

Charles Freine, "The Marvelous Freak"

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The toast of the Philadelphia Athletics spring training camp in 1910, Charles Freine is referred to as a "Marvelous Freak" by the media because he is an ambidextrous pitcher ... despite his sudden national fame, Freine will never pitch an inning in a major league regular season game.

Not much is actually known about Freine, including the correct spelling of his last name ... the two most common - Freine and Friene - are divided almost equally in the newspapers and magazines of the period ... in 1909, one article refers to him as a "left-hander", while a year later, the term "ambidextrous" is the most prevalent adjective linked with his name ... on several occasions it is noted that Freine is a rarity among baseball players of the day as he does not smoke or drink.

A native of San Jose, California, Freine is a standout pitcher for the Santa Clara College baseball team in 1908 and 1909, leading the school to the "Intercollegiate Championship" in 1909.

Graduating from high school straight to professional baseball, Friene makes his professional debut in 1906 with the San Jose Prune Pickers of the outlaw California State League.

On July 19, 1909, Freine is signed by Philadelphia Athletics' scout Josh Reilly ... however, prior to his reporting to the A's training camp the following spring, the California State League (now a full-fledged member of organized baseball) contends that Freine is the property of San Jose, a team that he has played with off and on since 1906.

PITCHER FREINE IS MARVELOUS FREAK



Charles Freine Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Level	W-L	HR	RBI	AVG
1904	San Jose High School	CHSA	HS	-	-	-	-
1905	San Jose High School	CHSA	HS	-	-	-	-
1906	Santa Clara College	Collegiate	College	-	-	-	-
1906	San Jose Prune Pickers	California	Ind.	-	-	-	-
1907	San Jose Prune Pickers	California	Ind.	-	-	-	-
1908	Santa Clara College	Collegiate	College	-	-	-	-
1908	San Jose Prune Pickers	California	Ind.	-	-	-	-
1909	Santa Clara College	Collegiate	College	-	-	-	-
1909	Watsonville Pippins	Three C	Semi-Pro	-	-	33	.340
1909	San Jose Prune Pickers	California	Ind.	-	-	-	-
1910	Scranton Miners	New York State	B	10-12	-	-	.200
1911	Los Angeles Angels	Pacific Coast	A	2-1	-	-	-
1911	Ogden	Utah State League	Semi-Pro	-	-	-	-
1912	Victoria Bees	Northwestern	B	-	-	0	.286
1912	Boise Irrigators	Western Tri-State	D	0-1	-	-	.206
1912	Tacoma Tigers	Northwestern	B	-	-	-	-
1913	Boise Irrigators	Western Tri-State	D	-	4	-	.260
1914	Nampa	Trolley League	Semi-Pro	-	-	-	-
1915	Nampa	Idaho-Oregon	Semi-Pro	-	-	-	-
1915	Hollister Alpines	Mission	Semi-Pro	-	-	-	-
1916	San Jose Missions	Mission	Semi-Pro	-	-	-	-
1917	Richmond Elks	Central California	Semi-Pro	-	-	-	-
1918	Richmond Elks	Central California	Semi-Pro	-	-	-	-
1918	San Leandro Tractors	Mission	Semi-Pro	-	-	-	-
1920	San Jose Bears	Mission	Semi-Pro	-	-	-	-
1921	San Jose Bears	Mission	Semi-Pro	-	-	-	-
Minor League Totals				12-14	4	-	---

In March of 1910, baseball's National Commission rules that Freine belongs to Connie Mack's Athletics ... following completion of spring training, Mack announces that despite several good outings, Freine is being sent to the New Bedford Whalers of the New England (B) League ... Freine ultimately ends up with the Scranton Miners of the New York State (B) League where he posts a 10-12 mark in his only full season in professional baseball.

In March 1911, Mack turns Freine over to the Los Angeles Angels of the Pacific Coast League for "further seasoning" ... two months later (May 11), Freine, one of the best paid players in the highly-competitive PCL, is released by the Angels despite a 2-1 record in six games ... it is noted that Freine is having trouble getting into shape as a result of "stomach trouble".

Starting the 1912 season with the Victoria Bees of the Northwestern (B) League, Freine is

Charles Freine [2 of 4]:

hitting .286 when he suffers an injury that first appears to be a sprained knee, but is later determined to be a broken leg ... the unsympathetic Bees release the now-gimpy Freine on July 8 ... he will finish the season playing with the Boise Irrigators of the Western Tri-State (D) League and the Tacoma Tigers of the Northwestern League.

Following his injury-laden, non-descript season of 1912, Freine makes amends quickly in 1913 ... despite holding out for much of the team's spring training in a contract dispute, the pitcher-turned-outfielder collects 30 hits in his first 65 at bats and is batting .462 in early May for the Boise of the Western Tri-State (D) League ... however, he is unable to maintain his early pace and ends up the season hitting .260 with four home runs and 24 stolen bases.

A year later (1914), continuing his nomadic ways, Freine suits up for the Nampa (Idaho) team in the newly formed and aptly-named "Trolley League" featuring towns situated along the Bamberger Electric Railway between Ogden and Salt Lake City ... league franchises are awarded to Boise, Nampa, and Caldwell with two different teams representing Boise.

NAMPA CAPTAIN BIDS GOOD-BYE

Freine Leaving for California and Team's Future Is Shaky.

NAMPA — Latest obtainable information indicates that the life of the Nampa baseball nine is figuratively hanging by a thread. Charlie Freine has resigned as captain and starts for his home in California on Saturday. Freine was delegated by Manager Nokleby to look after the club during the latter's absence in Ogden, but because of his contemplated departure from Nampa, Charlie declines to assume any responsibility. It is said that practice is being neglected. It is known that Manager Nokleby left here Monday evening expecting that his team would clash with Caldwell at that city next Sunday. Whether or not he will rally the scattered forces and swing his cohorts on to the fray after a glimpse at the situation on his return remains to be seen.

A year later, Freine is named captain of the Nampa club, but in early June he resigns his position and leaves for his home in California ... manager Nokleby had designated Freine to look after the club while he visits Ogden, but Freine declines to "assume responsibility" and leaves the team ... Freine later re-emerges with the Hollister Alpines of the Mission League.

It is in his native California where Freine plays out the remaining years of his career ... he will suit up for the Richmond Elks of the Central California League and the San Leandro Tractors and San Jose Bears of the Mission League.

Freine Chronology

March 16, 1906

Freine goes 1-for-4 in Santa Clara's 5-4 victory over St. Mary's.

June 29, 1908

Batting sixth and playing left field, Freine goes 1-4 with a double and two runs scored as Santa Clara College beats an all-star team from the USS Milwaukee (a St. Louis-class cruiser) 10-2, in game played at League Field in Honolulu, Hawaii ... as Santa Clara was beating the outmanned sailors, another game was being contested on the island of Oahu:

Insides beat Outsides 22-12

An interesting game of Baseball was played yesterday afternoon before a large number of spectators on the lot adjoining E. O. Hall's store, the teams being the Insides and the Outsides. The score ended 22-12 in favor of the Outsides.

Freine's "One Shining Moment"

San Francisco Call, March 10, 1909

College Twirler Gives Chicago Professionals Puzzle to Solve

SANTA CLARA, March 9 - The entire team No. 1 of the White Sox visited Santa Clara this morning and the players were the guests of Rev. Father Joseph R. Stack, S. J., director of athletics, until they left for Luna park for the contest with the varsity of the Jesuit institution.

Before calling the game, Edmond Lowe, representing the student body of Santa Clara college, after a speech of welcome to Colonel Comiskey and his men, introduced Michael Brown, the manager of the Santa Clara team, who presented a monogram sofa cushion to Comiskey; and an S.C.C. pennant to every member of the White Sox team.

James Doyle, the California State League umpire, shouted "Play ball!" and Hahn walked to the rubber (plate). The best he could do was to fly out to Dooling. Both teams settled down for a contest that will go down in history of baseball as one of the keenest and most spectacular games ever played.

The White Sox were continually left on bases by the heady work of Charles Freine and the support given by the whole Santa Clara team.

SANTA CLARA						
	AB.	R.	H.	PO.	A.	E.
Peters, 1b.....	2	0	0	8	0	1
Shafer, c.....	3	0	0	5	3	1
McGovern, ss.....	3	0	0	4	1	1
Freine, p.....	3	0	0	1	8	2
Jacobs, c and cf.....	3	0	1	1	0	0
Reams, 3b.....	2	0	0	2	1	0
Donovan, lf.....	3	0	1	3	0	0
Salberg, 2b.....	2	0	0	0	1	2
Dooling, rf.....	3	0	0	3	1	0
Total	24	0	2	27	15	7
CHICAGO						
	AB.	R.	H.	PO.	A.	E.
Hahn, rf.....	2	1	0	0	0	0
Parent, ss.....	5	0	0	1	3	0
Atz, 2b.....	5	0	2	0	2	0
Cougherty, lf.....	2	1	0	0	0	0
Flanagan, cf.....	4	0	0	1	0	0
Cravath, 1b.....	2	0	2	12	1	0
Tannehill, 3b.....	4	0	0	1	0	0
Owens, c.....	2	0	0	3	1	0
Sullivan, e.....	2	1	0	7	2	0
Fiene, p.....	2	0	1	0	1	0
Scott, p.....	2	0	1	2	3	0
Total	32	3	6	27	13	0
SUMMARY						
First base on errors—Chicago 3. First base on balls—Off Fiene 1, off Scott 2, off Freine 6. Left on bases—Santa Clara 2, Chicago 10. Struck out—By Fiene 3, by Scott 7, by Freine 3. Double plays—Freine to Shafer to Peters; Scott to Cravath. Hit by pitcher—Dougherty. Umpire—Doyle. Time of game—1 hour and 30 minutes.						

Charles Freine [3 of 4]:

Watsonville Pippins - Spring 1909

Register-Pajaronian, Watsonville, Calif., December 4, 2008

"Ball grounds were secured at the corner of Ford and Walker streets and grandstands were built on the four acres, plus fencing was installed around the ballpark. The players listed on the newly formed team were: Ray Bartlett, Frank Sears, Lynn Marsh, Charles Friene, Joe Giannini, Chris Gorman, Vic Salsberg, Pancho Dias, Joe Nevis and Sid Smith. The Three "C" Baseball League was formed that year, and Thomas Albright became manager of the local team — the Pippins. Under his leadership, the team won the pennant in 1909 and 1910."

July 19, 1909

Freine is signed by the Philadelphia Athletics.

August 9, 1909 - *Sporting Life*

"Charles Friene, the Pacific Coast pitcher secured by the Athletics Club, is a big **right-hander**, who started as a college pitcher and helped Santa Clara win the championship from St. Mary's, with which team Krause first attracted attention. This season Friene has been doing splendid work for the San Jose Club of the outlaw California League."

March 4, 1910 - *Sporting Life*

"When Connie Mack was on the Pacific coast he stated he had signed a promising young pitcher named Charles Friene, of the outlaw California State League. The latter organization, upon being admitted to the National Association, laid claim to the player and carried the case to the National Commission, which alone had jurisdiction, a major league club being involved. The Commission on Saturday last handed down a decision awarding the player to the Athletic Club."



**Charles Freine
1909 San Jose Prune Pickers**

CHARLEY FRIENE IS SIGNED By Scout for Philadelphia Club.

Pitcher
Charley
Friene
of
State
League
Follows
Footsteps
of
Harry
Krause
to
Berth
With
Athletics



March 26 1910 - *Sporting Life*

"Connie Mack's California recruit, Charles Freine, the **southpaw pitcher**, is a real base ball freak. He can pitch equally well with either hand. He can also bat finely from either the right or left side and is a corking good outfielder."

May 4, 1910 - *Sporting Life*

"Connie Mack, manager of the Philadelphia club of the American League, has a real true **ambidextrous** pitcher on his staff. Charles Freine is the youngster's name and he comes from the Pacific Coast in an effort to fight his way into big league company. The story goes that Freine can pitch equally well with either arm and change from one delivery to the other on the stand, to the complete mystification of the batter. Many ball players can use either arm for throwing or bat left or right handed, but not with the equal effectiveness. Freine will be a novelty if the wondrous tale is not exaggerated."

July 6, 1910

Freine picks up first shutout in professional baseball with a three-hit white washing of the Utica Utes.

March 11, 1911

Philadelphia Athletics' owner/manager Connie Mack turns Freine over to the Los Angeles Angels of the Pacific Coast League for "further seasoning".

Charles Freine [4 of 4]:

Boise.		AB.	R.	H.	PO.	A.	E.
Reams, 2b	.....	4	3	3	5	4	1
Freine, lf	.....	6	1	2	0	0	0
Blausser, 3b	.....	5	1	2	1	2	0
Clark, 1b	.....	5	1	2	8	1	0
Altermatt, ss	.....	2	2	1	3	3	0
Bonner, cf	.....	1	1	0	0	0	0
Gard, c	.....	5	1	3	7	2	0
Kaefer, cf, ss	.....	4	2	3	3	1	0
Winkler, rf	.....	4	1	2	1	0	0
Hall, p	.....	4	1	0	0	4	0
Totals	.....	40	14	18	27	17	1

Walla Walla.		AB.	R.	H.	PO.	A.	E.
Johnson, rf, 2b	.....	6	2	4	2	0	0
Childers, 3b, lf	.....	5	2	1	3	0	0
Davis, 2b, p	.....	5	1	3	1	0	0
Martini, lf, ss	.....	4	0	2	3	0	0
Sheely, 1b, c	.....	5	0	1	7	1	1
Lundstrum, ss, 3b	.....	4	1	1	0	1	0
Harmon, cf	.....	5	1	2	1	0	0
Brown, c, 1b	.....	5	2	2	7	2	0
Bridger, p, rf	.....	5	1	3	0	4	1
Totals	.....	44	10	19	24	8	2

Score by Innings.
 Boise 4 0 0 0 1 1 8 0 *—14
 Walla Walla . 0 0 1 0 0 0 3 6 0—10

Summary.
 Sacrifice hits, Kaefer, Hall; stolen bases, Reams, Freine, Blausser; two-base hits, Johnson, Brown, Davis 2, Clark, Gard, Kaefer; three-base hits, Bridger, Kaefer; home runs, Reams, Freine; double plays, Reams to Altermatt to Clark; innings pitched, by Bridger 7, by Davis 1, by Hall 9; base hits, off Bridger 18, off Hall 19; struck out, by Bridger 7, by Davis 2, by Hall 7; base on balls, off Bridge:

◀◀ September 4, 1913

Freine goes 3-for-6 with a seventh-inning grand slam as the Boise Irrigators clinch the second-half title of the 1913 Western Tri-State (D) League league season with a 14-10 win over August Bade's Walla Walla Bears ... the Bears were the league champion in the first half of the season with a 45-20 record.

September 6, 1913 ▶▶

Boise and Walla Walla are unable to come to an agreement on financial terms and the league's postseason championship series is cancelled ... Walla Walla demands \$600 to play the three-game series in Boise the following weekend (one game on Saturday and a doubleheader on Sunday) ... the Irrigators counter with a guarantee of expenses and a 50/50 split of the gate receipts ... within 24 hours of the decision, Boise officials fail in their attempt to arrange a post-season series with the Salt Lake City Skyscrapers of the Union (D) Association when it is learned that the Skyscrapers' grandstand and clubhouse has burned to the ground.

SERIES IS ABANDONED

BOISE AND WALLA WALLA UNABLE TO AGREE.

Post Season Games Not to Be Played and Western Tri-State Pennant Will Be Undecided.

BOISE, Idaho, Sept. 6.—(Special.)—Failure on the part of the directors of Walla Walla and Boise clubs, in the Western Tri-State League, to agree on the terms for playing off the post-season series has resulted in the negotiations being dropped and the post-season series to decide the pennant winner abandoned. The last game in the league's schedule will be played off tomorrow, ending the season, with the pennant winner undecided.

This announcement, made here today, was a keen disappointment to league fans. Walla Walla won the honors of the first half of the season, and the schedule was split, starting all clubs off the second half with a clean slate, with the understanding that the second half of the club winning the high percentage of the last half of the season would qualify to meet Walla Walla in a post-season series to decide the pennant winner.

Walla Walla demanded a guarantee of \$600 to play the series in Boise next week, but the local management refused to give this, but offered a guarantee of expenses, and even division of the gate receipts between the two clubs. Walla Walla refused the offer.

Boise will probably make application to the Union Association for a franchise next season.

FRIENE GOES TO PHILADELPHIA

Charley Friene has come to terms with Connie Mack and mailed back his contract. The Philadelphia Club will have in Friene a young pitcher of unusual ability. He is an ambidextrous thrower. There are very few pitchers who can shoot the ball over the plate with either hand, but Friene has done it. He has pitched part of a game with his right hand and finished up with his left. Friene usually pitches with his right. It is only when he is tiring or has some dangerous southpaw hitter that he smokes them over with his left. John Reilly discovered the youngster, who is a graduate of Santa Clara College, and recommended him to Connie Mack.—Bulletin.

Friene was the star pitcher for the Watsonville team last season, being largely responsible for the winning of the pennant by the Pippin town.

The Irrigators are later declared the champions of the Western Tri-State League on the basis of having the best overall record in regular season play.

The cancellation of the post-season series causes Boise officials to reconsider their association with the Western Tri-State League ... on October 8, 1913, at a meeting of League representatives, Boise officially withdraws from Western Tri-State to pursue membership in the Union Association.

June 30, 1917

Pitching for the Richmond (Calif.)

Elks, Freine tosses a two-hit shutout against the Modern Woodmen of Oakland in a Central California League game.

August 1971

Freine's date of birth and the date of his death are not known, however an 86-year-old Charles Freine passes away in San Francisco, California in August of 1971.