

Ray Hardee, "Wolfpack Twirler"

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On June 4, 1942, four days after signing with the Philadelphia Athletics off the campus of North Carolina State College, bespectacled right-hander Ray Hardee makes his professional baseball debut with the Wilmington Blue Rocks.

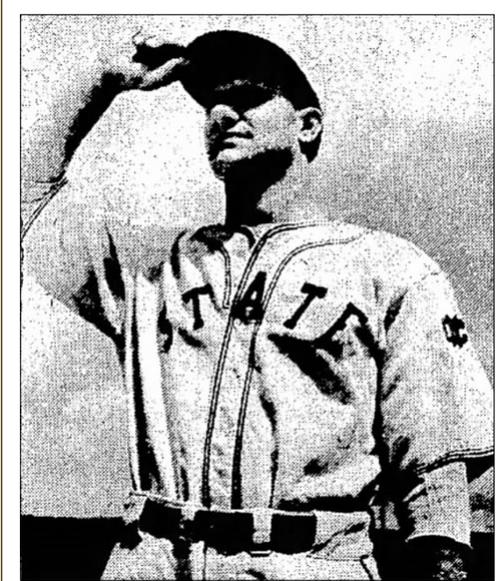
Starting the nightcap of an Interstate (B) League doubleheader against the Harrisburg Senators, the 21-year-old Hardee begins his professional career by throwing 12 straight balls and walking the first three Senator batters before being relieved by Virgil Feeney. The 21-year-old Feeney will eventually absorb the loss in a 7-3 defeat.

Hardee appears in only three games with the Blue Rocks before being demoted to the Newport News Builders of the Virginia (C) League where he goes 8-5 in 15 appearances. Following a four-year stint in the Army during World War II, the Clayton, North Carolina native returns in 1946 and will pitch five more seasons in the minors, finishing in 1950 with the Greensboro Patriots and a 47-39 career mark.

On July 13, 1946, Hardee hurls a no-hitter for the Angier-Fuquay Springs Bulls in a 13-0 Tobacco (D) League win over ex-major leaguer Van Lingle Mungo and the Clinton Blues. A year later, pitching for the Raleigh Capitals, Hardee wins both ends of a Carolina League doubleheader (August 18, 1947) against the Greensboro Patriots striking out 14 and allowing only six hits in a pair of complete game victories.

Hardee is a career-best 18-12 for the Capitals in 1947, earning both a berth on the Carolina League All-Star team and a free agent contract with the National League's Boston Braves. Hardee makes his major league spring training debut on March 15, 1948, pitching three innings in a 7-1 loss to the New York Yankees. Hardee is one of three pitchers, along with Bobby Hogue and Jim Prendergast, that Braves manager Billy Southworth declares are "hog fat" and will need extra work to get into form.

On April 3, 1948, the Braves option Hardee to the San Diego Padres of the Pacific Coast (AAA) League. In two games with the Padres, Hardee is 0-0 with a 3.60 ERA when on April 26, he is returned to the Boston Red Sox, who promptly send him to the class C Danville Leafs. Plagued by reoccurring arm problems, Hardee is 5-1 for the Leafs in 1948, and 7-12 in 1949 splitting time between Danville and the Reidsville Luckies, before being released at the end of the 1949 season.



Ray Hardee
1942 North Carolina State College Wolfpack

Ray Hardee Year by Year:

| Year | Team | League | Level | W-L | INN | H | BB | SO | ERA |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|----------|-------------|
| 1941 | NC State College | Southern | NCAA | - | - | - | - | - | --- |
| 1942 | NC State College | Southern | NCAA | - | - | - | - | - | --- |
| 1942 | 2 Teams | 2 Leagues | C-B | 8-5 | 113 | 91 | 49 | - | 2.15 |
| | Wilmington Blue Rocks | Interstate | B | 0-0 | 4 | - | - | - | --- |
| | Newport News Builders | Virginia | C | 8-5 | 109 | 91 | 49 | - | 2.23 |
| 1946 | 2 Teams | 2 Lgs | D-AA | 9-8 | 139 | 149 | 73 | - | --- |
| | Memphis Chickasaws | Southern | AA | 0-0 | 9 | - | - | 8 | --- |
| | Angier-Fuquay Springs Bulls | Tobacco State | D | 9-8 | 130 | 149 | 73 | - | --- |
| 1947 | Raleigh Capitals | Carolina | C | 18-12 | 236 | 235 | 113 | 188 | 3.74 |
| 1948 | 2 Teams | 2 Lgs | C-AAA | 5-1 | 68 | 61 | 34 | - | 3.44 |
| | San Diego Padres | Pacific Coasts | AAA | 0-0 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3.6 |
| | Danville Leafs | Carolina | C | 5-1 | 63 | 57 | 29 | - | 3.43 |
| 1949 | 2 Teams | 1 Lg | B | 7-12 | 143 | 155 | 84 | - | 4.97 |
| | Danville Leafs/Reidsville Luckies | Carolina | B | 7-12 | 143 | 155 | 84 | 98 | 4.97 |
| 1950 | Greensboro Patriots | Carolina | B | 0-1 | 23.2 | 26 | 12 | 13 | 4.56 |
| Minor League Totals | | 5 Seasons | | 47-39 | 722.2 | 717 | 365 | - | --- |

Hardee signs with the Greensboro Patriots on May 30, 1950, and is 0-1 in five games when on June 13, business manager Bob Doty announces that the 29-year-old right hander has been released to make room for pitcher Mel Nee.

HARDEE CHRONOLOGY

April 4, 1941
Chick Doak, Jr., hits two home runs and sophomore Ray Hardee pitches a complete game, allowing eight hits and striking out nine as NC State beats William & Mary 11-5 in the Southern Conference season opener for both teams.

Ray Hardee [2 of 3]:

April 8, 1941

Hardee yields eight hits and strikes out 10, but is out-dueled by Pittsburgh's "Special Delivery" Jones, who limits the homestanding Wolfpack to only seven hits in a 3-1 Panther win ... a football standout, Jones will finish seventh in the Heisman Trophy balloting in 1941 and eventually plays professional football with the Chicago Bears of the NFL and the Cleveland Browns of the AAFC.

May 15, 1942

In the season finale for both teams, NC State, behind a four-hit complete game by Hardee, beats Davidson 11-2 in a game limited to six innings because of darkness.

June 4, 1942

Ray Hardee's Professional Baseball Debut Island Park Stadium, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

| WILMINGTON | | HARRISBURG | |
|---------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| abr | h o a | abr | h o a |
| Rullo,2b... | 4 0 1 2 3 | Eagan,lf. | 2 2 1 2 0 |
| Duke,rf... | 3 2 1 1 0 | Castig'ess. | 3 1 0 3 2 |
| Mack'icz.cfi | 0 0 3 0 | Beaster,rf | 2 2 2 1 0 |
| Scheldt,1b. | 4 0 1 9 0 | Peters,3b | 4 1 2 2 1 |
| Rutner,3b. | 4 1 1 2 2 | Deal,cf... | 4 1 2 0 1 |
| Atkins,ss... | 4 0 1 3 1 | Barnett2b | 4 0 2 4 5 |
| Pelton,lf'... | 4 0 2 1 0 | Smith,1b. | 5 0 0 12 0 |
| Devlin,c... | 4 0 1 3 1 | Lloyd.c... | 3 0 0 3 4 |
| Hardee,p... | 0 0 0 0 0 | Jarlett,p. | 4 0 0 0 1 |
| Feeney,p... | 2 0 0 0 3 | | |
| xYarmul.... | 1 0 0 0 0 | Totals. | 31 7 9 27 14 |
| McC'han,p. | 0 0 0 0 1 | | |
| Coleman,p. | 0 0 0 0 0 | | |

Totals.. 31 3 8 24 11

xBatted for Feeney in 7th.

Wilmington 1 0 1 0 0 0 0 1—3
Harrisburg 2 0 1 0 0 0 0 4 x—7
Errors, Castiglione, Deal, Devlin. Runs batted in, Peters, 2; Duke, Deal, Barnett, Devlin. Two-base hits, Scheldt, Eagan, Peters, Rutner, Devlin. Home run, Duke. Stolen bases, Eagan, Mack-iewicz, Peters, Deal. Sacrifice, Peters. Double plays, Castiglione to Barnett; Barnett to Smith. Left on bases, Wil- mington, 5; Harrisburg, 12. Bases on balls off, Hardee, 3; Jarlett, 4; Feeney, 3; McCahan, 4. Struck out by, Feeney, 3; Jarlett, 3; Coleman, 1. Hits off, Harder, 0 in 0 innings; Feeney, 6 hits in 6 innings; McCahan, 0 in 1 inning; Coleman, 3 in 1. Hit by pitcher by, Feeney (Beaster). Wild pitches, Cole- man, 2. Losing pitcher, Feeney. Um- pires, Yasitis and Gilbert. Time, 2:30.

June 4, 1942

Hardee makes his professional baseball debut with the Wilmington Blue Rocks ... starting the nightcap of an Interstate (B) League double header against the Harrisburg Senators, the 21-year-old Hardee begins his profes- sional career by throwing 12 straight balls and walking the first three Senator batters before being relieved by Virgil Feeney ... the 21-year-old Feeney will eventually absorb the loss in a 7-3 defeat.

June 5, 1946

After pitching nine innings in five games for the Memphis Chicks, Hardee and fellow North Carolinian Woodrow Crowson are released ... a year later, Crow- son, pitching for the Greensboro Patriots, is killed on August 14, in Mayodan, North Carolina, when the Patriots' team bus is sideswiped by a passing water- melon truck.

July 13, 1946

Hardee hurls a no-hitter for the Angier-Fuquay Springs Bulls in a 13-0 Tobacco (D) League win over ex-major leaguer Van Lingle Mungo and the Clinton Blues ... Hardee allows only four Blues to reach first base, two on walks and two on errors.

July 13, 1947

Pitching for the Raleigh Capitals, Hardee beats visiting Greensboro 2-1, giving him at least one victory against each of the other seven teams in the Carolina (C) League.

August 18, 1947

Hardee wins both ends of a Carolina League doubleheader against the Greensboro Patriots striking out 14 and allowing only six hits in a pair of complete game victories.

Young Hurler Is Signed By Braves

Boston, Jan. 19 (INS)—Ray E. Hardee, righthand pitcher of Clay- ton, N. C., has signed a Braves contract. He was with the Ral- eigh club of the Carolina league last season.

John J. Quinn, general manager of the Braves, said tonight he had outbid several major league clubs for the services of Hardee.

January 19, 1948

Following an 18-win season with the Raleigh Capi- tals, Hardee signs with the National League's Boston Braves ... Braves' general manager John Quinn indi- cates that he has outbid several other major league teams for Hardee's services.

March 1, 1948

Boston Braves manager Billy Southworth orders "hard work" for rookies Hardee, Bob Hogue and Jim Prender- gast, all rookie pitchers and apparently overweight by Southworth's estimation.

Hardee Pitches Two Victories Over Patriots

Showfety's Homer Only Patriot Run Scored Last Night

BY EARLE HELLEN
Record Sports Editor

The Patriots hit a new low, even for them, in run production last night at the stadium. In two games they could get only one lone run off the Raleigh Caps' Ray Hardee and thus dropped a double-header by 8-0 and 7-1 scores.

Ray Hardee [3 of 3]:

April 1, 1948

Saying he needs more experience, Boston Braves' manager options Hardee to the San Diego Padres of the Pacific Coast League.

April 26, 1946

San Diego Padres manager James "Rip" Collins options pitcher George Nicholas to Tacoma of the Western International League and returns Hardee back to the Boston Red Sox, who promptly send him to the Danville Bees of the Carolina (C) League.

September 11, 1948

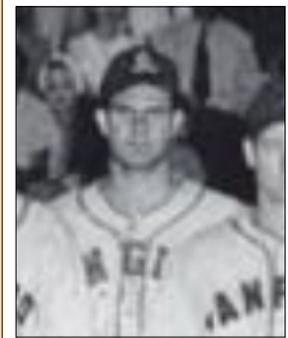
Hardee scatters six hits and strikes out 10 as Danville ties its Shaughnessy playoff series with Martinsville at one game apiece with a 5-0 win.

August 1, 1949

Pitching for the Reidsville (N.C.) Luckies, Hardee pitches the last shutout of his career, allowing only seven hits in a 4-0 win over the Burlington Bees.

May 25, 1950

A free agent, Hardee is signed by the Greensboro Patriots.



Ray Hardee
1946 Angier-Fuquay Springs Bulls

The Pats added a new hurler last night when Melvin Nee arrived from Lakeland, Fla. Nee was acquired in a trade for Wallerstein Saturday night. The right-handed pitcher set some sort of record in this day and time. He was informed of the trade Saturday night in Florida and arrived here last night, making a straight journey instead of the usual meandering journey ball players take these days in switching from team to team.

June 11, 1950

In an exchange of struggling pitchers, the Greensboro Patriots trade the team's only lefty, Rowe Wallerstein (2-6, 5.40), to the Lakeland Pilots of the Florida International (B) League for sidwinding right-hander Melvin Nee ... Nee, a 20-game winner for the Miami Tourists in 1947 that included a perfect game, is 1-7 with a 6.79 ERA for the Pilots.

June 13, 1950

Not expecting the newly-acquired Nee to arrive for a couple of days, Greensboro manager Bob Doty names Hardee as his starting pitcher for that night's game with the visiting Fayetteville Generals ... however Nee reports to the team that afternoon ... to make room for Nee, Doty

releases Hardee, ending his professional baseball career ... Al Zilian replaces Hardee on the mound and pitches a complete game, scattering eight hits in a 3-2 victory.

June 26, 1950

Nee fails to make it through the fifth inning in two starts with the Patriots and is 0-2 with a 16.50 ERA when he is assigned to the Newton-Conover Twins of the Western Carolina (D) League.

July 9, 1950

Nee is returned to the Patriots by the Twins, who promptly dispatch him to St. Hyacinthe Saints of the Provincial (C) League ... with the Twins, Nee is 4-7 with a 1.69 ERA, including a no-hitter against St. John's on July 23 that he loses 1-0.

August 10, 1988

Hardee passes away in his hometown of Clayton, North Carolina at the age of 67.

Baseball Reference:

<http://www.baseball-reference.com/minors/player.cgi?id=hardee002ray>

Out of Luck



PITCHING a no-hitter, yet losing the game, was the experience of Melvin Nee, right-hander of the St. Hyacinthe (Provincial) club, against St. Johns, July 23. An error, a hit batsman, a stolen base and the failure of his infield to complete a double play that would have retired the side without a score caused him to drop a 1 to 0 decision. Nee once hurled a perfect game while with Miami in the Florida International.