

## **Walter E. Beall**

As a 15-year pitching phenom with a nasty curveball, Walter Esau Beall was considered one of the best players to come out of the sandlots of Washington, D.C.. With a stocky build, and a serious arm, Beall's size was deceiving, making him look much older than he actually was. According to some reports, it is said as a 15-year old, Beall pitched and won one game for the Frederick-MD Hustlers of the Class D, Blue Ridge League, before being released after the game after the Hustlers Manager Jack Morrison found out how old he was.

After more success on the amateur circuit, Beall returned to the professional ranks in the Blue Ridge League in 1918, pitching for the Martinsburg-WV Mountaineers (0-4, 5.08 ERA), until the league disbanded in mid-June.

Beall continued his success pitching amateur ball in the Washington, D.C. area for the few years before joining the Norfolk-VA club in the Class Virginia League in 1920, where he went 6-7 in 15 games. He supposedly pitched for the Greenville-SC Spinners in the Class B, South Atlantic League, and another successful season followed. Soon, Beall was becoming known in baseball circles for his nasty curve ball, that left batters standing at the plate.

Beall spent a couple seasons with Rochester-NY in the Class AA, International League. In 1923, he went 15-9 in 1923, with a 2.81 ERA, as the Red Wings finished second behind the Baltimore Orioles, despite winning 101 games. Beall established a franchise record in wins and strikeouts in 1924 when he went 25-8, with 227 strikeouts. He led the International in strikeouts and ERA with a 2.76 mark, but missed a triple pitching crown finishing second in the league in victories behind the Orioles' "Lefty" Grove, who 26 games that season. Beall's exploits were rewarded when his contract was sold to the American League's New York Yankees prior to the 1925 season.

His curve ball caught the attention of Yankees Manager Miller Huggins, and of teammate, Babe Ruth. Though his overall Major League record amounted to 5 wins and 5 losses, Beall spent almost four seasons with the Yankees, and was a member of the 1927 World Series champions.

Ironically, Beall spent most of the season warming on the Yankees bench that season, pitching in one inning of one game all season. Beall did pitch 9 games for St. Paul-MN Saints of the American Association, early in the 1927 season, but was kept on the Yankees roster, mainly because of his curve ball.

The season of inactivity didn't help his arm, and Beall was released in spring training of 1928. He toiled in the minors for four more seasons. He did return to his hometown in June of 1929, after getting a tryout with Clark Griffith's Washington Senators, but after winning his only decision in three relief appearances, Beall was released. According to newspaper reports, Beall could not control his favorite pitch, and his wildness became a major concern of Griffith and coaching staff.

After two more unsuccessful attempts to revive his professional career in the minors through the 1931 season, Beall continued to pitch on a regular basis on the semi-pro level, pitching in the Valley League until 1935. He also pitched with Walter Johnson in several Old Timers games in the Washington, D.C. area.

Beall married the former Alma Mitchell of Washington, D.C. The Beall's had three children, Alma Lorraine (b. 1923), Walter Mitchell (b. 1932- d. 1933), and Deanna Joan (b. 1938).

Tragically, his only son, Walter died on August 31, 1933 from a freak accident a few weeks prior, when the toddler fell into his tricycle, and the handle bar pierced his mouth. The injury was treated, but an infection developed inside his mouth, and spread quickly through his body. He died of blood poisoning at the age of 17 months. His death would forever haunt his father.

Beall died of congestive heart failure on January 28, 1959 in Suitland, Maryland at the age of 59 years."

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