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Questions or Comments?

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# Sports

## GREAT SPORTS MOMENTS IN ABERDEEN



**All Nations in 1913:** J.L. Wilkinson's All Nations team playing in Aberdeen many times, and the team featured one of baseball's greatest pitchers of all time, John Wesley Donaldson (front row center). *Courtesy Photo*

# Early 1900s famous pitcher mows 17 Aberdeen batters

**Editor's Note:** The American News sports department is sharing its top 125 moments in Aberdeen Sports History this weekend as part of the city's 125th birthday celebration. Moments 27-75 are inside today's Sports section on pages 5-8D. Here is moment No. 26:

**By John Papendick**  
*American News Sports Editor*  
There was a time when just about everyone in South Dakota — including Aberdeen — knew the name and fame of pitcher John Wesley Donaldson. Donaldson was even considered for induction into the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame last year.

Donaldson's story was hidden away in hundreds of local newspaper stories (including ones in Aberdeen) that preserved some of the magical moments and the overwhelming numbers of

Today at 5:30 p.m. during the Minnesota Twins vs. Detroit Tigers pregame show the FOX Sports Network will be running a feature story on John Wesley Donaldson. Portions of the rare 1925 film footage of Donaldson uncovered this spring are scheduled to be shown

strikeouts accumulated by this "left-handed wonder," said Minneapolis baseball historian Pete Gorton.

"The pitcher's prime years were 1911 to 1919, when he was the star hurler of J.L. Wilkinson's All Nations team," said Gorton. "The All Nations featured a mix of players of many ethnic backgrounds, and the ball club first brought interracial baseball to hundreds of American cities."

Gorton helped document more than 250 victories and more than 4,000 strikeouts for Donaldson. Gorton contributed Donaldson's many feats to Steve Hoffbeck's book, "Swinging for the Fences: Black Baseball in Minnesota" (MHS Press, 2005).

"Donaldson was the best-known barnstorming pitcher in the decade before Satchel Paige, and Paige pitched on many diamonds where Donaldson had dominated earlier," said Gorton.

There were a couple of future Hall of Famers on the All Nations team, including

owner Wilkinson himself.

On June 14, 1915, Donaldson pitched All Nations to a 4-0 win over the Hub City Cubs "with minor assistance of his teammates," according to the report in the Aberdeen newspaper.

Donaldson had 17 strikeouts.

"One of the biggest crowds of the season was present and the fans were certainly given a rare treat in the line of sensational pitching," the newspaper reported. "The way the Cub sticklers were trying to connect safely with the white pill served as a source of pleasure to the large crowd present."

The Aberdeen pitcher, George Parden, also "twirled a splendid game." He allowed only five hits.

Donaldson and his All Nations teammates would play in Aberdeen several times over these years.