaumont Exporters       | Texas            | A               | 600         | 188         | 41         | 11         | 6          | <b>52</b>  | .313        |
| <b>1925</b>                | <b>3 Teams</b>           | <b>2 Leagues</b> | <b>A</b>        | <b>567</b>  | <b>166</b>  | <b>25</b>  | <b>15</b>  | <b>7</b>   | <b>24</b>  | <b>.293</b> |
|                            | Shreveport, Dallas       | Texas            | A               | 269         | 80          | 18         | 6          | 5          | 14         | .297        |
|                            | Little Rock Travelers    | Southern         | A               | 298         | 86          | 7          | 9          | 2          | 10         | .289        |
| 1926                       | San Antonio Bears        | Texas            | A               | 537         | 163         | 25         | 5          | 3          | 21         | .304        |
| 1927                       | Omaha Buffaloes          | Western          | A               | 696         | <b>251</b>  | 36         | <b>26</b>  | 20         | <b>49</b>  | .361        |
| 1928                       | Toronto Maple Leafs      | International    | AA              | 552         | 143         | 35         | 13         | 8          | <b>42</b>  | .259        |
| 1929                       | Toronto Maple Leafs      | International    | AA              | <b>685</b>  | 197         | 36         | <b>18</b>  | 16         | <b>46</b>  | .288        |
| 1930                       | Toronto Maple Leafs      | International    | AA              | 557         | 165         | 28         | 9          | 9          | 37         | .296        |
| 1931                       | Toronto Maple Leafs      | International    | AA              | 528         | 140         | <b>18</b>  | 12         | 13         | 30         | .265        |
| <b>1932</b>                | <b>4 Teams</b>           | <b>2 Leagues</b> | <b>B/AA</b>     | <b>240</b>  | <b>66</b>   | <b>3</b>   | <b>8</b>   | <b>0</b>   | <b>15</b>  | <b>.277</b> |
|                            | Toronto Maple Leafs      | International    | AA-B            | 0           | 0           | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | .000        |
|                            | Buffalo Bisons           | International    | AA              | 2           | 0           | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | ---         |
|                            | Scranton, Williamsport   | New York-Penn    | B               | 238         | 66          | 3          | 8          | 1          | 15         | .277        |
| 1933                       | Brooklyn Bushwicks       |                  | Ind.            | -           | -           | -          | -          | -          | -          | --          |
| 1934                       | Ridgewood Farmers        |                  | Ind.            | -           | -           | -          | -          | -          | -          | --          |
| <b>Minor League Totals</b> |                          |                  | <b>12 years</b> | <b>6354</b> | <b>1900</b> | <b>304</b> | <b>137</b> | <b>102</b> | <b>450</b> | <b>.299</b> |
| <b>Major League Totals</b> |                          |                  | <b>1 year</b>   | <b>3</b>    | <b>1</b>    | <b>0</b>   | <b>0</b>   | <b>0</b>   | <b>0</b>   | <b>.333</b> |

**Bold denotes led league**

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