

# Cups of Coffee: Jerry Conway

©DiamondsintheDusk.com

Washington Senators' teenage pitcher Jerry Conway is one of those rare players that never plays a day in the minor leagues prior to his major league debut.

The 6-foot-2, 190-pound southpaw is a couple of months past his 19th birthday when he makes his first and only major league appearance on August 31, 1920, against the Cleveland Indians. Relieving Harry Biemiller at the start of the eighth inning in a 7-1 loss at Griffith Stadium, Conway, a "big broth of lad who uses a jerky motion," allows only one hit - a single by Tris Speaker in the ninth inning - en route to turning in two scoreless innings.

An accomplished basketball player in the off-season, the Holyoke, Massachusetts, native is one of 137 players (including 16 Senators) to make their major league debut in 1920, and is the second youngest.

Playing in the Holyoke Industrial League, Conway is signed to a major league contract on August 3, by Washington scout Nick Altrack. Reporting to the Senators on August 17, Conway draws rave reviews a day later by simply warming up in the late innings during the second game of a doubleheader with the St. Louis Browns.

Conway is allowed to return to Holyoke on August 28, to play for the Falco semi-pro team in a 9-6 win over the American Writing Paper nine before an overflow crowd of over 1,000. Falco will eventually be crowned champions of the Holyoke Industrial League with a 10-1 record.

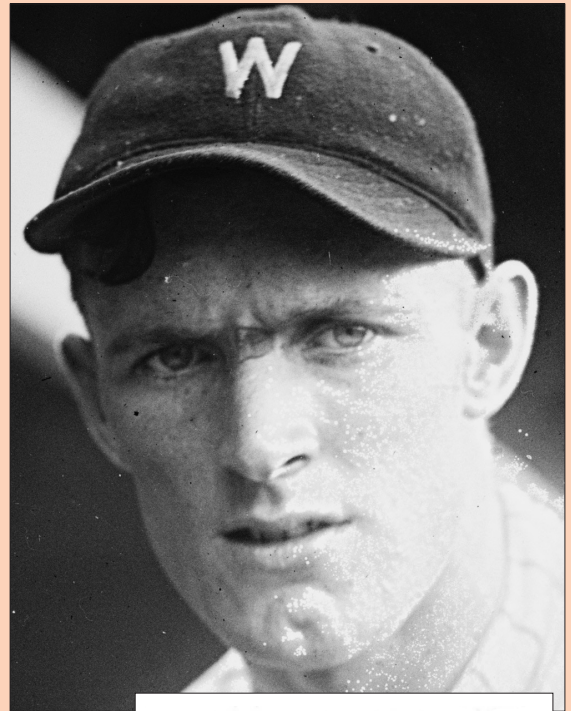
He is not with the team when it embarks on a 24-game, three-week road trip and elects to return home to Holyoke on September 9. Rejoining the team in Boston on September 28, his desire to pitch in that day's game with the Red Sox in Fenway Park proves futile.

The following March Conway is one of 10 pitchers listed on the Senators' spring training roster, but he decides to holdout and remain in Holyoke to play baseball and basketball in his hometown. On March 25, Senators' manager George McBride makes Conway's holdout permanent and he remains at home to play with various semipro teams for the next couple of seasons.

For the next 10 years, he plays on numerous semipro baseball and basketball teams in and around the states of Massachusetts and New York, including a brief two-game stint with the Boston Whirlwinds of the American Basketball League (ABL). In 1930, a 29-year-old Conway trades in his sneakers for cleats and signs with the Eastern League's Springfield Ponies. His debut is delayed in mid-April when Baseball Commissioner K.M. Landis rules that Conway is still on the Washington Senators ineligible list from 1921.

Eventually cleared to play with the Ponies, he hits home runs in each of his first two games in his return. Conway is hitting .260 with seven extra base hits in 28 games when he is sent to the Canton Terriers of the Central League. He declines to report and returns to paying semipro ball.

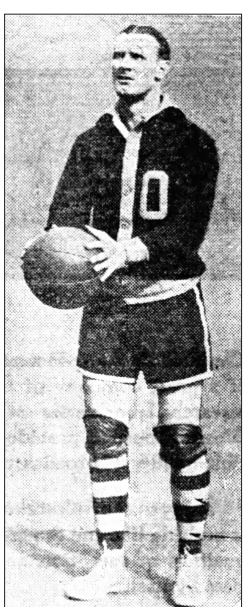
Jerome Patrick Conway dies on April 16, 1980, in Holyoke, Massachusetts, at the age of 78.



		Cleveland				
		AB.	R.	H.	O.	A. E.
Jamleson, lf	.....	2	2	1	0	0 0 0
Evans, lf	.....	0	0	0	1	0 0 0
Wambsgans, 2b	.....	3	1	1	3	4 1
Speaker, cf	.....	4	1	2	4	0 0 0
Smith, rf	.....	5	1	1	4	0 0 0
Gardner, 3b	.....	5	0	2	3	1 0 0
Johnston, lb	.....	4	1	1	9	0 0 0
S. O'Neill, c	.....	3	0	0	1	0 0 0
Lunte, ss	.....	4	0	0	2	6 0
Bagby, p	.....	4	1	2	0	0 0 0
Totals	.....	34	7	10	27	11 1

		Washington				
		AB.	R.	H.	O.	A. E.
Judge, 1b	.....	4	0	1	9	1 0 0
Ellerbe, 3b	.....	4	0	1	1	2 0 0
Rice, cf	.....	4	0	1	2	1 0 0
Brower, rf	.....	4	0	2	1	0 1 1
Harris, 2b	.....	4	0	0	2	5 1 0
Shanks, lf	.....	4	1	0	3	0 0 0
J. O'Neill, ss	.....	4	0	3	2	3 0 0
Gharrity, c	.....	4	0	1	7	1 0 0
Erickson, p	.....	1	0	0	0	1 0 0
Roth, z	.....	1	0	0	0	0 0 0
Biemiller, p	.....	0	0	0	0	0 0 0
Milan, zz	.....	1	0	0	0	0 0 0
Conway, p	.....	0	0	0	0	0 0 0
Zachary, zzz	.....	1	0	0	0	0 0 0
Totals	.....	36	1	9	27	14 2

z Batted for Erickson in sixth.  
 zz Batted for Biemiller in seventh.  
 zzz Batted for Conway in ninth.  
 Cleveland ..... 3 0 0 0 4 0 0 0-7  
 Washington ..... 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0-1  
 Two base hits—Gardner, J. O'Neill.  
 Three base hits—Smith, Bagby, Speaker.  
 Sacrifice hits—Wambsgans, S. O'Neill. Double play—Lunte to Wambsgans to Johnston. Left on bases—Cleveland, 7; Washington, 8. Base on balls—Off Erickson, 4; off Conway, 1. Hits—Off Erickson, 9 in 6 innings; off Biemiller, none in 1 inning; off Conway, 1 in 2 innings. Struck out—By Erickson, 2; by Bagby, 1; by Biemiller, 1; by Conway, 1. Wild pitch—Erickson. Losing pitcher—Erickson. Umpires—Connolly and Nallin



Jerry Conway  
 1926 Boston Whirlwinds  
 American Basketball  
 League

