

SEASON'S OUTLOOK OF BIG BASEBALL

Doubtful If Strenuous Finish of 1908 Will Be Duplicated.

OLD LEAGUES DISSECTED

Analysis of Fighting Strength of National and American Leagues Indicates That There Will Be Some Reversals of Form.

BY JOHN B. POSTER.

When the season of 1908 was completed the four best contests for pennants in the history of organized baseball were finished with it.

Three teams fought in the National League for supremacy until four days before the expiration of the schedule, and two teams, before the National League championship was decided, were compelled to play an added and extra game subsequent to the regular season.

Three teams were in the race almost to the last day of the American League championship and two until the last series. The championship in the American Association was not settled until the first week of the season, and the Eastern League was also settled, although a trifle more separated by teams was a bitter gallop to the very jumping off place where baseball ceased and football began.

In the two major league races for 1908 baseball "fans" may not have noted that the pitchers of both the National and American Leagues were almost exactly divided in regard to their ability in the box. Almost half of the pitchers in the National League won 500 per cent or more of their games. Almost half of the pitchers in the American League did exactly the same thing.

When the pitching becomes so well equalized that 50 per cent of those who throw the ball are successful on the plus side, as against 50 per cent unsuccessful on the minus side, the owners of the clubs have unconsciously handicapped their teams with even better success than they might have been matched had an expert and a professional student of odds attempted to achieve the same result.

Pitchers of the Present Year.

If the championship races of 1909 are not so close as those of 1908, and another such nerve-racking strain would almost separate families there is at least plenty of reason to believe that they will be much superior to some of the contents of the pennant which have taken place in the past. For while there may be teams which may not quite meet expectations, it is to be noted that the consideration that they have taken into account has not been to take them so far down the ladder as has been customary in other years, owing to the fact that good auxiliary strength has been recruited from the clubs of the minor leagues.

Outlook in the National League.

Chicago comes first—the world's champions—a title deservedly earned, as they have twice won it from the leading club of the American League which was pitted against them.

Ultimately the Chicago club on the field this year will not be far different from that of last season, unless there shall be serious injuries early in the campaign to some of the players.

In the beginning of the season Chicago will not place its nine in the race intact as John Evers, the brilliant second baseman of the club, persists in his determination not to play ball until the middle of June. If he does not begin the season with the team it is probable that Zimmerman will take his place. The right fielder will, therefore, be Chance, Zimmerman, Tucker and Steinmetz.

There will very likely be a change in the outfield. Browne has been signed by the club for the coming season and is almost certain to be placed in center, with Schulte on one side and Schantz on the other. His speed is great enough to warrant playing him in center, and the chances are that he will bat better for Chicago than Sibley. Kane is expected to play with Cincinnati. It is a Chicago player this season and will be used as a utility man.

Behind the bat, and in the box the Cubs are pretty much the same as last year, unless there be young pitchers who appeal to Chance in Spring practice.

Batting Strength Not Affected.

On the whole the batting strength of the team will not be affected adversely, although by these changes if the players live up to the form of previous years Zimmerman is a powerful hitter and will well up with the best in the league in the games in which he took part last season.

The team work of the nine and its general system of play will not vary from the methods which Chance has insisted upon in the past. His team is essentially one of run-getters, depending upon good battery work to hold the attack of opposing nines at a profitable defensive level. His pitching staff must not show any deterioration, the champions are to maintain their pace of former years.

New York has made more radical changes than any nine in either league, with a record behind it of the quality of that which was made by the giants in 1908.

Brennan, one of the greatest catchers of his time, has been permitted to go to another team as manager, and McGinnity and Taylor, two veteran pitchers who have won their share of games in the past, have been released outright by the club.

The infield will be made up of Tenney at first, Doyle at second, Bridwell at short and Devlin at third, an infield identical with that of last year. Its work in general was a revelation to the enthusiasts a year ago, for it then played together for the first time and so quietly that it was one of the fastest quietest of the race.

Murray was obtained from St. Louis for his time, has been permitted to go to another team as manager, and McGinnity and Taylor, two veteran pitchers who have won their share of games in the past, have been released outright by the club.

Schib, "Jack" Myers, the Indian, Snodgrass and Wilson will divide the responsibility of catching. In the field the giants should be stronger than they were last year. With Ames in condition at the beginning of the season and with Raymond, who was secured from St. Louis in the trade for Brennan, it is figured that the team has more reserve force to draw upon than it had.

It will be a nine of speed, based on the field and dangerous at base running at all times by reason of the batting strength of nearly every player.

Pittsburg will present much the same team for the championship that played so ably in 1908. Therefore it is but necessary to take the work of the club last year as a basis upon which to gauge its strength in the year to come, allowing for any

Some Big League Stars Who Will Soon Be in Action



WADDELL, ST. LOUIS
WILKES, PITTSBURG
WALSH, CHICAGO AMERICANS
BROWN, CHICAGO NATIONAL

deterioration because of long service on the part of certain players.

First Base Was the Weak Spot.
Not untruly it has been said that if Pittsburg had possessed a competent first baseman last season the team might have won the championship. Don't overlook this fact in forming an estimate of the nine's chances.

Strength with the bat is a predominant trait of Pittsburg. Combine that with the possible element of good battery work and Pittsburg will be found to fit into the scheme of play in the National League with an organization much to be respected.

Philadelphia will vary but little in its personnel from that of a year ago. The addition of Coveleskie is believed to have strengthened the pitching department experimentally, yet who are of opinion that Coveleskie may not be found so uniformly successful throughout a season as he was against the Giants at the close of last Summer.

Philadelphia is a well-balanced team, playing better ball than it has in some years. It can make runs, it can field well and it can bat.

In the Second Division.
The four second division clubs of last year will work with new managers this year. There is not one which pretends that it is of high enough class to win the championship.

Cincinnati proved that it had some class last year. Boston did not play to the standard expected, but was not expected from that. Brooklyn and St. Louis were both disappointments.

On general principles Griffith and Brennan may be expected to drive both Cincinnati and St. Louis better than they were handled a year ago. Broderman, at Boston, and Lumley, at Brooklyn, are regular shortstops and their long training in the National League and caliber of the men who have been engaged to play under them this coming season, they should not prove to be total failures, unless their teams are handicapped by causes which are not now foreseen.

The American League Race.
Frankly, the Detroit club seems to have a harder battle on its hands to win the championship this year than it had in 1908, and that is predicting a task for the Tigers and their plucky manager that means many a day of intense anxiety.

The team will enter the season better equipped for a championship battle than it was last year. There are two vital changes on the infield. Bush will be the regular shortstop and Moriarty is expected to become the regular third baseman.

Neither change seems to have detracted from the strength of the organization. Consciously they seem to have added to it. Schmidt has announced that he will retire from professional baseball. He may, but it is doubtful.

The club is essentially a run-getting organization, with a powerful outfield and a corps of pitchers who have been well tried in the American League and whose ability is known.

If the struggle to win the championship is more severe, as it appears likely to be, Detroit will fight that much harder to win again, for the team is shifty and does not play a stereotyped game. Moves are seldom wasted by the players and they are quick thinkers and quick actors.

Chicago is an element of uncertainty. Without Fielder Jones to manage the team it is a question whether Chicago

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ANGELS MUCH AT FAULT

Wheeler Dares Any Man to Spike Him and Gets It—Graney Sought Trouble—Shay's Rowdy Outbreak—Vernon Team Weak.

BY HARRY B. SMITH.
SAN FRANCISCO, Cal., April 10.—(Special.)—This has been a week of scrapping in baseball on all sides. The Portland and Los Angeles teams started affairs last Sunday in Los Angeles. Then the State Leaguers had a little affair of their own on Tuesday, and Graney, of the Beavers, succeeded in having himself chased off the grounds by Umpire McGreevy.

So far as the Los Angeles affair, I am satisfied that the Angel players were largely at fault. It appears that George Wheeler was chiefly at fault by making threats as to what he would do if anybody spiked him. Up to that remark nobody had been spiked, but the "dare" probably did Wheeler no good. At all events, it has resulted in a world of bad feeling, and when McGreevy called a game because of an unusually long delay, Graney "hollered" long and loud. First of all he was fined \$10. When he did not deced to take the money, he was benched. Even that was not enough, and Graney was retired from the field.

Shay Has Violent Outbreak.
The State League in its outbreak of Tuesday received the worst setback of its short career. Danny Shay, who is aping Muggsy McGraw, was responsible, and Jack O'Connell, the old Coast League umpire, was one of the central figures. O'Connell had just signed with the State League.

Shay showed his disposition to be nasty from the jump. He kicked at every decision. Jimmy Smith was the first man to bat for Cy Moreing's Oakland club, Shay came running in on the first ball called to say something mean.

When Smith was finally walked, there were not enough words in Shay's vocabulary to express his contempt. "You blankety, blank, blank, blank," he shouted at O'Connell, at the same time reaching out to grab the umpire. "Cal Ewing sent you over here to break up this league."

O'Connell ordered Shay and Catcher Frambes, who was also violent in his use of language, to the bench. Neither of them stirred. They kept on using vulgar language and O'Connell immediately declared the game forfeited to Oakland, 9 to 0. Then when some of the disgusted spectators fled out of their seats, it was agreed to play an exhibition game, which resulted in an Oakland victory.

Shay was fined \$50 by President Frank Herman, of the league, and was also called down by the managers of his own club. They told him plainly that they did not propose to stand for such rowdiness and that, if there was

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