

BEGIN TO PLAY BALL

ATLANTIC LEAGUE SEASON OPENS TO-MORROW AFTERNOON.

LANCASTER CLUB WILL START HERE.

THE TEAMS ARE ALL REPORTED TO BE IN GOOD SHAPE.

EIGHT CITIES CLAIM THE PENNANT.

Reports from all the Nine Encouraging, and Everybody is Looking Forward to a Prosperous Season—Bluebirds Ready.

To-morrow at 4:15 o'clock the guns will sound at Broad-Street Park, and at the athletic fields in Newark, Norfolk, and Hartford, and the signal will thereby be given for the beginning of the Atlantic League base-ball season of 1897.

The eight clubs composing the league, the success of which seems now well assured, will respond to the tap of the bat by making their appearance on the diamond, and the ball will be put in motion to continue its rotation until September 15th, next, when the race for the pennant will have been concluded and the cranks, fans, and rooters of the eight cities surfeited with the sport they love so well.

The season will begin with the Lancaster club in Richmond, the Reading club in Norfolk, the Philadelphia Athletics in Newark, and the Paterson boys in Hartford. The four games will, no doubt, be witnessed by large gatherings and the movements of the various teams will be watched closely and with analytical eyes by hundreds of the more pronounced cranks who will endeavor to ascertain the relative merits and demerits of the teams and the individual players composing them and try to form some definite idea as to where the pennant will land after the season is over and the play has closed.

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RICHMOND TEAM IN SHAPE.

Manager Wells's Bluebirds Will Give a Good Account of Themselves.

The Richmond Bluebirds having been actively engaged in practice for the past three weeks, are now in first-class condition for the opening of the season, and will undoubtedly give a good account of themselves when they line up against the Lancasterians, who will open the season here to-morrow afternoon.

The grounds at Broad-Street Park are in excellent condition; the diamond is well leveled, the bases are well marked, and a ball-room floor, thereby making it possible for the men on the teams playing here to do their work without being interfered with by obstacles in the shape of hills and valleys, as has been the case in some other parks.

Altogether, Manager Wells has seventeen players under contract—two catchers, six pitchers, four infielders, and five outfielders. Foster and Schabel, the latter a catcher, have shown an ability to the satisfaction of all concerned, and there is every probability that they will be retained during the entire season. In the pitchers' department, Schmidt, Ryan, and Leaver, who is yet to make his appearance, is said to be a good man in every respect.

Some little dissatisfaction is expressed in the infield, but there is reason to believe that the quartette covering that territory will do their work well, and will not let Richmond suffer for failure on their part to perform the duties assigned to them. Wells has demonstrated in past seasons that he is an exceedingly clever first-baseman, and he is indispensable to the team, it being necessary that he shall at all times be in the position of a good second baseman, and also a capable infielder, and he is covering second bag in a most praiseworthy fashion. Cain is making a first-class impression in the short-field, and as soon as he gets settled down in the outfield, he will give a good account of himself. "Brownie" Elberfeld is by long odds the favorite on the team. His work at third is exceedingly refreshing, and he plays his position like a veteran.

In the outfield, Elberfeld is the quintette of men from which to select. Hargrove is easily a star, and he will surely look after centre-garden during the season. The other two positions have not been decided upon, but Elberfeld and Scholtz will contest for leftfield, and Marr and Mazena will fight for the right-garden. All four are fairly good fielders, and any two of them would no doubt prove worthy of retention.

As much for the team's fielding ability. As to their hitting qualities, much can be said. There are no phenomenal hitters on the club, but there are a number of men who are such steady and accurate fielders. The pitchers, who can be depended on to hit the ball. Foster and Schabel are both good hitters, and in the pitchers' box there isn't a man among the six who cannot hit above the average. In the infield the hitters are not of the best. Wells always averages up well in the season, and Cain has shown wonderful improvement with the stick. His base-running qualifications are such that he will, even though he would not hit the ball, be of use to the team. Berte is only a fair hitter, but when he does lead, he drives the ball away out into the outfield. Elberfeld is a clever batsman, and while he may not be as hard as frequently as some others, he gets his first base about as often as the next one. He uses his head and eye when at the bat, and doesn't mind getting hit by a slow ball when opportunity offers.

Hargrove is unquestionably the best hitter on the team, and he is a good one; but Marr, Scholtz, Mazena, and Elberfeld are also good hitters, and no matter who gets the lead, he will have a good lot of hitters.

NORFOLK'S TEAM.

TWO VIEWS OF CHANCES—RECORDS OF THE MEN.

NORFOLK, VA., April 25.—(Special.)—Arguments from the standpoint of the critical and volatile base-ball world, the Norfolk club's chances for winning the Atlantic League pennant are rosy. From the standpoint of the closely scrutinizing analytical and pessimistic base-ball critics, the chances of the team are also considered.

THE ATLANTIC LEAGUE BASE-BALL SCHEDULE FOR SEASON OF 1897.

Table Showing the Number of Games That the Clubs Will Play at Home and Abroad and Where Each Club Will Be Each Day During the Season.

Table with columns for teams (Richmond, Norfolk, Philadelphia, Lancaster, Reading, Paterson, Newark, Hartford) and days of the week, listing dates and locations for home and away games.

ed to be particularly promising. A close, careful analysis of the preliminary practice work against the National League teams bears out this opinion. The roster of the Norfolk club, as originally selected by Manager Smith, is herewith given, with a brief synopsis of the record of each man:

First base will be guarded by Slaughter, last year of the Texas League, who stood No. 10 among the hitters of that league and No. 7 in fielding. Bating average .333 and fielding .872.

Second base will be guarded by Jack Wentz, whose ability in that place is too well known in Virginia to need any additional comment. Wentz's stick work this year shows a wonderful improvement over last season.

On third base Al Weddell will care for infilled hits in that direction. Weddell was last season with New Bedford, of the New England League, and was ninth in batting in that league. Average .337, fielding .861.

Danny Leahy is another familiar player, whose record in Virginia the past two seasons speaks for itself.

In the outfield is Wells, who plays left field. Wells also comes from the New England League, with batting average of .350, standing eighth on the batting list of that league and fifteenth as fielder, with average of .885.

Claud McFarlan will again care for centre garden, and he will no further in doubt, the same may be said of Manager Smith, who plays right field.

The catchers are Nie, Hayden, and Snyder, the first two from the Texas League, with averages, respectively, of .334, and .327 in batting, and .818 and .819 in fielding. Both men have given satisfactory evidence of their ability. Snyder was the crack catcher of the Western Association last year, leading the catchers of that league, with averages of .229 in batting and .829 in fielding.

ATHLETICS SHOW UP WELL.

Captain Sharsiek's Boys Are Hitters—The Batteries in Good Shape.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., April 24.—(Special.)—A few words suffice to indicate the condition of the Athletics team at the beginning of what promises to be a prosperous season. "Good fielders, sure hitters, but poor in team-work." Those were the words used in the spring practice games, and as good team-work cannot be developed until after Captain Moran drills his men for a few weeks.

The Athletics developed into a team that will stand in the first bunch this season, if they miss the pennant. It is true that the Athletics' showing was rather inferior, but their lively and ambitious endeavors in several subsequent contests outpoint this by far.

The Athletics put up a rattling opposition for ten innings, and an intended "limbering-up" contest, a thrilling finish, red-hot defeat of Scranton and Toronto, and a narrow escape of Washington add strength to the local's claims as a first-class team of workers.

The article of last week, in regard to the Athletics, is A No. 1; the batteries are better than expected, and the only weak spots are in the infield. Here, however, are two new men—Hamberg and Scholtz, and the latter from Troy and the Pennsylvania League. They have good material in them, but it is too slow in developing. However, both are such lively hitters that their manager would hesitate to change them this early. Rafter is agile, but in his ambition, loses his head; tired Hamburg seems afflicted with "that tired feeling" while at the bat.

The only other new players are B. Scholtz, third-baseman, whose work in the West attracted attention, and who is proving a valuable "find," on account of his gloriety movements and accurate throwing, and Harry, a spritely catcher, from the Peoria club. The additions to the staff are Jordan, a Hamilton and pitcher with a puzzling slow ball, and Garvin, a lanky high curve.

All the other members of the team are holdovers. Pitcher Anes' work shows a decided improvement over his Virginia League record of last year, and Coon, the latter a Philadelphia High-School youngster, of promise, will hold their own when facing the sluggers. Second-baseman Childs is not only a steady worker, and servant, but covers a wide territory, and is a backstop of all-round ability. Fox is notably so.

In the outfield, the Athletics have a bulwark of stone in Captain Moran, who is a perfect fielder and safe batsman; a centre, who catches easily, and runs like a deer, and swipes the ball with a vengeance, and Leaver, at right, who toes both fielding and batting marks. He "seats up" many "hits."

Now, concerning the team-work, there is room for great improvement, and with the opening games on next week at Newark this improvement will appear. The Athletics, when at home, will stand

on the finest base-ball grounds in the world, the Philadelphia National League managers having just spent \$100,000 in improvements to the already grand park. The buildings are mainly of brick and steel, and the entire seating capacity is 23,000.

The Athletic claim the leanest, tankiest player in pitcher Garvin, a new "gun," who is about 6 feet 2-1/4 inches in height. He tosses a single.

Paterson has started its "kidding" machinery early in the season. With the score 3 to 2 against them, they disputed a decision at Newark and left the grounds.

They Athletics will use three different ball-parks this season—the National League Park in Philadelphia; a park across the river, in Camden, and a park at Gloucester race-track, for Sunday games.

NEWARK IS IN THE PULL.

The Local Fans Have Great Confidence in Their Team.

NEWARK, N. J., April 24.—(Special.)—After a successful series of exhibition games the local Atlantic League champions of 1896 are in excellent condition and have every confidence of being able to make the same creditable showing on the diamond during the coming season as in the past.

It was at first feared that the loss of Tom Burns, who managed the Hartford team last year, might have a detrimental effect on the club's chances throughout the 1897 campaign. Captain "Jimmy" Gilman (the ex-Richmond) has, however, proved himself a most competent successor, and it is now considered by all that the club will lead the Pennsylvania teams, and will keep those at the top hustling.

THE PATERSON CLUB.

PATERSON, N. J., April 24.—(Special.)—Everything is in readiness for the opening of the championship season of the Atlantic League in this city, which occurs Thursday, April 29th.

Everything is in readiness for the opening of the championship season of the Atlantic League in this city, which occurs Thursday, April 29th. Billy Sharag and his band of Quakers will be here to measure their strength with the local team. Congressman James P. Stewart has kindly consented to be master of ceremonies, and will be assisted by Mayor Christian Braun and Mayor-elect John Hinckley.

The only weak spot is at second base, where Smith, who is a pitcher, has been playing an indifferent game. Smith is captain of the club, and a good man, but his long record is not all that bright. He will be put back in the box as soon as a good second baseman can be secured. Our pitchers are in perfect condition, and are capable of doing good work. Jones, especially, is in fine trim, and promises to be a great pitcher. He has been with Comiskey's St. Paul club in 1896. Vian is the ex-National League player, at one time with Cleveland. Flaherty is only 19 years old, but with proper coaching, should do well.

Sarcel was with Lancaster in 1895, and his record in that club was brilliant. He is a Haller, the tall first baseman, halls from St. Joe, Mo., and his few games here have made him a favorite with the occupants of Bleachersville.

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EVERYBODY TALKING BASE-BALL.

Reading Folks Think Their Team the Real Thing.

READING, April 24.—(Special.)—Reading is a great base-ball town for a winning club, and the fans are all satisfied that they have such a club this year. The great enthusiasm now being displayed throughout Reading shows the confidence which the people have in the team. One can hardly enter a place of business of any kind or a shop in any portion of the city without hearing the national game discussed. For every old sport whose interest in the game is on the wane, if there are a dozen others, younger and more elastic, to take his place. Even ministers are becoming interested, and several have attended some of the exhibition games.

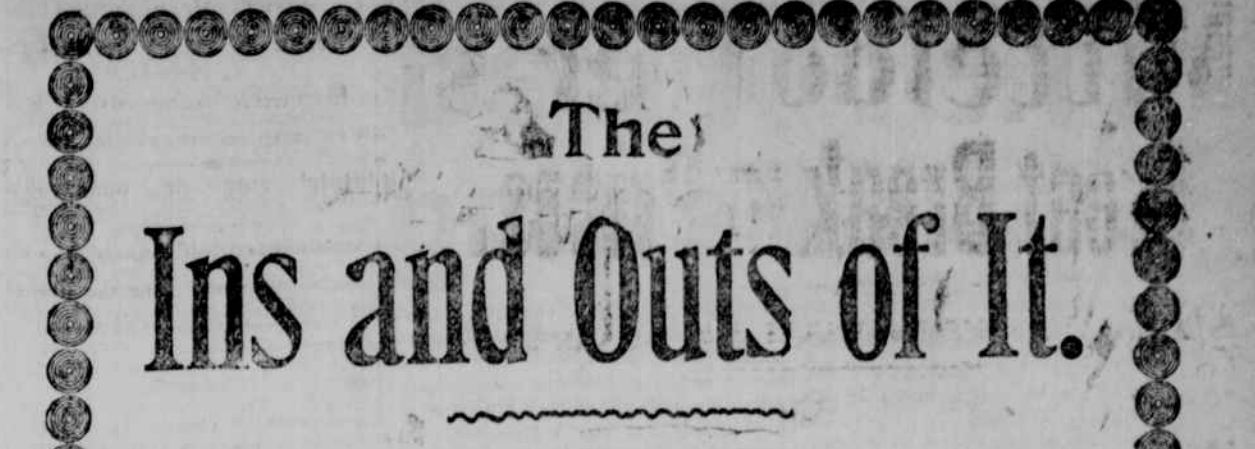
The fans are also well pleased with the new manager. Dennis Long is a hustler, and Reading has never had a more progressive manager. Long has erected a new grandstand, and the grounds are being leveled and rolled. If Reading does not prove to have city without hearing the national game discussed. For every old sport whose interest in the game is on the wane, if there are a dozen others, younger and more elastic, to take his place. Even ministers are becoming interested, and several have attended some of the exhibition games.

GREAT INTEREST IN LANCASTER.

The Town Never Before Had Such a Strong Team.

LANCASTER, PA., April 24.—(Special.)—The interest that is being taken in base-ball in Lancaster this season is greater than ever before, although this city has always been a prominent factor in base-ball circles of the minor leagues. This interest is, perhaps, due to the fact that Lancaster has not been represented in such fast company for some years, since it was in the Eastern League, and to the equally important and just as apparent fact that it never before had such a strong team.

Under the direction of Manager Frank Rinn, himself an old ball-player, and who is well known in southern base-ball towns, having been a member of the Danville club, of the Virginia League,



If you get best wear out of a coat best work must have gone into it. You can't get good bread out of poor flour. Moral: You can't get the best out of anything unless the best is in it; and the best has to be put in before it can be taken out. Now, we have a rule to test those sarsaparillas with a big "best" on the bottle. "Tell us what's put in you and we'll decide for ourselves about the best." That's fair. But these modest sarsaparillas say: "Oh! we can't tell. It's a secret. Have faith in the label." ... Stop! There's one exception; one sarsaparilla that has no secret to hide. It's Ayer's. If you want to know what goes into Ayer's Sarsaparilla, ask your doctor to write for the formula. Then you can satisfy yourself that you get the best of the sarsaparilla argument when you get Ayer's.

Any doubt? Get the "Curebook." It kills doubts but cures doubts. Address: J. C. Ayer & Co., Lowell, Mass.

REEF INSPECTION—BILLY PRACTICE.

BLACKSBURG, VA., April 24.—(Special.)—The Town Council has passed an ordinance requiring that all beef on the market shall be inspected previous to being offered for sale. The inspectors are likewise required to be used there to be inspected. The regulations are being rigidly enforced by Dr. E. P. Niles, State Veterinarian, and several animals have already been condemned. This is creating quite a commotion among the butchers, but the wisdom of such sanitary regulations cannot be questioned, and the action of the authorities is heartily supported by public opinion.

Rev. George T. Gray, senior chaplain of the institute, has returned from Clinchburg, where he has been under treatment for some weeks for a cancerous growth on the face. Mr. Gray returns in greatly improved health, very much to the gratification of his numerous friends. The troublesome growth has been removed from his face, and he has gained very much in general health, weighing fifteen pounds more than when he left.

PHILIP PRACTICE.

Your correspondent witnessed this week a preliminary practice of the cadets from which Colonel Shanks will select the team to compete for the prize offered by the government. Some excellent shooting was done. The best score made was that of Mr. Summerson, who struck the bull's eye at the distance of 200 yards seven times out of ten shots, making a score of forty-five out of a possible fifty. I believe that the best score on record in the army at this range is forty-eight.

LOTS OF INTEREST IN HARTFORD.

Tom Burns's Team is Expected to Play Great Ball.

HARTFORD, CONN., April 24.—(Special.)—The capital city of Connecticut has more base-ball enthusiasm to the square inch this spring than at any time since the old days when Hartford was in the National League. But that was twenty and more years ago in the days of Burdick, Allison, "Tommy" Bond, and the other old-timers. Last season, with the Hartford club under the management of "Billy" Barnie, the lovers of the sport rallied with the regularity of a good football. The position of the Hartford club at the finish was a credit to the players.

This season the club is in charge of "Tom" Burns, the veteran player, who has shown good judgment in the selection of players; in fact, he has so many good ones that he is in a quandary to know which to drop, for drop some of the score men he must.

The hall park is a Wethersfield avenue, on a double-track trolley "line" a couple of miles from the City Hall. The grounds are large, nicely laid out, and there is seating capacity for 6,000. The grandstand is on either side of the stand, "bleachers" accommodate 2,000 and more than one sad face may be seen among the cadets as these fair visitors take their leave.

The Monday Literary Society has selected its speakers to represent it at the annual convention of the State Association, to be held at the following: First President, Mr. C. W. Cochran, Frederick county, Va.; Orators, Mr. Julian H. Johnson, Richmond, Va.; Mr. W. R. Kay, Montgomery county, Va.; Debaters, Mr. Lawrence Priddy, Charlotte county, Va., and Mr. John Y. Guesout, of Fincastle, Montgomery county, Va. Mr. Benjamin Harrison, Jr., of Petersburg, Va., will, aided by a corps of courteous and pleasant ladies, endeavor to give a pleasant evening of music, and to make each fair dancer a belle, together with a smooth floor and good

ENJOYABLE EASTER DANCE—THOSE PRESENT—PERSONAL AND GENERAL.

STAUNTON, VA., April 24.—(Special.)—The Easter dance of the Staunton German Club was held in Crowley's Hall Thursday night, and the large number present, together with the zest with which the german was enjoyed, showed that the gay set had emerged from the forty-day penitential period with appetites whetted for the Terrestrial world. A galaxy of graceful, well-grown girls were present. All danced so satisfactorily in practice, that the night was the shortest.

THE VALLEY CITY.

On the Death of an Only Child. (Written for the Dispatch.)

Far beyond the bright blue sky, Where scraps of all eyes dwell, Lies my little blue-eyed boy. The one I loved! alas! too well.

My Father called him home to live, Where all is bright and pure above, To sing the songs that angels sing, Of everlasting joy and love.

I love him yet; I cannot tell, The anguish of my aching heart; I know I missed my child, O, why, why were we called to part!

It was to call me to Thy Word, In constant faith and hope to dwell; To lean upon Thy merciful arm, And rest my weary soul on Thee.

O Father, hear my daily prayer, Though long of short my life may be; That I may clasp my darling child, And spend eternity with Thee.

Be Thou my guide in future life, Where'er on earth my path may be; Teach me Thy blessed will to learn, And ever worship only Thee.

DEAFNESS CANNOT BE CURED

by local applications, as they cannot reach the diseased portion of the ear. There is only one way to cure deafness, and that is by constitutional remedies. Deafness is caused by an inflamed condition of the mucous lining of the Eustachian Tube. When this tube gets inflamed you have a running ear, which is not perfect hearing, and when it is entirely closed deafness is the result, and unless the inflammation can be taken out and the tube restored to its normal condition hearing will be destroyed forever. Nine cases out of ten are caused by catarrh, which may be cured by the use of our

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