

Jimmy “Slim” Williams

Birmingham Cardinals

“The Face of Industrial League Baseball”

No other player represents what industrial league baseball is all about better than Jimmy “Slim” Williams of the Birmingham Cardinals.

Jimmy Williams was born on May 18, 1965 in Butler, Alabama. He graduated from Choctaw High School in Butler and was drafted in the 10th round of the 1984 MLB June Draft. Passing up an athletic scholarship from the University of Alabama, he signed with the Dodgers and received a \$ 28,000 signing bonus.

The big left-handed pitcher who stands 6’ 7” tall and weighs 232 pounds intimidated hitters from high school through an 18 year career in professional baseball. Even today as he is approaching 50 years of age he is still getting hitters out who are half his age in the Birmingham Industrial League.

After being drafted by the Los Angeles Dodgers, his first assignment as a rookie was with the Great Falls Dodgers in the Pioneer League. During the 1984 season he also played for the Dodgers rookie team in the Gulf Coast League. In 1985 he was back in the Gulf Coast League and compiled a respectable 4-4 record with a 3.78 ERA. He also had 55 strikeouts in only 66.2 innings. The 1986 season found him in Vero Beach of the Florida State League.

After the 1986 season, Williams was traded to the Minnesota Twins organization. Minnesota sent him to Visalia of the California League for the 1987 season. It was while playing for the Visalia Oaks in 1987 that Jimmy really came into his own as a professional pitcher. He went 7-4 with a 2.22 ERA and struck out 81 batters in 85 innings during the 1987 season. Jimmy played in the Minnesota organization through the 1990 season making stops at Visalia (1988), Orlando (1989) and Portland (1989-1990).

In 1991 he was traded to the San Francisco Giants organization and spent the season at their AAA farm team in Phoenix where he went 7-9.

Prior to the start of the 1992 season, Jimmy signed a contract to play for Telemarket Rimini of the Italian Baseball League. Once arriving in Italy, he helped

lead Rimini to a “league” championship. His play in Italy got the attention of the Chicago Cubs who signed him before the start of the 1993 season. Jimmy split his 1993 season between the Orlando Cubs (Southern League) and the Iowa Cubs (American Association). He had an excellent season in 1993 going 10-8 with a 2.93 ERA. In 1994 he spent most of the season with the Ottawa Lynx of the International League and went 9-2 with the AAA farm team of the Montreal Expos.

Williams was on the move again in 1995 spending time with both the Baltimore Orioles and New York Mets organizations. At Norfolk which was the AAA farm team of the Mets he posted an impressive record of 11-4 with a 3.05 ERA.

In 1996 he was dealt to the Cleveland Indians and spent the season with the Buffalo Bisons of the American Association. Being only a short step away from the Majors, he showed he could win games and ended the season with a 12-3 record.

Frustrated with not being called up to the Majors he chose to play the 1997 season in Japan. Jimmy returned to the United States in 1998 and suffered through a long unproductive season with Charlotte

and Buffalo. By this time in his career he was transitioning from the role of a starter to a closer.

Before the start of the 1999 season Jimmy signed with the Atlantic City Surf of the Atlantic League. He returned to the role of a starter with the Surf and put up great numbers going 13-4 with “league” leading 124 strikeouts. After an off-season (5-9 won-lost record) with the Surf in 2000, he signed with the Camden Riversharks who also played in the Atlantic League. During the 2001 season with Camden, Williams registered 23 saves which tied him for the “league” lead. With Camden he was strictly a closer and had the best season of his career in 2002. He appeared in 48 games for the Riversharks and went 5-1 with an amazing 0.56 ERA. He also had 28 saves and struck out 47 batters in 48 innings.

After a brief stint in Mexico in 2003 with the Cordoba Cafeteros, he was forced to retire from professional baseball because of arm problems.

Jimmy Williams ended his professional career with an impressive record of 106-87 (.549) with 90 saves in 551 Minor League games. Despite a won-loss record of 56-42 (.571) in nine seasons at the AAA level he never got called up to the Major Leagues.

Jimmy Williams

Minor League Playing Career

Year	Team	League
1984	Great Falls Dodgers	Pioneer League
1984-1985	GCL Dodgers	Gulf Coast League
1986	Vero Beach Dodgers	Florida State League
1987-1988	Visalia Oaks	California League
1989	Portland Beavers	Pacific Coast League
1989	Orlando Twins	Southern League
1990	Portland Beavers	Pacific Coast League
1991	Phoenix Firebirds	Pacific Coast League
1992	Telemarket Rimini	Italian Baseball League
1993	Iowa Cubs	American Association
1993	Orlando Cubs	Southern League
1993-94	Aguilas de Zulia	Venezuelan League
1994	Ottawa Lynx	International League
1994	Harrisburg Senators	Eastern League
1994-95	Arecibo Lobos	Puerto Rican Winter League
1995	Norfolk Tides	International League
1995	Rochester Red Wings	International League
1995-96	Arecibo Lobos	Puerto Rican Winter League
1995-96	San Juan Senadores	Puerto Rican Winter League
1996	Buffalo Bisons	American Association
1997	Chunichi Dragons	Japanese League
1998	Buffalo Bisons	International League
1998	Charlotte Knights	International League
1999-2000	Atlantic City Surf	Atlantic League
2001-2002	Camden Riversharks	Atlantic League
2003	Cordoba Cafeteros	Mexican League

Jimmy “Slim” Williams
Minor League Pitching Statistics

Jimmy Williams

Industrial League Career

After retiring Williams returned to Birmingham and after a couple of years rehabbing his arm, he felt the need to play baseball so he joined the Birmingham Industrial League. For a ball player like Jimmy Williams, baseball never gets out of your blood. Thinking the industrial league would give him the opportunity to stay in shape and play the game that had been his life since he was a kid, he also found that he still had his skills as a pitcher and could still pitch very effectively. Competing against many players who were half his age he showed he could still get batters out.

His pitching prowess in the Birmingham Industrial League was best exemplified when he was named the Most Valuable Player of the 2013 Championship Tournament.

In 2015 at the age of 50 he is still pitching with the Birmingham Cardinals, getting hitters out and has no idea of retiring any time soon.