

# Pinch Hits, "The League That Was Sold Out"

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On January 7, 1902, 30-year-old baseball maverick Edward Ashenbach, loses out on the managerial job at Texarkana (Texas) before finding his way to North Carolina in an effort to start a new minor league circuit, and in the process own and manage the Charlotte franchise in that league.

Ashenbach is derisively nicknamed "Money" by the *Newport News Times-Herald* because of his affinity for selling players and then leaving town (with a handsome profit) as he did the previous season while managing Newport News Shipbuilders of the now-defunct Virginia-North Carolina League.

Six months later, despite his Hornets riding a 23-game win streak and in first place by 11 1/2 games, Ashenbach lives up to his moniker when he attempts to sell his entire roster, or parts thereof, to the Chattanooga Lookouts of the Southern League.

The sale falls through, but the damage to the fledgling North Carolina League is complete and irreversible.

## World Record (For 24 Days)

On June 10, the Charlotte Hornets beat the Durham Bulls 10-1, setting an organized baseball record with their 25th straight win. Twenty-four days later (June 4), the Texas League's Corsicana Oil Citys eclipse the Hornets' short-lived record beating Waco 6-1 and running their win streak to 26 in a row. The Oil Citys extend their new world record to 27 consecutive victories before they drop a 3-1 decision to Waco on June 6.

Two weeks later, on July 10, last-place Wilmington "surrenders" its franchise to the league, but thanks in part to monies raised by the Wilmington Street Railroad and executive backers of the franchise, the team is able to pay off each of its players and cover all of its obligations. A rumored move of the Sailors to either Tarboro or Winston-Salem proves to be just that, a rumor.

One day later, Ashenbach disbands his own team (after selling several players for a handsome profit), despite a sizeable lead on second-place Raleigh. Within 24 hours the six-team circuit is down to four teams and floundering badly.

A troubling sign for the league may have occurred a couple of weeks earlier when on June 7, the Durham Bulls file an official complaint to the league charging that Charlotte has exceeded the league salary cap of \$700 per month for the team, and no more than

\$75 per player. It is rumored that catcher David Lehman and pitcher John Bishop are both receiving \$125 per month, Eddie Person \$100 and Ashenbach \$250 per month.

## 1902 North Carolina (C) League - Final Standings

Team	W	L	Pct	GB	Manager
Charlotte Hornets	44	12	.786	--	Edward Ashenbach
New Bern Trackers	34	25	.576	11.5	C. Stevens/F. Marker
Raleigh Red Birds	35	27	.565	12	George Kelly/R.C. Rivers
Greensboro Farmers	33	30	.524	14.5	King Kelly
Durham Bulls	23	39	.371	24	Otis Stockdale
Wilmington Sailors	10	46	.179	34	Edgar Baer/Harry Mace

\*Wilmington disbands on July 10

\*Charlotte disbands on July 11

\*The league disbands on July 15



Edward Ashenbach

The New Bern Weekly Journal  
June 27, 1902

## IS CHARLOTTE GOING

### To Leave the North Carolina League? Ashenbach and His Dicker.

"Chattanooga may have a new ball team. Such are the negotiations now under way between the local management and the manager of a swift ball team in North Carolina. The various rumors that have been afloat on the streets on account of the matter have caused considerable talk among the base ball men, and not a few have stated that they are very much gratified at the prospective change-in the personnel of the ball team. About a week ago the local association received a communication from Ashenbach, of the Charlotte team. The team is composed of some of the fastest and all round good players in the South. The only objections presenting themselves to the association were the fact that the manager wanted too much for his men. One of the strongest arguments which induced the association to consider the matter was the fact that Ashenbach's team had won twenty-three consecutive games, and on account of that fact has nearly broken up the North Carolina League. The association has had the matter under consideration for some time, and a few days ago Percy Loomis, the president of the local baseball association, left for Charlotte for the purpose of investigating the team.

It is understood among the baseball people in the city that a deal will be made by which a manager and seven players are to be secured. This will be an excellent thing for the local club, as they have scarcely done a thing with the material on hand. In case the team secures the new players the local club will have an excellent chance to come out at the end of the season far at the top of the league. It will be remembered that last season New Orleans had a losing team and was near the bottom of ladder for months, then, strengthening the team, rose rapidly and came near beating the Fishermen out of the pennant. This will be the story in case Chattanooga can secure the additions to the team. While the chances of securing the whole lot are good, yet Chattanooga cannot afford to pay any fancy prices for the Tar Heels, but in case the negotiations fall to carry, the management will attempt to purchase a few of the players."

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However, one small problem remains for Ashenbach before he rides off into the sunset (or Shreveport, or his hometown of Cincinnati), the Raleigh Red Birds, with a profitable three-game series upcoming with Charlotte, have requested that all of the Hornet players (sold or released) must report to the state capital and play in the three games, or be blacklisted from organized baseball.

Unfortunately for the Red Birds, league president Perrin Busbee has already wired the Southern League's Birmingham franchise, where Ashenbach sold third baseman Arthur Brothers and shortstop Champ Osteen, that all of the Charlotte players were not under the protection of the National Agreement and were "at liberty to sign anywhere."

### **Seventeen to Fourteen the Score of the Game the Correspondent Thinks Too Poor to Report.**

(Special to News and Observer.)

**Greensboro, N. C., July 15.—The game this afternoon was too poor and featureless to justify report or the large attendance. It is impossible to give tabulated score or summary even, as the scorer requires a long time to make it out. Raleigh was simply walloped. Greensboro having two picked up local players at that in place of stick men.**

**Score:** R. H. E.  
**Greensboro** . . . . . 0 2 2 0 1 4 7 1—17 22 4  
**Raleigh** . . . . . 4 0 0 0 4 4 2 0—14 11 10  
**Batteries:** Courneen and McTeer; Childs, White and Rollins. Time of game 1:45.

Within 24 hours Busbee reverses his stance and informs Ashenbach and Birmingham that since the Charlotte team is "disorganized," it has no power to sell its players.

Ashenbach continues to sell his players with pitcher Fred Applegate and John Weaver going to Newark and Bishop to Toronto of the Eastern League.

Following the departure of Charlotte and Wilmington, the league attempts to carry on as a four-team league, starting a new season on July 11 with teams in Greensboro, Durham, New Bern and Raleigh.

On July 15, President Busbee announces the North Carolina League has disbanded and no more games will be played and since the organization is now defunct, he will abandon his effort to have Charlotte players blacklisted.

Despite Busbee's proclamation, there is one more game to be played and it takes place in Greensboro on July 16, where

the homestanding Farmers beat the Red Birds 17-14 in contest that the local correspondent "Thinks to poor to report."

## **CHARLOTTE IS NOT PLAYING FAIR BALL**

Durham Accuses the Hornets  
of Violating Pledges

PROTESTS ALL THE GAMES

On July 17, Busbee announces that the managers of Raleigh, Greensboro and New Bern have agreed that "no demand shall be made by any team for the pennant."

After a quick trip to his hometown of Cincinnati, Ashenbach lands on his feet, becoming a player/manager for the Southern Association's Shreveport (La.) Giants on July 27, where he is reunited with former Carolina League players Arthur Brouthers, Tony Pastor, David Lehman, Eddie Persons, Louis Childs, Gus Soffel and Champ Osteen.

### **Word From the Dead.**

Just to keep the North Carolina League in mind comes a few words each day.

The STAR last night received the following special from Raleigh:

"President Bisbee, of the late State Baseball League, says that the managers of each of the late teams interested in the defunct league agrees that no demand shall be made by any team for the pennant. A statement will be prepared at once for the settlement of affairs and a division of the sinking fund between Raleigh, Greensboro and Newbern, who retained franchises until the end came."



## **EDWARD ASHENBACH**

Born on October 18, 1871, in Cincinnati, Ohio, Ashenbach begins a 15-year minor league career in 1890 with the Canton Nadjys of the Tri-State League ... the spring prior to his managing the Hornets, Ashenbach is the head coach for one year (1902) at the University of North Carolina posting a 7-6 mark in his lone season in Chapel Hill ... Ashenbach's Charlotte roster is filled with several notable names, including right fielder Archie "Moonlight" Graham, who played under Ashenbach at UNC and who is not slated to report to the team until his studies are completed in June ... on February 16, 1912, a 40-year-old Ashenbach dies of paralysis at a detention hospital in Cincinnati.