

WITT TO BE REPLACED AT SHORTSTOP BY GROVER, IS RUMOR IN MACK CAMP; MAY BE SENT OUT TO RIGHT FIELD

Connie Said to Be Considering Change to Put More Experienced Infielder in Youngster's Place—Strunk Played High-Class Game

THERE is a possibility that Connie Mack will pull one of his customary surprises before the baseball season opens on Wednesday. For the last week there have been rumors floating about the camp of the Athletics that Lawton Witt would be relegated to the sidelines and Ray Grover inserted at shortstop. There are many who will doubt the wisdom of this move, but from what we have learned Connie has been studying the condition of his infield and believes that a more experienced man will strengthen the defense. Witt has not gone back in his playing. Instead, he has improved considerably over last year's form and shows signs of being one of the stellar infielders of the league. Right now, however, he is a raw product and needs a short course in the finishing school. Grover is a more experienced player, is a sure fielder and when he goes after a ball his teammates have confidence that he will get it and retire the runner. There is nothing graceful about Witt's fielding, and there is where the trouble lies. Whitey Shambaugh after a grounder with an air of uncertainty, and although he makes the play, the others are worried to death for fear he will fizzle. The psychological effect of his playing has not improved the work of the others, and that is the reason Mack is said to be considering a change. Witt's batting ability cannot be questioned, as he is hitting them just as far and oftener than ever, but his other work is said to be argument enough to put him on the bench.

IT WAS Connie's original plan to keep Witt on the bench for a year or more and allow him to absorb enough big league baseball to enable him to take care of himself when it came time to enter the line-up. This same plan was followed in the training of Stuff McInnis, Eddie Collins, Frank Baker, Jack Barry and others, but conditions were such last year that the youngster was forced to step into the breach and do the best he could.

Connie Is Anxious to Make Good Showing

THIS change may or may not take place Wednesday, but it is bound to occur in the near future unless Witt's fielding improves. Connie is out to make a decent showing in the league this year and will stop at nothing to attain that end. Although Grover is a weaker batter, his influence on the other members of the team will more than offset this. Then, again, it may be that Manager Mack is figuring on using Witt in right field until Thrasher gets better acquainted with the position. The Atlanta slugger is far from being a big league outfielder at present, and if he plays regularly the other clubs in the league will develop a flock of right-field hitters when they meet the Athletics. Thrasher is exceptionally fast, but his speed is not great enough to capture what are regarded as easy fly balls. A good outfielder usually starts for the ball as soon as it hits the bat and is waiting for it when it comes down. Faskert, Strunk, Cobb, Speaker and the others are examples of this style of play, and it is the only way they can cover the ground. Thrasher has not learned this feature. He waits until the ball begins to drop before starting for it, and then it is too late. His weakness is known to the other members of the team, and whenever a high fly is sent out to right field, Lawry, McInnis and Strunk go after it. This means that four men are after a ball which should be caught by the regular fielder, and the chances of a collision are so great that the ball invariably falls safe. Connie is aware of Thrasher's weakness, but has confidence in him. The Tiozan says that Eddie Murphy was a poorer prospect, but he learned the game quickly and fielded well despite his critics. But Connie cannot take chances with his club at this juncture. It is time to emerge from the cellar and no bet should be overlooked when it comes to strengthening the club. Witt is a good outfielder, and as the right guard in Shibe Park is one of the most difficult to play in the entire circuit it is possible that he will be shifted and Thrasher used as a pinch hitter.

WITT will be needed out there now, especially when Amos Strunk and Manager Mack apparently are on the outs. Bill Johnson, who played center field during Strunk's absence, also is inexperienced and needs some assistance.

Strunk Played Wonderful Baseball in the South

WHILE we are discussing the Strunk case, it seems strange that there were no signs of unpleasantness between the star outfielder and Mack before the club left Atlanta. Amos could not possibly be accused of indifferent playing, for his fielding was the feature of all the games. Twice, however, he failed to run out grounders which were fumbled and could have been beaten out; but each time the Athletics were in the lead and there was no serious consequence. On the defense he covered his own position and ran into right and left fields, where he made sensational catches. In fact, he seemed to be the entire outfield and his work was applauded more than that of any of the others. He was fighting hard all of the time, and this announcement of his differences with Mack came as a big surprise. There is no doubt that Strunk is dissatisfied with his lot, but he never has allowed this dissatisfaction to affect his playing. His contract is said to be one reason and the other is that the team doesn't fight as it should. Amos is a young man, full of aggressiveness, and it is against his nature to calmly submit to defeat without a struggle. He wants to carry the battle to the other fellow and keep after him all the time. He has an idea that more of that old-time "pep" will be the best thing for the Athletics and a little tilt with the umpire now and then will keep the players on their toes. Amos also believes that the dare-devil and pugnacious game played by Detroit is the proper thing, where the players are allowed to take chances and forget all about conservatism. In other words, he wants to play on a club composed of red-blooded players, where there is continuous excitement, instead of a cut-and-dried program which never varies from day to day.

STRUNK is one of the best outfielders in either league and is too valuable a man to have on the sidelines. His ideas, too, are sane and sound, but it must be remembered that he is only a player and Connie Mack is the manager. Connie has won several pennants through his own methods, and when it comes time to change he will do so.

The Passing of Ferocious Fredward Fulton

WE HAVE persistently maintained that Fred Fulton should not be taken seriously in his claims for the heavyweight championship, and his recent bout with Carl Morris bears out our contentions. Fulton, according to reports, acted more like a truck horse than a contender for the championship. For two rounds he was a wonder, but when he saw that he was inflicting no damage and Big Carl was coming in for more, the foul occurred. We do not believe that it was intentional, but we are sure it was lucky for Ferocious Fredward. The Plasterer demonstrated that he was no glutton for punishment, and when stacked up against a good man all of his cleverness, including that "pile-driving left," fell by the wayside. Against easy marks like Tom Cowler and Charley Weinert, Fulton looked like a champion—but he needs soft ones as opponents in order to show his best. This marks the passing of the widely heralded Gopher Giant. It is not likely that he will meet Morris in a return match, and this will mean that his name will be erased from the top of the list. It also will be a severe blow to Tom Jones and Jack Curley, the other unsilent member of the Willard syndicate. Fulton was plucked a year ago as a logical opponent for Jess and the champion was eager to meet him. Willard had Fulton's record down pat and figured his ability to a hair's breadth. Plans were laid for a battle in Milwaukee, where Jess was to back the show with his own money and grab off at least \$100,000 for his end. Now some one else must be substituted or everything will be called off.

JESS is not anxious to mingle with any one outside of Fulton, however, and perhaps will use the war alibi to retain his standing as a premier circus performer.

Pity the Poor Umpire—if You Can

LIFE will be no bed of roses for the umpires this season. For several years the arbitrators have been enjoying peaceful days and large salaries, and from present indications they will continue to enjoy the inflated pay checks and that is all. The halcyon days of peace are over for the umpires for two reasons: The Federal League and Players' Fraternity have passed out of existence, and with them went the indifferent spirit of the players. The men in uniform are out to hold their jobs in these uncertain times and they will be intolerant toward the men who make the decisions. You can't expect a man who is trying to hold down his job to feel charitable toward a chap who calls a bad one on him and makes him look like a dub in the eyes of his boss. All of this would make little difference, however, were it not for an evident change of heart on the part of the magnates and owners. The tip is out that the baseball public expects less friendship and more baseball on the diamond, and the owners have wisely determined to make good this year. The fans do not want rowdism on the ball field, but they do want to see the players fighting hard for victory, and no fighting team ever got along well with an umpire. The managers are instilling a spirit of battle into their players, and as a result the rooters will see teams out there fighting for every point. Naturally, the umpires are going to bear the brunt of this new-born spirit of what care?

Mathewson is the latest manager to come out with the statement that he is going to put some "color" into the Reds. When a quiet-mannered man of the Johnson type makes such a promise we chuckle with glee when we contemplate fighters like McGraw, Hughie Jennings, Stallings and his Lieutenant Evers

FEW CHANGES IN LEAGUE SCHEDULES

Most Opening and Closing Dates Correspond to Those of Other Years

MAJORS OPEN WEDNESDAY

Opening and Closing Dates of Big Baseball Leagues

Table with columns: League, Opening, Closing, Games. Lists American, National, International, Southern, Western, Southern Assn., Pacific Coast, American Assn., Blue Ridge, Southern, and Northwestern leagues with their respective dates and game counts.

Judging from the various major and minor league baseball schedules made public to date, there is little change in the general playing scheme for the season of 1917. A majority of the leagues have selected opening and closing dates which correspond closely to those of the last few years.

The chief changes are to be found in the schedules of the International League and the American Association. In round figures these two organizations have cut six weeks off their regular seasons in order to provide dates for the interleague series of forty-eight games to be played at the close of the pennant races in the two circuits.

The National and American Leagues will open Wednesday, and close on Thursday, October 3, which will permit the initial game of the world's series being played on Saturday, October 6, if eastern or western teams are competitors, or Monday, October 8, in case the series proves to be an inter-sectional contest.

In other respects there are few novelties, the Pacific Coast League having the longest season, while one or more of the class D leagues will stage the shortest pennant races.

The Northwestern opens a little earlier and closes later than last season. Nearly three months of baseball are billed on Blawie's circuit, the season opening on April 24 and closing on September 2.

BIG TENNIS TOURNAMENT SCHEDULED DESPITE WAR

NEW YORK, April 3.—Julian S. Myrick, president of the West Side Tennis Club, of Forest Hills, L. I., the largest organization of its sort in the world, has announced that his club would stage a series of exhibition matches between the leading players of the East during the season, irrespective of the action taken by the United States National Lawn Tennis Association with regard to the war.

The matches will be in the nature of individual contests and the players who will compete will be recruited from the ranks of those available for such competition. These matches, Myrick said, would in all probability be held even if the sanctioned schedule of the national association is not canceled. This schedule, the association announced last week, will be canceled only upon the advice of the military authorities.

The following players, among others, will be invited to play, unless they have been drafted for military service: R. Norris Williams, 24, the national champion; Karl H. Behr, George M. Church, Harold A. Throckmorton, Theodore Roosevelt Pell, Watson M. Washburn and S. Howard Voshell, the national indoor champion.

SNOW HALTS TWO BALL GAMES IN OHIO TOWNS

CINCINNATI, O., April 9.—The Cincinnati-Cleveland game scheduled yesterday was called off on account of snow.

COLUMBUS, O., April 9.—The Washington and Columbus teams were prevented from playing yesterday on account of snow.

GOLF LINKS TO BE USED FOR RAISING FOODSTUFFS

NEW YORK, April 9.—Golfers throughout the country will be urged to cultivate foodstuffs on all unused portions of their links and devote the products to the purchase of ambulance trucks and other articles of national defense.

PETERSON, PHILA. BOY, IN N. Y. STATE LEAGUE

ELMIRA, N. Y., April 9.—Bob Peterson, the Philadelphia boy, who was bought from the Bingoes by Manager Jimmy Jackson, of the local New York State League team, has accepted the terms offered by the Colonels, and will send in his contract in a few days.

TACTICS IN SPORT'S STEAD

West Virginia University to Stop All Athletic Activities

MORGANTOWN, W. Va., April 9.—Athletic contests at Girard College were suspended on account of the war, it is announced. More than 600 students at the university are taking military training, which will be substituted for athletics.

FEDERAL EFFICIENCY Unsolicited Phone Calls form the greater portion of "Federal" inquiries. When business men find that Federal Trucks cut out trouble and reduce delivery cost per ton-mile, they naturally tell their friends. It is easier every day to sell FEDERAL MOTOR TRUCKS Capacities 1, 1 1/2, 2, 3 1/2, 5 tons Federal Sales Co. of Phila. 2395 Chestnut Street Day and Night Service Station 3428 Ludlow Street One of ten trucks sold to Daniel J. Lutz

WHICH WILL PLAY SHORT FOR MACK?



Lawton Witt and Ray Grover are a pair of brilliant shortstops with Connie Mack. While Witt held down that job last year, it is said Connie's present plans are to start Grover in the position and keep Witt on the bench as a utility man or put him out in right field. Grover, Mack believes, is a more experienced player and a sure fielder.

SCHOLASTIC LEAGUE BALL SEASON OPENS TOMORROW WITH FOUR GAMES

THE opening of the interscholastic league baseball season will be ushered in tomorrow afternoon, weather permitting, with four games on various diamonds. Perhaps the most important will be between South Philadelphia, holders of two major sport championships, and the Northeast High School team.

Catholic High School opens the season at the Philadelphia Trades' School. The Trades' boys play at the Bill field and Coach Charles Schlow has hopes of winning the 1917 title. Phil Lewis's Germantown High nine will meet the West Philadelphia High School players at the West Phillies' field. Frankford High opens the season with Central High at Houston Field.

The league schedule follows: Northeast High vs. Southern, at Southern. Catholic High vs. Philadelphia Trades, at Trades. Germantown High vs. West Philadelphia, at West Philadelphia. Frankford High vs. Central High, at Central.

Brown Preparatory School was to speedily for the Girard College nine in the same played at Girard Saturday afternoon. The Brown team winning by a score of 5 to 2. The Girard athletes have not had much outdoor practice and a number of errors made were very costly. Gilham pitched a fairly steady game, but was wild throwing to the bases.

McKenty, who did the twirling for Brown, allowed only three hits. Milner, Landberg and Wittmaier again showed mid-season form in hitting and running the bases. As the game with Norristown was canceled, the Brownies will meet Villanova Preparatory School next Wednesday afternoon. Hurley will probably do the twirling in this contest.

The meeting of the supervisory committee on athletics will be held Wednesday of this week and the question of rowing will be settled. It is an even bet as to the probable action of the committee. The advocates of rowing will be out in force.

The school coaches and managers are going to be very careful that all the eligibility rules are enforced this spring. The use of an athlete over the age limit last term caused one school to lose a championship title.

South Philadelphia High School boys take a trip to the seashore next Saturday when they play Atlantic City High School. If the weather is as cold next Saturday as it was last week-end, the South Phillies will do well to wear winter suits and overcoats.

Germantown Academy's baseball team has been strengthened by the addition of a number of all-round athletes, and now Coach Stanley Sutton looks forward to a fairly successful season in the Interacademy League. Germantown plays the opening game with Episcopal tomorrow.

PHILLIES RATED AS ONE OF THREE BEST CLUBS TO BEAT OUT GIANTS FOR NATIONAL LEAGUE TITLE FLAG

New York Looks Like Top-Heavy Favorite, but Locals, Boston and Brooklyn Are Not Out of the Running Yet a While

By GRANTLAND RICE

ON WEDNESDAY of the present or fiscal week a new set of box scores will be raised to indicate the appearance of another big league campaign. By this date the advance has been spread before you in layers several feet thick, yet there is always room for another observation or so before the door is shut and the first blows are struck.

The Shift Just a year ago at this date we figured two clubs as pennant favorites. They were the Boston Red Sox and the Boston Braves. One came through and the other, after a bad start, came within two or three games of arriving in the borders of the promised land.

For 1917 there will be a brief shift in the dope. The flag favorite in the National League is bound to be New York. You can't get away from this pick, unless you are taking a flyer on the bare chance of calling an upset.

The Giants are by no means certain winners. There is no such entry in this rickety pastime. But of the eight clubs they have all the best of it when it comes to a matter of form, figures and advance guessing.

Four Clubs In the National League there are only four clubs with a chance. These all belong to the East. The West has siddled badly ever since the old Cub machine went to no club in sight with a chance to finish 1, 2, 3 if there is 1 per cent of anything in the April statistics. It is all New York against Boston, Brooklyn and Philadelphia, and only fine pitching will give any of these clubs a first-class show.

Boston, Brooklyn and Philadelphia are about as well matched as any three clubs you will find. They finished under a pocket handkerchief last October, and they will not be very far apart six months from now. All three are well managed clubs, and we happen to know that at least one of the three is confident of nosing out the Giants—not with any of that early April fake confidence for publication, but a sincere belief that the Giants are overrated, that they lack pennant pitching and that they won't win.

Another Scalp Lifter In the American League it is mostly a matter of how far success has eaten in the Boston Red Sox.

In the last two years they have won two pennants and two world's series. "Triumphs of this type are usually under-estimated in their effect. There is no great incentive in running after a street car that you have already caught.

Success and fame are no longer lures for the Red Sox. Victory is now an old story. It may be the Red Sox have one more great year left. They are a great ball club at their best, a better club than they have been given credit for. They have the pitching and the punch, the experience and the grit to keep on going.

But they are up against the keenest competition this season any ball club has known for a decade. For they have at least five husky competitors around with a war club in either mitt, looking only for a chance to swing.

This American League jubilee should be a wonder this summer. Last season un-wanted injuries and accidents to New York and Cleveland players and a slow, groggy start by St. Louis prevented a six-club finish through the stretch.

Of the six teams with a good chance, you can figure two out in advance through an unusual amount of bad luck. But it would not be surprising to have all six still in the race around late July or early August.

Beyond Dope This A. L. affair is a race that no man can dope. It is well beyond the vital and

succulent statistic. There are the three old favorites, Boston, Detroit and Chicago, sure to be up there exchanging wallops to a finish.

And then there are the Yanks. This club was three and one-half games to the good last July when Baker, Cullop and Gilhooly, three stars, were injured. They were three and one-half games out, but despite the fact that Ray Caldwell, the star pitcher of other years had not been able to contribute his part.

Now this club has known a season's play together, is far better balanced in general team work and is absolutely confident of success. The New York Yankees are a better ball club than you figure them to be. They have about everything a ball club needs—good catching, good pitching, defensive speed and the punch.

This Baker-Pipp combination is one of the most dangerous in the game. The wind-up is there in other parts to go out and get runs. And the pitching is better than any other in the league, with the possible exception of Boston.

The Yankees undoubtedly deserve a place in the dope on even terms with the Red Sox, Tigers and White Sox. They are bound to get fine pitching all the year, and fine pitching means a fine club where the rest of the cast is of average mould.

If the Braves, Dodgers and Phillies are able to keep the Giants in check, the National League race will be above the average. But this proposition calls for a lucky young "if."

You may recall the strength of Boston in the dope on even terms with the Red Sox, Tigers and White Sox. They are bound to get fine pitching all the year, and fine pitching means a fine club where the rest of the cast is of average mould.

General Wood to Open N. Y. Season NEW YORK, April 9.—Major General Leonard Wood will open the baseball season at the Polo Grounds Wednesday afternoon, when he will toss out the first ball in the game between the Yankees and Boston, which will underlie the American League race. Preparatory to this will be a feature of the program of the day for the Yankees are to show that they can do as well as play baseball.

BOSTON COLLEGE BATS FOR HARVARD AGAINST BRAVES BOSTON, April 9.—The Boston College baseball team, having canceled its southern trip, in which Georgetown University and Catholic University mines were to be played, has agreed to meet the Boston Braves at the Braves field tomorrow. Harvard College was scheduled to play the Braves on that date, but the Crimson has abandoned all its contests.

5 out of 9 on a Pullman A random test was recently made in a crowded Pullman Club Car—and it was found that, of the men who were smoking cigarettes, 5 out of 9 were smoking Fatimas. Probably an unusually high percentage even for Fatimas; but this case is merely one of the many evidences that more and more representative men are now-a-days choosing a sensible cigarette. They smoke Fatimas—not alone for their likeable taste—but for the common sense "man-comfort" that they find in this delicately balanced Turkish blend. Fatimas please the throat and tongue while you are smoking them—and they leave you feeling "fit" afterwards. You don't have to think of "how many" when you are smoking a sensible cigarette like Fatima. Lippitt's Agency, Boston, Mass.

FATIMA A Sensible Cigarette

20 for 15¢