

A Schott From The Bleachers

1923: Gilbert's First New Orleans Club Was A Pennant Winner

by

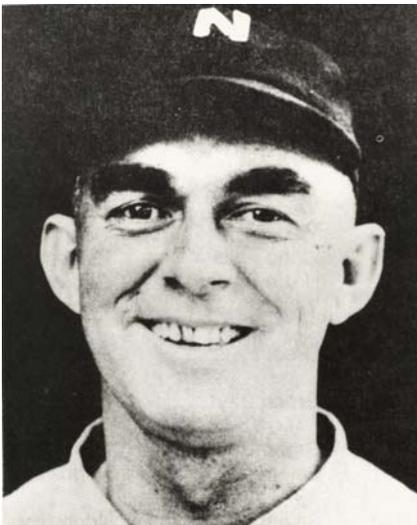
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As we await opening day of the 2003 season, it has been eighty years since the legendary Larry Gilbert became the manager of the New Orleans Pelicans. A native New Orleanian, Gilbert logged a quarter century as a Southern Association manager, in New Orleans for 15 years and in Nashville for 10 years.

After spending six seasons as an outfielder with the Pelicans, he assumed the role of player-manager in 1923, succeeding Johnny Dobbs. Dobbs had been the club's manager since 1914.



Player-manager Larry Gilbert's 1923 New Orleans Pelicans finished with a record of 89 – 57 (.610) to win the Southern Association pennant in his first season as skipper. It was the first of 15 seasons Gilbert spent in his hometown as manager of the Pelicans. He went on to manage for another 10 seasons at Nashville.

In his first season at the helm, Gilbert led the New Orleans club to the Southern Association pennant. The Pels were defeated in the Dixie Series in that 1923 post-season, losing to the Fort Worth Cats of the Texas League. Fort Worth was managed by Jake Atz, who not only had a long tenure as a Texas League manager, but also managed the Pelicans for one season.

The Pelicans finished the 1923 season with a record of 89 – 57, five games ahead of the Mobile Bears. Interestingly, the New Orleans club played an unusually high total of nine games that ended in a tie. The number of games called because of darkness undoubtedly was a contributing factor to that number. A total of 23 tie games were recorded in the Southern Association that year.

New Orleans' leading hitters in 1923 were Gilbert (.312), Ollie Tucker (.310) and Eddie Bogart (.307), but the strength of the Pelicans club was its pitching.

The starting rotation was dominating, with a "big three" of Roy Walker (21 – 9), Joe Martina (21 – 10) and Bill Whittaker (19 – 12). The trio of starters accounted for 61 of the Pels' total of 89 victories.

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Louisiana's Official Baseball Historian

N.O. Pelicans Roster of 1923

Player	Position	G	BA
Ed Bogart	OF-3b	146	.307
Eucal Clanton ¹	1b	61	.283
Bob Dowie	C	85	.248
Art Ewoldt	SS	154	.249
George Foss	2b	141	.283
Larry Gilbert	OF	99	.312
Fred "Snake" Henry	1b	118	.285
Henry "Cotton" Knaupp	2b	140	.219
Carl Mitze	C	101	.230
Maurice Schick	OF	137	.251
Oliver Tucker	OF	135	.310

Pitchers	G	W	L
Joe Martina	40	21	10
Henry Matteson ¹	40	8	13
Robinson ¹	45	16	19
Carl Thomas	30	2	7
Roy "Dixie" Walker	41	21	9
Bill Whittaker	45	19	12
George Winn	29	11	9
Maurice Craft	3	3	0

¹ Also played for another team during the season

