

Charlie Smith, "Done In By a Resin Bag"

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Smith's Baseball May Be Over

On June 16, 1947, 30-year-old Greensboro Patriots catcher Charlie Smith has his career come to an unexpected and abrupt end when he is hit in the right eye by a resin bag tossed by Raleigh Capitals pitcher Charlie Timm at the conclusion of Raleigh's 8-6 Carolina (C) League victory.

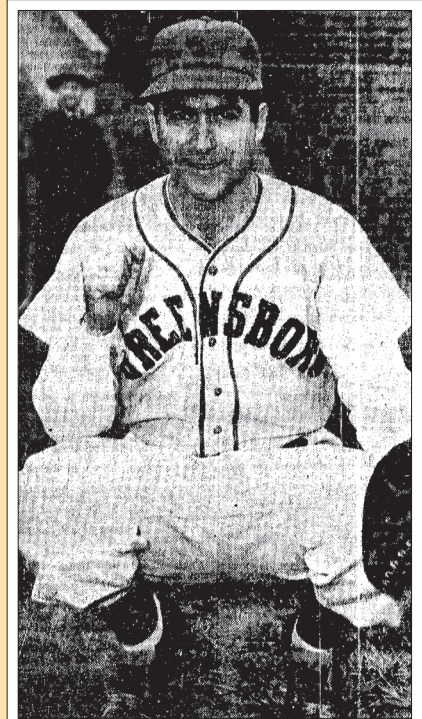
Walking off the mound following the last out of a 12-hit complete game victory, the 32-year-old Timm tosses the resin bag towards his dugout where he hits Smith, who is coming from the third base coaching box, squarely in the right eye.

Injured Eye Now Serious

Mishap Assists
Class Man Cut

Smith's eye is badly bloodshot and his vision already severely impaired when he visits Dr. Claude Whittington, the club physician, and Dr. Chuck Mills on June 19. The two doctors determine that the Mobile, Alabama, native has a detached retina with multiple hemorrhages. Whittington tells team officials that Smith has only a 50/50 chance of regaining his eyesight enough to play baseball again.

Needing to create a roster spot, the Patriots immediately give Smith the "pink slip," forcing the injured catcher, his wife and two children, Charlie, Jr., eight, and Elizabeth, four, to leave the next day for their home in Mobile. Smith, who is hitting a solid .312 with 10 doubles, three home runs and 32 RBIs at the time of the injury, is told to return in six weeks for a follow-up examination.



Charlie Smith
1947 Greensboro Patriots

Charlie Smith Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Level	AB	HT	2B	3B	HR	RBI	AVG
1936	Jeanerette Blues	Evangeline	D	594	176	37	11	15	71	.296
1937	Jeanerette Blues	Evangeline	D	536	145	24	8	5	50	.271
1938	2 Teams	2 Leagues	C-A1	549	147	27	7	10	78	.268
	Longview Cannibals	East Texas	C	493	134	26	7	10	73	.272
	Dallas Steers	Texas	A1	56	13	1	0	0	5	.232
1939	4 Teams	4 Leagues	C-B-D-A1	332	109	27	3	3	-	.328
	Dallas Rebels	Texas	A1	20	5	2	1	0	4	.250
	Midland Cowboys	WTexas/NMexico	D	41	16	5	0	2	-	.390
	Montgomery Rebels	Southeastern	B	48	12	4	0	0	-	.250
	Salina Millers	Western	C	223	76	16	2	1	-	.341
1940	2 Teams	2 Leagues	C-A1	323	84	15	6	1	-	.260
	Dallas Steers	Texas	A1	20	3	0	0	0	0	.150
	Longview Texans	East Texas	C	303	81	15	6	1	-	.267
1941	2 Teams	2 Leagues	D	385	85	8	0	1	-	.221
	Pampa Oilers	WTexas/NMexico	D	115	23	0	0	0	-	.200
	Lake Charles Skippers	Evangeline	D	270	62	8	0	1	-	.230
1944	Birmingham Barons	Southern	A1	272	83	20	2	1	51	.305
1945	Manila Dodgers	Military	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1946	Manila Dodgers	Military	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1947	Greensboro Patriots	Carolina	C	141	44	10	1	3	23	.312
Minor League Totals		8 Years		3132	873	168	38	39	-	.279

1938 - East Texas League All-Star

1947 - Carolina League All-Star Honorable Mention

At the start of the season, Smith is one of five "class men" on the Greensboro Patriot roster. Other class men are Emo Showfety, Woody Crowson, Henry Koch and James Burns. Each team in the Carolina League could employ up to five "class men", defined as players who have three or more years of experience at any level of organized professional baseball.

Smith's injury comes at a time when team management is debating what to do about their class man situation as 24 hours earlier, 31-year-old outfielder Bobby Falk, had his classification changed to class man status by the National Defense Service giving the Patriots six such players, one over the league limit.

Charlie Smith [2 of 5]:

Patriots manager Charlie Carroll says, "It was quite a blow to both Smitty and to us, because we was a mighty good catcher. It looks now as if he might be lost for the rest of the season, but Charlie has promised us that if he can play anymore and he does decide to play, he will return to Greensboro. We released him yesterday, and that enabled us to stay within league regulations on class men.

On July 6, Smith calls manager Carroll and tells him that his vision remains cloudy and that he has tried to play catch but he can't see the ball.

Four months after the injury at the age of 27, Smith gives up his baseball career and joins the Mobile police force.

The 5-foot-9, 185-pound right-handed hitting catcher, outfielder and corner infielder breaks into pro ball with the Jeanerette Blues of the Evangeline (D) League as a second baseman before turning to catching two years later. In eight minor league seasons with 10 different teams, Smith has 168 doubles, 38 triples, 39 home runs, a .279 career batting average and a .394 slugging percentage. His best season comes as a 19-year-old rookie with Jeanerette in 1936, where he hits .296 with 37 doubles, 11 triples, 15 home runs and 71 runs batted in.

Following a .305 season with the Birmingham Barons in 1944, Smith is drafted into the US Army and serves two years (1945-1946) in the Philippines. In 1946 Smith plays for Kirby Higbe's Manila Dodgers in what Smith later terms "double A" ball".

Dallas Morning News, March 8, 1939

Four Catchers and Only Two Jobs Open



—News Staff Photo.

CHARLES SMITH, BILL CRONIN, MYRON HAYWORTH AND JAMES MAEDGEN.

The Dallas baseball club will carry only two catchers, so this squad of four candidates for these jobs will have to do some eliminating before cutting down time and only two will stay. Veteran of the lot is Cronin, bought during the winter from Portland, Ore., of the Pacific Coast League. Next in line of experience is Hayworth, whose brother, Ray, is a regular backstop now with the Brooklyn Dodgers. He was bought in December from the Augusta (Ga.) club. Smith, who started out to be an infielder, was tried behind the plate at Longview last summer and showed much promise. Maedgen, who is merely working out and has not yet been offered a contract, is right off the campus of the University of Texas.

April 7, 1936

Charlie Smith Professional Baseball Debut Jeanerette, Louisiana

New Iberia—					Jeanerette—				
AB	H	PO	A		AB	H	PO	A	
M'Gwn rf	4	1	1	0	Krlika ss	4	0	1	0
Doty 2b	3	1	6	4	Smith 3b	4	1	1	2
Francine 3b	4	0	1	3	Squires lf	4	0	2	0
Lamey lf	4	2	4	0	Kimbrli rf	4	0	0	1
Smith cf	3	1	1	1	Lpsemb 2b	2	0	4	2
Wysock c	4	1	0	0	King cf	2	1	3	6
Radlfr lb	3	1	9	0	Yates c	3	1	11	3
Mosly ss	3	1	2	3	Manning 1b	2	1	4	0
Wallace p	3	0	0	2	Adams p	3	0	1	1

Totals 31 8 24 13 Totals 28 4 27 9
Score by innings:
New Iberia 010 000 000—1 8—1
Jeanerette 000 020 00*—2 4 0
Summary—Runs, Lamey, King, Yates;
error, Francoline; runs batted in, Wysock,
Manning; two-base hit, D. L. Smith; sacrifices, D. L. Smith, Doty; left on base,
New Iberia 6, Jeanerette 5; base on balls,
off Wallace 3, off Adams 1; struck out,
by Adams 11; passed balls, Yates; umpires, Ellis and Cohn; time of game, 1:46.

CHARLIE SMITH CHRONOLOGY

April 7, 1936

Playing third base and batting second for the Jeanerette Blues in their 1936 season opener, Smith goes 1-for-4 and handles all three fielding opportunities cleanly in his professional baseball debut ... Smith's first-inning single is one of only four hits off of New Iberia right-hander Lloyd Wallace ... Jeanerette's Ace Adams strikes out 11 Cardinals in a 2-1 Blues' win.

April 30, 1936

Smith powers a 12th-inning, 400-foot home run over the left-centerfield wall giving Jeanerette a 4-3 win over visiting New Iberia in a Evangeline (D) League game.

May 7, 1936

In a wild 15-14 win over the home-standing Lafayette White Sox, Smith goes 2-for-4 with two runs scored and two RBIs and is one of five players to hit a home run in the first night game ever played at the Parkdale Park in Lafayette.

July 19, 1937

Smith hits a two-out grand slam home run in the bottom of the eighth off of future major league all-star pitcher Red Munger to give Jeanerette a 4-2 win over New Iberia.

Charlie Smith [3 of 5]:

July 25, 1937

Smith suffers scalp lacerations and Jeanerette manager Carlos Moore is seriously injured when the team bus, that Smith is driving, collides with a car driven by Mrs. Frances LaSalle near Olivier, Louisiana ... the team is en route to Abbeville when LaSalle's car spins across the highway striking the bus.

Smith chooses to run the bus into a ditch rather than "run down" the car ahead of him ... Moore, who pitches four games for the Washington Senators in 1930, is "crippled" for the remainder of the season and 19-year-old second baseman Buddy Townsend is out for 30 days with an injured ankle.

July 16, 1938

Smith is one of five players from the Longview Cannibals named to the East Texas League All-Star game.

Smith To Pilot Midland Cowboys

DALLAS, May 26.—(P)—Recall of Charlie Smith, catcher and infielder, from the Montgomery, Ala., club of the southeastern league, was announced today by President George Schepps of the Dallas Rebels of the Texas league.

Schepps said Smith would be moved to Midland in the West Texas-New Mexico league to become manager, succeeding Jimmy Kerr, released.

May 26, 1939

Smith is hitting .250 for the Montgomery Rebels of the Southeastern (B) League when he is recalled by the Dallas Rebels of the Texas League ... Rebels' President George Schepps announces that Smith, despite being only 22 years of age and in his fourth year of professional baseball, will be sent to Midland in the West Texas-New Mexico League where he succeeds Jimmy Kerr as the team's manager.

May 30, 1939

Smith makes his managerial debut with a 12-11 victory over the Big Spring Barons.

June 8, 1939

Newspapers report that the Midland Cowboys are having financial problems ... Smith's managerial tenure lasts less

than two weeks when he and Charley Wilson, the team's business manager, resign their positions.

"The Lake Charles Evangeline League club had a nice, long hayride the other day. Leaving for a game at Lafayette, 70 miles away, they were stopped 15 miles short with a telegram from its owner, Joe Bratcher, saying the game was rained out. The bus turned back and Bratcher met it 15 miles out of Lake Charles with the information the telegram was all a mistake. About-facing again, the team arrived at Lafayette five minutes before game time to find the game really was rained out."

May 7, 1941 - Biloxi Daily Herald

September 11, 1941

In August, Smith takes over as the manager of the Evangeline League's Lake Charles Clippers and in the season finale (September 11) against the Port Arthur Tarpons, Smith makes his pitching debut but fails to last an inning in a 10-1 loss ... Smith also allows Jimmy Vaughan to wear a raincoat in left field during the game ... Vaughan has one putout, an assist and one error.

Baseball Players Hurt In Collision Of Bus And Car

New Iberia, La., July 26.—(AP)—The manager of the Jeanerette baseball team in the Evangeline League, Carlos Moore, former big league player with Washington, today in the General Hospital battled serious injuries received in a highway crash last night.

Moore and the Jeanerette Blues were riding in a bus to Abbeville to play the Abbeville Athletics.

Deputies said the bus collided with a passenger car operated by Mrs. Frances LaSalle of Segura, La. They reported the wheels of the car were caught in a rut near here and that in wrenching

them free Mrs. LaSalle spun across the highway before the oncoming bus.

Charles Smith, third baseman for the Blues, driving the vehicle, swung it into a ditch after the passenger car had graced it.

Katherine and David LaSalle, children of Mrs. LaSalle, and five Jeanerette players were injured slightly. The men were Smith, who suffered scalp lacerations, John Taylor, Chris Norman, "Biddy" Townsend and Edmond Lapot.

Manager Moore once played with New Orleans in the Southern Association.

1941 proves to be an eventful year for the Evangeline League's Lake Charles Skippers ...

1941

Not Superstitious--- He Just Likes Frogs

LAKE CHARLES, La., Apr. 21 (P)—Baseball fans, puzzled for years by the strange bulge in the cap of Jimmy Lawrence, manager of the Lake Charles Skippers in the Evangeline league, have discovered the cause.

"It's a live horned toad," said Lawrence. "I've worn a toad in my cap for the last four years. Not superstitious. It just feels good up there."

Lawrence said he developed a fondness for toads while playing football with the Horned Frogs of Texas Christian university.

Wears Raincoat In Left Field

Player Gets Away
Without Fine

LAKE CHARLES, La., Sept. 12.—Raising an umbrella outside the dugout to indicate to the umpires it was slightly wet cost Frankie Frisch, manager of the Pittsburgh Pirates, a \$50 fine, but Outfielder Jimmy Vaughan of the Lake Charles Skippers got away with wearing a raincoat in left field in the final home game of the Evangeline league season with Port Arthur, played in a drizzle. He had one putout, an assist and an error.

With nothing to gain or lose, the Skippers bowed, 10 to 1, to the Tarpons, outfielders and infielders trading positions and Manager Charley Smith starting as a pitcher. The pilot didn't last an inning.

Charlie Smith [4 of 5]:

**September 2, 1941
Charlie Smith Pitching Debut
Lake Charles, Louisiana**

Port Arthur—	AB	R	H	PO	A	E
Sarver, 1b	5	3	3	3	0	0
Wright, rf	4	1	2	1	1	0
Black, cf	5	0	1	3	1	0
Ludwig, ss	4	1	2	2	4	1
Birchfield, lf	5	1	1	0	0	0
Cappell, 2b	4	1	2	4	2	1
Jeanron, 3b	5	2	2	0	4	0
Grigg, c	4	2	2	8	0	0
B. Smith, p	4	0	2	0	1	0

Totals	AB	R	H	PO	A	E
Totals	40	10	17	27	13	2
Lake Charles—	AB	R	H	PO	A	E
MacDonald, rf	4	0	1	1	1	0
Jones, 3b	4	0	0	2	4	1
Yaughan, lf	4	0	0	1	1	1
Moore, ss	3	0	0	3	5	0
Hodge, cf	4	0	1	2	1	0
Mosel, 1b	4	1	1	12	2	0
Carlson, 2b	4	0	1	2	4	0
Lawrence, c	3	0	2	3	3	2
C. Smith, p	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wiggins, p	4	0	1	1	2	0
Totals	34	1	7	27	23	4

Score by innings:
 Port Arthur 2 2 1 0 0 2—10
 Lake Charles 0 1 0 0 0 0—1
 Runs batted in, Lawrence, Wright 2, Grigg, B. Smith, Cappell 2; two-base hits, Sarver, Wright, Mosel. Grigg; home run, Cappell; stolen base, Jeanron; double plays, Wright to Grigg, Ludwig to Cappell to Sarver; left on bases, Port Arthur 9, Lake Charles 8; bases on balls, off Wiggins 4, B. Smith 2; struck out, by B. Smith 6, Wiggins 2; hits, off C. Smith in 1 inning 2 hits and 2 runs. Umpires, Estell and Carter. Time, 2 hours.

May 8, 1944

After being out of baseball for the past two years, Smith signs with the Birmingham Barons of the Southern (A1) Association ... 19-year-old Dick Wentworth is suspended to make room for Smith who will hit .305 for the Barons in 83 games.

July 18, 1944

Smith breaks his hand during a game in his hometown of Mobile.

March 23, 1947

Fourteen pitchers and catchers take to the field as the Greensboro Patriots hold their first practice of the season ... Smith is among four catchers in camp, including 19-year-old Louis Marsh whom Smith "brings along" from Mobile ... Marsh does not make the team ... two Georgetown University dropouts - James Marlarkey and Albert Thompson - are also trying out for the team; Malarkey fails in his attempt to make the roster, however Thompson does make the final cut and will go 5-5 with a 5.31 ERA in his rookie season.

April 7, 1947

Smith leaves the team for his home in Mobile, Alabama for an undisclosed reason.

June 15, 1947

Smith collects the 873rd and final base hit of his eight year minor league career with a single in four at bats in the Patriots' 8-7 win in 10 innings over the league-leading Durham Bulls.

13

Birmingham Barons general manager Paul Florence picks No. 13 for catcher Charlie Smith when he orders uniforms for the 1945 team ... on November 13, Smith becomes the 13th player lost by the Barons to another league when he is drafted by Louisville of the American Association ... Smith is inducted into the military and never reports to the Colonels.

June 16, 1947

Raleigh scores seven runs in the second inning and then coasts the rest of the way for its 8-6 win over the visiting Patriots ... Capital 1B Dave Baxter keys the uprising with a two-run home run ... at the end of Raleigh's 8-6 victory, Timm, a 32-year-old minor league veteran, throws the resin bag towards his dugout where it hits Smith who had been coaching third base.

July 6, 1947

Smith calls Greensboro manager Carroll and tells him that his vision is still cloudy and that he has tried to play catch but he can't see the ball.

July 31, 1947

On the same day that President Truman orders "drastic reductions" in the upcoming duck hunting season as a result of a sharp decline in the nation's waterfowl population, Smith visits with his former teammate prior to that night's game with Winston-Salem.

Duck Season And Bag Limit Undergo Drastic Reductions

**June 16, 1947
Greensboro Patriots vs. Raleigh Capitals
Memorial Stadium, Raleigh, North Carolina**

GREENSBORO				RALEIGH					
	a	b	r	a	b	r	a		
Butzer, lf	5	1	2	0	Lockamy, 2b	2	1	1	3
Lamb, 3b	5	1	3	0	Joe Mills, lf	3	1	1	0
Burns, 2b	3	1	0	2	Edwards, ss	4	1	2	3
Topkins, ss	4	1	2	5	Baxter, 1b	4	2	2	4
Kunde, 1b	4	0	2	1	Sullivan, c	4	1	2	1
Taylor, rf	4	0	0	0	Carenb'r, rf	4	1	1	0
Falk, cf	4	1	1	0	Jim Mills, cf	4	1	1	0
Pickard, c	4	0	1	1	Pepio, 3b	3	0	1	2
Speaks, p	3	1	2		Timm, p	3	0	0	6
aCarroll	1	0	0	0					

Totals 37 6 12 11 Totals 31 8 11 21
 aBatted for Speaks in 9th.

GREENSBORO 000 210 021—6
 Raleigh 070 100 00x—8

E—Pepio. RBI—Butzer, Lamb, Topkins 3, Lockamy, Edwards, Baxter 3, Sullivan, Jim Mills, Timm. 2B—Speaks, Lamb. 3B—Lockamy, Baxter. HR—Topkins, Baxter. S—Timm. DP—Topkins, Burns to Kunde 2; Edwards to Baxter; Pepio to Lockamy to Baxter. LOB—Greensboro 5; Raleigh 5. BOB—Speaks 5, Timm 1. SO—Speaks 2, Timm 1. U—Phillips and Sermon. T—1:37.

Charlie Smith [5 of 5]:

"Oh, I'm feeling fine," Smith observes, "but I still can't see. I caught batting practice for the Atlanta Crackers when they were in Mobile, and I just couldn't see the ball too well."

One of the reasons given for the decline in waterfowl totals is that veterans returning from the service are now more interested in hunting and are far better shots than prior to World War II. It is noted that hunters have increased their pre-war average of 600,000 kills a season to over 2,000,000 in 1946.

October 1947

Smith gives up his baseball career and joins the Mobile police force.