

Cups of Coffee: Rufus Meadows

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On April 23, 1926, a teenage left-hander with the melodious name of Rufus Rivers Meadows makes his major league debut with the Cincinnati Reds. In an 18-1 loss to the Chicago Cubs, the sandlot twirler relieves Pea Ridge Day with two outs in the sixth inning and retires Cubs' third baseman Cliff Heathcote on a ground ball (unassisted) to first baseman Wally Pipp to end a seven run onslaught.

At 18 years of age, Meadows is the second-youngest player to make his major league debut in 1926, trailing only 17-year-old Mel Ott of the New York Giants.

For the Chase City, Virginia, native and cousin of Pittsburgh Pirates' right-hander Lee Meadows, his one-batter appearance not only marks his major league debut, but his major league finale as well. And he is the only pitcher in history to have faced only one batter in his major league career.

Born on August 25, 1907, Meadows will pitch 16 years in the minor leagues from 1924 to 1939, finishing with a 159-159 mark in 488 appearances and 2,795 innings pitched.

A 16-year-old Meadows makes his pro debut in 1924 with the last-place Petersburg Goobers (46-89) of the fast B-level Virginia League. The red-haired lefty, despite being acclaimed among Commonwealth scribes for his curveball, finishes 0-8 in 10 appearances.

CUBS SMOTHER THE REDS, 18 TO 1

Three Pitchers Hammered for 20 Hits—Rookie Keeps Binges Scattered.

Chicago, April 23—(A.P.)—Chicago went on a batting rampage against Cincinnati today and drove Carl Mays off the mound in the sixth, continuing the assault on Day and Springer, while the Reds' infield went to pieces to give the Cubs their fourth consecutive victory, 18 to 1. Charley Root, Pacific Coast League rookie, kept the Cincinnati hits well scattered. Score:

Cin.	AB	H	O	Chicago	AB	H	O
Bohne ss	2	0	0	Adams 2b	6	3	2
Emmer ss	2	0	1	Heathcote lf	4	2	4
Pinelli 3b	4	0	1	Munson rf	4	1	2
Roush cf	3	3	0	Wilson cf	4	2	4
Bressler lf	3	1	2	Freigau 3b	6	3	1
Springer p	1	0	0	Grimm 1b	6	4	8
Lucas p	0	0	0	Cooney ss	4	2	2
Pipp 1b	3	1	13	Gonzales c	4	1	4
Walker rf	4	2	1	Root p	5	2	0
Critz 2b	4	0	1				
Picinich c	2	0	0				
Hargrave c	0	0	1				
Mays p	2	1	1				
Day p	0	0	0				
Meadows p	0	0	0				
Christe'n lf	1	0	0				

Totals	31	8	24	Totals	43	20	27
Cincinnati	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Chicago	0	1	3	0	1	7	0

Errors—Bohne, Emmer, Critz. Two-base hits—Roush, Heathcote, Cooney, 2; Gonzales, Mays, Adams, 2; Wilson. Three-base hits—Munson. Stolen bases—Cooney, Gonzales. Left on bases—Cincinnati, 8; Chicago, 9. Bases on balls—Off Mays, 2; off Root, 2; off Springer, 2. Struck out—By Root, 4; by Mays, 1; by Springer, 1. Hit by pitcher—By Springer (Munson). Losing pitcher—Mays.

June 19, 1932
Montreal Royals at Newark Bears
Ruppert Stadium, Newark, New Jersey

Rufe Meadows Hurls No-Hit No-Run Game for Bear Nine

MONTREAL					NEWARK					
	abr	h	o	a		abr	h	o	a	
G'treau 2b	3	0	0	1	4	Neun 1b	4	1	2	9
Conlan lf	3	0	0	0	1	Rolfe ss	4	1	2	2
Thomas 3b	2	0	0	3	0	Walker cf	4	1	3	4
Shiver rf	2	0	0	0	0	Saltzer 2b	3	0	1	1
Ripple cf	1	0	0	0	1	Jensen rf	3	1	1	1
Mars'all ss	3	0	0	1	2	Hill lf	2	2	1	2
Henry 1b	2	0	0	1	0	Owen 3b	3	1	3	1
Susec c	2	0	0	1	2	Brenzel c	3	1	2	1
McAfee p	2	0	0	0	2	Meadows p	2	0	0	0
xHead	1	0	0	0	0					
Totals	21	0	0	18	12	Totals	28	8	15	21

x—Batted for Henry in 7th.
Montreal 0 0 0 0 0 0 0—0
Newark 5 1 1 0 0 1 x—8
Runs batted in—Rolfe, 2; Owen, 2; Brenzel, Walker. Error—Shiver. Two-base hit—Rolfe. Three-base hit—Hill. Home runs—Rolfe, Walker. Stolen base—Ripple. Sacrifices—Meadows. Left on bases—Montreal, 4; Newark, 4. Base on balls—off McAfee, 1; Meadows, 4. Struck out—by Meadows, 1. Umpires—Carroll and Sommers. Time—1:15.

A year later, Meadows drops down two classifications to the Cotton States (D) League and fashions an 8-4 mark with the Jackson Red Sox, allowing only 123 hits in 144 innings. Following the season, the 17-year-old, now with two years of experience under his belt is drafted by the Cincinnati Reds and invited to the team's preseason camp next spring.

Meadows pitches well enough in spring training to impress manager Jack Hendricks and the now-grizzled 18-year-old makes the Reds' opening day roster. On April 23, nine games into the season, Meadows debuts with his one-batter performance.

Three days later, on April 26, Meadows leaves the team for his home in Virginia after receiving word of the sudden death of his 26-year-old sister Addie Lee. Expected to return to the team within the week, Meadows, without fanfare, is sold back to the Jackson Red Sox.

Rufus Meadows [2 of 3]:

In late July, Jackson president George Brannon announces that red-headed lefty has been released outright, noting that he hasn't "been right" all season and has actually asked for his release. Meadows stays in the Cotton States League, signing with the Alexandria Reds, where he goes 4-4 in 17 outings, before ending up with a semipro team in Tchula, Mississippi, where the estimated population is a little over 600.

That September, he signs with the Texas League's Fort Worth Panthers, but each of the next two years he fails to make the team and returns to the now-familiar haunts of the Cotton States League, where he wins 14 and 10 games in back-to-back seasons for the Monroe Drillers and pitching 440 innings in the process.

However, the third time proves to be a charm for the Virginian, when he makes the Fort Worth roster in 1929, finishing with a 7-9 mark over 33 appearances.

In 1931, he is 12-17 with the Topeka Senators and leads the Western (A) League in strikeouts with 177. Meadows comes close to pitching three no-hitters that season, losing one with two outs in the ninth inning and two others in the eighth inning. Despite his 17 losses, he earns him another spring training invite, this time with the New York Yankees.

His effort to make the Yankees' opening day roster is hampered when he is struck on the shin by a baseball hit by Babe Ruth. The subsequent swelling keeps him on the sideline for a week and leads to his release to the Newark Bears on March 28.

BOSTON RED SOX BEAT LOUISVILLE COLONELS 7-3

Louisville, Ky., May 12. (P)—Rookie Ted Williams starred today as the Boston Red Sox whipped their American Association "cousins," the Louisville Colonels, 7 to 3, in an exhibition game.

Williams cracked a home run in the third and a double in the fifth.

Jake Wade, who eventually may be sent to Louisville, farm club of the Red Sox, went the route for Boston while Rufus Meadows pitched the distance for the Colonels.

Score: R. H. E.
Boston (A) 001 400 002-7 13 1
Louisville (AA) 001 000 002-3 11 2
Wade and Desautels, Peacock Berg; Meadows and Breese.

Rufus Meadows Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Level	W-L	GP	INN	H	BB	SO	ERA
1924	Petersburg Goobers	Virginia	B	0-8	10	68.0	76	35	14	3.97
1925	Jackson Red Sox	Cotton States	D	8-4	23	142.0	123	77	-	--
1926	Cincinnati Reds	NATIONAL	MLB	0-0	1	0.1	0	0	0	0.00
1926	Jackson Red Sox	Cotton States	D							
1926	Alexandria Reds	Cotton States	D	4-4	17	82.0	95	37	-	--
1927	Monroe Drillers	Cotton States	D	14-12	32	226.0	197	44	-	--
1928	Monroe Drillers	Cotton States	D	10-12	37	214.0	231	59	75	--
1928	Evansville Hubs	Three-I	B	-	-	-	-	-	-	--
1929	Fort Worth Panthers	Texas	A	7-9	33	145.0	161	55	-	5.15
1930	2 Teams	2 Leagues	A-D	10-19	37	214.0	226	88	-	5.00
	Wichita Aviators	Western	A	6-12	24	131.0	142	56	-	5.84
	Monroe Drillers	Cotton State	D	4-7	13	83.0	84	32	-	3.69
1931	Topeka Senators	Western	A	12-17	38	237.0	218	125	177	3.72
1932	Newark Bears	International	AA	9-6	27	143.0	138	74	46	4.53
1933	Atlanta Crackers	Southern	A	6-9	25	99.0	136	36	-	6.55
1934	2 Teams	2 Leagues	C-A	13-10	33	206.0	210	74	-	3.32
	Oklahoma City Indians	Texas	A	2-5	15	69.0	83	35	-	4.70
	Jacksonville Jax	West Dixie	C	11-5	18	137.0	127	39	-	2.63
1935	2 Teams	2 Leagues	C-A	8-14	31	195.0	180	42	-	2.72
	Nashville Volunteers	Southern	A	0-2	5	23.0	25	5	-	5.09
	Tyler Trojans	West Dixie	C	8-12	26	172.0	155	37	-	2.41
1936	Jacksonville Jax	East Texas	C	17-9	31	224.2	186	77	-	2.72
1937	Tyler Trojans	East Texas	C	25-6	42	261.0	241	91	-	2.66
1938	Louisville Colonels	American Association	AA	11-11	39	206.0	240	81	-	4.67
1939	2 Teams	2 Leagues	A1-AA	5-9	33	133.0	205	51	-	-
	Louisville Colonels	American Association	AA	0-0	4	6.0	11	2	-	--
	Little Rock Travelers	Southern	A1	5-9	29	127.0	194	49	-	5.60
1940	Louisville, Colorado	--	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	--
1941	Stearman Aviators	Kansas Semipro	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	--
Major League Totals		1 Season		0-0	1	0.1	0	0	0	0.00
Minor League Totals		16 Seasons		159-159	488	2795.2	2863	1046	-	--

'Ancient' Hearn Beat Goober Youngster In Final Scrap, 8-2; Colts Open Series Here Today



On August 18, 1924, the oldest and youngest pitchers in the Virginia League face off against one another in Petersburg's McKenzie Street Park. Wilson third baseman "Jazz Bo" Walters has a single, double and a triple in five trips to the plate and scores five times as the Bugs' 33-year-old Bunny Hearn (left) out-duels 16-year-old Petersburg lefty Rufus Meadows in an 8-2 Wilson victory. Meadows strikes out one, walks three and yields 14 hits in a complete game effort. The loss drops Ed Konetchy's last-place Goobers (40-65) to 10 1/2 games behind fifth-place Norfolk (49-53), a 5-2 winner over first-place Richmond.

Meadows is 9-6 with a 4.53 ERA for the first-place Bears, a team loaded with 25 former or future major leaguers, but his season is highlighted by his first career no-hitter against the Montreal Royals on June 19, in an seven inning 8-0 decision in the second game of a doubleheader.

Then came 1933, Wilbert Robinson, and his Atlanta Crackers. In the off-season, Robinson pays the Yankees \$5,000 (\$98,516 in today's money) for Meadows' services. Fans and media members accuse Robinson of purchasing "a lemon," but Robinson is steadfast in his support of Meadows and says he can tell a good pitcher by his legs and he insists that his newly-acquired slabster has "good legs."

Wilson third baseman "Jazz Bo" Walters has a single, double and a triple in five trips to the plate and scores five times as the Bugs' 33-year-old Bunny Hearn (left) out-duels 16-year-old Petersburg lefty Rufus Meadows in an 8-2 Wilson victory. Meadows strikes out one, walks three and yields 14 hits in a complete game effort. The loss drops Ed Konetchy's last-place Goobers (40-65) to 10 1/2 games behind fifth-place Norfolk (49-53), a 5-2 winner over first-place Richmond.

Rufus Meadows [3 of 3]:

Following a rough start to begin the season, Robinson first sends Meadows to a semipro team in Norcross and then follows that up with an appearance in a federal prison, where he takes a loss despite allowing the inmates only four hits.

Unfortunately, Meadows does not live up to Robinson's expectations, going 6-9 with a career-worst 6.55 ERA, and the following spring two days before the Crackers' 1934 season opener, the pitcher with "good legs" is sold to the Texas (A) League's Oklahoma City Indians.

In 1936 and 1937, Meadows enjoys career years in back-to-back seasons. In 1936, Meadows is 17-9 with the Jacksonville Jax with an East Texas (C) League-leading 2.72 ERA. A year later he is 25-6 with a 2.66 ERA for the Tyler Trojans and earns East Texas League All-Star honors.



Rufus Meadows
1939 Louisville Colonels



Rufus Meadows
1928 Monroe Drillers

May 2, 1930 Wichita Aviators vs. Des Moines Demons Western League Park, Des Moines, Iowa

Wichita—	AB	R	H	TS	SH	SB	PO	A	E
Jensen cf	4	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	0
Swansboro 1b	5	1	2	2	0	1	8	0	0
Johnson lf	5	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
Dugas rf	4	1	1	2	0	0	2	0	0
Vigars 3b	5	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	0
Sankey ss	4	1	1	1	1	0	2	3	0
Lindimore 2b	3	0	1	1	0	0	2	4	0
Harris c	4	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	0
Meadows p	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cano p	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newhill p	3	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0
aBerka	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yocke p	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Totals	39	6	9	11	2	1	24	9	0
Des Moines—	AB	R	H	TS	SH	SB	PO	A	E
Nielsen ss	3	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	1
Norris 2b	5	3	3	3	0	0	6	6	1
Oglesby 1b	5	2	2	2	0	0	12	1	0
Keyes rf	5	1	4	4	0	0	4	0	0
Hughes cf	4	2	2	2	0	0	2	0	0
Berger lf	5	1	3	5	0	0	1	0	0
Windham 3b	4	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
Lingle c	4	1	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
Tinning p	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	4	1
Totals	38	13	15	17	1	0	27	13	4

aBatted to Newhill in seventh.

Score by innings:

Wichita..... 0 0 0 2 0 0 4 0 0—6
Des Moines..... 11 0 1 0 0 1 0 0 *—13
Summary—Two base hits, Newhill, Dugas, Berger 2; sacrifice hits, Jensen, Sankey, Nielsen; stolen base, Swansboro; left on bases, Wichita 10, Des Moines 7; struck out, by Tinning 4, Newhill 1, Yocke 2; first on balls, off Tinning 3, Meadows 2, Cano 2, Newhill 1; runs and hits, off Meadows 6-4 in 0 inning (pitched to six batters in first inning), Cano 2-0 in 0 (pitched to two batters in first inning), Newhill 5-0 in 6, Yocke 0-0 in 2; earned runs, off Tinning 2, Meadows 6, Cano 2, Newhill 5; losing pitcher, Meadows. Umpires, Swazina, Hopper. Time, 2:10.

The first-ever night game in professional baseball takes place on May 2, 1930, when the Des Moines Demons host the Wichita Aviators in front of 12,000 spectators. Rufus Meadows starts for the Aviators in the historic game, but fails to record an out while allowing six runs on four hits and two walks, which probably has something to do with his 5.84 ERA at season's end.

Meadows' final pro season in 1939 starts off on the wrong foot as he is forced to sit in the stands during Louisville's season opener against the Milwaukee Brewers because