

# Elmer Leifer, "32 Strikeouts"

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On June 28, 1915, in a semipro game between Ewan and Malden, two small townships in Southeastern Washington, Ewan's Elmer Leifer, released earlier in the spring by the Spokane Indians from their spring training camp, sets a record for semipro baseball in the Northwest, striking out 32 batters in a 19-inning 6-4 win at nearby Malden.

Three weeks later, Leifer re-signs with the Indians and makes his professional baseball debut against the Tacoma Tigers on July 18 ... relieving 37-year-old pitcher/manager and former major leaguer Bob Wicker in the third inning, Leifer pitches seven strong innings, allowing two runs on only three hits in a 4-1 loss.

Born in Clarington, Ohio, on May 23, 1893, Leifer plays eight years in the minor leagues with the Butte Miners, Oakland Oaks, Moose Jaw Robin Hoods, Portland Beavers and the Little Rock Travellers.

After taking over as the player/manager of the Moose Jaw Millers in June 1921, Leifer is sold to the Chicago White Sox on July 21 for \$1,200 ... he remains with the Millers until the team disbands in August before joining the White Sox.

A 28-year-old Leifer is 1-for-2 with an RBI single in his major league debut in a 10-2 loss to the St. Louis Browns on September 7, 1921 ... in nine games with the Pale Hose, Leifer has three singles in ten at-bats, finishing his major league career with a .300 average.

A year later, Leifer is hitting .329 with Little Rock when his career comes to an apparent end on May 10, 1922 ... in the fourth inning of a game against the Atlanta Crackers, Leifer, playing third base, collides with 18-year-old shortstop and future Hall of Famer Travis Jackson.

At first it is reported that his injury is not serious and that he will return within a week ... it is later learned that Leifer has fractured the frontal bone in his head and has severed an optical nerve that eventually requires the removal of his left eye ... Jackson returns to the lineup but in the off-season submits to a nose operation to improve his breathing.

## SOUTHPAW SETS RECORD

**Elmer Leifer Strikes Out 32 Men in 19-Inning Game.**

SPOKANE, Wash.—Elmer Leifer, a left handed pitcher of Ewan, Wash., who was with the Spokane Northwestern league team at the Boyes Springs, Cal., training camp in the spring of 1914, set a new record Sunday for semi-professional baseball for the northwest, if not for the entire United States, when, in a 19-inning game at Malden, Wash., he struck out 32 of the Malden batsmen. He won his game for Ewan 6 to 4.

### Elmer Leifer Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Level	AB	R	HT	2B	3B	HR	AVG
1915	Ewan	Washington	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1915	Spokane Indians	Northwestern	B	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1916	Spokane Indians	Northwestern	B	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1916	Butte Miners	Northwestern	B	82	12	18	-	-	-	.220
1917	Butte Miners	Northwestern	B	233	39	82	10	2	1	.352
1918	Oakland Oaks	Pacific Coast	AA	110	-	26	5	2	1	.241
1919	Moose Jaw Robin Hoods	Western Canada	C	162	22	43	-	-	0	.265
1919	Portland Beavers	Pacific Coast	AA	41	-	6	1	1	0	.146
1920	Moose Jaw Robin Hoods	Western Canada	B	399	73	130	-	-	0	.326
1921	Moose Jaw Millers	Western Canada	B	318	-	104	22	10	2	.327
1921	Chicago White Sox	AMERICAN	ML	10	0	3	0	0	0	.300
1922	Little Rock Travelers	Southern	A	79	-	26	3	1	1	.329
1923	Minot Magicians	North Dakota	D	149	-	36	1	1	0	.242
1924	Pasco	Blue Mountain	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1925	Climax	-	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1926	Lethbridge Cubs/Champion	Alberta Southern	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
<b>Major League Totals</b>				<b>1 Year</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>.300</b>
<b>Minor League Totals</b>				<b>8 Years</b>	<b>1584</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>

Year	Team	League	Level	W-L	G	INN	SO	BB	ERA	
1915	Spokane Indians	Northwestern	B	1-4	8	45.2	21	25	---	
1916	Spokane Indians	Northwestern	B	0-1	1	8.0	4	4	---	
1916	Butte Miners	Northwestern	B	6-7	12	129.0	57	97	---	
1917	Butte Miners	Northwestern	B	2-2	9	35.0	13	12	---	
1919	Moose Jaw Robin Hoods	Western Canada	B	0-0	3	-	-	-	---	
1920	Moose Jaw Robin Hoods	Western Canada	B	5-1	8	-	-	-	---	
1921	Moose Jaw Millers	Western Canada	B	0-1	2	-	-	-	---	
1923	Minot Magicians	North Dakota	D	-	22	-	-	-	---	
<b>Minor League Totals</b>				<b>8 Years</b>	<b>14-16</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>217.2</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>---</b>

## Elmer Leifer [1 of 2]:

Remarkably, Leifer returns the following season to play with the Minot Magicians of the newly-formed North Dakota (D) League ... he pitches in 22 games and hits .242 in 149 at bats in his final year of organized baseball.

### LEIFER CHRONOLOGY

January 27, 1916

Cut by Spokane the previous spring enabling the Indians to stay within the player limit, Leifer re-signs with the team, after President F.C. Farr offers him a blank contract and tells him to fill his own salary.

July 17, 1917

On the same day that 6-foot-7, 215-pound Harry Pitenger, the "biggest pitcher in captivity" walks into the front office of the Cleveland Indians, the Butte Miners sell Leifer to the New York Yankees and is told to report to the team's spring training the following season.

May 10, 1918

The starting left fielder for the Oakland Oaks of the Pacific Coast League, Leifer breaks his leg sliding into third base and is still sidelined when the league suspends play for the duration of the season on July 14.

June 3, 1921

Leifer succeeds Nick Williams as manager of the Moose Jaw Robin Hoods of the Western Canada (B) League.

July 21, 1921

Leifer is sold to the American League's Chicago White Sox for \$1,200.



1, Leifer; 2, Mielke; 3, Schroeder; 4, Hendrix; 5, Fitzsimmons; 6, Stokke; 7, Kippert; 8, Tucker; 9, McJannet; 10, Johnson; 11, Grover; 12, Levin; 13, McGinnity, Mgr.; 14, Hofmann; 15, Mehlfaf.

BUTTE TEAM—NORTHWESTERN LEAGUE.

September 7, 1921  
Elmer Leifer Major League Debut  
Sportsman Park, St. Louis, Missouri

## Davis Holds Chicago, Browns Pound Russell

ST. LOUIS, Sept. 7.—Dixie Davis was in good form today, holding Chicago batters to five hits, while his teammates fell on Russell. White Sox recruit, for thirteen hits in five innings, and St. Louis took the first of a two-game series 10 to 2.

CHICAGO.		ST. LOUIS.	
♯	ab.r.h.o.a.	♯	ab.r.h.o.a.
Hooper, rf.	4 1 1 0 1	Tobin, rf.	5 2 3 3 1
Milligan, 3b.	4 0 0 0 5	Ellerbe, 3b	3 0 0 2 1
Collins, 2b.	3 1 1 5 3	Mullen, 3b.	0 0 0 0 0
Sheely, 1b.	3 0 1 1 1	Sisler, 1b.	5 0 2 6 0
Falk, cf. lf.	4 0 0 0 0	Jacobson, cf	5 1 1 2 0
Mostil, cf.	2 0 0 1 0	Severoid, c	5 2 3 3 1
Leifer, lf.	2 0 1 0 0	Williams, lf	4 2 2 5 0
McClellan, ss.	3 0 0 2 3	Gerber, ss.	4 2 2 3 4
Shalk, c.	2 0 0 3 0	McManus, 2b	3 1 1 3 3
Lees, c.	1 0 0 0 0	Davis, p.	4 0 2 0 0
Russell, p.	2 0 1 0 1		
Hodge, p.	1 0 0 0 2		

Totals... 31 25 24 16 Totals... 39 10 17 27 10  
Chicago..... 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 1—2  
St. Louis..... 1 0 0 4 4 0 0 1 x—10  
Errors—Chicago, 1 (McClellan); St. Louis, 1 (Tobin)

Two-base hits—Collins, Sisler, Jacobson, Gerber, McManus, Tobin. Home runs—Hooper, Gerber. Stolen base—Sisler. Sacrifice—Ellerbe. Double plays—McClellan, Collins and Sheely; Sheely (unassisted). Left on bases—Chicago, 5; St. Louis, 7. Bases on balls—Off Davis, 2; off Russell, 1; off Hodge, 1. Hits—Off Russell, 13 in 5 innings; off Hodge, 4 in 3. Hit by pitcher—By Davis, Sheely. Struck out—By Davis, 1; by Russell, 1. Losing pitcher—Russell. Umpires—Nallin and Chill. Time—1:50.

◀◀ September 7, 1921

Leifer makes his major league debut against the St. Louis Browns on September 7, 1921 ... subbing for starter Johnny Mostil, Leifer plays left field and goes 1-for-2 with a ninth-inning RBI against Browns pitcher Dixie Davis in a 10-2 loss.

May 10, 1922 ▶▶

Leifer is batting .329 in 24 games when, in the top of the fourth inning in a game against the Atlanta Crackers, he collides with shortstop Travis Jackson fracturing the frontal bone in his head and severing an optical nerve that requires the removal of his left eye ... the Southern Association later begins a fund raising effort to assist Leifer, now recovering in a Chicago hospital ... a total of nearly \$6,000 is raised (equivalent to \$83,000 today) ... Jackson, the shortstop, went on to be enshrined in the Hall of Fame.

September 26, 1948

Leifer dies in Everett, Washington at the age of 55 from an overdose of Nembutal.

## PLAYERS COLLIDE

Atlanta, Ga., May 10.—Shortstop Jackson and Center Fielder Leifer, of the Little Rock baseball club, were injured probably seriously in the fourth inning of today's game with Atlanta when they collided behind second base while trying to get a short fly hit by Freddy Graff. Both players were sent to Grady Hospital. It was said Jackson's skull was fractured and Leifer suffered serious cuts in the face.