

Artie Wilson

“Greatest Hitter”

in the History of the

Birmingham Industrial League

In 1937 Artie went to work at American Cast Iron Pipe Company (ACIPCO) in Birmingham and immediately started playing on their baseball team in the Birmingham Industrial League (BIL). ACIPCO already had a very powerful team and were a dominant force in the Birmingham Industrial League before Artie joined them.

Wilson excelled on the baseball diamond and soon became the team’s leading hitter as their starting shortstop. During his employment at ACIPCO he worked mainly in machine shop number three of the plant.

Artie joined the ACIPCO Pipemen baseball team for the 1937 season. The team entered the 1937 season having won seven straight Birmingham Industrial League championships. Artie had an excellent season in his first year with ACIPCO. He finished the season with a .364 batting average. Led by Artie’s timely hitting, ACIPCO posted an impressive record

of 45-15-1 for the season and finished in second place in the league behind Stockham.

When the 1938 season started, Wilson was back at shortstop and the team's lead-off hitter. ACIPCO finished the Birmingham Industrial League season in second place in the league standings. Wilson had another outstanding season at the plate. He won the BIL batting championship with a .419 batting average. Artie also led the league in hits with 82 and runs scored with 64. For Wilson the highlight of his season was hitting ten (10) homeruns. The amazing part of his homerun production for the year was that he only hit a total of 35 homeruns for his entire baseball career.

Artie had another outstanding season in 1939 and finished the year with a .411 batting average. However, he lost the league batting championship to first year ACIPCO player Lorenzo "Piper" Davis who hit .450 for the season.

Behind a strong team that included future Negro League players Lorenzo "Piper" Davis, Greedy Mc Kinnis, William Powell, Ed Steele and Artie Wilson, the 1940 ACIPCO team won its second straight Birmingham Industrial League championship. Artie

continued his dominate play and posted a .398 batting average.

ACIPCO won its third straight Birmingham Industrial League championship in 1941. Artie won his second league batting title with a .446 average and also led the league in hits with 52.

When World War II started, Wilson was spared from having to serve. In 1942 he received a physical deferment from serving in the military because his right hand had been injured in an industrial accident while working at the ACIPCO plant.

One of the many highlights of Artie's career with ACIPCO in the Birmingham Industrial League (BIL) came in 1942 when he won the Birmingham Industrial League batting title with a .476 batting average and helped lead ACIPCO to a BIL championship with an amazing 49-1 record. During the course of the season ACIPCO won an unprecedented 32 consecutive ball games.

When the 1943 season started, Artie Wilson and the ACIPCO Pipemen picked right up where they had left off at the end of the 1942 season. ACIPCO finished the season with a record of 47-4 and won their fifth straight Birmingham Industrial League championship.

The 1943 season would be Artie's last year with ACIPCO and he went out in style by winning his third straight batting title. For the 1943 season he collected a league leading 85 hits in 168 trips to the plate for an unbelievable .559 batting average.

Artie played seven seasons with ACIPCO from 1937 to 1943 before signing with the Birmingham Black Barons to play in the Negro American League. Over his career in the Birmingham Industrial League he hit over .400 in five of his seven seasons and compiled a lifetime career batting average of .438. Behind his strong play at shortstop and his incredible hitting, he led ACIPCO to five straight Birmingham Industrial League championships from 1939 to 1943.

His career hitting statistics for ACIPCO are as follows:

Career Statistics – Hitting (Birmingham Industrial League - BIL)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1937	ACIPCO	-	96	-	35	-	-	-	-	-	.364	-
1938	ACIPCO	-	196	64	82	-	-	10	49	-	.419	-
1939	ACIPCO	-	84	-	35	-	-	-	-	-	.411	-
1940	ACIPCO	-	103	-	41	-	-	-	-	-	.398	-
1941	ACIPCO	-	118	-	52	-	-	-	-	-	.446	-
1942	ACIPCO	-	126	-	60	-	-	4	-	-	.476	-
1943	ACIPCO	-	168	-	85	-	-	-	-	-	.559	-
	Total	-	891	64	390	-	-	14	49	-	.438	-