

# THE SPORTING WORLD

## Star Catcher Star Pitching

By W. S. FARNSWORTH.

New York, N. Y., August 12.—"Mr. Dreyfus, if you can possibly arrange it, I would like to have by battery mate, James Kelly, bought by the Pittsburgh Club."

This plaintive message was received by the liberal president of the Pittsburgh Pirates soon after he had paid the record sum of \$22,500 to the St. Paul (American Association) club for the release of Martin O'Toole, the flame-haired pitcher for whom a half dozen major league clubs entered into a spirited bidding match after Roger Bresnahan offered \$18,500 for O'Toole and Kelly. The plea came from O'Toole himself. It was speedily granted.

All of which once more recalls the question or now much a catcher has to do with the success of a pitcher. The record show that in nearly every instance a star twirler has a star catcher as a battery mate. In some cases, however, it is found that a crack catcher has not been assisted by a pitcher of high rank. But these instances are few and far between. Again, there have been cases where a pitcher goes entirely to the bad when he is working without his star receiver. If such is the case it merely strengthens the theory that a good catcher has much to do with the making of a pitcher of high standing. Go down the line and ponder over the great batteries of the day. We find that a good pitcher and an equally good catcher invariably have been matched and this brings success to teams. The most notable pair in baseball history are Sy Young and Lou Griger. For years these two worked together as no two ever did before. While Young has outlived his former partner so far as the league usefulness is concerned, it is a fact that "old Cy" has his best years while Griger was on the receiving end. Just as soon as Griger was sold by the Red Sox to the Yankees, Young began to lose some of his vaunted effectiveness. Though still winning pitcher, without Griger catching him, Young's work was not up to the standard.

Another combination that has lasted years and years, and still is as good as ever, is that of Edward Walsh and Billy Sullivan. While Walsh would be a winning pitcher with even the very best catcher, the fact remains that Sullivan has had a large share of Walsh's success.

Walter Johnson and Charley (Gabby) Street form another formidable team. Johnson is rated as the speediest hurler in the big league and with Street on the other end Johnson would be at a loss with his terrific speed. The Coffeyville speed merchant is fearful of letting loose with any other catcher but Street working with him, and as a result Street possesses as fine a pair of mangled fins as any man in baseball company.

It is doubtful if "Babe" Adams could have attained the success he has been granted with if George Gibson had not been on the other end of the delivery in the world's series against the Detroit Tigers. Adams was practically an inexperienced youngster and hardly knew the weaknesses of the opposing batters. Gibson makes a study of every player that steps up to the bat. It was merely a case of Adams putting the ball where Gibson directed him to put it.

Christy Mathewson and Roger Bresnahan basked in glory for many seasons. This crack battery had much

to do with the Giants winning a couple of National League championships and a world's championship. Since Bresnahan was shifted to St. Louis, the Giants have been unable to get a catcher of Roger's ability. Bresnahan was there with the headwork and with Mathewson's cunning it was an easy thing for Matty to win a majority of his games.

For several years Mordcai Brown and Johnny Kling worked together and three championships were the result.

There are any number of combinations where there are stars at both ends of the receiving department. Each year furnishes new stars in both positions. Whenever a sensational pitcher breaks into major league company and maintains a record pass, it will always be found that a tried catcher is his mate. The shining example this year is Grover Cleveland Alexander, the wonder acquired by the Phillies. It took the master hand and crafty mind of Charley Dooin to place Alexander on the pedestal he now enjoys. Could Alexander have been half so successful if an untried receiver had been working with him? Dooin is acquainted with the failings of every player in the National League, while Alexander probably does not yet know the kind of a ball a certain player does not care for. Now that Dooin is out of the game it will be interesting to note how Alexander fares with Pat Moran catching him.

There must have been something more than mutual friendship that prompted O'Toole to ask Dreyfus to bring Kelly to the Pirates. It would be inadvisable to place this pair in a game together for they are not well versed with the weaknesses of the batters in the National circuit. It is prophetic that the American Association reputation with Kelly catching him, then we will be firmly convinced that a catcher has a great deal to do with the success of a pitcher.

### Not Satisfactory.

Far from the maddening crowd in the dining room, Bertha and Bertie stood together under the library palms. They had been engaged for nearly a fortnight, and the blissful flight of time had left them eager for the day.

"Is it too soon to think of it, Bertie?" she asked.

"No, never too soon!" replied Bertie, striking his head fervently against the mantelpiece.

She pressed her hand to her throbbing heart, while he pressed his to his aching temple.

"Then, dear," she murmured, "let it be three weeks from Thursday."

"Begin your pardon, miss but you'll have to make it earlier in the week," said a voice through the keyhole. "Thursday is my day hont!"—Answers.

### Expert Testimony.

Two men who swore off New Year's day for a year have not seen each other since that time. One tied to a city job, is under the guns because all of his friends were posted on the resolution. The other travels, and if his feet slip on the road nobody need be the wiser. The stationary party to the agreement received a letter from the traveling man and wrote in reply: "I removed the stamp from the envelope containing your letter and submitted it to a chemist, who reports that it reeks with whiskey."—Chicago Evening Post.



OSCAR STANGE IS BEST CATCHER

Oscar Stange, the great young catcher of the Detroit Tigers, is supplanting as regular backstop and two of the veteran pitchers that he has seen in the center. On the left is Charley Schmidt, who is rapidly giving way to Stange. On the right are George Mullin (above) and Wild Bill Donovan. These were the first successful twirlers in baseball and each has been called at different times the best pitcher in the American League. Donovan's pitching won two pennants for Jennings, while Mullin was the best pitcher in the American League for keeping the pitchers going right.

## Oscar Stange is Best Catcher in Amer. Asso.

(By MONTY.)

New York, Aug. 12.—There are catchers, but there seems to be no such thing as "the best catcher" at least not just at present. Rather there is one—of course there is a "best" but nobody can place his finger on him and say with truthful certainty: "There he is."

Almost daily we hear of somebody saying that such and such a man is the classiest thing in backstops. Such persons don't know what they're talking about. But they think they do and they have their reasons for thinking so; they spin a fabric of sophistry, which they call logic, dealing out the facts that exist and supplying from their own fertile imagination those that do not exist. The whole thing is a matter of opinion, the same as every comparison of this sort.

There is one fact, however, that impresses itself on every fan who is non-partisan in temperament. That is the supremacy of the National League in the receiving department. The senior organization boasts no less than seven catchers who are top-notchers in every sense of the word. Enumerate them: Johnny Kling, Roger Bresnahan, George Gibson, Chief Meyers, Larry McLean, Red Dooin, Jimmy Archer. In other words, every club in the league has a first calibre receiver excepting Brooklyn. The Dodgers have a man, who, strictly as a catcher, compares favorably with any, but as a batter or baserunner he is not worth his salt. That is Bill Borgan. Bill is a wonder behind the plate, but Heaven help the team that has to send him to the bat in a pinch. The other seven mentioned are the exact antithesis of Bergen in this respect, as their batting averages attest. And they are all past masters at handling the big mitt. Combining the versatile ability, each individual one of them is the equal of any catcher in the rival organization.

As against this array, the American League offers Charley Street, Ira Thomas, Ed Sweeney, Ted Easterly, Jimmy Stevens, Billy Sullivan, Bill Carrigan, Oscar Stange. All good men; otherwise they wouldn't be big leaguers. But, where do you find a star in the whole bunch? Home team partisans will pick out Street, Thomas or Sweeney and the man will be lauded as the greatest in the business. If the fan will carefully analyze his men, and weigh him part by part with the cracks of the National League he will realize that there is hardly a team in the Lynch organization that cannot forward a better man. During the last few weeks I have asked every club manager—National and American—for his opinion as to the truth of that broad assertion. Without exception the American league moguls refused to discuss the matter, saying there was no way of deciding it. Several National League leaders were willing to talk lucidly on the subject. They declared their association far superior to the rival in the catching department.

The tacturnity of the American Leagues on the general subject serves as a verdict that is as near to final as could be desired.

"Promising" catchers is a different matter. In this line the American League has a little the better of the pair will surely become a world-



JEM BRISCOLL

Jem Briscoll, the shifty little Britisher, once acclaimed by fight fans in this country, who is to meet Owen Moran for the lightweight supremacy of England. Of course it is hard to see how two beaten men such as these can fight for a "championship" especially since Freddie Welsh and Matt Wells, both Britons, are still in the hunt, but nevertheless it is being billed as such by the London promoting syndicate which has offered a purse of \$20,000 and a "prize belt" valued at \$1,500. The date of the mix-up has not yet been named.

argument. With two youngsters like Stange and Easterly showing the form they are, there is good ground for the pronostication that one of

## Boxing Booster In New York Now

(By W. W. NAUGHTON.)

San Francisco, Aug. 12.—That the coming revival of boxing in New York means a wondrous boost for the sport of the gloves is something that must be manifest to everybody interested in Queensbury pastimes. The big city by the Atlantic will soon become the hub of the pugilistic universe; for ring men in quest of fame and fortune, all roads will lead to New York.

Before the turmoil of matchmaking begins, it might be as well for the Easterners to formulate rules and regulations for the guidance of the men who don the gloves. At present many matters connected with pugilism are in a state of confusion and now is the time to set things right.

In regard to the weights, there is very little unanimity of opinion. It might almost be said there are no weight classes. The limits have fused and run into one another and it is hard to tell where a lightweight ends and where a middleweight begins. Billy Paak, fresh from London, says he is the middleweight champion, and that he will defend the title at 160 pounds "six hours before." This means that the middle weights of the future will be heavyweights. Certain sporting authorities in England have tried hard on various occasions to interest the managers and matchmakers in this country in a scheme for a universal weight classification. They failed for the reason probably that boxing was under a ban in many of the large cities on the Eastern states.

Now it is different. With New York at the head of affairs in the American boxing world and in view of the way the sport will hum in New York and other points, it is absolutely necessary that there should be an American weight classification. The boxing authorities of New York should go ahead and arrange a tabulation to suit themselves. The rest of the country, I am sure, will be ruled by what is done.

The writer, in the hope that his hint will be acted upon, has a suggestion or two to offer. One is that ringside weighing be abolished for all time and that a uniform weighing hour—say six hours before boxing—be fixed upon.

The reasons for a rule of this kind are obvious. For a subject that has been thrashed out again and again, it will suffice to say at this time that in most of the matches which call for ringside weighing, one of the men goes to the scratch devoid of strength. He weighed in at the ringside because his opponent, who was thrashed out again and again, insisted upon it. He took a chance and his bodily weakness is such that he could not make a decent showing. The result is a keen disappointment to the spectators. It would have been different no doubt if he could have had a few hours for rest and nourishment instead of having to step into the thick of the battle.

Another thing with the sport organized as it should be under the new order of things in New York—each and every boxer should be compelled to record his exact fighting weight when placing himself on the list of eligibles. It looks almost as if a boxer's register of the kind described should be a part of the office equipment of the new commission which has been appointed to see that the sport is properly conducted. With a record of that description handy to refer to, the commission could easily keep in touch with a glance whether the matches were made on a proper weight basis, and the tendency on the part of the promoters to arrange "ill assorted matches" could be checked.

Very often, if hard pressed for talent, a promoter will think up a card which on the surface promises exciting entertainment but which in reality is a menace to the sport. The result is a disappointment to

the public and very often a scandal.

I have one or two instances in mind. One was just a few years ago when the names of Frank Erne and Terry McGovern were words to conjure with. Erne was required to reach much below his normal fighting weight to meet Terry, and the affair took place at Madison Square Garden, New York. When Erne entered the ring he looked like a consumptive. He had dark rings around his eyes and his appearance was so pitiable that if there had been a boxing commission then the bout would probably have been called off before a blow had been struck. Poor Frank was too weak to even raise a glove and he went over in the third round. At his own weight he would have beaten McGovern decisively in all probability.

A few months later after McGovern and Joe Gans met in Chicago. It was another handicap match, Gans having contracted to make a weight which robbed him of all his fighting force. It could be seen from Gans' appearance that he did not have much fight in him and as the bout progressed it could be seen that he had no need of any. It was probably a case of "what's the use," but any how the affair was a swindle and McGovern won after Gans gave a clumsy initiation of a championship which he did not have. Years after, Gans told the story. These are simply some of the evils that arise from the making of handicap matches. With a uniform weighing and a register of fighting weights, handicap matches could easily be frowned down.

### How She Got Even.

Mrs. Brown, telephoning to a friend one morning, happened to say:

"I have such a bad sore throat I'm afraid I cannot go to that dinner party tomorrow night."

Just then something went wrong with the connection, and she heard a strange voice break in:

"Gargle your throat with cooking soda, and I think you will be able to go to your dinner."

"Who is this speaking?" asked Mrs. Brown, startled.

"Oh, that you will never know," answered the voice.

Mrs. Brown was greatly amused and decided to try the remedy. Her throat improved, and she went to the party. During dinner she chanced to overhear the gentleman opposite say to his neighbor:

"I had an amusing experience the other morning. I was telephoning and the wires became crossed. I suddenly heard a lady's voice say: 'I have such a bad throat, I can't be able to go to that dinner party.' Just for fun I broke in and said: 'Gargle your throat with cooking soda, and you'll be all right.' The lady's voice in reply sounded rather surprised. I wonder if she took my advice."

Mrs. Brown was greatly tempted to reveal her identity as the heroine of the episode, but she decided she could get more fun another way. She made careful inquiry of her hostess as to the gentleman's full name and address and next morning called him up. When he answered, she said: "I just wanted you to know that I took your advice, gargled my throat with cooking soda and was able to go to the dinner."

"Who—who is this speaking?" came an astonished voice from the other end of the wire.

"Oh, that you will never know," answered Mrs. Brown, laughing, and rang off.—Lippincott's.

Some marriages may be made in heaven, but most of them seem to be made by the girl's mother.

No woman is a peasantmist so long as she has a looking-glass.

Lots of golden opportunities won't stand the acid test.



MIKE DONLIN

Mike Donlin, the once leading batter of the National League who is looked upon as a future manager of the Boston Nationals. The sale of Donlin to the Rustlers by McGraw of the Giants is declared by those close to the "Little Napoleon" to have been made with the intention of strengthening the Beantown crew, so that they could put a few crimps in the pennant aspirants of the Giants' rivals.

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HARRY DAVIS

A new action photograph of Harry Davis, field captain of the Philadelphia Athletics, who has been displaced as first baseman by the rising young Jack McInnes, and is now reported to be slated for an American League managership, believed to be either St. Louis, Cleveland or Washington.