

Al Tefft, "One-Year Wonder"

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**"I watched him throw across the diamond and I decided then and there he was a pitcher."
- Paul Badgett, Blackstone Barristers, 1948**

On September 14, 1948, before 2,103 fans, Blackstone (Va.) Barrister ace [Al Tefft](#) puts the finishing touch on one of the finest seasons in Virginia League history when he wins his 22nd consecutive game of the season with a 9-3 victory over the Petersburg Generals in the opening game of the league's Shaughnessy Play-off.

However, proving success is sometimes fleeting, less than two years after his record-setting performance the talented right-hander is out of baseball, an unfortunate victim of reoccurring arm injuries.

Born on December 2, 1928, in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, to Albert A. Tefft and Ruth (Leach) Tefft, the 5-foot-10, 165-pounder plays third base at Pawtucket West High School, but also dabbles in some mound duties while playing sandlot ball in and around his hometown. A graduate of [Bryant College](#) in Smithfield, Rhode Island, Taft serves in the U.S. Army for two years in Europe.



**Al Tefft
1948 Blackstone Barristers**

Tefft Hurls Victory No. 22 For Lawyers

**Generals Bow, 9-3,
In Series Opener**

BLACKSTONE, Sept. 14—Al Tefft captured his twenty-second consecutive victory here tonight as he hurled Blackstone to a 9-3 triumph over Petersburg in the opener of the final Virginia League play-off.

Tefft fanned eleven General batters and held the visitors to just six hits but was frequently in difficulties in the early innings because of the eight bases on balls which he gave up.

Dick Brockwell held the Barristers to a single tally for the first four frames but they fell all over him in the six-run fifth and sewed up the game, getting seven of their 15 safeties then.

PETERSBURG (VI)		BLACKSTONE (VI)	
Leeds lf	2 1 0 0 0	Dillman of	2 2 2 0 0
Mills 2b	4 0 1 4 1	Trushetsky ss	4 2 2 1 0
Varner ss	3 1 2 0 8	Yata 2b	4 1 2 2 0
Grant 3b	2 0 0 1 2	Badgett 3b	5 0 3 1 0
Hise 1b	1 0 0 0 1	Bray of	2 1 1 2 0
John of	4 0 0 0 0	Ross lf	4 1 1 2 0
Deputy of	1 0 0 4 0	Davis 2b	4 1 2 2 2
McMahan 2b	2 0 1 0 0	Crosswhite s	2 0 1 1 1
Smith c	4 0 0 0 0	Tefft p	4 0 0 0 0
Laffoon c	0 0 0 0 0		
Brockwell p	2 1 1 0 0		
Diaz p	1 0 0 0 0		
Trotter p	1 0 0 0 2		
Totals	22 7 6 26 12	Totals	37 9 13 27 6

Runs: John, Dempsey, Smith, Crosswhite.
Home Batted In: Mills, Grant, Dillman, Yata.
1: Badgett, 2: Hise, 3: Smith, Two-base hits: Varner, Mills, Trushetsky, Yata, Dillman.
Three-base hits: Davis, Ross. Left on base: Brockwell, 8; Petersburg, 8. Bases on balls: Brockwell, 2; Trotter, 2; Tefft, 8. Struck out by: Brockwell, 5; Trotter, 1; Tefft, 11. Hits off: Brockwell, 8 in 4 2-3; Diaz, 7 in 1 2-3; Trotter, 2 in 2. Umpires: Phelps, Nettleton and Harding. Time: 2:20. Attendance: 2,103.

However, the road to Blackstone wasn't easy for Tefft.

Recently discharged from the Army in the Spring of 1948, Tefft reports to a St. Louis Cardinals' tryout camp in Lynchburg, Virginia. He shows up with a personal invite from the Cardinals' front office which he had kept with him for two years since high school.

Following the tryout, the Redbird brass decides that Tefft is a third baseman and advises him to "forget" about pitching. The Cardinals assign him to their Tallassee, Alabama, farm team in the Class D Georgia-Alabama League.

After 14 games, Tefft is hitting .234 with only one extra base hit in 47 at bats when the Cardinals release him in late May.

Undeterred, Tefft shows up in LaGrange, Georgia, for a tryout the Troupers, a New York Yankee farm club in the same league as Tallassee. The Yankees are impressed enough to sign the 19-year-old to a contract and promptly "dispatch" him to Blackstone with instructions for manager [Paul Badgett](#) to use him where he thinks best.

After playing a couple of games at third base, Badgett says, "I watched him throw across the diamond and I decided then and there he was a pitcher."

Tefft makes his pitching debut on June 1, allowing three runs in a five-inning relief stint in a 13-0 loss to the Petersburg Generals in the second game of a doubleheader. Four days later against the Franklin Cubs, Tefft enters the game in the eighth inning with an 8-7 lead, but yields two runs and loses 9-8 for his first and only defeat of the season.

Tefft finishes the regular season with a 20-1 record with a 1.57 ERA and is named to the league's all-star team. He completes 15 of his first 16 starts, including seven shutouts, including four against the Emporia Nationals. He has one two-hitter, two three-hitters and three four-hitters and his primary catcher for most of the season is [Jon Durkin](#) who was a teammate of his at West Pawtucket High School.

Al Tefft [2 of 4]:

A year later, Tefft is set to open the season with the Newark Bears of the International (AAA) League and receives a ringing endorsement from the Parke Carroll, the team's business manager:

"Tefft doesn't look like a pitcher. He doesn't seem to throw hard and he has a jerky motion on the mound. But Hassett has used him in intrasquad games and in a couple of exhibitions and nobody has abused Tefft yet."

Al Tefft Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Level	W-L	GP	CG	INN	H	BB	SO	ERA	
1948	Tallassee Indians	Georgia-Alabama	D	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---	
	Blackstone Barristers	Virginia	D	20-1	24	18	184	141	63	113	1.57	
1949	Four Teams	4 Leagues	AAA/B	0-8	8	0	92	86	52	7	5.57	
	Newark Bears	International	AAA	0-1	3	0	12	8	12	-	6.75	
	Norfolk Tars	Piedmont	B	0-3	5	0	21	19	15	7	5.57	
	Amsterdam Rugmakers	Canadian-American	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---	
1950	Three Teams	3 Leagues	B/C	3-2	5	3	29	22	9	25	5.57	
	Norfolk Tars	Piedmont	B	0-0	1	0	1	2	1	0	9.00	
	Amsterdam Rugmakers	Canadian-American	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---	
	Kingston Colonials	Colonial	B	3-0	4	3	28	20	8	25	2.89	
Minor League Totals				3 Seasons	23-11	37	21	305	249	124	145	2.92

1948 - Virginia League All-Star

Over the last two years of his career, Tefft wins a total of three games in 11 decisions while playing for six different teams in five leagues.

In 1950, he is 3-0 with a 2.89 ERA and three complete games in four starts for the Kingston Colonials of the Colonial (B) League when on July 4, he is forced to leave a game with the Poughkeepsie Chiefs in the second inning because of a sore arm. It will be his last appearance in professional baseball.

Tefft passes away on November 7, 1999, at the University Medical Center in Las Vegas, Nevada.

TEFFT CHRONOLOGY

June 1, 1948

After being released by the Tallassee Indians, Tefft joins the Blackstone Barristers of the Virginia State League and makes his first pitching appearance that night against the Petersburg Generals.

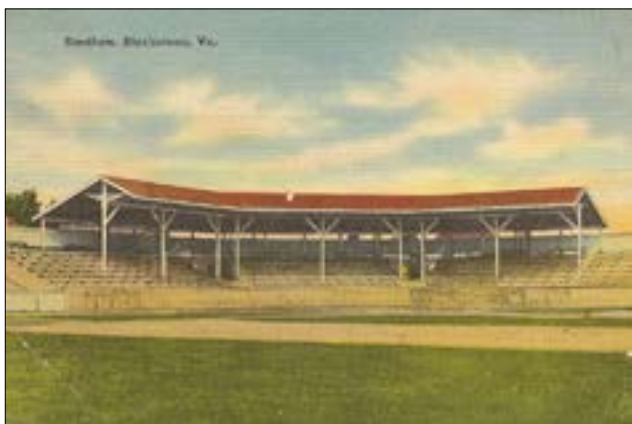
June 5, 1948

Tefft relieves starter [Roger Pontbriand](#) in the eighth inning with the Barristers holding an 8-7 lead over the Franklin Cubs ... Franklin's [John Zontini](#) makes a loser of Tefft when he singles home two runs with two outs in the top of the ninth inning.

June 13

Tefft picks up his first win in professional baseball pitching three and 2/3 scoreless innings in a 4-3 win over Lawrenceville in the second game of a doubleheader.

Blackstone (Va.) Ballpark



July 17, 1948

Making his first career start, Tefft blanks the visiting Emporia Nats 4-0 on two hits ... Tefft strikes out four and walks three in the win.

June 25, 1948

Blackstone, behind Tefft's 10-hit complete game, moves to within four games of first place beating the front-running Franklin Cubs 4-2.

June 5, 1948
Blackstone Ballpark
Blackstone, Virginia

Zontini's Single Gives Cubs Decision, 9-8

Special to The Times-Dispatch

BLACKSTONE, June 5—After two were out in the ninth, Franklin loaded the bases here tonight and Manager John Zontini singled to score two runs which led Franklin to a 9-to-8 victory over Blackstone. It was the second night that Blackstone has dropped a one-run verdict to the Cubs.

FRANKLIN (V)		BLACKSTONE (V)	
	abr.h.o.a.		abr.h.o.a.
File 2b	5 2 2 5 1	Majack 2b	2 1 1 2 0
Cornwall lf	5 2 1 2 0	Timberlake ss	6 0 0 5 8
Jacobs 2b	5 1 2 1 3	Yala 1b	6 1 2 5 0
Sheller 1b	5 0 2 1 0	Badgett 2b	3 3 3 4 3
Pawelek c	5 0 1 2 1	Bass lf	5 0 2 1 1
Zontini cf	8 1 8 2 0	Brazz rf	5 1 2 0 0
Porter ss	4 0 1 0 4	Dighearn cf	6 2 2 2 0
Atkinson rf	2 0 0 2 0	Johns c	3 0 1 0 1
Helle p	1 0 0 0 0	Posteland p	4 0 1 0 2
Blackhead p	1 0 0 0 0	Tefft p	3 0 0 0 0
Markello p	0 0 0 1 1		
Totals ..36 8 12 27 15		Totals ..37 8 18 27 10	
Franklin	302 000 022-9		
Blackstone	220 061 000-8		

Errors: Zontini, Dighearn, Jacobs.
Runs batted in: Sheller, 3; Zontini, 2; Bass, 3; Badgett, 2; Timberlake, Jacobs, Pawelek, Posteland, Porter. Two-base hits: Badgett, Bass, File, Zontini, Porter. Three-base hits: Sheller, Badgett, Brazz. Home runs: Sheller. Stolen bases: File. Double plays: Porter to Zontini to Sheller; Timberlake to Badgett to Yala; Timberlake to Badgett. Left on bases: Franklin, 8; Blackstone, 6. Bases on balls off: Posteland, 5; Helle, Blackhead, 3; Markello, 2; Tefft, struck out by: Posteland, 3; Helle, Markello, Tefft. Hits off: Pontbriand, 9 in 7 1-3 innings; Helle, 5 in 2 1-3; Blackhead, 5 in 2 2-3; Markello, 3 in 4; Tefft, 2 in 1 1-3. Hit by pitcher by: Helle (Badgett). Winning pitcher: Markello. Losing pitcher: Tefft. Umpires: Kurtz and Fallers. Time: 2:30. Attendance: 845.

Al Tefft [3 of 4]:

June 29, 1948

Tefft goes 2-for-4 with three RBIs and pitches an eight-hit complete game in a 7-3 win over Suffolk.

July 26, 1948

Tefft strikes out seven and allows only three hits in a 4-0 win over Emporia.

August 5, 1948

Tefft moves to 13-1 with a three-hit shutout of Emporia.

August 9, 1948

Tefft notches win No. 14 with a seven-hit complete game 10-2 victory over Petersburg.

August 13, 1948

Staked to a 11-run lead in the fourth inning, Tefft improves to 15-1 with a 17-2 win over Franklin.

August 17, 1948

Trailing 3-0 in the eighth inning, Blackstone tallies seven run in their last two at bats en route to a 7-3 win at Suffolk ... Tefft moves to 16-1 despite allowing 13 hits in the route-going effort.

August 22, 1948

Blackstone, behind Tefft's four-hit pitching, moves into second place in the Virginia League standings shutting out Lawrenceville 3-0 ... the win moves the Barristers past slumping Franklin and within five games of first place Suffolk.

August 26, 1948

[Whitey Bragg's](#) two-run double in the bottom of the ninth inning gives Blackstone a 6-5 win over the Emporia Nats ... Tefft notches his 18th straight win allowing eight hits and striking out five.

August 28, 1948

Tefft is named to the Virginia League All-Star team in a vote by the league's managers.

August 30, 1948

Manager Paul Badgett's two-run home run in the bottom of the eighth inning rallies Blackstone to a 14-13 win over Petersburg in the second game of a doubleheader ... Tefft wins his 19th straight game despite yielding a season-high 17 hits.

September 3, 1948

[Marion Timberlake](#) singles home Tefft, who opened the ninth inning with a double, with the game-winning run as Blackstone rallies past visiting Franklin 4-3 ... Tefft allows four hits while striking out 11 and walking two in picking up his 20th-straight win.

September 7, 1948

Tefft gives up five hits and strikes out 11 as Blackstone beats Franklin 2-1 in the first round of the Virginia League playoffs ... the victory is the 21st consecutive for Tefft.

September 14, 1948

Tefft strikes out 11 and allows six hits and picks up his 22nd straight win in a 9-3 victory over Petersburg in the opening game in the championship round of the Shaughnessy playoffs.

Four Managers Land Positions On Virginia League All-Stars

The Virginia League managers evidently hold the athletic abilities of the Virginia League managers in the highest regard.

Four of the league's five everyday playing managers -- Petersburg's Paul Varner, Franklin's Johnny Zentini, Emporia's Smut Aderholt and Blackstone's Paul Badgett -- have been named to a Virginia League All-Star team selected by the circuit's bossman for The Times-Dispatch.

Bill Scimecke, pilot of the pennant-hungry Suffolk Goobers, didn't play enough to merit All-Star consideration while Johnny Pruitt, Lawrenceville's third manager of an unhappy Summer, ran into Varner in the balloting for the shortstop position.

Tefft Is No. 1 Prospect
The manager's named Al Tefft, of Blackstone, owner of a 18-game winning streak, as the league's No. 1 prospect.

Tefft and George Blair, of Petersburg, the league's only 20-game winner were the only unanimous choices.

Suffolk, which seems on its way to the pennant, placed only one man on the team -- the Goobers' ace reliever, Ceell Hutson. Franklin placed four, Emporia three and Petersburg and Blackstone two each. Lawrenceville was shut out.

Blair, Blair and Tefft form the All-Star pitching staff. The

All-Star Team

1b--Morse Shelter, Franklin.
2b--Paul Badgett, Blackstone.
SS--Paul Varner, Petersburg.
3b--Art Jacobs, Franklin.
OF--Smut Aderholt, Emporia.
OF--Johnny Zentini, Franklin.
OF--Joe Pendleton, Emporia.
C--Gordon Knieley, Franklin.
C--Bill Horne, Emporia.
P--Al Tefft, Blackstone.
P--George Blair, Petersburg.
P--Ceell Hutson, Suffolk.

managers were asked to name four hurlers. They were virtual unanimous agreement on that trio, but all was confusion in naming the fourth man. Ed White and Treney Howell, of Suffolk; Harry Markellos, of Franklin, and Charlie Miles, of Emporia, all received two votes.

Catchers Stand Out
There wasn't much doubt about the All-Star catchers. Gordon Knieley, of Franklin, received five votes and Bill Horne, of Emporia, four.

Joining Varner and Badgett, the "star" second baseman, in the infield were a pair of Franklin Cubs -- First Baseman Morse Shelter and Third Baseman Art Jacobs.

Joe Pendleton, of Emporia, was selected as third man to go with Aderholt and Zentini in the outfield.

Al Tefft Hurls 20th Straight Win

BLACKSTONE, Sept. 3--Al Tefft tonight chalked up his twentieth mound victory as his Blackstone teammates edged a 4-3 verdict over Franklin.

Not only was Tefft in rare pitching form--he gave up four hits, fanned 11, and walked two--but he also played a big part in winning his own game.

With none out in the ninth, the righthander slammed out a double and came home on Marion Timberlake's slashing single.

Tefft lost his first game, in a relief role, back in May.

R. H. K.

Franklin ----- 100 110 000--3 4 3
Blackstone ----- 001 002 001--4 10 3

Kramer and Knieley; Tefft and Crosswhite.

Al Tefft [4 of 4]:

January 26, 1949

Tefft signs a contract with Newark of the International League.

Newark Buys Pitcher Who Won 22 Games in Row

NEWARK, N.J. (UP) — The Newark Bears of the International League today announced the purchase of pitcher Albert Tefft Jr., a right-hander who has a consecutive winning streak of 22 games.

Tefft was purchased from the Blackstone club of the Virginia League. He broke in with that club as a pitcher last spring, lost his first game in a relief role and then went on to compile 22 straight victories—20 during the regular season and two in the play-offs.

Tefft turned to pitching when he failed to make the grade as a third baseman with the Lynchburg club of the Piedmont League. He is only 20 years old.

April 5, 1949

Newark Bears business manager Parke Carroll is not impressed with Tefft so far during the team's spring training camp, "Tefft doesn't look like a pitcher," says Carroll. "He doesn't seem to throw hard and he has a jerky motion on the mound."

June 30, 1950

Pitching for the Kingston Colonials, Tefft runs his record to 3-0 with a 3-2 complete game victory over first place Poughkeepsie ... Tefft strikes out nine and walks one.

July 4, 1950

Three days after posting his third straight victory for the Kingston Colonials, Tefft makes his final appearance in professional base when he leaves a game against the Poughkeepsie Chiefs with one out in the second inning due to arm soreness.

November 7, 1999

Tefft passes away at the University Medical Center in Las Vegas, Nevada.



Al Tefft
1950 Kingston Colonials