

WALTER JOHNSON IS TAMPA LION

Most Admired Ball Player in Tampa Generally Honor Guest at Any Function in Which Athlete Can Shine.

By JOHN B. FOSTER
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Tampa, Florida, March 26.—Walter Johnson, that superb old pitcher of the Washingtons — and he is not called old on account of his age, but with that endearment that goes among old fellows when they meet as friends — is the most admired ball player of the fans in this part of the world.

This player, who is to the pitchers what Napoleon LaJole was to the infielders, the star without a pennant, is the guest of honor at Tampa whenever there is a function that admits of a speech by an athlete.

Johnson has been coming here for many years to make the first advances toward unshackling his arm for a winning season, and while there have been plenty of seasons for him personally, Washington has yet to gain the pennant that Johnson ought to have to crown his career.

Johnson starts off this season as methodically as he has started those other seasons that are now history. He is as hopeful as ever and as patient as ever with his arm. Of course there is nobody who knows, not even Johnson, whether that arm which has been the marvel of the baseball world year after year will prove as effective as it was in 1923. Yet it is fair to predict that opposing batsmen had better be careful how they try to take liberties with it. The man who has struck out over 3,000 batters is still an athlete. There must be a tremendous reserve strength within him. How liberally he has drawn upon it! And yet it responds generously when that big arm swings from his shoulder down his side, and another batter falls prey to the man who never quits.

Were there two Johnson's on the Washington team, it might win a championship by sheer force of pitching, provided the team were a wee bit over the average in other respects. That's a strong claim to make and yet one entirely within reason, because the success of a pitcher is not to be gauged alone by the number of victories he wins, as the victories would have been increased in number had he been playing with a better team.

Johnson paid a great tribute to Ruel when he declared that young man to have hailed him as successfully as any other catcher who has been enlisted with the Washington Club. Some how, it seems to have been overlooked that Ruel was the busiest catcher in the American League last year, but when Johnson spoke of him so warmly, his record was unearched. It showed that Ruel had 528 putouts in 1923, a record for the league. He had 146 assists, which is another league record. He played in 133 games, being second in that column. And Johnson is not the only member of the Washingtons who has praise for Ruel. Most of the Senators believe they have the league's coming catcher in Ruel. Griffin scored well in the deal that got him. Pleinich, who went to Boston in exchange for him, did not do so well.

The question now arises, how much can Ruel do to improve the Washington Club? The better the catcher, the more confidence the pitchers have in him, and confidence is as important to a pitcher as a tall is to a kite. Therefore, Ruel, with the confidence he built up last season ought to be a decided help to his club.

As for pitchers, Griff has a lot of them who have done so well in the minors that it seems impossible to send any of them away without giving a round or two in fast company. It may be that the experiment will not unearth any more Johnson's but Griff can gain nothing unless he makes it.

The Washington team puzzles you. It was fifth in fielding last year, yet it had more assists than any team in the circuit, and was second in putouts, with one more than New York. Putouts, of course, are secondary plays, except when they are fly catches or touchouts on fielded grounders.

The Senators could get on top of the ball often enough—more often than most of their rivals—yet they couldn't play their chances with the sureness of the Yanks. They had 216 errors to New York's 144. Somehow that seems to be one of the reasons why the Yanks are champions. They put their chances away, while Washington kicked its chances away, that is too many of them.

Yet it cannot be denied that Washington is a team with hands like hams, because it gets more whacks at the ball than its rivals. Griff says they will field better this year. If they do, and continue to handle as much on the field, may be they will be the dark horse to feed in the Yankee out bin.

Miss Minnie Hussey who has been visiting Miss Evelyn Jones left Monday for Hartford where she will visit her brother, Dr. F. L. Hussey.

FOR THE GAME'S SAKE

BY LAWRENCE PERRY
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New York, March 26.—Chancellor Charles W. Flint of Syracuse University, who has been in New York the past few days, is not greatly worried by the present athletic trend in our universities. Adequate control, he believes, is all that is necessary to keep varsity sports in their proper place with respect to the essential work of an educational institution. The chancellor spoke with special reference to the recent outgiving of the Carnegie Foundation on the subject of intercollegiate athletics. He will make some more extended reference to this in his annual report but in the meantime a few of his reactions are as interesting as they are timely.

"The paid coach," said the chancellor, "has no enmity from me. He must, of course be the right sort of coach, a qualified instructor and a wholesome influence. Being such I prefer him to the amateur coach who serves without pay if only because the paid coach can be controlled and the amateur coach cannot."

BASEBALL QUESTION BOX

If you have some question to ask about baseball—

If you want a rule interpreted—

If you want to know anything about a play or player—

Write to John B. Foster, the man who helped make the rules under which the game is played today. If you want a personal reply enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise your question will be answered in this column.

Address: John B. Foster, special baseball correspondent of The Daily Advance, 811 World Building, New York.

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Question — Runner on first and second. Catcher tries to get the runner at first napping. He throws the ball to the first baseman and the latter trying to tag the runner runs his arm under the runner's foot lifting it from the base. One umpire called it out and one safe. What was it.

Answer — Umpire was justified in calling the runner safe if he was satisfied the fielder interfered with him and the decision should have

not.

"Big stadiums when built to meet a demand and thus financially feasible, are not objectionable. Rather the contrary, I believe. Alumni bodies increase year by year and hence the necessity for greater seating capacity grows normally.

"A graduate or a student can do a lot of worse things than spend an afternoon in a football or baseball stand exercising his lungs. In fact I approve of this. It makes for collegiate solidarity and spreads the wind and sunlight of outdoors throughout an institution.

"The ideal varsity athlete, that is to say the athlete of whom I most heartily approve, is the man who can transfer his enthusiasm, his powers of concentration and his tenacity of purpose from the athletic field to the class room. Athletes can do that; they are doing it right now in Syracuse. Publicity of athletes? This does no harm to the right sort of boy and the wrong sort is hurt by almost anything."

been made by the Field Umpire.

Question — Runner is on his way to third after a ball has been hit to the outfield and the outfielder in trying to throw to third to get him hits the runner with the ball. The umpire calls the runner out for interference although the runner had his back to the play. Was the umpire right?

Answer — No. It is evident that a runner does not interfere with a play of this kind that he cannot see.

Question — Runner on first. Batter hits to shortstop. The latter throws to second but the second baseman is not on the base. Second baseman figures that if he goes to the base he will be too late to get the batter and throws to first. Runner remains on first all of the time. First baseman touches the base and then the runner. Umpire will not give a double play. Was he right?

Answer — Yes. When the first baseman touched the base the batter was out and the runner at liberty to hold the base. Had he caught the

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ball and first touched the runner and then the base it would have been a double play.

Question — Runner steals second base. Catcher throws the ball to second base and there is no one there to receive it. The runner goes on to third. Who gets the error?

Answer—Second baseman. He is supposed to guard the base even if it is true that some times the shortstop plays it. If the shortstop is willing to take the error give it to him.

Question — If a pitcher starts a game and is sent to the bench can he be sent back into the game?

Answer—Not without the permission of the opposing captain. Once on the bench a player is out of the game for good.

Question—Did Mathewson ever win a game in the world series pitching against Marquard of the Athletics?

Answer — No Marquard never pitched for the Athletics. He has always been a National League player.

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