

Sam Thompson Goes From Hammer To Bat

WAS AWKWARD AT THE PLATE

Disobeyed All Rules as to Why Batter Should Stand But Lost the Pill Just the Same.

By JOHN B. FOSTER
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A big, ungainly ball player was Sam Thompson, but what a batter, and what a player for the National League to possess. He played with Detroit and Philadelphia and twice in his career he batted better than 400. There are few players who have lived to do that sort of thing in base ball.

Sam Thompson's career began in a rather homely sort of fashion. The start was much like Sam's position at bat where he violated all the rules that are presumed to be set down for proper placing of the feet, and a proper stance, and stood any old way that he felt like standing.

Sam Thompson was putting a roof on a house out in Indiana where he lived. The town club was to play Detroit and one of the town players was unable to report. The head of the club pitched up his trotter and hurried to Thompson's home. They told the base ball man there that Sam was shingling a house in the neighborhood and to the house the manager went.

After a little negotiation he succeeded in getting Sam to play that afternoon for his team. It is said that the price was \$2.50 which corresponded to a day's wages, and Thompson thought he was driving a good bargain in getting a full day's pay for a half day's work because he also had his time on the shingling job.

Thompson was picked right off the roof as he stood and went over to the ball ground. Almost the first thing that he did was to knock the ball into hereafter and he continued to keep knocking. He was the "knockinest knocker" that the visiting club had ever seen and there it was that fate changed the cut for Sam Thompson. He bade farewell to the hammer and the shingle nail to take up the bat and make himself famous all over the eastern part of the United States as one of the great sluggers of the big league.

Thompson's stance at the plate had every evidence that the batter was the laziest man alive. He hung so on one foot and leg that it almost seemed as if he were going to nod shortly, and forget that base ball was being played, but if the pitcher threw one where Sam Thompson wished to swing at the ball, his bat suddenly sprang into action like a rapier in play in a duel, and the ball, if it was hit on the center, where Sam aimed it should be, would almost surely pass out of the game.

SPORTS QUESTION BOX

If you have some question to ask about baseball, football, boxing or any other amateur or professional sport—

If you want a rule interpreted—

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

Write to John B. Foster, on Baseball; Lawrence Perry, on Amateur Sports, and Fair Play, on Boxing and other professional sports. All are special correspondents of The Advance, 814 World Building, New York.

If you want a personal reply enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise your question will be answered in this column.

Question—Runner on first base. One ball and one strike have been pitched to the next batter. Pitcher and catcher hold a conference. Batter steps away from the box and is standing about five feet out of it. Runner on first steals second and the field umpire sends him back on the ground that there could be no play even if the umpire-in-chief had not called time when the pitcher, catcher and batter were out of their positions.

Answer—The umpire was wrong. There is always a play unless time has been called. There is no such thing as an arbitrary suspension of the game because men are out of position.

Question—I am going to train a friend for a boxing bout. How shall I harden muscles in his stomach where he is soft?

Answer—Lie on back, hands stretched out back of head. Rise to sitting posture. Raise legs over head, supporting body with hands and make legs swiftly and vigorously in same motion as pedaling a bicycle.

Question—No one is out. First batter signals, next batter gets a hot grounder to first baseman. He fields the ball cleanly. First baseman throw the ball to the second baseman who hold it momentarily and in a quick attempt to make a double play drops the ball. Umpire calls both runners safe. Was he right?

Answer—A decision of this kind depends solely upon the personal judgment of the umpire. He must determine as to how long the ball has been held and whether it is a legal catch.

"Philly" team, which was the old manager's greatest ambition and never to be realized.

"HANS" WAGNER ALL ROUND MAN

Was One of National League's Ten Greatest Players and a Mighty Safe Slugger.

By JOHN B. FOSTER

"Hans" he was to face the fans of his day and "Hans" he will always be in baseball. He was one of the National League's greatest ten ball players, because he was one of the best batters the National League had in its history and because he was a splendid ball player in all capacities.

He was born in Mansfield, Pa., and resides there now, although it is Carnegie in these days. He is a Pennsylvania Dutchman and yet he is not. He does not belong to those sturdy farmers of German extraction who are scattered over the wonderful lands in the eastern part of the state. He never would have made a farmer. His natural inclination is to be a hunter. That may be why he is a good ball player. Almost all good ball players are hunters.

He was 20 years old when he came into prominence in baseball. That was when Ed. Barrow, then manager of the Paterson, N. J. club sold his services to Louisville because Harry Pulliam, who was at that time secretary of the Louisville club, paid \$100 more for him than Pittsburgh would pay. In time it made little difference because three years later Drefus bought the Pittsburgh club and took Wagner along with him from Louisville.

All told Wagner played 2785 league games in his time. In all time he probably played more than 3500. With the big leagues he compiled a batting average of .329 for 21 years play. That doesn't signify much to the person who hasn't know the inner mind of baseball statistics. In reality it means that in every third time that he went to the bat he made a base hit and a fraction more; that is, batted the ball where it could not be fielded so as to put him out. That is a fine achievement. There are very few men in sports in which a club or stick is used who can accomplish once in every third time that which they undertake to do.

He made his greatest reputation playing shortstop. He could play the outfield and began his career doing that. He could also play first base and he could pitch after a fashion. He was utterly without conceit and egotism, although a player of pride. He loved to fish and when he was east he would drift to the ocean on off days and try deep water fishing.

His skill in fielding was due to his huge hands and his ability to get into motion almost instantaneously, although a very large man physically. He stole bases with impunity on slow catcher because he started away from a base as if he were sliding on a greased tiring pan. He did not have to get to his toes. He simply cozed away on his feet.

In his last year in baseball, 1917, he played in 74 games. He had wished to cease playing before he did but was coaxed to stick. One afternoon things did not go to suit him and he went to the club house and packed his uniform. He was through and no amount of effort could prevail upon him to continue.

He was cast in a mold completely that of the shapely Anson, or

WAKE FOREST GRID SCHEDULE IS HEAVY

Wake Forest, Jan. 1.—Wake Forest College has nine games on its 1925 football schedule, according to the announcements of the athletic authorities here. The season is opened at home with the same team with which the season was opened in 1924, the University of North Carolina. The season closes with a game with the University of South Carolina at Columbia, South Carolina. The schedule, which is a comparatively heavy one, was given as follows:

- October 18—University of Florida at Tampa.
- October 25—Lynchburg at Danville, Virginia.
- November 1—Gulfport College at Wake Forest.
- November 11—Trinity College at Durham.
- November 15—Eaton College at Wake Forest.
- November 22—North Carolina State College at Raleigh.
- November 27—University of South Carolina at Columbia, South Carolina.

CARD OF THANKS

We wish to express our sincere heart-felt thanks to our many friends and neighbors for their sympathy and loving kindness to us during the illness and death of our dear husband and father, S. M. Brothers, Sr., and for the beautiful floral tributes, also automobiles placed at our service.

His Wife and Children

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HOUSE AND BUGHY FOR SALE
Apply Mrs. Maggie Bogan, 57 Pearl Street, City. dec 31/24p

TWO ADJOINING LOTS CORNER Cedar and Ash streets. Very desirable for home. Box 9, City. dec. 31-Jan. 5pd.

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J. W. STOKELY HAS WINE.

Miscellaneous

THE ONE WHO TOOK A PACK addressed to B. B. James, Buffalo City, N. C. from the trash pile on South Martin street Monday is asked to return it to the Express Office and receive reward. dec 31-Jan1 pd

NOTICE—AM NOT GOING OUT of business. Have two new brick buildings for rent in addition to the four I am using. Apply to W. J. Woodley, wholesale grocer and sales agent for King Flake Flour, Lehigh Cement, Wall Plaster and Finishing Lime. dec 31/24p.

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FOR ADVERTISING ON THIS page, telephone Miss Blount at The Advance office. Phone 357. tf

STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING
The annual meeting of the stockholders of the Savings Bank & Trust Company, will be held at its Banking House in Elizabeth City, N. C., Monday, January 12, 1925, between the hours of three and four p. m., for the purpose of electing directors and for the transaction of such other business as may be brought before said meeting.
H. G. KRAMER, Cashier, dec. 29, Jan. 1, & 10.

YOU SAY YOU CAN HEAR THE HOOTING OWL? I SAY HAPPY NEW YEAR!

GRANDDAD HONOLEY FIRED OFF HIS OLD MULLET AT MIDNIGHT WELCOMING IN THE NEW YEAR—UNFORTUNATELY SOME BLOWERS WERE IN A DIRECT LINE WITH THE MULLET.