

10 Things (+3) to Know about Gene Krapp

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Personal

Born Eugene Hamlet Krapp on May 12, 1887, in Rochester, New York, the sixth of 12 children born to a German-immigrant father, Frederick, and New York native Bertha (Hettig) Krapp. On March 31, 1923, following an operation for an colon cancer, Krapp passes away in Detroit, at the age of 35.

Early On

In 1903, it's reported that 16-year-old Eugene Krapp has signed a contract with Flint of the Southern Michigan League. Two years later Krapp is playing for the Detroit Brewing Company in one the city's semipro leagues.

Out of Here

On August 20, 1906, pitching for the Flint Vehicles of the Southern Michigan (D) League, a 19-year-old Gene Krapp is "ordered out of the game," for throwing the game ball over the grandstand during a heated dispute in the eighth inning of a 2-1 loss at Saginaw.

Nice Start

Krapp comes to the majors having won 20-or-more games in three of his four prior seasons and owns a 88-57 won-loss mark with Tecumseh and Flint of the Southern Michigan League (1907-1909) and Portland of the Pacific Coast League (1910).



Gene Krapp
1910 Portland Beavers

Quick Start

In 1910, Krapp makes the jump from the Flint Vehicles and D ball to the very competitive Pacific Coast League look easy as he wins his first five starts with the Portland Beavers. In 442 innings with the champion Beavers, he finishes 29-16-2 with a career-best 1.26 ERA and is second to teammate Van Gregg in strikeouts (256) and shutouts (8).

Record Setting

In a streak that last from October 7 to October 15, 1910, Krapp plays a key role when the Portland Beavers set a baseball record with nine-straight shutouts and do not allow a run in 82 consecutive innings. Krapp and Van Gregg each have three shutouts during the record-setting streak that lasts for the nine games and three innings of the 10th contest.

One Man's Opinion

"I want to see Ty Cobb bunt with Gene Krapp pitching and try to beat it out," says Gus Fisher, Krapp's catcher with Portland in 1910. "He is fast, but I would bet Krapp would throw him out four times out of five. Krapp is so fast in fielding that it is better for the catcher to stay out of the infield. I learned that last season."

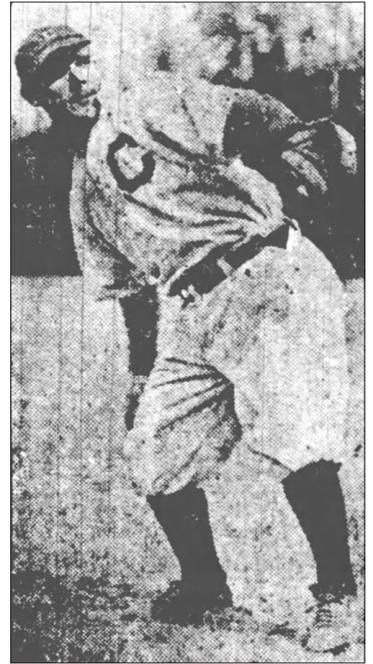
Detroit's Loss

In November 1911, Detroit Tigers' scout

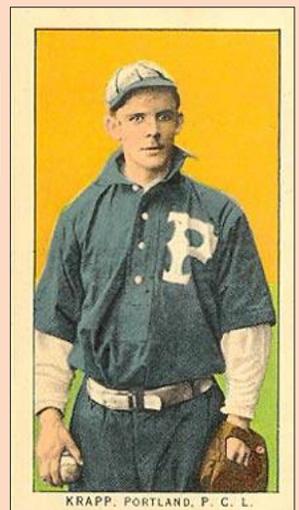
Robert Cannavan recommends signing Krapp to team owner Phil Navin, but usually astute Navin declines to do so after meeting with Krapp because of the twirler's height - or lack thereof. The Tiger boss always wants "large" men for his pitching staff, contending that "little" men are handicapped because batters did not have the proper amount of respect for them. Navin tells the 5-foot-7, 160-pound Krapp that his "list was full," and sends him on his way.

Navin Refused Krapp Because He Is Small.

Gene Krapp, Pygmy Pitcher of Big Leagues



Gene Krapp
1912 Cleveland Naps



KRAPP, PORTLAND, P. C. L.

Gene Krapp [2 of 2]:



Gene Krapp
1911 Cleveland Naps

Cleveland's Gain

When Krapp is signed by the Cleveland Naps in 1911, for \$1,300, St. Louis Browns' manager Bobby Wallace says that the Naps have made an "wonderful pickup" in the signing of the 5-foot-7 hurler. To make room for their newly-acquired pitcher, the Naps release outfielder Walter Doan to New Orleans Pelicans of the Southern Association.

Debut

In his major league debut on April 14, 1911, against the St. Louis Browns, Krapp picks up a win in relief of starter Willie Mitchell despite allowing four earned runs on three hits and a walk in three innings. The Naps score three times after Krapp fails to hold a 4-1 lead when he enters the game in the seventh inning.

Wild Thing

In his rookie season with Cleveland, Krapp is 13-9 with a 3.41 ERA in 222 innings, but he also walks a league-high 138 batters. In his four major league seasons in the American and Federal Leagues, Krapp always walks more batters than he strikes out.

Not a Way to Make Friends

Krapp says that the secret to his pitching success is to send the first pitch as close to the head of the batter and then

follow with low curves away. In 1910, Krapp hits 22 batters while pitching for Portland in the Pacific Coast League. He later admits that "half of the wallops" are intentional. "I am only a little fellow you know," he says, "and some of those husky batters used to crowd the plate so hard that I simply had to soak one now and then just to make them entertain a little greater respect for my fast ball."

Uncle Sam

Following his playing days, Krapp joins the Army in 1918 and is assigned to the 85th Army Division at Camp Custer near Battle Creek, Michigan. He is discharged in 1919.



Gene Krapp
1915 Buffalo Blues



Gene Krapp
1912 Cleveland Naps