

SPORTING FACTS AND FANCIES

"Johnny" Evers, the polished little second baseman of the Chicago Cubs, believes that Frank Chance is the greatest "inside" baseball player in the game to-day. Speaking of last year's struggle for supremacy in the National league, Evers says: "When you take into consideration base running, fielding and at the bat most of Chance's plays seem to have gone unnoticed, and many inside plays worked on the opposing teams by the champions were at his instigation. Tinker is a very tricky 'inside' man, his fooling the base runner on an outfield fly being a good one. I remember how he caught Magee of Philadelphia three times in as many days on this same play. Magee was on first each time and each time started to steal second when the batsman hit a fly to our outfield. Tinker scrambled for an imaginary grounder or apparently took Kling's throw at second, and when Magee learned of his mistake he was an easy out before he could get back to first base." Evers tells another good story of "head" work, and Schulte of the Cubs is the hero. It seems there was a man on third and Schulte was on first base, with one man out. The Chicago club was playing Cincinnati. Capt. Chance told Schulte to block a double play if possible so that the man on third might score. The ball was hit to Second Baseman Huggins and he tossed the ball to "Tom" Corcoran, who, in attempting to complete a double play, hit Schulte straight in the forehead, knocking him unconscious. When Schulte came to he simply said: "I was told to block a double play and I guess I used my head this time." But Chicago won the game and subsequently the world's championship.

There is a whole lot of time saved in throwing the ball down low, for if the second baseman has to take the throw on a line with his head the runner slides into the base while he is pulling it down. Tommy Evers, one time a second baseman on the Washington club and a swell one in his time, who is an uncle of the Chicago candy kid, Johnny Evers, says that Street has all the motions and the same kind of a throwing arm as had Buck Ewing. When the St. Louis champions were sweeping everything before them, says Mr. Evers, and running crazy on the bases, beating the backstops to it at every point, they blew into New York with the idea of making Buck Ewing look as foolish as they had the other catchers on the circuit. The first man up for the St. Louis club was Arlie Latham, the third baseman and a champion base purloiner of his day. "Juice" tore off a single, and away he raced for first, and never stopped when the right fielder threw the ball over the first baseman's head in returning it, and Ewing had to race back of the stands to recover it. Latham, much to the amazement of the Giants, tore for third, yelling loudly that no Giant could put him out. Then Buck, with that terrific whip of his, shot the ball across the diamond, and he had Latham by five feet. During the rest of that game Buck Ewing threw out 11 men who tried to steal on him, and when the Mound City lads finally woke up to the fact that they were up against a real backstop they were the saddest lot of ball players that New York had seen in many a day. Yet Mr. Evers thinks Ewing, in his best days, never had anything on Charley Street in the throwing line.

In the National league the feature pitching performances have been turned by a trio of south paws, Nap Rucker of Brooklyn, Johnny Lush of St. Louis, and George Witase of New York. The work of Rucker was perhaps the most noteworthy. He shut the Boston team out without a hit or run and struck out 14 men, creating a record for the older organization. The only two men who reached first did so by grace of errors on the part of the infield. According to Umpire Jim Johnstone it was the greatest bit of catching he has seen since joining the National league staff. George Witase shut out the Phillies for ten innings without a hit or run, the only man catching first being hit by a pitched ball.

The peculiar names of the various star twirlers and catchers of the fast leagues offer many a play on words. It is only natural to suppose that Upp and Doolin ought to be the liveest battery. Upp is a south paw with Columbus, while Doolin receives for the Phillies. Lush and Bliss would be the happiest battery. Both are members of the St. Louis Cardinals. Hogg and Sweeney, of the New York Americans, would be the funniest. Their names sound like a couple of knock-about comedians.

Ground has been broken at Union City, Tenn., on what is said to be intended by Joe Cantillon, manager of the Washington Baseball club, as the greatest "winter home" for tired ball players' ever built. The structure is located near the great fishing and hunting grounds of Reelfoot Lake, in the Sunken Lands district, noted for its big and little game. Scores of major and minor league ball players will assemble there in cold months.

DOOIN TELLS OF CATCHER'S WORK

PHILADELPHIA NATIONALS PLAYER SAYS IT IS EASY WHEN TEAM IS WINNING.

FIGHTING SPIRIT NECESSARY

Player Cannot Be Successful Without It—Truest Test of Good Backstop Is When Men Are on Bases—Declares Spitball is a Nuisance and Hardest on Receivers.

"It's a cinch," said Charlie Doolin of the Philadelphia Nationals recently, "to catch a game when the side you're on is winning. I'd rather do it than anything else I know. But I always was a hard loser, and, although I never give up hope, it always breaks me up when we come out on the wrong end of the score board. "To be a successful player you've got to fight, and to win championships you've got to have a team of scrappers. By that I don't mean bruisers, but fellows who are in the game for all it's worth, who are willing to take every chance that comes up, and get away with it. Take the New York Giants, for example. There's a team



of fighters, every one of them. People say they are arrogant. But it's nothing more than their fighting spirit cropping out when they swagger around the field, just brimming over with self-confidence. They haven't such a lot over some other teams in the league, but the present clip they have been going in, in my opinion, due largely to their fighting spirit.

"Yes, I suppose catchers are pretty hard to find," continued Doolin. "As for myself, barring a few times, when I played in the outfield, I have always been behind the plate, and, although Charlie Comisky once told me that I'd make a better tailor than I would a catcher, I've managed to keep there still. Catching isn't hard, especially when the game is going your way, and the pitcher is working well.

"The true test for every backstop comes when there are men on bases and you are up against a fast team. You have to keep your eye on the runner all the time, and try if possible to read his signal to the batter when he is going down to second, then you give the pitcher the sign to waste a ball, and you can generally manage to catch the runner napping.

"It's the only way to break up a hit-and-run play that I know, and although the crowd may yell at the pitcher for putting wide ones over, and wasting balls, it pays in the end, for it keeps runs down if you can get a man napping at first or on his way down to second.

"When a man is coming home from third base the only way to get him to dive for him and reach him before he reaches you. I stand a little inside of the line, and when I get the ball, lunge my whole body at the runner. Then he can't hurt you, for with shin guards and a heavy chest protector, the catcher is pretty safe. When I first caught, I used to stand to one side and try to tag the runner as he came down the line, or just as he went by, but one summer while I was playing ball in the mountains I noticed a big, husky football player. He never tried to tag a man, but just dove for him, and he seldom missed. After I had seen him work I made up my mind that that was the game for me, and I have always kept it up.

"Yes, I wear shin guards and knee protectors, and I have done so for years. Three foul tips striking me on the kneecap in one game almost put me out of the catching business, and I don't take any chances now."

Doolin is one of the best-natured fellows in the world, but the one subject that makes him fly off at a tangent is the spitball.

"It's rotten," was his verdict, given in very hearty emphasis, "and it is really harder on the catcher than it is on the batter. Very few pitchers have any sort of control over the thing, and it has ruined some catchers completely. Besides being the hardest kind of a ball to catch, it is almost impossible to make any kind of an accurate quick throw with it. Don't say spitball to me. It's a bad noise."

Connie Mack says he will be a contender for the rag in good old 1908.

GREAT PROSPECTS FOR 1908 FOOTBALL SEASON IN WEST

Teams of Conference Colleges More Evenly Matched Than Ever Before—Championship in Doubt.

On the eve of the 1908 football game, indications are that the line-bucking game will have a most prosperous session.

Never before have the conference universities been so evenly matched. Where heretofore it has been a foregone conclusion that victory would go to one or two teams, the situation this fall, according to experts, is decidedly different in that all conference teams seem to be about equal in strength.

On the western gridiron, the championship is open for argument. Chicago, who won the title last fall, has been deprived of many of her best players, and unless some high class timber is developed, Coach Stagg will have a very rough journey.

Indiana is said to have the brightest prospects she has been confronted with in years. The Hoosiers themselves admit this, and rival elevens are taking the hunch that Coach Jimmy Sheldon's outfit will have to be reckoned with.

The same situation holds in Illinois, despite the wail of the Illinois coaches that they have lost all the star freshmen. A number of last season's veterans have been retained, and, with the new material at hand, it is certain a strong football organization will be constructed.

Wisconsin, according to close students of the game, is the "dark horse" in the west. The Badger elevens got into the fray late in the 1907 season after a bad start and made things decidedly interesting.

Most of last year's players will be found in line this year, and, with an early start, the team is bound to be heard from in a substantial way.

Minnesota has lost a number of 1907 stars. With the loss of Capron, who did the Tiger's share of keeping the Gophers in the running last year and many of the veterans, the Gopher club coach will have to develop a number of men to play on the varsity team.

Northwestern will have a fair representation. Her football battles will be confined this fall to Illinois and Purdue and Director Gillespy is hopeful of getting away with at least a .500 batting average.

NOTRE DAME'S LEADER



He played tackle and was captain of the Dartmouth eleven in 1903 and was an All-American tackle in 1903.

Umpire Owens Making Good. President Pulliam has introduced a new umpire to National league baseball fans. His name is Owens, and he comes from the American association. The new indicator has made a very favorable impression. He is a powerful looking young man and has a deep bass voice. At times the fans can almost understand what he is saying, which is a vast improvement on some of the older umpires. Owens had a remarkably good reputation in the minor league, and is said to have had complete control over the players. Incidentally it is reported that he whipped one or two of the ball tossers for insults—not on the diamond, but after the shades of night had descended.

No Change in Forward Pass.

Representatives of all the eastern colleges met in New York recently to discuss possible amendments in the playing rules for this season's football. The meeting was held under the auspices of the central board of officials of the American intercollegiate football rules committee. The chief point under discussion was the rule governing the forward pass. After argument had been heard from a number of prominent coaches on the subject it was decided that the rule as interpreted last year would be preserved in its integrity, the tendency to frequent changing of the rules being unanimously condemned.

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