

RAIN HAS KEPT A LOT OF BALL PLAYERS AWAY FROM SHIBE PARK, BUT IT BROUGHT OUT BURRUS

BURRUS WOULD BE WITH JACK COOMBS NOW, BUT IT RAINED

Shower During Spring Training Prevented Phils' Boss From Giving A. and M. College Star Once Over at Charlotte—Makes Debut With A's Today

By ROBERT W. MAXWELL Sports Editor Evening Public Ledger Copyright, 1919, by Public Ledger Co.

MAURICE BURRUS, aged twenty-one, height 5 feet 11 inches and 185 pounds in weight, joins the Athletics today. This young person, who was discovered in the wilds of arid Columbia, S. C., by Connie Mack, comes here with a big reputation manufactured in advance, and is supposed to take George Burns's place at first base. The athlete who does this will have to go some, but Maurice is expected to do that very thing.

Connie Mack says Burrus is a wonderful player and one of the most likely looking youngsters he ever has seen. He made a trip to Columbia and was impressed the instant he laid his eyes upon him. It required but a look and the youngster's fate was sealed. He just HAD to be brought a member of the A's and Connie refused to leave until the deal was completed.

Now comes one of the strange angles of the game of baseball. Few know that Burrus, instead of being with the Athletics and boosted to the skies before he sinks a spike in Shibe Park, almost became a member of the Phils, and the only thing which prevented it was a rainstorm. This sounds strange, but nevertheless it is true.

When the Phils were trying to train down in Charlotte this spring a practice game was arranged with A. and M. College, of Raleigh. Coombs was anxious to play a real ball game with anybody and the college boys were eagerly awaited. Some of the natives told Coombs of a wonderful pitcher named Burrus and asked him to see him on during the game.

"This lad Burrus is a leaver," said the Charlotte booster. "He is the best college twirler in the South, and may, he can hit that ball. Look him over and I'll bet you will sign him."

Jack promised to do this, but was not impressed. Boosts of that character are handed out twenty times a day in a training camp and they are old stuff. Coombs, however, who never lets anything slip by, told all of his players to look over the kid currier and if he was any good he would give him a chance. And that was as close as the Phils came to getting this phenom.

It rained the next day, the game was called off and the A. and M. boys departed for another town to play a scheduled game.

NOT for the position best in this affair. Coombs knows a good ball player when he sees one, and if Connie was impressed the first time he saw Burrus, isn't it safe to assume that Coombs would have taken him just as he had? True, the kid was a pitcher then instead of a real leaver, but that will tell no matter how hard you try to hide it.

Burns Playing Better Ball

GEORGE BURNS is playing better baseball these days and appears to be emerging from the batting and fielding slump of the last month. His hits are flying off his bat more frequently. He was the sensation of the league last year, when he compiled a scintillating average of .352, which was 126 points better than his 1917 mark.

George is a peculiar hitter. Never does he perform brilliantly two years in a row, but has a bad year after every good one. He started with Detroit in 1914 and hit for .291. That was very good in those days and much was expected of him the next year. In 1915, however, he dropped to .253 and came back with .283 the following season. The big slump came in 1917 and Hughey Jennings, after looking at his final average of .226, decided to turn him loose. In this manner he became a member of the A's and hit for .352 his first year.

He has been going bad this year, but he is a great hitter just the same. Burns stands out as a slugger, has made a reputation and you can't take it away from him. The other day George paid a great compliment to Ty Cobb, and said he would every bit of what little success he had to the Georgian.

"When I first broke into the league," said Burns, "we were training in Gulfport, Miss. I was just an ambitious kid and worked my head off every day. I was a fair hitter, but my form was terrible. One day Cobb told me my position at the plate was wrong and suggested that I change it. After that he paid close attention to my work, told me how to swing and other little details which go with successful hitting. Then I watched him closely while he was at bat and I began to improve."

"Ty Cobb is one of the greatest men in baseball and always is willing to lend a helping hand. Some say he is a crab and has a swollen head, but don't you believe it. Ty is one of the grandest fellows on earth."

SNOKES TOWN, the young infielder purchased from Detroit by Connie Mack, also is a Cobb booster. David says Ty taught him how to run the bases, improve his throwing and always was ready to advise him.

Babe Ruth Hitting Consistently

TYRUS THE GREAT maintains his lead among the American League hitters with an average of .358. He also has soaked the largest number of hits and still is going strong. It will be hard to dethrone the King of Swat. An interesting feature in the weekly averages is the work of Babe Ruth in the last week. Tarzan is hitting consistently at last and has busted into the 300 class with a mark of .519. This is a gain of thirty-five points in a week.

This season Babe decided to become a home-run hitter. Every time he stepped up to the plate he tried to knock the ball out of the city, and as a result was an easy mark for the pitchers, who used change of pace. He used to reach out for wild curves or hit the ball near his knuckles and went hitless game after game. Now he is willing to hit a few singles and his average has profited greatly thereby. It will be remembered that Cobb seldom makes a home run. Most of his hits are one-basers.

As usual, the A's made a sorry showing in the column, there being only two 300 hitters—Roth and Wirt. The others are lost in the shuffle near the bottom. Tilly Walker, however, has boosted his mark twenty-four points and Joe Dugan has an increase of twenty-two. However, with Burns hitting .222, Perkins .206, Thomas .164 and McAvoy .146, we can't expect to win many ball games.

THE pitchers are not setting the world on fire, but establishing records that the game. Tom Runers has the best losing streak in the league with eight straight. It will be hard to beat that mark.

Gavy Real Hero of National

THE real hero in the National League is Gavy Cravath, with his batting average of above .400. This is a wonderful piece of work, especially when one realizes he is playing on a losing team where the players are discouraged and don't care a hang if school keeps or not. The old boy is there with the goods, is playing a great game every day, steps up to the plate and whangs 'em out as if he were on a championship club and never quits. That's Gavy all over—he is no quitter.

He is doing more for the ball club than any other man, is the principal gate attraction and one of the most popular players in the league. At the age of thirty-seven he is outstripping all of the youngsters and shows no signs of cracking. If he can hit above .400 when the club is losing, what will he do when it starts winning?

The Phils' still are a mystery. They are the third best hitting club in the league, second in the greatest number of hits and third in the runs scored. Yet they are losing consistently and many are wondering what is the matter.

Bill Phelon, the Cincinnati expert, takes his pen in hand and dashes off the following:

"Slowly but surely Jack Coombs's unfortunate team seems to be dropping into the cellar. There's a lot of uneven work—a lot of sickness. The makeshift infield doesn't combine right and the runners are having fun with the outfield. Williams never could throw for sour apples and Meusel's arm is so lame he can hardly get the ball up to the infield. Much diversion results and much damage to the Phils' percentage."

"The pitchers, too, are going wild and the batsmen take full advantage of their follies. It's a bad-looking ball club."

THERE'S the dope from a disinterested outsider. But after losing thirteen in a row we can expect anything, and all we can hope for is a big improvement when the club gets home on Monday.

IT'S A HARD, HARD LIFE

A 6x6 grid of cartoon illustrations of a man's face with various expressions, each with a number and a humorous caption. Captions include '1st HOLE - GOOD START', '2ND - ON MY GAME', '3RD - I'LL MAKE IT UP', '4TH - NEVER MIND', '5TH - UH-HAD I SAY?', '6TH - OH, BABY!', '7TH - OH-WELL', '8TH - OUCH! TWO SEVENS', '9TH - WHAT THUM?', '10TH - I'LL COME BACK', '11TH - IT'S A GOOD FIVE', '12TH - A FIVE IS GOOD', '13TH - HAGEN COULDN'T DO BETTER', '14TH - THAT'S PAR', '15TH - I MISSED A PUTT', '16TH - OH AM I THERE?', '17TH - I HAD BAD LUCK', '18TH - OW-OO!!'. The number 12 is written in a large, decorative font.

PHILS FALTER, BUT CRAVATH RETAINS LEAD; COBB STILL HOLDS TOP IN AMERICAN HITTING

Gavy Only Major Leaguer Over Four Hundred Mark With His .418 Rating

CUBS TRAIL AT BAT

Table showing batting averages for Gavy Cravath and Ty Cobb. Cravath is listed with a .418 average and Cobb with a .358 average.

HEADS NATIONAL HURLERS In the national race, Jess Barnes is topping the twirlers with nine victories and three defeats.

ONLY two Phils now linger above the 300 mark—Gavy Cravath and Cy Williams. The continued losing on the part of the Phils has failed to take the heart out of all Curtus Cravath, who lost thirteen points during the week, but still finds his .418 good enough to show the way in the National League drive.

The averages, including the games played Wednesday, follow:

Table of batting averages for various players in the National League, including Gavy Cravath (.418), Ty Cobb (.358), and others.

Club Batting Averages in National League

Table showing club batting averages for various teams in the National League.

Barnes, of Giants, Leads Pitchers in National in Games Won With Nine

Table showing pitching statistics for various pitchers in the National League, including Jess Barnes and Eddie Cicotte.

Cicotte's Twelve Wins Still Keep Veteran White Sox Pitcher in Lead

Table showing pitching statistics for various pitchers in the American League, including Eddie Cicotte and others.

AMATEUR BASEBALL NOTES

Notes on amateur baseball events, including mentions of the Oak Leaf A. A., Divisional Club, and other teams.

Georgian Continues to Set Pace With .358; Leads in Number of Safeties

JOE JACKSON SLUMPS

Table showing batting averages for various players in the American League, including Joe Jackson and Eddie Cicotte.

TY COBB, with his sixty-three safeties, has pounded out more hits this season than any other major leaguer. His rating of .358 is enough to allow him to set the pace in the American League.

The averages, including the games played Wednesday, follow:

Table of batting averages for various players in the American League, including Ty Cobb and others.

Club Batting Averages in American League

Table showing club batting averages for various teams in the American League.

PRESENT YEAR IS REAL GOLDEN AGE FOR SHORTSTOPS

Old Days Had Three Star Shortfielders in Long, Wagner and Jennings, but Spotlight of 1919 Is Turned on Great Number

IN THE SPOTLIGHT—BY GRANTLAND RICE Copyright, 1919. All rights reserved.

SONGS OF THE GAME

No. 2—"You're Pitching to the Wrong Home Plate"

Young Mickey Jones, a big league star, was calling on some dame; Young Mickey had a lot of speed, no matter what the game; So after winding up a bit to let his stuff get by; He hooked a fast one round her neck—the other was waist high; Whereat the lady having ducked quite safely out of way; Turned her 300 eyes on him and bitterly did say—

Chorus "Take away that hop from off your fast one, kid, Settle down a trifle in your role; You'd a little too much stuff upon that last one, kid, Show me a little more control; What with the landlord and the grocer in the game, I have decided to wait; Oh, you're got all the speed that a winner ought to need, But you're pitching to the wrong home plate."

So Mickey Jones got up and left before her burning scoff; Said he, "I'll show this woman up or pitch an elbow off"; He won his next eleven games—and expects all ahead off; That he had Alexander stopped and Walter Johnson freed; And when the lady saw his name in headlines every day; She crept to think she unto him those bitter words did say—

Chorus "Take away that hop from off your fast one, kid," etc.

The Shortstop Harvest

THE old days had their great shortstops—three of the greatest in Long, Wagner and Jennings. But it is a matter of excessive doubt if any period in baseball history ever knew as many shortstop stars as the present epoch knows. The year 1919 might well be called the Golden Age of Shortstops.

HOLLOCHER, Peckenpough, Maranville, Fletcher, Scott, Bancroft, Bush, Lavan, Chapman, Dugan—virtually all through the list. No other one position carries an equal proportion of stars.

Holding the Edge

IT IS no great feat to develop the keen edge of form if one goes about the job. But maintaining this keen edge is another affair. Jack Dempsey was reported to be around top form over ten days ago. He was reported ready over three weeks before the kick-off came. This means the keenest sort of training judgment will be required to have him on edge around July 4. A youngster of twenty-four doesn't need half the training period a middle-aged athlete around forty requires. Willard had a cluster of fat to work off and a number of kinks to iron out. Yet Dempsey was on the job at Toledo before Willard was.

Dempsey needs all the weight he can carry to face a man of Willard's displacement. He already had the keenness and the pep. One of the easiest things an entry can do is to reach top form too soon and find himself skidding by the day of the main event. For here is a mental statement that is fully as fatal as a physical stameness, although one generally brings on the other.

DEMSEY has nineteen first-round knockouts. There is a rumor out to the effect that he would just as soon make it twenty before the next fortnight has slipped by.

Limerick of the Links

A moody old duffer named Mandel, Remembered, as he blew out the candle, My terrible score, Might well have been lower, But my niblick got too hot to handle.

IT IS easy enough to say, "Keep your eye on the ball." But suppose the elusive orb refuses to stay where it's put? Then what?

WE THOUGHT when Connie Mack senttered his old machine in 1915 that he took a lease on the cellar. But we never knew he bought the place.

CONNIE'S case carries out an old story, however. When you get used to a place it's always hard to move.

"WHAT is meant by a short putt?" queries a reader. Offhand we should say any putt you miss.

SERGEANT JOE DALY, the dispatch rider extraordinary, writes us that among old ball players now with the Third Army along the Rhine are Bill Coughlin, Pete Noonan, Tommy Dowd and Jack Kerin. And it's a long look slide from the Rhine to home with June rolling by.

FEDERAL RESERVE WINS POLO PHILADELPHIA COUNTRY CLUB

Won Seven Straight Games in Bank and Trust League In the final game of the National Bank and Trust Company League, Girard National defeated Corn Exchange by 16 to 5. Federal Reserve won the championship.

BURRUS PLAYS TODAY SHIBE PARK TODAY, 3 P. M.

After hard week's work spend half holiday with us. Seats, 50c, 35c and 25c. Buy this A. M. at Gimbel's and Suddlers'. BURRUS PLAYS TODAY SHIBE PARK TODAY, 3 P. M. Athletics vs. Detroit

PT. BREEZE VELODROME

TONIGHT—8:30—TODAY 1 HOUR 30 MIN. P. M. Starters: Chapman, Drobach, Redell, Weber, Martin, Marx, G. H. H. THREE OTHER FAST BOTS

Advertisement for Flor de Manuel cigars. Text: 'Quality Alone Explains its Success'. 'FLOR DE MANUEL Super Quality'. '10c and up'. 'ALLEN R. GRESSMAN'S SONS PHILADELPHIA'.