

Cups of Coffee: Frank Leary

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Frank "Damp Flinger" Leary has a major league career that lasts a total of 36 days with the Cincinnati Reds in the early part of the 1907 season.

During that span, the 5-foot-10 right-hander appears in only two games for manager Ned Hanlon's Reds before being sent back down to the minors on May 17.

Less than five months later, the spitball artist will be dead from complications brought about by an appendicitis followed by several hours of general peritonitis. Leary is 26 years old at the time of his death.

One of 61 Penn alumni to make it to the major leagues and a successful lawyer in his own right, Leary makes his major league debut on April 30, against the eventual World Series champion Chicago Cubs in Cincinnati's Palace of the Fans.



April 30, 1907
Chicago Cubs at Cincinnati Reds
Palace of the Fans, Cincinnati, Ohio

Cincin.	AB	H	O	A	E	Chicago.	AB	H	O	A	E
Huggins, 2b.	2	0	1	7	0	Slagle, cf ...	2	0	0	1	0
Davis, cf ...	3	1	3	0	1	Sheckard, lf .	4	1	0	0	0
Lobert, ss...	3	0	0	2	0	Randall, rf ..	4	2	1	0	0
Ganzel, 1b. .	3	1	6	0	0	Chance, 1r..	4	2	1	0	0
Schlei, 1b. .	1	0	4	0	1	Steinfeldt 3b	2	1	1	2	0
Mitchell, rf.	3	0	2	0	0	Hofman, ss ..	1	0	4	2	0
Odwell, rf...	1	0	0	0	0	Evers, 2b ...	2	0	3	2	0
Kruger, lf	4	1	2	0	0	Moran,	5	0	8	1	1
Mowrey, 3b..	2	0	2	2	3	Overall, p . .	4	0	0	2	0
McLean, c...	3	0	7	3	0	Totals.....	28	6	27	10	1
Hall, p	0	0	0	1	0						
Leary, p.....	2	0	0	3	0						

Totals ...	27	3	27	18	0
Cincinnati.....	3	0	0	0	0
Chicago.....	0	0	3	1	0

Runs—Slagle, Sheckard (2), Randall, Davis, Lovett, and Ganzel. Two-base hit—Randall. Three-base hits—Ganzel and Kruger. Hits—Off Hall, 2 in 3 innings, off Leary, 4 in 6 innings. Sacrifice hits—Hofman (3), Evers. Stolen bases—Slagle, Chance (2), Moran. Double play—Overall, Hofman to Chance. Left on bases—Cincinnati, 4; Chicago, 12. Bases on balls—Off Hall, 7, off Leary, 5, off Overall, 6. Struck out—By Leary, 4, by Overall, 6. Hit by pitched ball—By Overall, 1. Umpire—O'Day. Time of game—2 hours and 20 minutes.



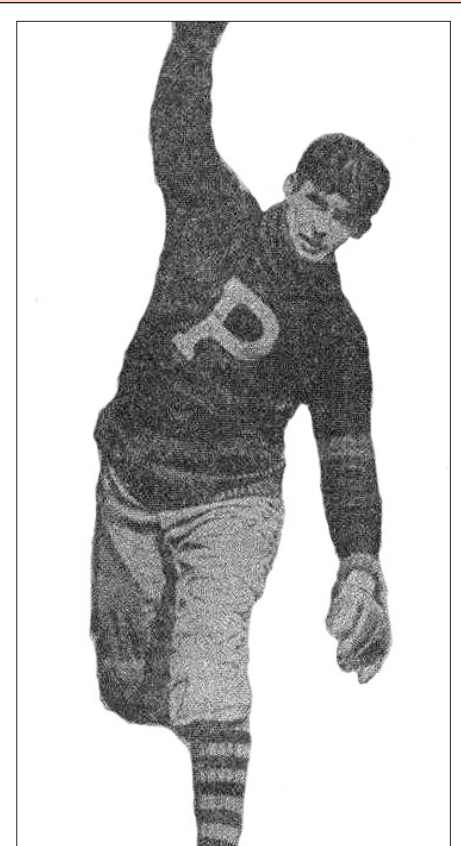
Frank Leary
1906 Harrisburg Senators

In a game where 18 walks are issued by three pitchers who "occupied the firing line," he relieves starting pitcher Charley Hall at the start of the fourth inning. He pitches well, allowing only one run (in his first inning of work) on four hits, five walks and four strikeouts in six innings. However the lone run breaks a 3-3 tie and is the deciding factor in a 4-3 Cub win with Leary absorbing the loss and Orvie Overall picking up the win.

Leary earns the starting nod on May 5, against the St. Louis Cardinals in his second and final major league appearance. In two innings of work, he faces nine batters, allowing one run on three hits and a walk in an 11-2 win over the visiting Redbirds. Veteran Andy Coakley relieves Leary at the start of the third inning and allows only one run in seven innings en route to picking up the first of his 17 wins on the season.

Leary remains with the team for another 12 days before Hanlon elects to send him back to Harrisburg of the Tri-State (B) League. *The Cincinnati Enquirer* reports that far from being distressed at his demotion, Leary "is not at all disgruntled" at being sent back to Harrisburg and "is quite willing to return there."

He will pitch in 31 games for George Heckert's Senators, going 15-13, on a team finishes second in an eight-team league with a 79-47 mark.



Frank Leary
1899 University of Pennsylvania

Frank Leary [2 of 3]:

Born on February 26, 1881, in Wayland, Massachusetts, the second of two sons to Patrick and Mary Leary, he attends Natick High School before enrolling at the University of Pennsylvania as a freshman in 1898.

A noted two-sport standout in both baseball and track while at Penn, Leary is a top sprinter in both the 100 and 220 yard dashes. He will eventually graduate from Penn's Wharton School of Business in 1904.

Slated to participate only for the school's track team in 1901, head baseball coach Arthur Irwin says that he considers Leary as a "loan" from the track team in 1900 and will not mind if Leary devotes himself entirely to track athletics that spring. However, Leary returns to the diamond and plays a key role in the Quakers' 16-4 record.

That summer, Leary appears in several games for semipro teams in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, and Whitinsville, Massachusetts, before signing with Malone of the Northern New York League, where he makes his pro debut on August 26, 1901, beating Ogdensburg 4-3.



Frank Leary
1901 University of Pennsylvania

Frank Leary Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Level	W-L	GP	INN	H	BB	SO	ERA
1899	University of Pennsylvania	-	College	-	-	-	-	-	-	--
1900	University of Pennsylvania	-	College	-	-	-	-	-	-	--
1901	University of Pennsylvania	-	College	-	-	-	-	-	-	--
1901	Woonsocket	-	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	--
1901	Whitinsville	-	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	--
1901	Malone	Northern NY	-	1-1	-	-	-	-	-	--
1902	Camden	-	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	--
1903	Rochester Bronchos	Eastern	A	8-29	-	-	245.0	84	111	--
1904	Rochester/Toronto Maple Leafs	Eastern	A	7-14	-	-	204.0	71	78	--
1905	Lebanon/Harrisburg Senators	Tri-State	Ind.	-	-	-	-	-	-	--
1906	Harrisburg Senators	Tri-State	Ind.	18-16	47	-	-	-	-	--
1907	Cincinnati Reds	NATIONAL	MLB	0-1	2	8.0	7	6	4	1.13
1907	Harrisburg	Tri-State	B	15-13	31	-	-	-	-	--
Major League Totals		1 Season		0-1	2	8.0	7	6	4	1.13
Minor League Totals		6 Seasons		49-73	-	-	-	-	-	--

ML Debut: April 30, 1907 at Palace of the Fans, Cincinnati: relieved starting pitcher Charley Hall at the start of the fourth inning; allowed one run on four hits, five walks and four strikeouts in six innings and was the losing pitcher in a 4-3 loss to the Chicago Cubs.

ML Finale: May 5, 1907, at Palace of the Fans, Cincinnati: the starting pitcher against the St. Louis Cardinals; allowed one run three hits and one walk in two innings; relieved by Andy Coakley who allows one run in seven innings and picks up the win.

Penn's lone returning pitcher in 1902 with any college experience, Leary's senior season is brought to a sudden end on March 13, when he is declared ineligible by both the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) and the school's Baseball Committee for having played on those three teams the previous summer.

Three weeks after being ruled ineligible, Leary pitches for the Philadelphia Athletics in an exhibition game against Yale. If he does well against the New Haven school, the Athletics indicate that they will sign him and allow him to pitch only in home games while he continues his studies at Penn.

There is no indication that the Athletics get Leary's signature on a contract and on May 1, it is reported that he has signed with a semipro team in Camden, New Jersey.

March of 1903 proves to be a busy time for Leary as on the 10th it is announced that he has signed with the Eastern League's Rochester Bronchos, managed by his former college coach Arthur Irwin. A week later, it is reported that he has signed with a semipro team in Norristown, Pennsylvania. Both announcements say that he will report to the team sometime in June after he finishes his studies at Penn.

On May 31, Rochester suspends second baseman Louis Castro and pitcher Jack McAlese after the duo declines to board the team train for a series at Jersey City. Leary is officially signed to replace McAlese and a week later he debuts against the Newark Sailors on July 7 and is "decidedly off color" allowing 12 hits and four walks in a 9-2 loss.

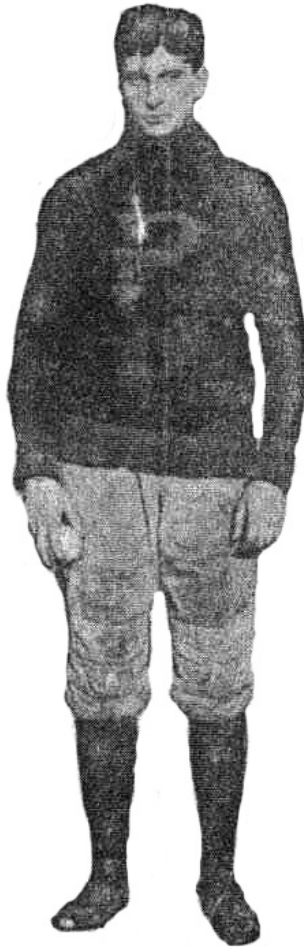
Leary finishes his first full minor league season with eight wins and a league-high 29 losses.



Frank Leary
1901 University of Pennsylvania

Frank Leary [3 of 3]:

In the off-season, *The Buffalo Courier* reports that the local Eastern League team, the Buffalo Bisons, try to acquire Leary (despite his 8-29 record) after he did "splendid work there the past season."



Frank Leary
1900 University of Pennsylvania

The much-sought-after slabster begins 1904 with Rochester, but is traded to the Toronto Maple Leafs and manager Arthur Irwin (again) on August 2, for former major league pitcher Willie Mills.

Leary is 7-14 with the two teams combined while Mills is 9-20 splitting time with Toronto, Rochester and Baltimore. It's with the Maple Leafs that Leary begins to experiment with the spitball and quickly gains a reputation for his "salvia slant."

In the off-season, Leary jumps his contract with the Maple Leafs and enters into the realm of "outlaw baseball" for the next two seasons with teams in the Tri-State League.

On June 2, 1905, recently signed by the Harrisburg Senators of the Tri-State League, Leary pitches a six-hit complete game with seven strikeouts in a 4-1 win over visiting Johnstown. Three weeks later, the local paper is effusive in its praise of Leary.

**"Mr. Frank Leary stands all alone in
the spitball class."
-The Harrisburg Courier, June 23, 1905**

In the off-season, Leary notifies Harrisburg of his decision to retire from baseball in order to devote more time to his Boston law practice. In late February, he changes his mind and reports to the team's pre-season training on April 11.

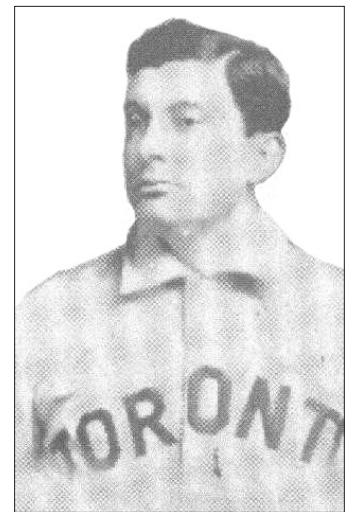
Following an 18-win season with the Senators in 1906, Leary is purchased by the Cincinnati Reds of National League

on September 16, and told to report to the team immediately. But before he is allowed to suit up for the Reds, the business of him jumping his contract with Toronto has to be cleared up.

The Reds eventually include Leary and Harrisburg teammate Billy Dyer on their protected list for 1907. Leary will sign with Cincinnati on December 1, and the National Commission awards Leary to the Reds the following February.

Leary reports to the 1907 Cincinnati Reds spring training camp in Marlin, Texas, overweight. Despite the extra baggage, he makes an "excellent" impression in his first appearance in an intra-squad game, allowing only one run in four innings of work. He is noted as a "slow and careful worker, taking plenty of time, but always knowing first what he is about. He apparently has nearly perfect control of his spit ball."

After spending most of the 1907 season with Harrisburg, Leary is among four players recalled by the Reds on August 22 and told report when their respective seasons are finished. Cincinnati pays Harrisburg \$400 for his services. He reports to the Reds but leaves the city due to an illness that may or may not have caused his death.



Frank Leary
1904 Toronto Maple Leafs

PITCHER F. T. LEARY DIES IN A HOSPITAL

Was a Member of the Cincinnati Club and Had Been Operated Upon

Natick, Mass., October 4—Frank T. Leary, a base ball pitcher connected with the Cincinnati National club, died suddenly here to-night following an operation for appendicitis. For some time Leary was a student at the University of Pennsylvania, and played on the base ball team. He was also a member of the track team until barred for playing "summer base ball" with the Whitinsville, Mass. team. Later he played with Jersey City, Toronto and Rochester of the Eastern league. Later he joined the Harrisburg Tri-State team and from there went to Cincinnati. He was 27 years old.