

## ED WALSH THE WORKHORSE

Professional Baseball Hall of Fame

WHEN?  
1904-1917

WHERE? Plains, PA



EVENT  
Walsh was a 40 game winner in 1908

VOCABULARY  
miner  
minor league

“Big Ed” Walsh was a workhorse. According to William Kashatus, Walsh had very impressive stats that earned him the nicknames. Standing at six feet, one inch, the 193 pound right-hander pitched 2,256 innings between 1906-1912. He threw at least 32 complete games and his single season earned run average (ERA) was never higher than 2.22 and ended his career with a 1.82 ERA. He struck out at least 250 hitters each season between 1908 and 1912 (Kashatus 50, 51).

Walsh didn’t start out in baseball nor did he have the advantage of the kind of training, diet, and rest that today’s pitchers have. The son of an anthracite miner, he quit school at age 11 to work with his father in the mines. The hard work strengthened his whole body particularly his arms as he worked loading coal cars for \$1.25 a day. That strength was one of the hallmarks of his career hence the nickname “Workhorse”. Though Walsh started out as an outfielder in the semi-professional league in Plains, he soon found his niche as a pitcher. When his team’s pitcher had to stop during a game, he came in and struck out 18 of the 19 batters he faced.

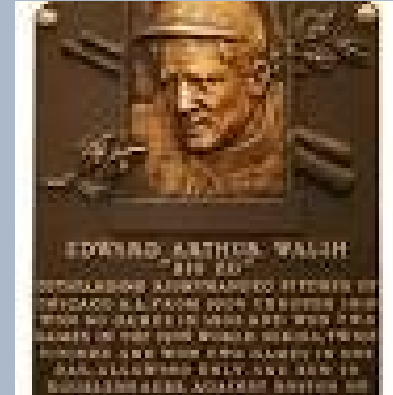


By 1902 his fastball and outfield play earned him a spot in the professional ranks with Wilkes-Barre of the Pennsylvania league. He was sold to Newark after playing for Meridan of the Connecticut League where he earned \$125 a month. Newark stepped up to \$1800 for the season which he completed with a 9-5 record (Kashatus 51). His reputation for hard work, a hard-throwing fastball and a newly acquired pitch—the spitball—made him very valuable to the Chicago White Sox and their owner Charles A. Comiskey.

Kashatus rightly points out this period of baseball lent itself to his style. Known as the “Dead Ball” era it lasted until cork-centered baseballs which proved to be livelier came into play. Hitters then began to make their own statements and the advantages of the pitchers began to be balanced out.



According to Kashatus, “Big Ed’s finest season came in 1908 when he posted a 40-15 record. During that season also led the American League in games (66), innings pitched (465), completed games (42), winning percentage (.727), shutouts (12), and strikeouts (269).” His spitter was difficult hit as it dropped sharply before the plate and when added his fast ball, Walsh was a formidable pitcher who found four ways to throw his spitter (outlawed in 1920 along with other trick pitches.) Kashatus quotes Walsh: “Let’s take a right-handed hitter,” he once explained. “I could break the ball down and away, straight down, down and in, and up. get the rise, I threw underhand, but the three other pitches were thrown with the same motion as my fast ball. I’d grip the ball with the fingers close together and the thumb underneath. I let the ball slip from under my wet fingertips. Learning the release is the trick to mastering the spitter.”



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Eventually, his arm grew tired and he requested a year off to rest it but decided to go back. He actually did not pitch very well in 1913 and saw his career quite limited by 1917. He tried to get into coaching but that didn’t work out either. He moved to Meridan, Connecticut where he worked as a milkman. He died at Pompano Beach, Florida, in 1959.

#### ONLINE RESOURCES

[Ed Walsh](#)

[Baseball Hall of Fame](#)

#### PRINT RESOURCES

Kashatus, William. *Valley With A Heart*.

Luzerne County, PA: Luzerne County Historical Society and Luzerne Community College. 2012.