

# YEAR 1925 WAS GOOD ONE IN BASEBALL

## PUT GLOOM ON WORLD SERIES

### Which Was Played in the Worst Weather and on Worst Grounds of Any Classic Ever Staged

By JOHN B. FOSTER  
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A fitting climax to the National League's Golden Jubilee celebration, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of big league baseball, was fashioned by the Pittsburgh Pirates when they moved out to Washington Senators, champions of the American League, in the seventh and deciding game of this year's world series.

Pittsburgh's victory over Washington was sweet enough to the National League, but more important from the standpoint of the league's welfare as a whole, perhaps, was the fact that Pittsburgh wrested the championship of its own circuit away from the New York Giants, who had held it for four straight years, and took it west of the Alleghenies for the first time in six years. The West hadn't had a look-in on a National League championship since Cincinnati won the flag in 1919. And West was beginning to get restless and talk about New York moneybags buying championships.

### The Golden Jubilee

The National League's Golden Jubilee provided a golden aura for the entire season of 1925. It was back in 1876 that the National League came into existence, and the organization which had courageously, and at times doggedly, pushed its way to the top of sports that it had earned the right to celebrate.

President John Arnold Heydler of the National League inaugurated the year of festivity by inviting the old fellows to a reunion in the Broadway Central Hotel in New York City, where the league was born a half century ago. There they feasted and cooped. Tommy Bond, Lon Knicker, George Washington Bradley, Jack Manning, Jim Mutrie and others of the halcyon days of '76—white of head but green of memory—spent the happiest six hours they had spent since they left baseball to engage in other occupations.

Following this event came local celebrations in the various cities of the circuit. At each of these the old time ball players were specially honored, and there never have been any more connected with any sport in this country who appreciated more the attention that was being paid them than these "Boys" of sixty and even seventy, who were back again in the atmosphere of the sport they love more than any sport in the world.

### Parades, music, speeches, fun, prevailed from one end of the National League circuit to the other, and even a special flag was designed to broadcast the news that it was the National's golden year—end one of the greatest of baseball's time marks; as there had been many a gloomy prophet in seasons early in the sport who predicted that the National League wouldn't last fifty months.

### Pirates Hit Stride & Last

The management of the Pittsburgh National League has been struggling for nearly 20 years to bring forth the magic combination that would once more give that city a championship club. The Pirates have shown flashes of championship baseball from time to time in recent years, but not since 1908 was the club able to show the dash and stamina necessary to take it through a gruelling season to victory.

In the end it was youth, the outpouring of timidity, the restoration of self-confidence and the development of speed and hard hitting that won the championship of the Pittsburgh. Those qualities assisted in overcoming New York, which had dominated the Pittsburgh mentally, if not always physically, in prior years.

The particular Pirate who did more than any other one player to lead Pittsburgh through to victory was Earl Smith catcher. Smith comes from Arkansas. He is as trusty as the rifle which he carries into the Ozark mountains; his throwing arm is more tolerable and his knowledge of catching is deeper seated than the top layer of his hair. But it was his uncomely power as a spiritual repressor that did most for the Pirates.

Day after day he told his team mates how little respect he had for the Giants. He had been a member of the New York team and knew what his words would do. However, he had been strong enough in the ruggedness of his Arkansas soul to "sass" the respectable John McGraw back, and that gave him added standing among his Pittsburgh fellows.

### "Smithy's" War Cry

Away back in California when the Pirates were training in the spring and the birds were singing their songs, "Smithy" began loudly chirping, "Bring on your Giants." In time he had other words of the team who had been blown to pieces, asking—if modified at least asking—where are the Giants? There was still a little lacking in confidence at the very start of the season when the Pirates clashed with the San Francisco Giants. But at least the tone of the spirit, and one afternoon through words to the fact that the Giants could be defeated, and that any other team who did not beat them from this on New

entered the hotter months to give his advice and to help Barney Dreyfuss in connection with the business management, was credited with much to do with the team. He gave it, too. But the liniment that soaked in the fire that never was quenched, was the ceaseless war cry of "Smithy," "Bring on your Giants."

### A Two-Team Race

The National League race was all between New York and Pittsburgh. Now and then it seemed as if Cincinnati would push its way into the fight and make it three cornered, but as so often has happened in Cincinnati there was only red fire in the pan and red fire burns out and leaves the world blacker than ever very quickly. The Reds never really got into the fight.

Hornaby was taken out of the position of dough boy in the ranks to become manager of the St. Louis team and immediately injected enough enthusiasm into the players to lift them out of the slough into which they had fallen and put them where they could finish fourth. It was his enthusiasm which did that, combined with confidence on the part of members of the team. They had had little or no confidence in Rickey, who had theorized and blackboarded them for Cincinnati. The fact that he had a right mood of the year because it had no infield, a mediocre outfield and fair catching. It staggered along, upheld by Vance and occasional good pitching by others. Boston improved as greatly as the Chicago retrograded. The Philadelphia Club made a fight with nothing and succeeded remarkably in achieving something.

### Few Managerial Changes

Chicago, like St. Louis, attempted a change of managers in mid-stream. Killefer was supplanted by Maranville, which proved to be a case of jumping out of the frying pan into the fire and must be marked up as another error of administration in Chicago.

No other managers were disturbed in either league, although some of the veterans had a terrible time trying to make a showing. They not only did not have the players but the players did not seem to have enough ambition to get out of their tracks. More lazy ball players ambled through 1925 than in any year since the war.

### The American League Race

The championship of the American League was won by Washington for the second year in succession. It was a fight of aggressive attack for lower places to a higher that carried Washington on just as was the case in 1924.

Much of the credit is due to the pitching of Walter Johnson and Harry Coveleskie whose success was wholly unexpected. The other pitchers did a fair share, especially Ruetheer, but the bulk of the work fell upon the broad shoulders of Johnson and Coveleskie, and they carried through.

Harris was as good a manager in most respects as he had been the year before. He shifted his players well, added Joe Harris to his team—a very fortunate selection, as the Washingtons were badly in need of a powerful right hand hitter—and used judgment in the placing of his outfield. He kept Washington just behind the Athletics all of the season, a very favorable place from which to strike forward. And when the time came he struck and struck so hard that the Athletics almost staggered into third place.

The Athletics had begun the season faster than any team in either major league and kept the pace so long that they threatened to become champions. Why? They had a fine young catcher who instead of being the failure that some predicted proved to be a winner. They had good early pitching and they found Poole to play first base for them when they lost Hauser. They emerged from every known trouble with a smile and traveled easy street until they started on their last western trip, where they fell into several games which they should have won. Nothing will kill a ball team quicker than the games that "should have won," but doesn't and the Athletics, without the mental force to hold themselves in the fight, slipped a little, and then a little more and were out of first place when Washington challenged them.

### Ruth and Yanks Blow Up

The collapse of the Yanks in the American League was as much of a surprise as was the success of the Athletics. The Yanks started the year possible champions. Manager Huggins was very sure that his team had one more good season left. He did not reckon upon much to follow after that. Others were of like opinion. That was his reason for making the trade with the St. Louis by which he got Shoemaker. He wanted a sure pitcher to help him out and as Shoemaker was always a tough pitcher for the Yanks to hit he was building two ways, in his opinion—adding a winner to his own team and taking away from another team a winner against him.

It did not result that way. The Yanks were not the possessors of the one more year he thought they had. They began to fall apart like vines on a lima bean pole, and maddest member of all, the sensational member of the team, Ruth, by his own gluttony and mental sloth-

fulness, made himself about as worthless as he could and the Yanks without his services for a long time.

Shoemaker didn't win as expected; the shortstop slipped into the valley of gloom and second base went along with it because of the injuries to Ward. And then, to make everything lovely, Dugan's knee went back on him so there was no longer a third baseman and Pipp, first baseman, dropped out on account of injury. By then there was nothing left of the Yanks.

### The Also Rans

Detroit was a disappointment. Cobb couldn't get his team started because he experimented too much, as he always has. Cleveland did about as well as rival managers expected, although not as well as Speaker expected. Chicago held third place with skill almost all of the race to drop out of it when Eddie Collins was injured and left the team. St. Louis shot forward at the very end as it has done before, but started with disputation as it has also done in the past. Boston was out of it all of the time.

### A Gloomy World Series

The world series began at Pittsburgh. It was played there for the first two days. Pittsburgh lost the first game and won the second. The teams went to Washington and the home boys won two. That gave them three victories to one for Pittsburgh. On the following afternoon the Washingtons arrayed themselves in their baseball flannels and laughed their way out of the dug house enroute homeward—so they thought. They expected to win that game, and the series and be packed for a rest. Some of the players even had their traveling bags packed to go home.

A little later they returned to the club house and chastened, defeated in a game in which Stanley Harris, the boy manager, not only was outgeneraled but in the opinion of many used poor judgment. In any event the Washingtons never won again in the series and the "championship"—which it is not in any sense—had reverted to the National League.

The series was the most depressing and annoying ever played, although not without its exciting moments. The first two days in Pittsburgh were pleasant. The next in Washington was a rainy one and on the following day clearing weather brought a wind attack which lowered the temperature to a level that was little better and the last day in Washington was warmer but not pleasant. The special trains went back to Pittsburgh and on their arrival the occupants of the coaches bustled to another game. The day after that was one of soaking rain and soaked spectators because the letter were held in the down pour at Forbes Field awaiting the decision as to whether there would be a game.

### That Final Game

The next afternoon the final game of the series started. It did not rain when play began but the field was wretched. A worse one never was seen in a world series game, and before it was over it was the worst field on which any important ball game ever was played.

Washington started with a lead of four runs in the first inning and lost it by the end of the seventh. The world series with its tremendous more than a million dollar purse rehabilitated some of the clubs to a large extent. The trouble with that distribution is that it casts an unmistakable shadow of syndication on baseball.

### Most Valuable Players Named

The two most valuable players named for the honor of leaders in the major leagues were Roger Peckinpaugh, shortstop of the Washington club, and Rogers Hornsby, second baseman of the St. Louis Nationals.

Peckinpaugh was apprised of the credit voted him before the world series began and promptly went out and made eight errors—all that were made by his team except one—thereby earning the title of most valuable Washington player to Pittsburgh. After that climax it was announced that the name of the most valuable player of the American League was not to be made public in the future until after the series had been played.

The name of Hornsby was not made public until December. The rivalry between him and Cuyler of Pittsburgh was somewhat keen at first but Hornsby, because he had led the league so often as batter, and has shown such unmistakable ability as leader, was adjudged to be the better. Unquestionably one of the greatest right hand batters in the history of baseball, there is no reason why he should not have been voted the honor.

### Pitchers Have Off Year

The pitching in both major leagues on the whole was just ordinary. Sherdel led in the National League, closely followed by Vance. This is on the percentage basis. Sherdel won 16 games and lost 5 by unofficial figures, and Vance won 22 and lost 9. Sherdel had a percentage of .727 and Vance of .710. Sherdel did not take part in as many games as Vance, but he did take part in enough to give him a perfect right to be considered the leading pitcher so far as the unofficial figures go.

Of the coming youngsters in the National League one may single out Reinhart of the St. Louis Nationals who seems to have a future before him.

The leading pitchers of the American League were Coveleskie, Washington, with 20 victories and five defeats and a percentage of .800, a very creditable year of pitching; and Holloway of Detroit, with 13 victories and four defeats and a percentage of .765. This entitled Holloway to be rated over Walter Johnson who had 20 victories and seven defeats and a percentage of .741. None of these figures are official.

### The Greatest Improved Pitcher

in the American League was Blankenship of the Chicago Sox.

### International League

The big stake gained in the minor leagues was John Dunn's seventh successive victory in the International League for Baltimore. No matter how strong or how weak the International may be considered to be in the minor league, there isn't the slightest doubt that it is a big thing in baseball to win a pennant seven times in succession. No matter how much Dunn may have been hit or may have seemed to be hit by changes in his team, he persists in coming back and winning pennants for the city to which he promised the best baseball he could bring it. Any manager who can win seven pennants in succession must have more than "breaks."

When the season was over Baltimore played Louisville for the Class A championship and defeated the Kentuckians, to their chagrin. The chances are that in the latter part of the season Louisville did not have enough hard work to keep the team on edge.

### American Association

The championship of the American Association was won by Louisville, which ran away from the league. It was the result least expected in minor league baseball. When the season began

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almost all of the prophets and the managers were quite sure that the Association was in again for one of those close competitions which had made their races the wonder of both major and minor league baseball.

The start was not bad, but suddenly the Louisville club began to put forth an excellent card of pitching, with timely batting and skillful base running. First the team was in front and then it was away in front, and there it remained. The race which had been the delight of the fans who make up the Association circuit was such a walkaway that the attendance fell off badly.

### Pacific Coast League

The championship of the Pacific Coast League was like that of the American Association in some respect. It was too easy for the San Francisco team. Now and then one of the other teams would appear as if it were about to throttle the San Franciscans, but there was no stability to anything which followed and the old pennant chase went on and on, with all the length which it is customary to play in that part of the United States, and San Francisco was well enough ahead when a reckoning was taken to make it sure that it would be ahead when the finish finally arrived.

So it happened and then San Francisco played the Louisville club of the American Association which had first been defeated by Baltimore in the East. It was not much of a series because San Francisco couldn't see where it would be interesting when Louisville was not in any sense a post season championship contender after losing to Baltimore. The series did drag through, however, and it came mighty near being a wallop for San Francisco.

### The Dixie Series

The Dixie series between Atlanta and Fort Worth again demonstrated enterprising effort on the part of the Southern Association and the Texas League. This series has become a fixture and the enthusiasm with which it is approached makes baseball look mighty well in both sections. In Fort Worth, especially, the fans are deserving of great credit for what they have done to make this series so thoroughly enjoyable and the baseball club and the public men also have contributed to it in no uncertain way.

### Pirates Should Win in 1926

The coming year should prove a great one for the national sport, according to all signs. There is

only one sensation possible for the National League, however, and that is to have some other club defeat Pittsburgh for the pennant. Not that it can't be done, because there is nothing quite impossible in baseball. But there doesn't seem to be strength enough in any organization, even granting that players may be collected, to overturn this combination of youth and skill—and more confidence is placed in the youth of the team than the skill.

This coming season will be youth that has been through the mill and that knows what it means to play for a pennant. It is no longer immature youth, which has been eulogized more than once out of a good play because the veteran knows how to confuse inexperienced brains.

### Open Race in American League

In the American League there are all kinds of possibilities. If Washington is to win again, Manager Harris not only must exercise all that he has learned about managing a team, but must reinvigorate his pitching staff which will not stand up as well after going through the tax of two world series.

Coveleskie looked very ordinary in one game of the world series and should have won the other.

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