

Some titles are won on the field. Others are given at birth. It's up for debate which ones actually do more to cement a man's legacy. In Part One of the 100 Best Names in Cleveland Sports History, we celebrated such luminaries as Eric Plunk, Bimbo Coles, and Pepper Johnson. Now it's on to Part Two, with Top Names #75-51. Take a trip down moniker memory lane with us, won't you?

100 Best Names in Cleveland Sports History: [#100-76](#) | [#75-51](#) | [#50-26](#) | [#25-1](#)

#75 – Charlie Spikes

Outfielder, Cleveland Indians, 1973-1977

A native of Bogalusa, Louisiana, Leslie Charles Spikes had the tools of his future trade right there in his birth name. Looking back, though, it was probably more amusing than prophetic. Charlie only stole 27 bases in his career, so the emphasis on the footwear was probably a bit unfair. He also made 18 errors in the outfield between '73 and '74, so "Charlie Glover" wouldn't have fit much better.

#74 – Weldon Humble

Guard, Cleveland Browns, 1947-1950

He served in both World War II and Korea, won four championships with the Browns, and made his way to the Pro Bowl in 1950. But the big Texan Weldon "Hum" Humble didn't get a big head about it. How could he with a name like that?

#73 – Alvaro Espinoza

Utility Infielder, Cleveland Indians, 1993-1996

Cleveland may best remember him for his bubblegum-on-the-ballcap antics, but for a banjo-hitting glove-man, Alvaro Espinoza carved out a pretty nice 12-year Big League career for himself. In New York, legendary Yankees PA announcer Bob Sheppard often cited Espy's name among his all-time favorites to introduce—one syllable gliding into the next.



#72 – Zydrunas Ilgauskas

Center, Cleveland Cavaliers, 1997-2010

Here he is, Big Z-- the Cavs' all-time leader in games played. A class act in Cleveland for 13 years, it was a true bummer to see the dome-headed Lithuanian relegated to cheerleader status for the world's most hated team in the 2011 Finals. But them's the breaks, old man.

#71 – Tris Speaker

Centerfielder, Cleveland Indians, 1916-1926

Born in Hubbard, Texas, in 1888, Tristram E. Speaker, aka "The Grey Eagle," excelled in the deadball era and still ranks near the top of virtually every offensive category in Indians history. But even his role as player/manager on the Tribe's first championship club in 1920 may rank second to the majesty of his moniker.

#70 – Hector Marinaro

Forward, Cleveland Force / Crunch, 1983-84, 1989-2004

The face (and name) of soccer in Cleveland for two decades—albeit the bargain basement indoor variety. Still—carpet or grass-- it's hard to argue that any futbol player had a bigger impact on the growth of the game locally than the Argentinian-Canadian with the delicious sounding name.

#69 – Buddy Bell

Third Baseman, Cleveland Indians, 1972-1978

A good baseball name needs instant character—folksiness, a little alliteration perhaps. Something snappy, like a short-hop stab and quick throw from the hot corner. Buddy Bell was an All-Star for the Indians, but had he stuck with his given handle of “David Gus,” we might not recall him quite as fondly.



#68 – Joe Jurevicius

Wide Receiver, Cleveland Browns, 2006-2007

It looked like a happy homecoming when Cleveland native and Lake Catholic grad Joe Jurevicius signed his appropriately violent-sounding name on a Browns offer sheet in 2006. But after two solid seasons, a knee injury begat a staph infection, which begat an early retirement, which begat a lawsuit, which begat an undisclosed settlement between the vicious one and his hometown team.

#67 – Leon "Daddy Wags" Wagner

Leftfielder, Cleveland Indians, 1964-1968

Like Al “Bubba” Baker in the first part of our list, Leon Wagner’s nickname meets the standard of steady usage required to get him on this list. After all, if you’re thinking of the lean, mean power-hitting machine who patrolled left field for the Tribe in the mid ‘60s, you’re not thinking of Leon Wagner. You’re thinking of “Daddy Wags.”

#66 – Snuffy Stirnweiss

Third Baseman, Cleveland Indians, 1951-1952

He's pretty much forgotten these days, but Snuffy Stirnweiss (sadly *not* short for Snuffleupagus) led the AL in hits and stolen bases in both 1944 and 1945 as a member of the Yankees. Of course, those were also undermanned WWII seasons in baseball. By the time the Indians picked Snuffy up as a 32 year-old in 1951, he had long since devolved into a weak-hitting defensive specialist. He only appeared in 51 more Major League games, and was tragically killed in a passenger train wreck in New Jersey at just 39 years of age.

Honorable Mention: **Stuffy McInnis**, *First Baseman, Cleveland Indians, 1922*

#65 – Cleveland Pittsburgh Crosby

Defensive End, Cleveland Browns, 1980 (Draft)

It was certainly cute that the Browns used their second round draft choice in 1980 to take a guy named Cleveland. They'd already had plenty of dudes named "Brown," after all. It was Cleveland Crosby's middle name, however, that the Browns brass had perhaps failed to notice. Yes, Cleveland Pittsburgh Crosby could very well have become the living embodiment of the Browns-Steelers rivalry... had he managed to make the team. Instead, the 6'5" defensive end didn't play an NFL down until 1982 as a member of the Colts. That's right-- Cleveland Pittsburgh only played in Baltimore.



#64 – Addie Joss

Pitcher, Cleveland Bronchos / Naps, 1902-1910

Lost in his prime to fatal meningitis in 1911, Addie Joss still put up enough numbers in just nine seasons to eventually earn his enshrinement in Cooperstown (160 wins, 2 no-hitters, and a

crazy 1.89 career ERA and .968 WHIP). His death also was the first of a string of similar tragedies that have scarred the Indians franchise (the figurative death of Grady Sizemore not included).

#63 – Sonny Siebert

Starting Pitcher, Cleveland Indians, 1964-1969

About a half-century after Addie Joss pitched his last game, the Indians signed a kid out of the University of Missouri named Wilfred Charles Siebert—better known as Sonny. He didn't reach the Majors until he was 27, but he quickly joined "Sudden" Sam McDowell and Luis Tiant as part of lethal rotation in the late '60s, finishing his Tribe tenure with a 61-48 record and 2.76 ERA.

#62 – Shaquille O'Neal

Center, Cleveland Cavaliers, 2009-10

Okay, so the "Big Witness Protection" thing didn't work quite as planned. And yes, the wider world will wisely erase its memories of Shaq as the 37 year-old (quite doughy) shadow of his former self. But hey, the guy was a jolt of positive energy in 2009, and no matter how old he gets, the name Shaquille O'Neal will always rank among pro sports' rhymiest and finest.

#61 – Bill Wambsganss

Second Baseman, Cleveland Indians, 1914-1923

Cleveland native Bill Wambsganss didn't have a name that was easy to say let alone spell (newspaper boxscores routinely just identified him as "Bill Wamby"), but the sheer oddity of it—and the fluke of an unassisted triple play in the 1920 World Series—have solidified his legend for a century.

#60 – Ebenezer Ekuban

Defensive End, Cleveland Browns, 2004

You've just got to love a bruising defensive end with a Dickensian first name and Neptunian last name. Ebenezer actually had a career-high 8 sacks in his one season in Cleveland, before joining Courtney Brown, Gerrard Warren, and Michael Myers on Denver's "Broncos" defensive line.

#59 – Moose Solters

Leftfielder, Cleveland Indians, 1937-1939

On January 17, 1937-- in possibly the greatest exchange of names in the history of sports-- the

Indians acquired Moose Solters (birthname: Julius Joseph Soltesz), Ivy Andrews, and Lyn Lary from the St. Louis Browns for Bill Knickerbocker, Oral Hildebrand, and Joe Vosmik. Man, the Great Depression doesn't seem so bad now does it? Anyway, Moose held up his end of the bargain, having a monstrous 1937 season for the Tribe (20 HR, 109 RBI, .323 AVG). Sadly, though, his eyesight began to fade in the seasons that followed, and Solters was reduced to a bench role for the rest of his career.

#58 – Boog Powell

First Baseman, Cleveland Indians, 1975-1976



In the rogues gallery of “past-their-prime” Cleveland athletes, even a rundown Shaq in wine and gold can’t quite top Orioles legend Boog Powell in head-to-toe bright red for the ’76 Tribe. The mighty Boog (birthname: John Wesley Powell) actually had a very solid first year in Cleveland (27 HR, 86 RBI, .297 AVG in 1975), but the bicentennial saw his gut grow and his numbers shrink (9 HR, 33 RBI, .215 AVG). Fortunately for Boog, no one outside Cleveland still remembers it.

#57 – Marion Motley

Fullback, Cleveland Browns, 1946-1953

The word “motley” literally means “exhibiting great diversity of elements; different colors combined.” So it seems fitting that Marion Motley became one of pro football’s first great African-American stars, suiting up for Paul Brown a full year before Jackie Robinson joined the Dodgers. His 8.2 yards per carry in 1946 also made the generally feminine “Marion” sound a lot more intimidating.

#56 – Moxie Meixell

Rightfielder, Cleveland Naps, 1912

Want an even better M.M. name than Marion Motley? No problem. Meet Moxie Meixell. It almost seems like player/manager Napoleon Lajoie just enjoyed surrounding himself with other remarkable monikers, because a couple years before Tinsley Ginn and Rivington Bisland signed on, the Cleveland Naps briefly employed Mr. Merton Merrill Meixell—a Dr. Seuss character who somehow managed to improve his designation with the nickname “Moxie.” And boy did it suit him. Moxie Meixell finished his career with an eye-popping .500 batting average (ahem, 1 hit in 2 at-bats).

#55 – Rolly Woolsey

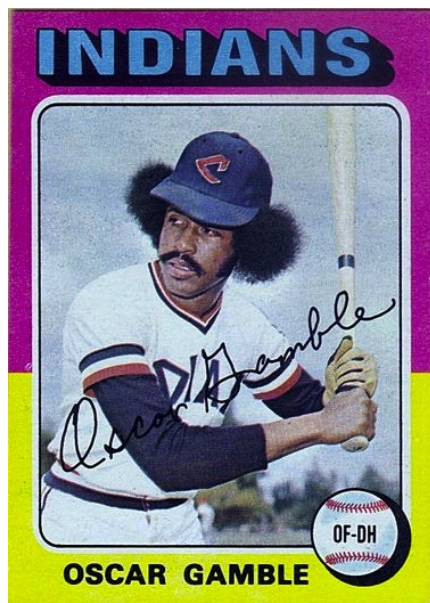
Defensive Back, Cleveland Browns, 1977

I’m pretty sure Rolly Woolsey was one of Harry Potter’s more obscure Hogwarts chums, but according to the NFL record book, he also returned 32 punts for the 1977 Cleveland Browns. He clearly wasn’t much in the way of wizarding, either, since he failed to take a single one to the house.

#54 – Wally Szczerbiak

Forward, Cleveland Cavaliers, 2007-2009

We saw Wally tear it up at Miami of Ohio and establish himself as a solid NBA player for 10 seasons, including two as a role player for some great Cavs teams. ... And yet there is still not a soul among us who can spell his name correctly without looking... and re-looking. It’s a bit like the way Wally World played defense—we’re willing to give it a shot, but that sort of arrangement of consonants just isn’t our forte.



#53 – Oscar Gamble

Outfielder / DH, Cleveland Indians, 1973-1975

His fashion sense and power afro made him a quintessential '70s ballplayer, but Oscar Gamble's name is timeless—a true classic from the treasure trove of great Alabama ballplayer names: Red Barnes, Bubba Church, Rusty Greer, Shovel Hodge, Skeeter Newsome, Amos Otis, Satchel Paige, etc. Oscar also gave the baseball world one of its great quotes: "They don't think it be like it is, but it do."

#52 – Smush Parker

Guard, Cleveland Cavaliers, 2002-03

The 2002-03 Cavs were the worst team in the NBA, but if stupid names were useful attributes, they would have been title contenders. Since nobody watched that team, it's easy to forget that rookie William "Smush" Parker averaged a solid 13 PPG in 66 games, playing alongside a rag tag collection of Boozers, Bimbos, Zydrunases, and Diops.

#51 – Orel Hershiser

Starting Pitcher, Cleveland Indians, 1995-1997

With an outstandingly bizarre name far better suited to the 1930s, Bowling Green grad Orel Hershiser arrived in Cleveland as a free agent reclamation project in 1995, and needless to say, things turned out pretty well for the old Bulldog. He won 45 games in three seasons with the Tribe and pitched in a couple World Series.

Honorable Mention: **Oral Hildebrand**, *Pitcher, Cleveland Indians, 1931-1936*

See, I told you that name was better suited to the '30s. Turns out old timey Oral wasn't a slouch either—he was a member of the first AL All-Star Team in 1933.

[Continue on to see Top Names #50-26 .](#)