

James Collins—Third Baseman Without Equal

HE HAD SPEED AND ACCURACY

Could Run to Home Plate and Shoot the Ball to First in Time—Retire the Batter.

By JOHN B. FOSTER
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The baseball season of 1924 will be the first in the history of the National League. In commemoration of this anniversary, which will be fittingly celebrated during the coming season by the present hosts of baseball, John B. Foster, former newspaper editor on the staff, is writing a remarkable series of articles about the National League. These articles will deal with the history of the league and its founders and how they happened to organize it, the first teams of the league; the 15 greatest players of the league; the five leading pitchers; its six most famous managers; the greatest games; its early championships and the development of the rules.

"Jimmy" Collins belongs among the National League's fifteen most famous ball players because there never was a third baseman developed in the National League in all its fifty years of history who was such a polished player as he was.

The National League has brought out most of the great third basemen of all time. Beginning back with the days when "Old Deacon" White played third base with his bare hands and stopped ground hits that some ball players gladly would have side stepped, going on to the time of Ed. Williamson, who played third base some of the time, and to Jerry Denny, Arthur Devlin, and some others, the National League always has had a star on the third base corner.

None of them could quite equal Collins. Some times old timers think Denny was as good, because Denny could play third base with his right hand, as well as most players could play the base with both right and left. Others think Devlin was the great man, because Devlin, for two years, was making plays at third base that raised him above all other third basemen. Bobby Wallace is recalled when he played third before he went over to shortstop but not one of them could do it as easily as Jimmy played.

Collins was one of the third basemen of history who could come up to home plate, pick the ball off the ground and throw out fast runners at first base. There have been several third basemen who could get the ball within, say, fifteen feet of home plate, and catch their men at first, but Collins got on top of home plate itself and made the catcher get out of the way. How he did it not even the eye could tell because the eye had its troubles to follow him.

When Collins was acquired by the Boston National League club the management was not altogether certain that it had a good ball player. He started to play with Boston but he stopped now and then and Boston was so well equipped with good men that they were loath to keep him going. They sent him down to Louisville where he was to get a year on the infield and develop himself. One day a certain citizen walked into the office of the Boston club, and said: "You fellows better get that third baseman of yours back from Louisville. If

Wanta Fight?



A challenge to all feminine pugilists of the 105-pound class has been issued by Miss Helen Brundige, 19, of Kansas City. She has appeared in matches before several clubs.

you don't they will lynch you when you try to take him away. He's the greatest ball player in baseball."

Boston lost no time in seeing that Collins did not get away after that remark. The papers were put through to recall him properly from Louisville. The fan had told the truth. Collins was the best article in baseball that had left Boston temporarily, since Uncle Bill Conant was a kid catching cutters down in Boston Bay.

After Collins had reached Boston and had thoroughly warmed up and become accustomed to the city again, and his position, Frank Selee the Boston manager became so enrapt with the playing of his third baseman that he sat all one afternoon on the bench looking at him in pop-eyed astonishment, and forgetting to give a single instruction to the team from the time the game started until it was over.

"Hey there," said Hughy Duffy, who was an outfielder of the team, "asleep, boss?"

"Yes," drawled Selee quietly. "Don't wake me up. I want to remember that boy and this day always. Collins was a good batter, not so good when he began as he was after he got started. He could play ball with either hand, run fast, start like a sprinter and make some of the most astounding stops and throws from third that any fan or any manager ever beheld, no wonder he dazed the spectators.

NEW CAMP BOOK STARTS BIG ROW

But Yale's Claim Though Backed by So Eminent Authority Not Like Stand Before Public Opinion

New York, Jan. 2.—With athletic competition temporarily at a standstill Yale and Princeton are indulging in a polite little war as to which of the two universities participated in the first intercollegiate football game.

It is a matter of substantiated record that Princeton and Rutgers played the first intercollegiate game in the fall of 1869, 55 years ago. Until now this claim had been allowed to stand unchallenged.

But now the Yale Alumni weekly has come forth debating this proud distinction and maintaining that the Yale-Columbia game of 1873 was in reality the first intercollegiate football contest.

The News back up this assertion by quoting Mr. Walter Camp's book, "Yale: Her Campus, Classrooms and Athletics." Says Mr. Camp, "In the fall of 1873 Yale challenged Columbia and the first legitimate game between colleges was played."

"Why," plaintively asserts Edward M. Norris, editor of the Princeton Alumni Weekly, "this first game played by Yale was any more legitimate than the five intercollegiate games that preceded it is not apparent to the lay mind."

"If," continues Norris, "this contention should happen to fall under the eye of the Hon. William S. Gummere, '70, Chief Justice of New Jersey, who was captain of the Princeton team that played the first intercollegiate game with Rutgers in the autumn of 1869, no doubt that eminent jurist would be interested to know the difference between a legitimate and an illegitimate game of football and in particular to be informed as to why after all these years that historic first game in which he participated is now branded as illegitimate."

It would seem that pending the views of Judge Gummere it is distinctly up to the Yale alumni organization to define the difference between legitimate and illegitimate football as played in the late sixties and early seventies. It is true that the rules under which the two games were played differed somewhat but not so materially as to bulwark the attitude Yale has taken.

In the meantime it is to be noted that Michigan claims to have played the first organized football in the middle west having gone in for the game and produced a team in 1878.

KAPLIN HAS ODDS FOR TITLE TONIGHT

But Kramer is Well Qualified to Put Up Sturdy Battle for Featherweight King

By FAIR PLAY
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New York, Jan. 2.—Unless there happens to be a draw, draws are not very frequent at the Madison Square Garden—there will be crowned a new featherweight king on tonight in this city.

Upon this fateful and eventful and otherwise momentous evening Luis (Kid) Kaplan, of Meriden, Conn.—originally from Russia whence he came to this country when he was five years old—will meet Danny Kramer of Philadelphia.

The betting favors Kaplan by goodly odds and if they don't switch—they have been known to switch very suddenly before important bouts in New York—a lot of layers will be eating at the automat on Saturday morning if the youth from the nutmeg state loses.

Kaplan seems to be the favorite on the ground of his showing in the two fights he fought in his recent featherweight elimination tourney, especially his clean knockout of the Panama contender, Lombardo.

Kramer on the other hand is not so well known in this neck of the woods and thus is not so highly regarded. But the writer who, had a look at him at Collins Park at Summit, N. J., the other day, believes that Kramer is well qualified to put up a sturdy battle and that if Kaplan stows him away the Kid will be highly deserving of the crown that will be bestowed upon him.

LEFT HANDERS HAVE THE EDGE

It Is Only by Small Margin That They Outbat Right Handed Sluggers, Says Sport Writer.

By JOHN B. FOSTER
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New York, Jan. 2.—Which are the better batters, right handers or left handers? The argument has been "settled" many times in favor of the left handers, but a glance at the records does not give the left handers so much of an edge.

Take the season of 1924 for instance, Ruth, a left hander, won the American League League batting championship. But Hornsby, a right hander, won the National. And, leaving out the question of home runs, it can't be said that the Babe has so much on Hornsby. The 1924 result—a left hand hitting champion in the American League and a right hander in the National—merely carries out the

tradition of the two leagues. The American always has been the left hand batting league, with 17 out of its 25 batting champions operating from the first base side of the plate. In the National things are reversed, the figures being 26 right hand champions and 23 left handers.

Totalling the champions of the two leagues, the left handers have the edge, the figures being 40 left handers to 34 right handers. Of the right handed champions, Honus Wagner led the greatest number of seasons—seven—although it is doubtful whether he was a harder batter than Anson, who was king for four years in the earlier history of the older circuit.

Next to these two among the right handers comes the present title holder, Hornsby, who has won it five times in a row and stands a good show of making it six in 1925. It is far from impossible that Hornsby may displace the great Wagner as king of the right hander before his star ball playing days are over.

One of the greatest batters the National League ever had never shone very brilliantly in the championship figures. That was Keeler. Willie was called upon so often to sacrifice that he never had the fine opportunities Wagner, Anson, Hornsby and some others had. He was called to bunt at least 25 per cent of his

times at bat. Ty Cobb, of course, stands forth as the king of the left hand batters, and it was largely due to his brilliancy that the theory of the superiority of left handers sprang up. Nine straight years of batting championship and another stretch of three years was

Cobb's contribution to the South-paw predominance in the American League. This year Ruth won the crown that Heilmann of Detroit and Sisler of St. Louis had won after Cobb had lost it. If Ruth were not so far along in his baseball career, he might prove a strong

factor in boosting the left hand average of the American League. But at that he cannot hope to be a factor for more than five more years. It is a constant fight now on his part to keep his flesh down, and the time will come when he will have to surrender to old General Obesity.

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