

A Schott From The Bleachers

Forgotten Minor League HR King Was Once A N.O. Pelican

by
Arthur O. Schott



Member, Society For American Baseball Research

In 1888, New Orleans professional baseball was in its second year. The Pelicans competed in the Southern League, which was founded in 1885. On the 1888 New Orleans team was an outfielder-first baseman, Perry Werden, who hit five home runs in 56 games. That total was good enough to give him the Southern League home run title for 1888.

The remarkable career of Perry Werden began in 1884 and ended in 1908. The record shows that Werden was a slugger before slugging was commonplace. He is a nearly forgotten Deadball Era minor league power hitter.

- ❖ Werden appeared in 2,232 games in organized baseball, including 693 in the majors.
- ❖ He hit a career total of 195 home runs, 169 in the minors and 26 in the majors.
- ❖ He posted a career minor league batting average of .341.

Playing with Minneapolis in the Western League in 1894, Werden hit 43 homers. He followed that season up with a 45 home run year in 1895. His total of 88 homeruns over two seasons astounded the baseball world of the 1890s.

Werden was the most productive home run hitter in professional baseball from 1876 through 1899, with a total of 142. He hit his last career homer in 1906 while playing for Vicksburg in the Cotton States League.

Perhaps his greatest hitting performance came on July 23, 1895, when he hit four home runs in a game for Minneapolis – an almost unheard of accomplishment in the 19th century.

Curiously enough, in his big league career (see below), he was a far bigger triples hitter than he was a home run hitter. In fact, Werden twice led the league in triples at the major league level. He hit 20 triples with Toledo to lead the American Association in 1890, and led the National League in 1893 with 29 three-baggers.

Major League Career Totals:

G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BA
693	2,740	444	773	109	87	26	367	.282

Author's Note: In preparing this article, a big assist goes to our colleague Bob McConnell, fellow SABR member, whose *Minor League Home Run Record Book* is a baseball research masterpiece.

This article appeared previously in The Bleacher Creature.

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