

ONE YEAR BROUGHT ABOUT GREAT CHANGE IN POSITIONS OF PHILLIES AND ATHLETICS

CONDITIONS REVERSED AS PHILLIES AND ATHLETICS PREPARE FOR 1916 SEASON

Moran's Team Were Dubs One Year Ago, but Champions Now, While Mack's Pennant Winners Are Tailenders

BASEBALL will be officially under way for Philadelphia tomorrow when the Phillies leave for the training camp at St. Petersburg, Fla. One year ago Manager Moran took virtually the same squad to St. Petersburg, but at that time it looked like a hopeless second division aggregation. The Phils were royally greeted in the Southern city, but the fans took no more than a passing interest in Moran's team because they did not think it would amount to much. This year they are returning to St. Petersburg as champions of the National League, and it is safe to predict that the reception given the men will not be forgotten for some time to come.

Tuesday the Athletics will depart for Jacksonville. One year ago the Mackmen arrived in Jacksonville as champions of the American League and heralded far and wide as the "famous Mack machine." The team finished in last place in the American League race. Was there ever a greater example of the uncertainty of the great national game?

As one looks back upon the events of the year, it is easy to understand just how this strange reversal of the dope occurred, but skipping over the events of the summer, a most unusual condition exists. It is this uncertainty that has made baseball the national game.

What Will the Next Six Months Bring?

What will happen during the next six months? Will the Athletics shock the baseball world just as the Phillies did, and will the Phils disappoint the fans?

On form there is little chance for another complete reversal, but one can never tell what will happen in baseball. The Phils are taking a veteran aggregation to the training camp. It is reasonably certain that there will be no "dark horses" in the squad who will win positions from regulars. The team can be but little stronger from a playing standpoint, and must win the pennant—if it is to be won—on team work and an improved brand of pitching.

The Athletics are in an entirely different position. With few exceptions every position on the team will be open. Recruits will be tried out at all positions but first base and center field, and if they do not measure up to the mark there will be more recruits on hand when the team returns from the South. If any one were to predict that the Mackmen would even finish in the first division, he would be laughed at; but stranger things have happened.

Minor Leagues Reorganizing Throughout the Country

Minor leagues which blew up last season are reorganizing throughout the country, and by April 1 it is believed that there will be 50 ready to operate. President Tener, of the National League, recently predicted that at least 40 would take the field, whereas only 25 finished in 1915. Since Tener issued his statement, the Canadian, Nebraska State, Texas-Oklahoma, Vermont and Arizona State Leagues have decided to try it again.

The baseball war cut down profits of the major league teams, but the small leagues were the real sufferers. Last spring it was predicted in these columns that the Federal raids would force the small leagues to close their gates because in the majority of cases the sale of players is the only source of revenue to a minor league club, as the gate receipts never cover expenses. Last year the majors feared to purchase minor leaguers. It is estimated that 5000 ball players were out of employment last summer. Many promising youngsters entered business, but the lure of the diamond is proving too strong and they are gradually falling in line.

Browns Made Wise Move in Buying Campbell

Phil Ball, new owner of the Browns, is the first president of a major league club in St. Louis to appreciate the value of a winning team in the Missouri city. St. Louis is one of the best baseball cities in the country if a good brand of ball is provided, and will prove one of the greatest money makers in either league. Ball realizes this and is spending money lavishly to get a winning team.

The purchasing of Vin Campbell was a master stroke. Critics are inclined to ridicule the idea of Ball buying a high-priced star when he was already well equipped with outfielders, but it was a wise move, as it will give Jones some excellent trading material. The Browns are weak in the infield and there were no star Federal League infielders on the market. There are several good men in the American League who will be forced to play substitute, and one of these can be secured in a trade for one of the Browns' extra outfielders. A trade of this sort may completely upset the dope in the American League race.

The New Ty Cobbs Are at It Again

The Ty Cobbs are burning up the training camps at the present time, while all pitchers are dubs. In a few weeks when the pitchers start cutting loose and the curve balls begin to break, the Ty Cobbs will merely have their names in the Yanigan line-up, while the old guard will be whaling out the base hits.

The ease with which youngsters get their hits in the early spring practice before the pitchers are right really acts against them. When they face good pitching later in the training season, they are helpless and lose confidence. Mack discovered this long ago and that is why he sends his twirlers South before the regulars when he is building a new team.

"Slim" Love Is Tallest Player in Baseball

"Slim" Love, the southpaw recruit pitcher purchased by the New York Americans from Los Angeles, of the Pacific Coast League, is the tallest man playing ball today. Love stands 6 feet 7 1/2 inches in height, which gives him the edge on Carl Wilmann, Grover Lauderback and a few other giants. "Wild Bill" Donovan is trying to develop Love's drop ball, believing that he will be a marvel if he can perfect this delivery. Love has an excellent fast ball and with a fast-breaking drop would be invincible pitching from the raised mounds now in vogue in the major league parks.

Creehan Predicts De Oro Is Through as Billiard Star

John Creehan, the oldest billiard critic in the United States, declares that Alfredo De Oro is about through as a three-cushion billiard expert and will never regain his title. According to Creehan, the lead De Oro had over Ellis, starting the last night of the three-cushion match at Allinger's Academy, was equivalent to 300 points at the ball game, but that the new champion discovered that De Oro was not the De Oro of old, and gained confidence which enabled him to win out in a sensational finish. Creehan believes that in the future other players will have more confidence against the Cuban and will not be "beaten before the match starts," as has been the case.

Central High Clinches Scholastic Basketball Title

Central High School clinched the Interscholastic Basketball League title by smothering West Philadelphia High yesterday. There was little to the game, as the Crimson and Gold completely outclassed the West Philadelphians. Had it not been for the great work of Mearkle, West Philly's star forward, the score would have been doubled. Mearkle threw 21 foul goals out of 24 tries, which is one of the best records made in any league in several years, and starred in other departments.

A Pittsburgh scribe is indignant because a New Yorker insinuated that Bill Hinchman, the Philadelphia player who starred in the outfield for the Pirates last season, was no longer a "spring chicken." The Pittsburgher declares that Bill has passed the 30th milestone yet. Those who have known Bill from childhood merely grin. We will not venture a guess at Bill's exact age, but he was a mighty big boy 15 years ago. After all, what does it matter as long as Bill can play as well as he did in 1915?

When tennis fans gather to discuss the dope and talk shifts to players who are exponents of back-hand play, Teddy Pell's back hand is always used as a basis for comparison. As a matter of fact, one of the city's best players, Alec Thayer, has a back hand that is every bit as good as Pell's, and some think it is better. Like Pell, Thayer is weak in fore-hand strokes.

The match played between Thayer and E. C. Hall, of Moorestown, in the second round of the indoor championship at the 1st Regiment Armory last night, was a mixture of good and bad tennis. Both players ascended to great heights and fell to correspondingly low depths. The first set, which went to 30 games, was the longest ever played in a local tournament and equaled in length the famous first set of the match between McLoughlin and Brooks for the Davis Cup two years ago.

It is generally agreed that the men's singles event will eventually resolve itself into a dual between Willis E. Davis, the California State champion, in the upper bracket, and the winner of the semifinal between W. T. Tilden, 2d, and Wallace F. Johnson in the lower half of the draw.

EVER TAKE A SERVANT HOME ON THE TRAIN? YOU HAVEN'T MISSED MUCH

