

A Schott From The Bleachers

Johnny Dobbs Recalled

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Johnny Dobbs, Larry Gilbert's immediate predecessor as manager of the New Orleans Pelicans, guided the club for nine years – 1914 through 1922. During this span the Pelicans never finished lower than third in the league standings, and won two pennants – 1915 and 1918.

Johnny was born in Chattanooga, TN, on June 3, 1876, and died in Charlotte, NC on September 9, 1934, only 58 years old.

He played major league ball for five years in the National League, with a lifetime batting average of .263 and only seven home runs. He began his managerial career in 1907 with Nashville in the Southern Association, finishing last. After one year he returned to manage in 1909 and won the South Atlantic championship for Chattanooga.

In 1910 Chattanooga joined the Southern Association and Dobbs began his link with the league, finishing fourth. Dobbs remained in the Southern Association through 1931, winning a total of five titles, and was out of the first division only four times. In all, Dobbs spent 25 years as a manager, including 19 games in 1933 when he piloted Charlotte in the Piedmont League.

Dobbs was involved in the famous game of August 28, 1927 at Heinemann Park when nearly 20,000 fans attempted to jam the stands and ground rules prevailed as the overflow crowd consisted of standees on the field. A fight ensued between Ray Gardner and Max Rosenfield which resulted in the arrest of Rosenfield, and the game was delayed for two hours until the Birmingham second baseman could be released from jail and returned to the park. In the end Larry Gilbert's Pelicans defeated the Dobbsmen by a score of 25 – 16, as 18 ground-rule doubles fell among the overflow crowd.

While attending a winter baseball meeting in Los Angeles in 1970, I had the pleasure of meeting Casey Stengel at breakfast. I introduced myself and said, "Mr. *Stengel*, you played in the old Southern Association," to which he replied, "Sure did, with Montgomery, and Johnny Dobbs was my manager." This left a lasting impression on me because when I envision how many players and managers Stengel played with, under and against during his career, this recall by Casey denotes the impact Johnny Dobbs left on the Ol' Perfessor.

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