

Ona Dodd, "Horned Frog to a Pirate"

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**"One of the Pirates' recruits is named Ona Dodd. But he can't help that, poor fellow."
-Pittsburgh Press, January 27, 1912**

Born on October 14, 1886, in [Springtown, Texas](#), as the only child to George Dodd and Mattie Johnson, [Ona Melvin Dodd](#) has a brief major league career that lasts two months with the Pittsburgh Pirates during the later part of the 1912 season. During that span, the 5-foot-8 right-handed hitting utility infielder appears in only five games for Manager [Fred Clarke](#) before sent to the Columbus Cubs in the American Association, on September 27, as partial payment for 20-year-old rookie and future star pitcher [Wilbur Cooper](#).

Major League Debut

**Pittsburgh Pirates at Philadelphia Phillies
Baker Bowl, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
July 26, 1912**

PITTSBURGH	AB.	R.	H.	P.	A.	E.
Doolan, rf.....	2	0	0	0	0	0
Carey, lf.....	4	0	0	1	0	0
Wilson, cf.....	4	1	1	2	0	0
Wagner, ss.....	4	0	2	5	5	0
Miller, 1b.....	4	0	1	0	1	0
Viox, 3b.....	4	0	0	0	1	0
Dodd, 2b.....	3	0	0	0	0	0
Gibson, c.....	1	0	0	0	0	0
Simon, c.....	1	0	0	1	0	0
O'Toole, p.....	2	0	0	0	1	0
Adams, p.....	0	0	0	0	0	0
*Mensor.....	1	0	1	0	0	0
Hyatt.....	1	0	0	0	0	0
!Kelly.....	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals.....	31	1	6	24	11	0

PHILA.	AB.	R.	H.	P.	A.	E.
Paskert, of.....	3	2	2	0	0	0
Lobert, 3b.....	4	0	2	0	0	0
Magen, lf.....	2	1	1	2	0	0
Cravath, rf.....	4	0	1	3	0	0
Luderus, 1b.....	4	1	1	7	0	0
Knabe, 2b.....	3	0	0	2	2	1
Doolan, ss.....	3	0	0	4	1	0
Kilifer, c.....	4	0	2	0	2	0
Moore, p.....	4	0	0	0	1	0
Totals.....	30	4	10	27	6	1

Pittsburgh.....	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-1
Philadelphia.....	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	-4

*Batted for Gibson in eighth.
!Batted for O'Toole in eighth.
!Ran for Mensor in eighth.
Two-base hits—Wagner, Cravath, Miller.
Three-base hit—Wilson.
Home run—Luderus.
Sacrifice hit—Doolan.
Stolen bases—Paskert, Lobert, Kilifer.
Struck out—By O'Toole, 5; by Adams, 1; by Kilifer, 7.
Double plays—Knabe, Doolan and Luderus; Wagner and Miller (3).
First base on error—Pittsburgh.
First base on balls—Off O'Toole, 4; off Moore, 4.
Left on bases—Pittsburgh, 7; Philadelphia, 2.
Hit by pitcher—By Adams (Knabe).
Hits—Off O'Toole, 8 in 7 innings; off Adams, 2 in 1 inning.
Time—1:45.
Umpires—Rigler and Finneran.

Dodd goes 0-for-3 with a fifth-inning walk in his major league debut against the Philadelphia Phillies' Earl Moore. The loss drops the Corsairs to 50-35 while the Phillies move to one game over .500 with a 42-41 mark.

Dodd makes his major league debut on July 26, 1912, against the Philadelphia Phillies. Batting seventh and starting at second base, he goes hitless in three at bats against 34-year-old right-hander [Earl Moore](#) in a 4-1 loss to the Philadelphia Phillies. In his brief five game major league career, Dodd is hitless in nine at bats with one RBI, three strikeouts and one walk.

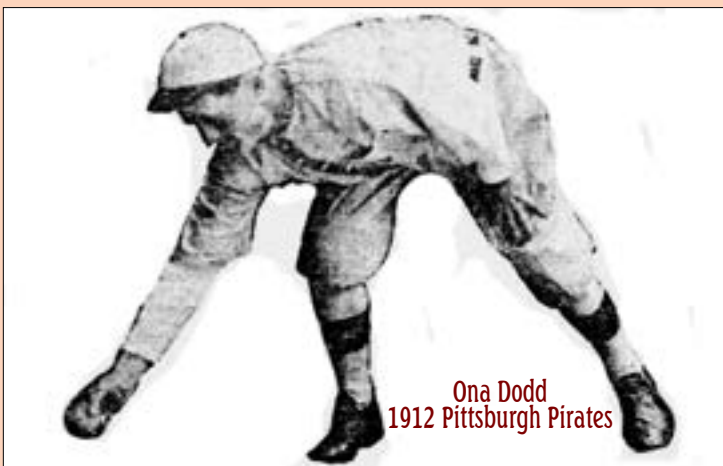


**Ona Dodd
1912 Pittsburgh Pirates**

In 1907, playing for an independent team in [Weatherford, Texas](#), Dodd plays every position in the infield, except first base. Despite being regarded as one of the team's stars, his responsibilities on his family's farm are such that he elects not to play baseball, at any level, in 1908 and 1909.

Electing to attend [Texas Christian University](#) in the fall of 1909, he has a successful freshman season and after much persuasion by the manager of an independent team in [Wichita Falls, Texas](#), the talented infielder decides to leave the family farm and restart his diamond career. On June 2, he garners state-wide attention when he hits for the cycle and scores three times in Greenville's 15-6 win over Marshall.

As a newspaper opines, "This was the opening wedge to higher things, as Dodd played such a brilliant game at second and shortstop that he soon attracted the attention of managers of league teams in that part of he state."



**Ona Dodd
1912 Pittsburgh Pirates**

Near the close of a successful independent league season, he signs with Waco manager [Ellis Hardy](#) (who also happens to be his coach at TCU) to play for the Texas

Ona Dodd [2 of 3]:

League Navigators in 1911. Dodd becomes the second TCU player to appear in the major leagues - pitcher [Louis Drucke](#) (18 major league wins) is the first in 1909. He plays two seasons with the Horned Frogs (1910-1911) and begins his pro career two days after ending his collegiate one.

Dodd's initial season with the Navigators is good enough, .246 with 32 doubles and 32 stolen bases, that the 24-year-old infielder is drafted by Pittsburgh in the annual minor league draft that September. Noted for being "fast and clever," he plays 59 games at second, 56 at shortstop and 24 at third in his first year as a pro.



Ona Dodd
1912 Indianapolis Indians

Listed on Pittsburgh's 1912 spring training roster, Dodd is a surprise holdout and the second-to-last Pirate to sign his contract when he sends in his paper work on March 11, only 30 days prior to the start of the season. He offers the Pirates no reason for the unexpected delay and fails to tell management if and when he will report. He is expected to compete with 23-year-old [Alex McCarthy](#) for playing time at second base, however Pirate manager Fred Clarke says that he considers McCarthy his starting second baseman until, "a faster and better man," makes his appearance.



Ona Dodd
1912 Pittsburgh Pirates

On April 7, four days prior to Pittsburgh's season opener with St. Louis, Dodd is one of three players sent to Indianapolis of the International League. It's reported that "a lack of ginger," is the only thing preventing Dodd from remaining with the Corsairs. Indianapolis is 0-7 when on April 17, a still lackluster Dodd is turned back to Pittsburgh which then sends him on optional agreement to Wheeling of the Central (B) League.

Dodd will play in only two games with Indianapolis when he tells the *Indianapolis Star* that he is

Ona Dodd Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Lev	W-L	Finish	Age	AB	R	HT	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	SLUG	OPS	AVG
1910	Texas Christian University	-	College	10-1	-	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	--	--
1910	Greenville	-	SPro	-	-	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	--	--
1911	Texas Christian University	-	College	8-6	-	24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	--	--
1911	Waco Navigators	Texas	B	75-71	5 of 8	24	553	68	136	32	6	5	-	32	.353	--	.246
1912	2 Teams	2 Leagues	B/AA	-	-	24	348	38	119	30	9	4	-	-	.514	--	.342
	Indianapolis Indians	American Assoc.	AA	56-111	8 of 8	24	4	1	1	0	1	0	-	-	.750	--	.250
	Wheeling Stogies	Central	B	66-61	6 of 12	24	344	37	118	30	8	4	-	-	.512	--	.343
	Pittsburgh Pirates	NATIONAL	MLB	93-58	2 of 8	25	9	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	.000	.100	.000
1913	3 Teams	2 Leagues	B	-	-	26	286	39	94	1	3	0	-	13	--	--	.329
	Columbus Senators	American Assoc.	AA	-	-	26	5	1	1	0	0	0	-	0	.200	--	.200
	Columbus Cubs	Interstate	B	-	-	26	211	30	74	-	-	-	-	11	--	--	.351
	Waco Navigators	Texas	B	81-71	3 of 8	26	70	8	19	1	3	0	-	2	.371	--	.271
1914	Beaumont Oilers	Texas	B	89-54	3 of 8	27	454	70	127	20	3	4	-	37	.364	.698	.280
1915	Beaumont Oilers	Texas	B	61-84	7 of 8	28	543	61	148	28	3	1	-	19	.341	.635	.273
1916	Beaumont Oilers	Texas	B	66-79	t6 of 8	29	545	80	157	22	8	2	-	28	.369	--	.288
1917	Beaumont Oilers/Fort Worth Panthers	Texas	B	-	-	30	606	71	155	21	10	3	-	17	.338	--	.256
1918	Houston Buffaloes	Texas	B	38-48	7 of 8	31	289	37	71	10	1	0	-	12	.287	--	.246
Major League Totals		1 Season					9	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	.100	0
Minor League Totals		8 Seasons					3624	464	1007	164	43	19	-	158	.363	--	.278

ML Debut: July 26, 1912, at Baker Bowl, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: starts at second base and bats seventh; goes 0-for-3 with a strikeout and a walk against Earl Moore in a 4-1 loss to the Philadelphia Phillies.

ML Finale: August 14, 1912, at Forbes Field, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: enters the game in the ninth inning at second base; handles one chance without an error in a 3-2 win in 10 innings over the Philadelphia Phillies.

1914 Texas League - All-Star Utility First Team
1915 Texas League - All-Star Utility Second Team

Ona Dodd [3 of 3]:

"homesick," and while he willingly reports to Indianapolis, he doesn't plan on going to Wheeling. Despite his misgivings a week later he is the Stogies' starting third baseman in the season opener. Switched to the "halfway station," in late June, he has a 15-game and an 11-game hitting streak and is the only player to twice hit the league-wide Bull Durham advertisement signs and winning the \$50 in the process.

He is among Central League hitting leaders with a .351 average when on July 23, the "Smoketown Crew" sends [Stump Edington](#) to the Stogies for Dodd's return to Pittsburgh. On the same day that Dodd departs for the Steel City, the Stogies release 25-year-old [Garnett "Midge" Craven](#), whom local scribes say "has been playing the greatest game of his career and will have little trouble finding new berth." Craven is hitting .170 with one home run in 171 at bats and is later picked up by the Grand Rapids Black Sox, his fourth team of the season.

On September 27, Dodd's travel odyssey continues as he sent to Columbus in the American Association as partial payment for rookie pitcher Wilbur Cooper. Cooper will go on to win 216 games in the majors and another 80 in the minors in a stellar career.

In 1913, Dodd appears in a couple of pre-season games with the Columbus Cubs of the Interstate (B) League before being sent to the San Francisco Seals of the Pacific Coast (AA) League. He refuses to report and says he is going to quit baseball and return to his home in [Paradise, Texas](#). Dodd later explains that he is in fear of the Japanese population in California and for that reason dreaded a trip to the west coast.

Returning to Columbus, he plays several games with the AA Senators when utility infielder Pinky Johns gets hurt. For most of the season, he's the Columbus Cubs' starting second baseman and when the Interstate League contracts to a four-team circuit on July 14. Dodd, among league leaders with a .351 batting average, has his contract sold to the Texas League's Waco Cubs.



Ona Dodd
1914 Beaumont Explorers

In 1914, Dodd signs with the Beaumont Oilers, with whom he will enjoy three-and-a-half productive seasons before being sold to Fort Worth in 1917. In 1914 he earns first-team Texas League All-Star honors after hitting .280 with 20 doubles and 37 stolen bases. In addition, Dodd and Sioux City's [Bill Davidson](#), set a minor league record with 75 sacrifices, breaking the previous mark of 74 set by Oakland Oaks' [Clyde "Buzzy" Wares](#) in 1910. A year later, he has a team-high 148 hits and 28 doubles and is second in hitting with a .273 average en route to earning second-team All-Texas League utilityman.

In 1917, Dodd is on the wrong team at the wrong time for the second time in his career, when on May 16, the Beaumont and Galveston franchises disband because of financial difficulty. Dodd is leading the Texas League in extra base hits with 23 when he signs with Fort Worth for the remainder of the season. In the off-season Dodd signs with his fourth and final Texas League team when he inks a contract with the Houston Buffaloes to be their starting third baseman. In a war-shortened season, the 30-year-old Dodd hits .246 with 11 extra base hits. In the final game of his career on July 7, Dodd is 1-for-4 with an error in a 6-2 loss to visiting San Antonio.

On February 27, 1919, Beaumont manager [John McCloskey](#) receives a letter and an unsigned contract from Dodd (another newspaper report has him signing the contract), who tells McCloskey that he is not "kicking" about his salary, but feels that he can make more money from his [Carter, Oklahoma](#), wheat farm than playing for the Oilers. He says, "I have tried baseball for several years and have about broken even. I am going to try a wheat crop this year."

And with that, Dodd's eight-year career comes to an end.

On December 17, 1956, two months following his 70th birthday, Ona Dodd dies from advanced pneumonia at his ranch in Carter.

Professional Debut

Waco Navigators at Fort Worth Panthers
Panther Park, Fort Worth, Texas
April 12, 1911

WACO						
	AB.	R.	BH.	PO.	A.	E.
Price, ss.	3	0	0	2	1	2
Dodd, ss.	1	0	0	0	0	0
McLaurin, rf. ...	4	0	1	1	0	0
Duguey, 2b.	3	1	0	2	6	0
Wolheben, 1b. ...	4	1	0	13	0	0
McMahon, 3b. ...	3	0	0	0	2	0
Rennard, lf.	4	0	0	5	0	0
Wakefield, cf. ...	4	0	1	1	0	0
Carson, c.	4	0	0	3	0	0
Miller, p.	3	0	0	0	4	1
Totals	32	2	2	27	13	3

FORT WORTH						
	AB.	R.	BH.	PO.	A.	E.
Jolly, lf.	3	0	1	3	0	1
Snapp, 3b.	2	0	0	2	3	1
Stovall, rf.	4	0	0	0	0	1
Coyle, 1b.	3	0	0	9	1	0
Pennell, cf.	3	0	0	0	0	1
Kinnally, 2b. ...	3	0	0	4	2	0
Huber, ss.	4	0	0	2	2	2
Ritter, c.	4	0	0	7	0	0
McKay, p.	3	0	0	0	3	1
Totals	29	0	1	27	11	7

Score by innings:
Fort Worth 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0—0
Waco 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 1—2

Summary—Sacrifice hits, McMahon, Snapp; stolen bases, McMahon, Jolly, Coyle, Ritter; two-base hit, Wakefield; bases on balls, by Miller 5, by McKay 1; struck out, by McKay 7, by Miller 1; left on bases, Waco 5, Fort Worth 8; passed ball, Carson. Time of game, 1 hour and 55 minutes. Umpire, Bush.

Two days after playing his final game at TCU, Dodd is hitless in one a bat in his pro debut as a seventh-inning replacement for starting shortstop Kerr Price, who is injured in a slide by Fort Worth's Abe Jolly. The next day, Dodd is 1-for-4 in his first pro start in a 5-4 10-inning loss to Fort Worth.