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# THE WONDERFUL CAREER OF PITCHER CHRISTY MATHEWSON



Pitcher Christy Mathewson has had an interesting career. Some years ago Cincinnati reached out languidly, gathered him in, delayed a try-out and finally traded him to New York for a second-hand belt, or something of that sort. The rangey novice was sent into two games in the fall of 1900 and came out plastered with defeat each time. He managed to hold over, however, and in the spring of 1901 handed the annual opener to Yale by a slump in the ninth inning. Then the curtain rose on the regular league season and, without warning, a great transformation scene was sprung upon the public. The crude proposition heeled the slab and walloped the big clubs, one after the other. The heaviest sluggers were like infants in his hands. He had the speed of a Rustle, the control of a Young, the endurance of a Nichols and curves that were beyond any other pitcher. His decisive victories, his perfect style and the romance of his career fastened the attention of the entire sporting world on New York's representative in the old National league.

That ancient body was facing, perhaps, what threatened to be the gloomiest season in its history, but the exploits of the handsome college boy lightened the sky for the time being and put an end to all worry concerning the loyalty of the "fans" of the metropolis.

It will be recalled that New York finished in seventh place in 1901, after a grand start. The following season was still more dismal, the luckless Giants bringing up in the extreme rear without a struggle. Mathewson held up his end, but internal affairs were so rotten that real endeavor found no reward. With things at their worst McGraw and Brush came to the rescue. The air was disinfected; the dead wood replaced with sound timber. In 1903 the New Yorks jumped seven notches into second place and Mathewson began his climb to the highest pinnacle of pitching fame. He had, to begin with, that serenity of temperament which is so often characteristic of the trained mind.

It occurred to him early that he was not making the most of his im-

mense resources. He gave an ear to the astute McGraw and the wily McGinnity. He learned one thing and invented something else. The value of restraint, as our actor friends would say, was duly recognized and his repertoire was enriched to that extent. During the campaign of 1904 McGinnity was the nominal leader, but none knew better than the "Iron Man" himself that a far greater force than he was gradually and surely lifting the New York club to the proudest station in the domain of professional sport. So much has been written about the world's series of 1905 that further reference simply amounts to a waste of ink. Every one concedes, therefore, that Mathewson, in that desperate clash, hung up a mark for the pitchers of the future to shy at. Indeed, so unique was his triumph that the grizzled spokesman of the opposition was stirred into uncoiling the most flattering and comprehensive tribute ever paid by a writer to a player. Strange to say, the two seasons that followed revealed the tremendous scene of Mathewson's powers. It was a term of convalescence for him. Thin, drawn, fleshless, he was covering the tedious route that leads from anti-toxin to normal health. And yet, so profound was his knowledge of the science of pitching, so accurate his enfeebled arm that he managed to lead the Giants' twirling staff, as usual and stand well up in the general list, each year.

Last year found Mathewson once more sound and ready. It was one of the best years of his amazing career; in fact, it was the very best, allowing that he was not backed by a standard team. Credit him with that fairly-earned win over the great Cubs, later declared a tie, and he again topped the pitchers of America. He averaged less than a single base on balls per game. His total of strikeouts far exceeded that of any other pitcher in either league. And it may be added that some of his most brilliant performances are recorded in the lost column, chiefly because the long arm of fate guided a number of his opponents' puny splashes into safe territory at critical moments.

## WOULD PAY \$25,000 FOR TWO OF THE CUB PLAYERS

President Ebbetts of Brooklyn Offers Small Fortune for Shortstop and Center Fielder.

President Ebbetts of the Brooklyn club says he would like to buy two stars from the world's champion Chicago Cubs and would gladly pay \$25,000 for them or, if necessary, would give President Murphy a blank check and permit him to name his own figures. The Brooklyn magnate declined to come out flatly and name the two Cubs he wants, but did say that a shortstop and a center fielder were the positions on his team which he wished most to fill. This would mean Joe Tinker and Artie Hoffman.

"Give me a pitcher, a catcher, a shortstop and a center fielder, all of stellar caliber, and I will quickly build up a championship ball club," said Mr. Ebbetts the other day. "Those four positions are, in my opinion, the pivotal ones of a ball club. All the others may be considered of secondary importance. I have now on the Brooklyn team half of the requisites. Considered in this light with my star pitchers and a grand catcher in Billy Bergen, I have now to fill in the gap

at short and put in a center fielder who can roam about in the suburbs and help out the other two fielders, and the Brooklyn club would quickly become a contender in the league pennant race.

"We are trying to build up a good team here, but it is the hardest kind of a proposition. To get gems out of the minors is next to impossible, and is always a lottery at best. Clubs having star men will not let them go to the weaker clubs, for they know their own teams would thereby be weakened. But, if we could fill those two positions, no price would be too great to ask us and we would gladly pay for the chance to get such men."

President Ebbetts also intimated that he would be glad to get Jimmy Sheppard back again if such a thing were possible, though he realized the hopelessness of making any proposition to the Chicago management.

"That deal by which Sheppard went to Chicago was a good one for both clubs concerned at the time it was made," said he, "but we could use Sheppard to good advantage now. There is no chance of getting good men without giving up some of the good ones we now possess and that we will not do under any circumstances."



Wheeling has released Abe Lezotte and suspended Dick Nobinger. Boston is planning a field day for major and minor league ball players. Kansas City has released Hugo Mill, at one time a Cleveland player, to Mobile.

Ray Demmitt is doing some hitting for the Highlanders since he took Keeler's place in right field.

President John I. Taylor has closed terms with Pitcher Ray W. Collins, a University of Vermont pitcher, and he will join the Boston team soon.

Kid Gleason has succeeded Eugene McCann as manager of the Jersey City club of the Eastern league. Gleason was with Jersey City for a short time in 1907.

The archaic Jake Beckley is batting .390 in the American association and is a better first baseman now than some to be found in the big leagues.

Hicks of Harvard is hiding his light under a bushel on a college nine. Two no-hit games in one season is likely to make him a target for the eyes of professional managers.

Aside from their batting ability, Wagner and Cobb surpass all their rivals in stolen bases. Wagner has 16 to his credit in 40 games, while Cobb has purloined 24 in 29 battles.

Pitcher Chappelle, who was purchased from the Boston Nationals ten days ago by the Reds, was sold to the Rochester Eastern leaguers. Chappelle is the man Joe Kelley had such trouble in landing while he was in the Southern league last year.

## Queer Baseball Play.

One of the queerest baseball happenings of the season took place in a recent Baltimore-Newark game. Hearne, playing first, was credited with an error in the ninth, when he caught the ball. This is the story: Meyers slammed one into the infield and was off with the speed of a greyhound. The throw was perfect, but at the very instant that Meyers touched the bag the ball bounced out of Hearne's mitt and then dropped back again. Umpire Kelly was right in his decision, and not a murmur of protest was heard.

## VETERAN CLEVELAND PITCHER



Addie Joss, the Cleveland twirler, is rated as one of the stars of the American league. He has pitched winning ball for his team for a number of seasons and the close of each year finds his name near the top of the list of leading twirlers.

## St. Paul Allows Sunday Ball.

President Lennon of the St. Paul team of the American Association has announced that Sunday baseball games will be resumed when the team returns from its present tour. Arrangements for the use of the Lexington park grounds, used for Sunday games last year, have been completed. Mr. Lennon has directed his attorney to discontinue the suit to dissolve the injunction against playing baseball in the downtown park. The Lexington park grounds will be completely rebuilt.

# ONE OF THE TIGER SLUGGERS BACKSTOPS AND FIRST BASEMEN



THESE TWO POSITIONS DEVELOP FEWER STARS THAN ANY OTHERS ON DIAMOND.

## BEST CATCHERS OF THE DAY

It is now a recognized fact that star catchers in professional baseball, catchers of the same relative degree of skill as third basemen, shortstops and other positions of the diamond, are fewer proportionately than the stars of other positions. With the number of catchers who are developed—each club carrying two at the least—it doesn't seem that this ought to be so. No team carries two third basemen, two first basemen or two players for any other position except



Roger Bresnahan.

## THE FIRST SACKER'S JOB

BY HARRY DAVIS, Captain of Athletics.

The first baseman's job has steadily increased in difficulties in the course of the last ten years.

It used to be that the man who played the bag was picked first for his ability to hit the ball. That was the main consideration. He had to be a slugger, who could hit fourth in the batting order and chase the runs home with long drives. Then if he could catch a thrown ball he was decided to have the qualifications.

When a man could hit, but was too slow to play any other position, he was decided to be good material for first base. A decade ago used to see the position played by men so big that they never dared move very far away from the bag for fear they couldn't get back to it in time.

But the day for that kind of a first baseman has gone, and the boy who has ambitions to play the bag wants to learn how to be a modern first baseman, the scientific kind who handles bunts, who pays just as much attention to plays at other bases as the other fielders do to plays at first base.

## Bezdek to Manage Ball Team.

Encouraged by the success of Manager Vandergriff, the former University of Illinois athlete, who has placed Helena at the top of the Arkansas league pennant race, Fort Smith has engaged Hugo Bezdek, former University of Chicago football star, to manage its tail-end team.

## BALL PLAYERS TALK OF HOLDING OWN MEETINGS

Plan to Get Their Side of Disputed Questions Before Magnates Still Being Quietly Discussed.

Many ball players in the American and National leagues are talking in a quiet way of an organization among themselves along new lines. It is not proposed to oppose the club owners in any way, but to attempt to get the players' side of all disputed questions before the public by holding annual meetings, just as the magnates do, and perhaps at the same place and time.

Ball players declare—and present many arguments to back up their claim—that salaries, instead of being reduced, should be increased, inasmuch as the average career of a major league ball player is short, and that a salary of \$2,000 or even \$3,000 a year for five, six or seven seasons is not to be compared with salaries of from \$1,000 to \$2,500 extending over a long period.

In support of this declaration, the players point to the history of the American league. Of the 160 and more players who took part in the games played by that league in 1906—the first year of its existence—only eight are left. Hartsel, then with Indianapolis; Hemphill and Shafer, then with Kansas City; Elberfeld, then with Detroit; Waddell and Conroy, then with Milwaukee, and Isbell and O'Leary, then with the White Sox, are still in the American league.

pitcher. Yet catchers of the really first rank have been and are the hardest to find.

The requirements of the position doubtless have something to do with it. Of good mechanical catchers there is no lack, but in those matters of generalship, head work—whatever the subtle something is that the catcher must have in addition to the good arm and the watchful eye for base runners—the national game is none too well provided in its backstops. We all know what an asset such a catcher is to a team with his knowledge of batters, his ability to direct his pitcher, his ability to oversee the defensive play and adjust it to suit the attack—points of play which are all important, though quietly done and not in the limelight.

Naming the crack catchers is a brief task. There was only one Ewing. He was conceded to be the best that went behind the bat. Bennett, Bushong, Tom Daly and Flint were good, but no Ewing. Johnny Kling, Lou Criger, Roger Bresnahan and Billy Sullivan are almost unanimously ranked as the best of the catchers of the present and in a class which is at least a shade superior to the rest. Mike Kelly, Wilbert Robinson, Malachi Kittredge and Martin Bergen were catchers of the past whose work rated them head and shoulders above their rivals, and in this list might be mentioned Duke Farrell, Gibson, Jay Clarke, Street and William Bergen, catchers now doing duty who are better than the average.

The best first sacker in the country to-day is Hal Chase. By some he is considered the best that ever played the bag. It is true that his ability as a base runner, as an inside player, his speed and quick grasp of points add to his reputation; but as a first baseman pure and simple he also excels. He doesn't make any less errors than his contemporaries—he may make more—but a majority of these are due to his superior agility and making the play before his companions are ready for it. His style too, adds to his reputation; he has magnetism on the field. Perhaps were he a bit more of a plodder, had a bit more stability, so to speak, he might be still better.