

Charles Joseph “Joe” Brophy
Cumberland Colts 1918; Chambersburg Maroons 1920;
Martinsburg Mountaineers 1920-1922; Waynesboro 1923-24
Third Baseman/Outfielder
Class D, Blue Ridge League

By Mark C. Zeigler

Remembered as a hard hitter, a flashy fielder, and a fiery ball player, William Joseph “Joe” Brophy was also one of the most popular players in the Class D, Blue Ridge League.

Born on October 30, 1895 near Elk Garden, West Virginia, Brophy was the son of J. Patrick and Margaret Brown Brophy. He attended public school in Frostburg, Maryland, and graduated from Staunton Military Academy in Virginia. Brophy also attended Davis & Elkins College in West Virginia.

Sports had played a large portion of his life, especially baseball. Brophy made his baseball debut with the Frostburg, MD club in the semi-pro, Georges Creek League as a raw 19-year old in 1917.

A third baseman, Brophy broke into the professional ranks in the Class D, Blue Ridge League under Manager Eddie Hooper and the Cumberland Colts in 1918. Brophy was leading the league in batting (.343) and hits (23) when the league disbanded in mid-June. After his baseball season was curtailed, Brophy joined the service on July 23, 1918, and served in Officer Reserve Corps at Camp Meade, Maryland, from where he was sent overseas to France. Brophy was slightly wounded in action on September 29, 1918, during a battle in the Meuse-Argonne region, which killed another former Blue Ridge League player, Sgt. Leroy Bruff. Brophy was honorably discharged from the army on June 9, 1919.

When the Blue Ridge League returned in 1920, Brophy followed his former manager, Hooper to Chambersburg PA where he started the season with the Maroons. However, a sluggish start and a .219 batting average led to his release at the end of June. Brophy was soon picked up by Bill Loudon's Martinsburg, WV club, and he batted .296 in 52 games for the second-place Mountaineers. Brophy played in 93 games that season batting .262 with 85 hits in 325 at bats, including 17 doubles, a triple and two home runs.

In 1921, Brophy returned to Martinsburg, where he batted .278 in 88 games. The following season, Brophy batted .264 in a career high 97 games, as Martinsburg, now known as the Blue Sox, captured their first Blue Ridge League pennant under Manager H. Burton Shipley. Among Brophy's teammates those two seasons included future Hall of Fame inductee, Lewis “Hack” Wilson.

He married the former Helen Brown of Martinsburg, WV on July 27, 1922 in Berkeley Springs, WV. The Brophy's had two children, William Joseph Brophy, Jr. (b.1923), and Frances Brown Brophy (b.1930).

Brophy signed with the Dover, DE club of the Class D, Eastern Shore League in 1923 under manager Jiggs Donahue, but was released in August after playing in 59 games. He returned to the Blue Ridge League the final week of the 1923 season playing for the Blue Sox league rival,

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Waynesboro, PA club, batting .312 in six games. He returned to Waynesboro in 1924 with former Martinsburg manager, William “Country” Morris, playing in 80 games.

After six seasons in the Blue Ridge League, Brophy spent some time with the Fairmont, WV club of the Class C, Middle Atlantic League. He hung up his spikes prior to the 1926 season, and returned to the Martinsburg, WV area to live, and work as a foreman at a quarry plant in Bakerton, WV.

While in Martinsburg, Brophy became a well-known figure in the area, serving several years as the baseball coach for the Martinsburg community team in the early 1930's.

Tragically, Brophy's life was cut short. On the evening of March 11, 1934, he was leaving his job at the quarry plant when his car skidded on an icy highway during a snowstorm off the Shepherdstown-Charles Town Pike near Bakerton, WV, and went over an embankment, pinning him beneath the wreckage. He was found by a passing motorist, but had to be extradited by a crane about an hour later, and rushed to the City Hospital in Martinsburg, WV.

Brophy died the following late evening, March 12, after suffering a crushed chest, broken ribs, internal injuries, and a fractured skull. He was 38 years old. His death was such a shock to the Martinsburg community that his obituary appeared on the front page of *The Martinsburg Journal* the following afternoon.

Funeral services were held at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Martinsburg, WV, and were attended by many former teammates and opponents during his days in the league. Among his pallbearers included former Blue Ridge League players and teammates “Hack” Wilson, Frank Colley, and Thomas V. McGuire.

Brophy is buried at Old Newbourne Cemetery in downtown Martinsburg, WV.

Listed below is a breakdown of Brophy's Minor League Statistical Batting Record:

Joe Brophy's Known Minor League Batting Statistics

BATTING

Year	Club	League	.AVG	G	AB	R	H	TB	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SAC	SB
1918	CUMBERLAND-MD	BRL-D	.343	18	67	12	23	28	3	1	0	5	4	5
1919		<i>Did Not Play - In Military Service</i>												
1920	CHAMBERSBURG-PA	BRL-D	.219	41	146	19	32	40	5	0	1	12	7	7
1920	MARTINSBURG-WV	BRL-D	.296	52	179	18	53	70	12	1	1	20	4	2
1921	MARTINSBURG-WV	BRL-D	.278	88	338	41	73	126	15	1	5	-	19	11

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1922	MARTINSBURG-WV	BRL-D	.264	97	383	75	101	155	22	7	6	-	5	22
1923	DOVER-DE	ESL-D	.234	59	252	46	59	111	15	2	5	-	-	12
1923	WAYNESBORO-PA	BRL-D	.312	6	16	2	5	8	3	0	0	-	0	0
1924	WAYNESBORO-PA	BRL-D	.247	80	271	35	67	85	13	1	1	-	13	9
1925	FAIRMONT-WV	MAL-C	No Statistics Available											
BLUE RIDGE LEAGUE TOTALS			6 years	.253	382	1400	202	354	512	73	11	14	-	52 56
MINOR LEAGUE TOTALS			8 years											

Sources: Reach and Spalding Guides, 1921-1925. Special thanks to Andrew North of SABR-L for Brophy's 1923 Eastern Shore League statistics; The Frederick News-Post, „March 12, 13, 14, 1934; The Washington Post, March 13, 1934; The Martinsburg Journal, March 12, 1934, front page. Maryland in the World War 1917-1919, Volume 1, Maryland War Commission, Baltimore, MD, 1933.