

A Schott From The Bleachers

Longest Opening Game By New Orleans Pelicans

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When the Zephyrs concluded their 12-inning contest at Privateer Park on Friday, April 14, 1993, it prompted me to visit the archives and locate the record for the longest season opener by a New Orleans team.

The old Pelicans opened the 1953 season at Rickwood Field against the Birmingham Barons of the old Southern Association, and lost a tough one by a score of 8 – 7 in 16-innings. To date this remains the record for the longest opening day game involving a New Orleans entry in organized baseball.

Lou Klein and Lenny Yochim, both New Orleans natives, furnished the local talent in this game. Klein led both clubs with four hits in eight times at-bat, including a fifth inning home run into the left-field bleachers.

Yochim, now a scout for the Pittsburgh Pirates, relieved Lee Anthony on the mound for the Pelicans and sustained a defeat after pitching five and one-third innings. The late Harry Martinez, then sports editor of the New Orleans States-Item, covered this game from Birmingham and reported the last inning as follows:

“In the fatal 16th, big Emil Telling, who was the batting star for the Barons, opened with a two-bagger to center. Dave Waters attempted a sacrifice and went safe when Lenny Yochim dove for his pop fly and missed it. George Moskovich was purposely walked and Smith came through with the game-winning single that drove in John Hunton, who ran for Telling.”

A crowd of 8,044 was in attendance that night of April 10, 1953 to witness this memorable game which lasted four hour and 36 minutes.

Mel Brookey caught the entire game for the Birds and was the most productive batter for New Orleans in that he accounted for three runs batted in on three singles.

The box score of Opening Day in Birmingham, April 10, 1953

NEW ORLEANS					BIRMINGHAM				
	AB	H	PO	A		AB	H	PO	A
Brandon Davis, lf	8	2	4	1	Joseph Polich, ss	7	2	5	7
Gail Henley, cf	7	1	4	1	Charles Weiss, 1b	7	2	16	1
Lou Klein, 2b	8	4	6	4	Norman Siebern, cf	7	1	7	0
Al Grunwald, 1b	8	2	11	1	Tom O'Brien, lf	6	0	4	0
Emanuel Senerchia, 3b	7	2	3	2	Emil Tellingner, rf	7	3	0	0
James Monahan, rf	6	1	4	0	b – John Hunton, pr	0	0	0	0
Mel Brookey, c	7	3	11	0	David Waters, 3b	7	3	1	4
Michael Turturro, ss	6	1	1	5	George Moskovich, 2b	7	3	4	4
Don Cochran, p	2	0	0	2	Harold Smith, c	7	3	10	0
Lee Anthony, p	2	0	1	0	John Kucab, p	4	1	0	1
Lenny Yochim, p	2	0	0	1	Tom Sturdivant, p	2	0	0	2
					a – Harold Grote, ph	1	0	0	0
					Neil Lettau, p	0	0	1	0
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Totals	63	16	45	17	Totals	36	10	27	14

a – flied out for Sturdivant in the 14th
 b – ran for Tellingner in the 16th

R – Henley, Klein 2, Grunwald, Senerchia 2, Brookey, Polich, Weiss, Siebern, O'Brien, Tellingner, Hunton, Moskovich, Smith. RBI – Davis, Klein, Senerchia, Monahan, Brookey 3, Tellingner 4, Waters, Smith, Kucab. 2B – Henley, Grunwald, Polich, Weiss 2, Tellingner 2, Moskovich, Smith. HR – Klein, Tellingner. SB – Senerchia, Turturro. SH – Monahan, Weiss, Tellingner. DP – Moskovich to Polich to Weiss; Turturro to Klein to Grunwald.

Umpires – Burch and Popp.
 Time of game – 4 hours and 36 minutes
 Attendance – 8, 044

Score by innings:

												R	H	E	LOB				
New Orleans	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	16	1	13
Birmingham	0	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	18	1	19

Pitching	IP	R	H	BB	SO	Pitching	IP	R	H	BB	SO
Cochran	6	4	6	4	3	Kucab	8	7	13	3	3
Anthony	3.2	3	6	2	2	Sturdivant	6	0	2	0	2
Yochim (L)	5.1	1	6	2	4	Lettau (W)	2	0	1	1	1
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Totals	16	8	18	8	9	Totals	16	7	16	4	6

WP – Cochran