

Bobbie Orrison

Frederick 1915-1917 Hanover 1917

Outfielder

Class D, Blue Ridge League

The first successful slugger to play in the Class D, Blue Ridge League was a local unknown hero named Robert Lee “Bobbie” Orrison of Brunswick, Maryland. An outfielder, Orrison was one of the best players to come from the southern Frederick County, Maryland town, which had a rich history of baseball in the early part of the 1900’s.

Born on August 18, 1886 in Point of Rocks, Maryland, Orrison was one of the most sought out players when the Class D, Blue Ridge League came into existence in 1915. Having played for the Hagerstown entry in the semi-pro Tri-City League the year before, Orrison’s pitching and batting prowess was quite evident among the directors of the individual clubs in the new league. Manager John “Jack” Morrison and director Frank Schmidt of the Frederick (MD) Hustlers convinced Orrison he should be playing for his “hometown” team. As one of two county-bred players on the Hustlers (along with pitcher Bill King), the left-handed hitting Orrison quickly became a main force in right field at Agricultural Park, where the Frederick club played.

He helped Frederick win 13 of their first 15 games, and was a constant threat to opposing pitchers throughout the league’s first season. When the dust settled, Orrison became the first ever league batting champion, batting .341, also leading the league with 104 hits, to help the Hustlers to the league’s first ever pennant.

At the end of the season Orrison and the Frederick Hustlers played in an exhibition game against Connie Mack’s Philadelphia Athletics at Frederick’s Agricultural Park. Over 6,000 fans were in attendance to see the A’s come from behind in the ninth inning to beat the Class D, Blue Ridge league champions, 6 to 3. Mack’s Athletics featured shortstop Lewis “Cy” Malone, who started the season with Frederick, and future Hall of Famer, Nap Lajoie.

In 1916, Orrison led the league with 10 home runs, but Frederick lost a few key players to injuries, and their success from the previous year had faltered, with the club slipping to fourth place. Still one of the league’s most feared sluggers, Orrison rapped out 23 doubles and 5 triples, accounting for 171 total bases, in a season dominated by pitching. On September 13, 1916, he married his sweetheart, the former Mary Jane Loy, of Purcellville, VA.

By the time the 1917 season arrived, the Frederick club had changed managers, and Orrison found himself fighting for playing time in the outfield. By late June, Frederick Manager Tom Crooke released the popular Orrison, much to the chagrin of the local fans. A few days later, Orrison’s former Frederick teammate, John “Rabbit” Agnew, who



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1915 Batting Champion

photo 1916 Reach Guide/Harry Decker archives,

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was player/manager of the Hanover (PA) Raiders, signed Orrison to play for the Dutch city. Within a month, Agnew was fired as manager, but Orrison stayed on until the latter part of the season. A newlywed, Orrison found his playing days nearing their end after the 1917 season, and with the advent of World War I, gave up baseball to concentrate on his marriage, and a life on the B&O Railroad, as a fireman.

The Orrison's had twin daughters, Alverta and Roberta, however according to family friends, Robert and Mary Jane divorced in the 1920's, while their children were of a young age.

He eventually settled in the Lovettesville, VA area, working on the railroad until he retired. Orrison died on April 19, 1958 at 71 years of age at his home in Brunswick, MD.

Orrison is buried at Lovettsville Lutheran Union Cemetery in Lovettsville, Virginia.



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Frederick Hustlers

Hit 10 homers in 1916

(photo 1917 Reach Guide)/Harry Decker)

Bobbie Orrison's Known Minor League Statistics

BATTING

Year	Club	League	.AVG	G	AB	R	H	TB	2B	3B	HR	RBI*	SAC	SB
1915	FREDERICK-MD	BRL-D	.341	77	305	42	104	137	12	6	3	45	1	9
1916	FREDERICK-MD	BRL-D	.295	96	366	40	108	171	23	5	10	71	6	4
1917	FREDERICK-MD	BRL-D	.253	24	87	11	22	30	5	0	1	16	1	0
1917	HANOVER-PA	BRL-D	.238	52	189	13	45	54	5	2	0	25	2	2
BLUE RIDGE LEAGUE TOTALS			.295	249	947	106	279	392	45	13	14	157	10	15

PITCHING

Year	Club	League	W-L	.Pct	GP	GS	CG	ShO	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	ERA*
1915	FREDERICK-MD	BRL-D	3-0	1.000	6	3	3	1	39	28	4	4	8	22	0.92
1916	FREDERICK-MD	BRL-D	3-0	1.000	8	3	2	1	46.3	37	16	9	17	22	1.75
1917	FREDERICK-MD	BRL-D	0-0	.000	1	0	0	0	3	5	3	2	1	1	6.00
1917	HANOVER-PA	BRL-D	1-1	.500	4	4	2	0	25	24	11	8	15	11	2.88
BLUE RIDGE LEAGUE TOTALS			7-1	.875	19	10	7	2	113.3	94	34	23	41	56	1.83

*Unofficial. RBI's and ERA's were not official statistics of the Class D, Blue Ridge League.

Sources—Frederick News, 1915, 1916, 1917; The Frederick Post, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917; Hanover Sun, 1917. Charles Hartman and Pepper Scott; Lovettesville (VA) Museum. Obituary, The Post, Frederick, MD, April 21, 1958.