

TEAM SNAPSHOT: 1954 Jackson Generals

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1954 Jackson Generals

| Name | Pos | G | AB | R | H | 2B | 3B | HR | RBI | SB | TB | HS | SLG | AVG |
|------------------|--------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|-----------|------------|----------|-------------|-------------|
| Robert Morehouse | P | 5 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| Malcolm Melton | OF | 2 | 5 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 1 | .600 | .600 |
| Lou Lucas | INF,P | 14 | 42 | 5 | 17 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 23 | 10 | .547 | .405 |
| Danny Myers | INF,OF | 25 | 97 | 21 | 34 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 2 | 40 | 16 | .412 | .351 |
| Stewart Riles | C,INF | 19 | 65 | 16 | 21 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 9 | 2 | 24 | 5 | .369 | .323 |
| Bill Hughes | 1B | 26 | 83 | 17 | 26 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 35 | 9 | .422 | .313 |
| Vance Byrd | INF | 23 | 83 | 12 | 24 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 27 | 8 | .325 | .289 |
| Mike Luciano | OF | 15 | 56 | 14 | 16 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 13 | 1 | 23 | 3 | .410 | .286 |
| James Carswell | P | 7 | 7 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | .286 | .286 |
| Harry Arterburn | OF | 26 | 102 | 11 | 28 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 12 | 1 | 41 | 6 | .402 | .275 |
| Mike Miliuzzo | INF,OF | 25 | 90 | 17 | 23 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 0 | 29 | 4 | .322 | .256 |
| Charles Dillon | P | 5 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | .250 | .250 |
| Coleman Bell | OF | 7 | 20 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 7 | 4 | .350 | .200 |
| Jack Strunk | P | 7 | 13 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | .231 | .194 |
| Wayne Jones | OF | 10 | 37 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 2 | .216 | .189 |
| Charles Perkins | C | 13 | 43 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 3 | .209 | .186 |
| Tommy Giordano | C | 4 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | .111 | .111 |
| Richard Hardish | P | 12 | 31 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | .097 | .097 |
| Jim Kluck | P | 11 | 25 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | .080 | .080 |
| Frank Martinez | 3B | 8 | 28 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | .107 | .071 |
| John Zawacki | OF | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | .000 |
| Jeff Hooper | OF | 6 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | .000 |
| Charles McMillen | INF | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | .000 |
| Willie D. Smith | C | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | .000 |
| Stanley Kovalski | P | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | .000 |
| Sonny Wilson | P | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | .000 |
| Paul Martin | P | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | .000 |
| James Long | P | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | .000 |
| John Schlichting | P | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | .000 |
| Bob Huff | P | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | .000 |
| Robin Mills | P | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | .000 |
| James Hunt | C | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | .000 |
| | | 26 | 869 | 136 | 226 | 37 | 7 | 4 | 109 | 10 | 284 | - | .329 | .260 |

| Pitching | W-L | GP | GS | CG | INN | R | HT | SO | BB |
|------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Jim Kluck | 0-7 | 10 | 5 | 2 | 53.2 | 66 | 78 | 21 | 18 |
| Richard Hardish | 1-4 | 10 | 3 | 1 | 40.0 | 33 | 44 | 23 | 33 |
| Jack Strunk | 0-4 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 27.1 | 44 | 49 | 10 | 25 |
| Vance Byrd | 0-2 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 19.2 | 21 | 25 | 20 | 12 |
| James Carswell | 0-1 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 14.1 | 24 | 25 | 5 | 15 |
| Charlie Dillon | 0-3 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 12.1 | 20 | 16 | 2 | 9 |
| Buck Martin | 0-0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 8.0 | 16 | 16 | 4 | 14 |
| John Schlichting | 0-0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 7.0 | 10 | 7 | 2 | 9 |
| Robin Mills | 0-0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6.2 | 16 | 14 | 4 | 7 |
| Gerry McGhay | 0-1 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 5.1 | 13 | 8 | 1 | 10 |
| Robert Morehouse | 0-1 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 4.1 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 9 |
| Lou Lucas | 0-0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3.0 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| Robert Long | 0-1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 3.0 | 14 | 11 | 2 | 4 |
| Bob Huff | 0-0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1.2 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| Ed Patt | 0-0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1.1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Sonny Wilson | 0-0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1.0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Ed Strychniewicz | 0-0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0.2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Stanley Kovalski | 0-1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0.2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | 1-25 | 26 | 26 | 5 | 210.2 | 304 | 308 | 100 | 176 |

HS denotes Hitting Streak

Jackson Decides To Quit Loop After 26-Game Losing Streak

On May 31, 1954, the hapless Jackson Generals end a season-opening and Kitty League record 26-game losing streak with a 10-2 win over the Madisonville Miners in the second game of a doubleheader.

And then the following afternoon the Kitty League's cellar dwellers pass into oblivion when their well-intentioned and loyal owner Hiram Hopper decides that there is no more depth to his pockets.

What are the causes of the Generals' demise?

To begin with, Jackson is the only team in the Kitty League without a working agreement with a major league team. The team is forced to find its own players and it's obvious they didn't do a very good job.

During the first week of the season, the Chicago Cubs initiate discussions with Hopper to begin a working relationship in regards to providing players. However, after talking with the Cincinnati Reds, who had an agreement with the club in 1953, the Cubs balk at formalizing an agreement.

Jackson's two-week spring training, essential for a team that brings in over 35 players for tryouts, is disrupted by continual rain and cold weather that forces the postponement of two preseason games and prohibits the team from practicing under the lights.

Highly-regarded second baseman Burl Brooks signs with Jackson, but tells the team that he will not report until he is done teaching school in his native Texas. Brooks never makes it in time for play for the Generals, instead signing with the Hopkinsville Hoppers where he hits .386 with 22 doubles and 10 home runs and is named to the Kitty League all-star team.

Thirty-two players take to the field for manager Lou Lucas during the season, including 18 pitchers and five catchers.

1954 Jackson Generals [2 of 4]:

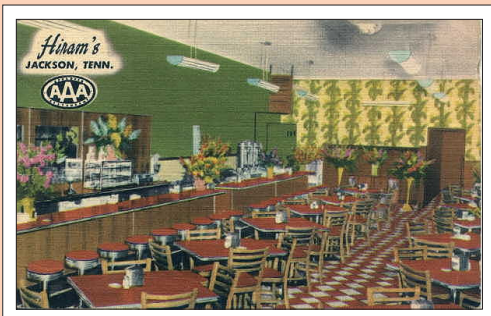
An additional four players are reported to have signed with the Generals but never appear in a game.

The team's home park, Municipal Stadium, is a converted racetrack grandstand that has a trash dump beyond the right field fence and is so far outside of town that it doesn't have a bus line or taxi service to it.

A couple of days before the home opener with Fulton, the team lets it be known that it is looking for 250 feet of snow fence to rent during the season to place in front of the first and third base bleachers. On the plus side, a new ticket booth has been built at the north end of the grandstand and an "efficient" concessions stand will be run by C.E. Gay.

The Generals don't have a trainer and pitchers take turns rubbing each other's arms down with liniment that they buy with their own money. That may explain why Jack Strunk, who once had a spring training stint with Cleveland, has a sore arm the entire season.

Pete Mucci, the team's business manager, doubles as the public address announcer.

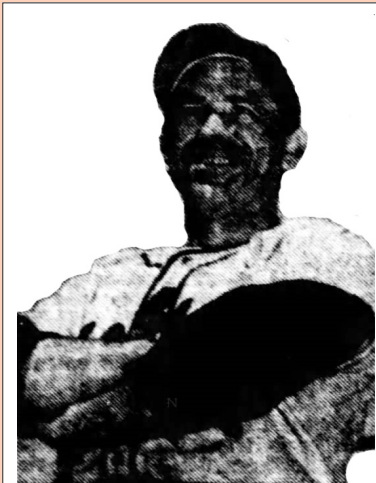


The team office is a filing cabinet behind cash register at Hiram's Restaurant at 211 Main Street, and the team's business is conducted over the counter.

Player salaries are low and meal money for the players is \$2.50 a day.

Hopper counts on selling 1,000 books of season tickets and raising \$20,000 before the start of the season. Instead they sell fewer than 50 and net less than \$1,000.

In a late May series at Fulton, the homestanding Lookouts end up paying for Jackson's expenses (\$50 a day for each of the three games) so Fulton can realize the gate proceeds.



Jackson manager Lou Lucas promises fans not a "hard-hitting" team, or a "solid defensive team," but instead Lucas sets up special sliding pits and promises Jackson fans a "hard-running club" ... the hard-running Generals steal all of 10 bases in 26 games.

Neither team owner Hopper, or manager Lucas are happy with each other, feeling that the other is not doing "the best job possible" for the team.

And finally, the Generals are simply unable to compete with Jackson's little league and legion baseball programs, drive-in movies and television entertainment. Eighty-six fans attend the afternoon half of the May 31 doubleheader while across town a crowd of 600 watch a Babe Ruth League game.

The team's total receipts for the 15 home playing dates is under \$1,700.

In the end it all comes down to money, or lack thereof, for Hopper.

"I have over \$10,000 tied up in this club, counting the equipment, lights, fences, bus and such," says Hopper. "It costs about \$30,000 a year to operate. We have to draw about 600 paid per game to break even."

"There isn't anything for me to do but turn back the franchise."



Owner Hiram Hopper (right) watches his Generals drop their 26th straight game to the Madisonville Miners.

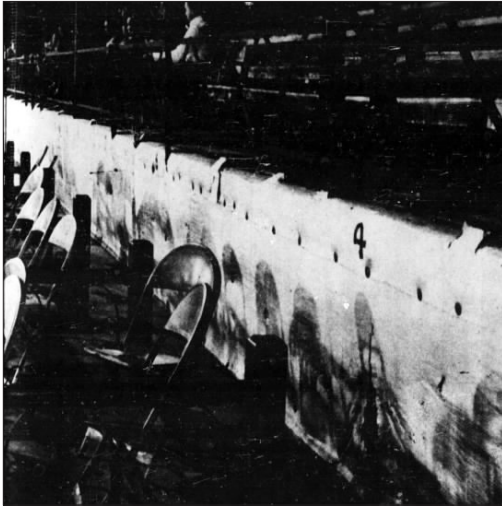
1954 Jackson Generals [3 of 4]:

Kitty League President Shelby Peace desperately tries to keep Jackson in the league because if the Generals don't continue, the circuit will have to drop another franchise to balance the league at six teams. Peace tries to find another community to take the Generals but is unsuccessful.

Semi-Pro Entry Replaces Jackson in Kitty League

MAYFIELD, Ky. — The Kitty League, which had been operating with seven clubs since May 31, when the Jackson Generals folded, has voted to split its season and will start the second half on July 5 with the Central City (Ky.) Reds of the semi-pro Green River Valley League shifting into O. B. and entering the circuit as the eighth member.

Municipal Stadium



Jackson's Municipal Park was not an ideal place to watch a ballgame. It was too far out of town for the city buses and taxis to take fans to and from the games. The aforementioned grandstand was designed for watching car races and didn't configure to the shape of a baseball diamond. The temperature was chilly even on warm evenings and the nearby Forked Deer River often cast a blanket of fog over the outfield. "Even on a reasonably warm night, all that Forked Deer moisture would settle in down there and you would have to wear jackets in the summer," recalled former sportswriter John D. Graham. "It wasn't like going out in short sleeves to a ballgame." There was also a dump located beyond the right field fence and the smell of burning garbage sometimes had to be endured by the players and fans."

- Kitty League.com



Down to an unmanageable seven teams, league owners award Jackson's vacated spot in league membership to semipro organization in Central City, Kentucky, which begins play at the start of the second half of the season.

The Central City Reds, formerly of the Green River Valley League, fare little better than the Generals, finishing 13-44.

So, this begs the question, were the 1954 Jackson Generals the worst team in minor league baseball history?

Let's take a quick look at the contenders in chronological order:

1914 Austin Senators Texas (B) League

Winners of only 11 of its last 83 games, including a league-record 30-game losing streak in mid-season, Austin finishes in last place 67 1/2 games behind first place Houston with a 31-114 (.214) mark ... pitcher James Wainwright is 3-22 for the Senators including seven losses during the losing streak.

1926 Redding Keystones International (AA) League

The Keystones finish 31-129 (.194) under three managers and set a minor-league record by finishing 75 games behind the first-place Toronto Maple Leafs ... drew a league-low 32,329 fans ... their best pitcher, Charles Swaney, led the league in complete games (28) and losses (29).

1949 Leavenworth Braves Western (C) League

The Braves lose their first 22 games en route to a 25-112 (.183) record and a mere 70 1/2 games behind the St. Joseph Cardinals ... desperate for talent Club President Robert Ricketson advertises in newspaper for players and compares the coming and going of players and managers (3) to "an army replacement center in wartime."

The Great Bus Caper



Departing from Jackson for Madisonville at 1:00 a.m., on May 22, following a 9-5 loss to Fulton, Jackson's "ancient" team bus first experiences trouble at 4:00 a.m., when the radiator goes bad near Kentucky Lake. Lucas calls back to Jackson asking for another bus, but is told to get the current one fixed. Repairs are made by noon but with the bus unable to exceed 40 miles per hour, the team reaches Hopkinsville at 8:00 p.m., which is the starting time for their game in Madisonville, still 35 miles away. President Peace orders the game to be played, but pushes the start time back to 9:15. Thirty minutes later, the bus light goes out, forcing the bus to go even slower. When they "crept" into Crofton, Kentucky, they call Madisonville asking for cars to transport the team the final 22 miles. When this final request is denied, the game is forfeited to the Miners.

1954 Jackson Generals [4 of 4]:

1951 Granite Falls Graniteers Western Carolina (D) League

Under the tutelage of five managers, Granite Falls finishes 14-96 for the worst full-season winning percentage (.127) in professional baseball history ... more than 70 players don a Graniter jersey during the forgettable season ... they have a 26-game losing streak early in the year before capping off their stellar performance with a 33-game losing streak to close out the season.

1954 Jackson Generals Kitty (D) League

Before we go proceed any further, it needs to be make clear that this comparison refers to only to the **Jackson Generals**, who end their season on June 1, and not a combination of the Generals and the Central City Reds, a semipro team from the Green Valley League, who replace Jackson in the Kitty League one month later ... Jackson and Central City are two different teams as correctly listed in the *Encyclopedia of Minor League Baseball, Third Edition*.

NOTING THE GENERALS: Jackson is 1-25 on the field, not including the one forfeit at Madisonville. In those 26 games they allow 316 runs (12.2 per game) and their starting pitchers get out of the first inning only seven times ... a two-week spring training opens April 20, bringing six or seven players from New Jersey ... Detroit sends two pitchers ... a dozen West Tennesseans also try out ... practices are from 9 to 4 ... Lucas expects his 18 years of experience to pay off in signing players

Ms. Kitty League 1954



Lowell Mendenhall and Sal DeMatteis shoulder Miss Kitty League of 1954, Nancy Adams of Mayfield. Union City ace pitcher Jim Major looks on.

1954 Jackson Generals



Jackson pitcher Jack Strunk

**May 31, 1954
Madisonville Miners at Jackson Generals
Municipal Stadium, Jackson, Tennessee**

SECOND GAME

| Madisonville | AB | R | H | O | A |
|---------------|----|---|---|---|---|
| Brozellino 3b | 5 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Bragan 2b | 5 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| Pass ss | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Raus lf | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| Tanner rf | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Wallace c | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 |
| Layan cf | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Latshaw 1b | 2 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 0 |
| Day lf | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Siner p | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 |

Totals 33 2 7 24 11

| Jackson | AB | R | H | O | A |
|---------------|----|---|---|----|---|
| Jones rf | 4 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Byrd ss | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Milinzazzo 3b | 5 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 4 |
| Arterburn lf | 5 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Luciano cf | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Meyers 2b | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| Hughes 1b | 2 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 1 |
| Riles c | 4 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 1 |
| Hardish p | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Perkins c | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Totals 34 10-11 27 11

Madisonville . . .000 000 010—2
Jackson 023 111 20x—10

Summary: E—Bragan, Siner, Byrd, Meyers. RBI—Layana 2, Jones, Byrd, Milinzazzo, Arterburn, Meyers, Riles 2, Hardish 2. 2B—Byrd, Milinzazzo, Arterburn. 3B—Hughes. SH—Pass, Day, Hardish 2. SB—Jones, Meyers. Left—Madisonville 12, Jackson 6. BB—Hardish 7, Siner 5. SO—Hardish 7, Siner 3. Winner—Hardish. Loser—Siner. U—Ellens, Murray. T—2:15.

are reserved for "colored fans" ... Lucas contacts Pittsburgh and the Cardinal organizations looking for any available players that might help a Class D team ... for their home opener on May 5 against Union City, pre-game festivities include the Jackson High School marching band along with the Perkins Brothers Hillbilly Band ... in the season opener the previous night at Union City, Greyhounds' lefty Jim Major strikes out 14 and Jackson can muster only two hits as the hosts score in all but two innings en route to a 20-0 victory ... the home opener, the Generals have only two hits again with Union City pounding out 19 hits in a 24-1 win ... Jackson commits 10 errors while General pitchers issue 15 walks ... catcher Willie Smith drives in the team's first run of the season with a fielder's choice in the fourth inning.