

Webster Garrison—Where Is He Now?

Former Ehret Star Makes a Career of Professional Baseball

By:
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Contributing Writer

Webster Garrison was living the dream of many youngsters before him when he was drafted out of Marrero's John Ehret High School in the 2nd round draft pick of the 1983 major league draft—the 37th overall pick in the draft that year. Roger Clemens, who would become one of the best pitchers in the history of baseball, was the 19th overall pick. Wally Joyner, Charlie Hayes, and Ronnie Gant were eventual major league players selected in the 3rd and 4th rounds behind Webster.

Webster signed for a reported \$150,000 bonus with the Toronto Blue Jays, turning down an athletic scholarship offer with the University of New Orleans. Baseball scouts saw him as a young, raw talent with a lot of potential. They were very patient with him in his early professional years as he struggled with hitting.

After getting a few seasons under his belt, Webster was starting to realize the potential that major league scouts saw in him out of high school. He made the Southern League All-Star team in 1987, while playing for Double-A Knoxville and had another good season in 1988 when he stole 42 bases with Knoxville and repeated as an all-star.

By 1989 at age 23, Webster appeared to be on track to get to the big leagues, as he was promoted to Syracuse at the Triple-A Level for the first time and played in 50 games with them.

However, the Blue Jays' parent club already had good-hitting, slick fielding shortstop Tony Fernandez who made his first of five major league all-star teams in 1986, and he was only three years older than Webster. Then Webster had an injury-plagued season in 1990, and the Blue Jays granted him free agency at the end of that season.

Webster signed a contract with the Oakland A's organization for the 1991 season and had his best year to that point in his career in 1993, hitting .303, seven home runs and 73 RBI for Triple-A Tacoma. Although, again he was granted free agency by the A's after that season.

Webster then signed with the Colorado Rockies organization, where he improved his play during the next two seasons, with .302-13-68 and .293-12-77 offensive statistics for Triple-A Colorado Springs in 1994 and 1995, respectively. In

1995, he was a member of the Pacific Coast League championship team. However, by that time Webster was 29 years old and was considered past his prime as a major league prospect. He was granted free agency again, and wound up returning to his previous organization, the A's.

Webster turned in respectable seasons with the A's organization and finally made his major league debut on August 2, 1996. He appeared in five games with the Oakland A's, going hitless in nine at-bats. It had taken him 13 years and 1500 games to make the major leagues at age 30, but he can count himself among the 17,000+ players in history who can say they made it to "The Big Show."

He finished his professional playing career in 1999, unable to get another shot in the big leagues. In all, he played 16 minor league seasons. He appeared in 1,796 games, garnering 1,721 hits in 6,426 at-bats for a .268 batting average. During his career, he hit 101 home runs and 713 RBI and scored 836 runs.

Webster was a player-coach for Double-A Huntsville in 1999, and then turned to full-time coaching for the 2000 season.

He was promoted to minor league manager in 2001. In the Oakland A's organization, he has managed teams at the A and AA levels and his career managerial record is a respectable 334-302 in five seasons.



Baseball cards featuring Webster

After two seasons as an A's minor league coach in 2009 and 2010, he returned to managing with Stockton of the California League for the 2011 season.

While Webster's playing career did not turn out as he and others expected, he may yet reach the major leagues again, as a coach or a manager.

He can look to the career of Mike Quade, former University of New Orleans baseball player, as a hopeful example. Quade never made the major leagues as a player, but after 21 years of managing and coaching in the minors, he became a coach for the Chicago Cubs in the major leagues. Then, in 2010, he replaced Lou Piniella as the Cubs' interim manager near the end of the season. Quade is now the Cubs' permanent manager for the 2011 season, one of the elite jobs in all of baseball.

After all, Webster does have experience with perseverance, right?

A native of Marrero, he still makes his off-season home there. ✨



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