DUSTER MAILS

Watter "Duster" Mails was a 6-foot 195-pound hard throwing left-handed pitcher who was born October 1, 1894 in San Quentin, California, where his mother was postmistress. His family moved to Sacramento when his father found employment at the Southern Pacific Railroad. Mails grow up in Sacramento where he played baseball for Christian Brothers High School what was located at 12" and K Streets (he was the first major leaguer from the school). Duster also played in local Sacramento semi-pro leagues. He later played baseball and basketball at St. Mary's College in Moraga, California. Mails earned his nickname Duster by throwing near the heads of the batters. During his baseball career he was described as being egotistic and overbearing as well as a great showman.

Mails began his 22 year professional baseball career in 1914 with the Seattle Giants in the Northwestern League where he went 2-2. In 1915, at the age of 20, Mails moved up to the majors with the Brooklyn Robins. He went 0-1 in 13 games over the 1915 and 1916 seasons (he did not appear in the 1916 World Series). When Mails went back to the minors, Wilbert Robinson, Robins Manager, described him as "the brashest rockie I've ever met".

In 1917, Mails was with the Portland Beavers. He played for his home town Sacramento Senators from 1919 through 1920, posting an 18-17 record with a 3.23 ERA in 1920. In August, Sacramento traded Mails to the Cleveland Indians, who were then managed by Tris Speaker. Brash as usual, as he boarded a train to Cleveland, he said he was going to win the pennant for the Indians, hopefully against his old Brooklyn Robins team. As it turned out, Cleveland did beat Brooklyn five games to two. Mails pitched well, throwing a 1-0, three-hit shutout in game 6.

Mails had a good season in 1921 for the Indians with a 14-8 record and a 3.94 ERA. In 1923-24, he pitched for the Oakland Oaks. His 1925 and 1926 seasons were split between the San Francisco Seals and the St. Louis Cardinals. While the Cardinals won the 1926 World Series, Mails did not pitch in the series. From 1927 through 1929, he pitched for the Seals. Duster pitched for the PCL Portland Beavers from 1930-31. In 1932 he was with the Chattanooga Lookouts and in 1933 with the Kansas City Blues. He finished his career back with the Seals from 1934-38.

Mails seven year major league record was 32 and 25 with a 4.10 ERA. His 14 year PCL career record was 173 and 171 with a 3.90 ERA.

In 1936 Duster took a job with the San Francisco Seals doing public relations. A couple of his promotional ideas included having Seals catchers catch baseballs thrown from a 450 foot tower at the 1938 SF World's Fair and a balloon drop where Seals catchers would try to catch balls dropped from a bilmp 1,000 feet in the air. He left the Seals during World War II to serve in the Marines, but rejoined the team in 1954. He later did public relations for the San Francisco Giants until he retired in 1972.

Duster died July 5, 1974 in San Francisco.

SACRAMENTO BEE

HENTO, CAL, MONDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 11, 1920-18 PAGES .. TTT...

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