Board Names Bob Hedinger to Pilot Lafayette Oilers

By Lee Meade
Advertiser Sports Editor

Third baseman Bob Hedinger will manage the Lafayette Oilers during the 1954 Evangeline League baseball season.

SECOND GUESS

The board of directors of the Citizens Baseball Association of Lafayette announced the selection of the playing manager and new nickname today.

Hedinger, a 33-year-old veteran of 14 years of professional baseball and coaching, was hired Friday night at a board meeting in the Huval Bakery Building.

The nickname, Lafayette Oilers, was the result of a week-long “Name-the-Team” contest which came to an end last night.

Sanford Breaux of 314 Goldman Street in Lafayette won a season’s pass to all home games played by the Oilers during the 1954 Evangeline League campaign for his entry:

“I believe that the Lafayette team should be named Oilers because Lafayette is now the oil capital of South Louisiana and a salute to this great industry would be very appropriate.”

Breaux’s simple and concise entry was selected from almost a hundred which were submitted during the contest. Twelve other baseball fans suggested the name “Oilers” for the team.

Hedinger and the board of directors agreed on a contract Friday night, and, although terms of the pact were not made public, both parties expressed satisfaction.

A curly-haired, bespectacled infielder, Hedinger was the recommendation of a three-man screening committee. He was accepted by the board without a dissenting vote.

Impressive Record

The 6-foot 2-inch, 194-pounder brings an impressive playing record to Lafayette. He has played every position except catcher during a 14-year professional career and has a lifetime batting average of more than .300.

Hedinger has played in the Class B Gulf Coast League the past three seasons and set a loop fielding record for third baseman at Port Arthur in 1952. He played 145 games for the Seahawks and committed only 21 errors in 431 chances at the hot corner — a .951 percentage.

Hedinger was also a big man with the stick at Port Arthur. He batted .321 and drove in 114 runs.

Last season he was hitting over .400 when he suffered a severe ankle sprain early in the year and missed more than a month of play. However, he filled in as a pinch-hitter and finished with a .304 mark after returning to the regular lineup.

Before coming to Brownsville, Tex., of the Gulf Coast League in 1951, Hedinger spent most of his playing time in the Western International League. He played one year with the Los Angeles Angels in the open-classification Pacific Coast League.

Married and the father of two boys, aged 11 years and 16 months, Hedinger will handle the front office for the Oilers in addition to his field duties.

He returned to his home in Groves, Texas, Saturday after a two-day stay in Lafayette. He is scheduled to return the latter part of this week and probably will move his family to Lafayette early in March.

Amazing Fans

Hedinger was “amazed” by the baseball enthusiasm of the people of Lafayette.

“The people in Lafayette have amaze me in their drive to retain professional baseball,” he said. “It is difficult to imagine enthusiasm like the citizens of Lafayette have shown this long before the baseball season.”

He promised a “good, hustling” type of ball club this summer.

“The Evangeline League is going to be a very good and fast Class C circuit this season. And we intend to give people a good show in Lafayette. I believe that if the present enthusiasm of the fans is retained, Lafayette can top the 100,000 mark in attendance during 1954.”

Box Seat Sale Begins

Meanwhile, V. C. Reid has disclosed that box seats will be sold at $60 each with a preference given to former box holders at Braham Stadium.

Reid said that after a deadline which will be named later, all boxes will be sold on a “first come, first serve” basis.

Gladue E. Domingue and Ernest Theriot are members of the box seat committee with Reid. They reported that the new park will not have as many boxes as Braham Stadium did, but that 100 will be sold.

In other business at Friday’s meeting, the board:

1. Rejected a new offer from Alcide Dominique, lessor of Braham Stadium, for rental of the park on a basis that the proposal came too late.

2. Authorized the building committee to use $8,500 for construction of 100 box seats, a grandstand seating 384 persons directly behind home plate, a fence with advertising signs, and a screen over the box seats and grandstand.

The board also said it would begin efforts to obtain bleacher seats along the first and third base lines at the stadium, until such a time as more funds were available to continue construction of a larger grandstand.

3. Moved for the transfer of the “WE WANT BASEBALL” funds to an account named for the Citizens Baseball Association of Lafayette, and

4. Extended a proposition to Leo Gross to operate the concession stand for the association.

The next board meeting will be called upon the request of the building committee after it has met with the Playground and Park Commission regarding approval of a building plans on the All-Purpose Field.