

George McConnell "BEYOND THE SCOREBOOK"

©DiamondsintheDusk.com

Babe Ruth makes his organized baseball debut for the International League's Baltimore Orioles on April 22, 1914. In the team's second game of the young season, the 19-year-old lefthander twirls a two-hit 6-0 shutout of the visiting Buffalo Bisons before a paltry crowd of 200. In addition, the hometown product collects two hits in four at bats, including a single to right in his first career at bat.

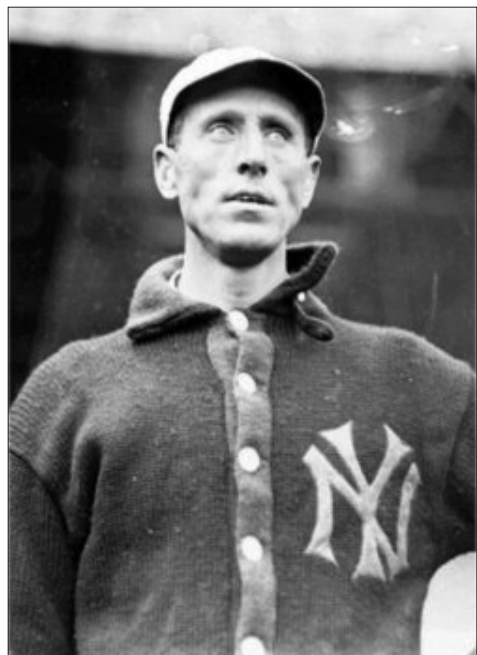
Ruth's mound opponent that afternoon in Baltimore's Oriole Park is 36-year-old former major leaguer George (Slats) McConnell, who toiled the past two seasons for the New York Yankees.

McConnell will pitch six years in the big leagues, winning 41 of 92 decisions with 58 complete games, five shutouts and a 2.60 ERA. Released by the Chicago Cubs in the spring of 1915, he signs with the Federal League's Chicago Whales and responds with a career season, posting a 25-10 mark with a 2.20 ERA.

Primarily a first baseman in the minors until 1908, when the Buffalo Bisons of the Eastern (A) League convert him to a pitcher. The 6-3, 190-pound righthander responds to his first season on the mound by posting a 17-12 mark, allowing only 183 hits in 242 innings.

In six minor league seasons, the Shelbyville, Tennessee, native fashions a 98-59 mark, including a career-best 30-8 mark for the Rochester Hustlers in 1911.

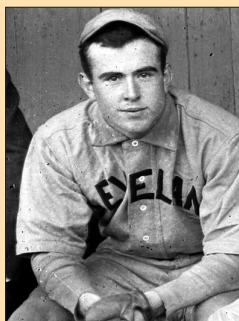
On January 20, 1913, Cleveland Naps manager Joe Birmingham expresses an interest in trading 22-year-old infielder Roger Peckinpaugh for McConnell, who is coming off an 8-12 mark in 1912. The deal falls through when New York manager Frank Chance refuses to part with McConnell.



George McConnell
1909 New York Yankees

Not be denied and obviously not a great judge of talent, Cleveland's Birmingham eventually gets his wish and deals Peckinpaugh to the Yankees on May 25, 1913, for 27-year-old outfielder Jack Lelivelt and 20-year-old infielder Bill Stumpf.

The "astute" Birmingham (right) gets rid of a player who will play another 14 seasons in the majors, collecting 1,817 hits, including 252 doubles, 74 triples and 47 home runs and be named the American League MVP in 1925 while playing with the Washington Senators. In return, the Naps receive one player (Stumpf) who will not play another game at the major league level, and Lelivelt, who will total 87 at bats in 50 games before returning to the minors for another 13 seasons.



April 22, 1914 Buffalo Bisons vs. Baltimore Orioles Oriole Park, Baltimore, Md.

BUFFALO AT BALTIMORE, APRIL 22.—"Babe" Ruth, the sensational young southpaw, who was plucked from the sand lots to make good his first year out in the professional ranks, held Buffalo safe all the way. Big George McConnell, late of the New York Americans, was rapped hard and timely by the home team, while his support was also rather wobbly.

Score:

Baltimore	A	B	R	B	P	A	E	Buffalo	A	B	R	B	P	A	E
Daniels, rf	4	1	2	3	0	0		Vaughn, 3b	5	0	2	1	2	1	
Parent, 3b	3	0	0	1	0	0		McCarthy, 2b	4	0	0	0	1	0	
Ball, 2b...	2	2	0	1	3	0		Murray, rf	3	0	0	0	0	0	
Cree, cf...	4	1	1	2	0	0		Houser, lb	4	0	1	1	0	0	
Twombly, lf	4	1	1	1	0	0		Jacyson, lf	2	0	0	1	1	0	
Derrick, ss	4	1	3	1	5	0		Roach, ss...	3	0	1	2	5	0	
Gleichen, lb	4	0	0	1	1	0		Paddock, cf	4	0	1	2	0	0	
Egan, c...	4	0	1	4	0	0		Kritchell, c	4	0	1	6	2	1	
Ruth, p...	4	0	2	0	2	0		McConnell, p	2	0	0	2	0	0	
								*Stephens...	1	0	0	0	0	0	
Totals..	33	6	10	27	11	0		Totals...	33	0	6	24	13	2	

*Batted for McConnell in ninth inning.
 Buffalo 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0—0
 Baltimore 3 0 3 0 0 0 0 0 0—6
 Two-base hits—Daniels, Derrick, Kritchell, Roach.
 Stolen bases—Ball, Daniels, Houser. First on balls—
 Off Ruth 3, McConnell 3. Struck out—By Ruth 4,
 McConnell 6. Passed ball—Kritchell. Left on bases—
 Baltimore 7, Buffalo 10. Time—1:50. Umpires—
 Nallin and Carpenter.

Slats goes AWOL October 1, 1911

John Ganzel's Rochester Hustlers, having already clinched their third straight Eastern League championship, close out the 1911 regular season in a three game series against third-place Toronto without the services of star pitcher George "Slats" McConnell.

A 30-game winner, McConnell jumps the team before the Maple Leaf series and does not appear in any of the three games.

Rochester players tell the media that McConnell was paid \$80 to pitch for a Plainfield, New Jersey, semipro team in a city championship game ... many of Rochester players contend that he should have contributed the \$80 in the season-ending pot to be shared by the team's players ... Ganzel denies he gave McConnell permission to leave the team.