

## Profiles From The Past

# Joe Martina – The Oysterman Remembered

by  
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One of the most popular players ever to put on a Pelican uniform, "Oyster Joe" started his career pitching in the South Atlantic League for Savannah in 1910. While pitching for Beaumont in the Texas League in his late teens, Joe notched a career high for wins with 28. Following the 1920 season, Joe was acquired by New Orleans where he would pitch the Pelicans to three Southern Association pennants in seven years. With the Pelicans, Joe won 20 or more games four times.

In an era where one was expected to finish what one started, Joe had an iron arm as was evident in a double-header against Birmingham in September of 1923. After taking the opener, Joe started the nightcap. Twelve innings later Joe was still on the mound, shutting the Barons out on 8 hits as the game was called because of darkness. In total, Joe pitched 21 innings – an amazing feat itself.

Joe finally reached the show the following year in 1924 with the Washington Senators, going 6 – 8. He saw action in the World Series against the New York Giants. In Game Three at New York, with the Giants ahead 5 – 2, Joe pitched the seventh inning, facing 3 men, striking out one and retiring the rest on pop flies. His lone strikeout victim was future Hall of Famer George "Highpockets" Kelly.

Joe returned to New Orleans the next year, leading the Southern Association in wins and innings pitched with 23 and 289 respectively. His best year came in 1927 when he registered a 23 – 12 record, again leading the Southern Association in wins and strikeouts with 103.

After winning 12 games for New Orleans in 1926, Joe bounced around with Dallas, Lake Charles, Monroe, Baton Rouge, and finally Knoxville, where after going 0 – 1 Joe hung up his glove in 1931.

Following his retirement from playing, Joe was a salesman with the American Brewery Company for many years. After his death from a heart attack, Joe was buried at Greenwood Cemetery. He was 72.

Joe's lifetime 349 minor league wins are second to Bill Thomas' 383. His lifetime record with New Orleans, 133 – 79 (.627) ranks him the all-time winningest pitcher in Pelicans history.