

BATING GAINS AND LOSSES

How Big League Players Fell Back or Went Ahead.

DOPE ON THE STICK WORK

Bransfield, Doyle, Evers, Lohert and Bridwell Make Big Advance in National League—Thomas in the American.

In both the National and American leagues last season more batters fell off in their stick work than gained. In the National league fifty-two gained in points and fifty-nine lost a drop. In the American league only forty-five gained, whereas seventy-one had a slump. It is plain, therefore, that the National leaguers held up to their work better than the hitters of the younger base ball organization. It also is plain in both leagues that the batters are not holding their own in their struggle with the pitchers, that the reverse of headway is being made by the batters in the ceaseless duel with the occupants of the box for the upper hand, a duel which is one of the salient phases of the national game.

There is in each of the big leagues one batter who may be said to be in a class by himself. One is Wagner of the National league, the other Cobb of the American league. There are no batters quite of the grade of these two exceptional performers with the locust wand, and of the two Wagner is the greater. He is again at the top, and if his gain this season was small it was because his batting of the previous year was about as high in percentage as it is humanly possible for a player to go. Cobb, in the American league, ranked second this year, but the man who ranked ahead of him did not play in nearly as many games and was small at the bat often enough to go against the same law of chance, the likelihood of having his average pulled down, as Cobb was.

The figures show some pronounced rises and falls. Some of these were built on substance and consequently were earned. Others were mere flukes, the result of a freak gain, belonging to men who were at the bat comparatively infrequently and for that reason would jump far ahead by making a few more base hits than in the previous year. Take such batters as Larry Doyle, Killy Bransfield, Johnny Evers, Hans Lohert and Al Bridwell in the National league, and their gains represent real improvement in stick work, for they were in the game day in and day out. The same is true of Delehanty, Hemphill and Stovall, in the American league.

In the National league the best gain among the every day players was made by Bransfield, who advanced 71 points over 1907. It is a tribute to John McGraw's judgment the way Bradwell improved in his hitting. He was 67 points better than in 1907 and became not only a first class but a timely batter. One of the best natural hitters in the country, Sherwood Magee of the Philadelphia, slumped appreciably, but that probably represents only a temporary decline. Three of the players whom McGraw traded last winter to Boston—Browne, Bowerman and McGann—all fell off in their batting, as did Shannon, who was disposed of to Pittsburgh. For that matter so did Tenney, who was had from Boston.

The biggest gain in the National league was made by Lew Moren, the Philadelphia pitcher, who jumped forward 164 points. The biggest loss fell to Sammy Strang—138 points—but Strang played only a few games in the big league last season before he was released to Birmingham, and less would have done better had he had more opportunity. Wittise of the New Yorks was another pitcher who was much better with the ash this year than last. He boosted his average 102 points. Ferguson, the Boston pitcher, improved a great deal in his hitting, and had more opportunity to go to the bat than he had when with the New York club.

Frank Chance, a good batter season in and season out, fell from seventh to twentieth place. Another classy batter who dropped, and dropped far, was Mike Mitchell of the Athletics, who ranked eighth in 1907 and seventeenth in 1908. McLean of the same team had a big tumble, too. Bridwell moved up from eighth to tenth place, Doyle from thirty-sixth to third. Bransfield, from seventeenth to fourth, Evers from fifty-fifth to fifth and Lohert from sixteenth to sixth. Tommy Leach fell from fourth to thirty-first and Beaumont from third to twenty-third. Chic Fraser finished in the same place both years, 146th.

The biggest gain in the American league was made by Ira Thomas, the catcher. When with the Highlanders season before last he ranked 106th, but with the Detroit the last season he climbed up to sixth place and advanced 115 numbers. Ed Killian, the Detroit pitcher, took a big tumble. His average was 133 points less than in 1907, and he dropped from fifth to 159th place. Pitcher Bill Donovan of the same team also took a long shoot down the batting totem. Thielman, the Cleveland and Boston pitcher, soared to the extent of 101 points and ranked seventh last season to 193rd for the season before.

The once peerless hitter, Lofe, was in fifteenth place among the 1908 batters, the lowest he has been since he became a major leaguer. That was six places lower than he was the year before, and his average shrank ten points. Jim Delehanty of the Washingtons advanced from nineteenth to third place and added thirty-nine points to his percentage. The doughy Sam Crawford was fourth last season, fourth the year before and lost four points. Ty Cobb lost sixteen. Hemphill improved his position by thirty-six notches and added thirty-six points to his batting average.

Willie Keeler made a gain over his 1907 average, though still far below his normal percentages when he was in his prime. It will be noticed in both leagues that there are considerably more gains than losses among the batters who rank near the top. The deduction is that though the poorer batters are suffering, the good ones are holding their own against the pitching. The following tables show the ranking of the batters in 1907 and 1908 and the gains and losses in points:

NATIONAL LEAGUE table with columns for 1907 Rank, 1908 Rank, and Gains/Losses. Includes players like Wagner, Doyle, Bransfield, etc.

WITH COLLEGE ATHLETES

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MICHIGAN WANTS COMEBACK

Outdoor Tests for Amherst Freshmen—Michigan Apparently Ready to Return to Conference Field.

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Physical training is required at Amherst for all classes for the first three years. Any man who wants to get his degree must satisfy the physical director of his physical fitness. The fall work is conducted on the athletic field by way of an entrance examination. It shows the instructor what are the capabilities of his men and what they most need, which is better even than the entrance examination in studies. In running 100 yards a performance better than 15 1/2 seconds is required before any points may be scored. In the broad jump 11 feet 8 inches is the lowest mark which points may be counted. For the shot put the minimum is 18 feet 3 inches. Marks of 100 per cent are awarded for running 100 yards in 10 1/2 seconds, clearing 20 feet in the broad jump or putting the shot 42 feet. The proportions do not appear to be very clear, because putting the shot that distance is not so easy as running 100 yards in two-fifths more than even time. There is a good comparison between the tests in the shot put and the broad jump. At the first test this year it was found that the average time for running the dash was 15 1/2 seconds. The freshmen leaped on the average 15 feet 8 inches in the broad jump, figured out 28 feet 8 inches to the shot. These performances are very much below what are to be expected from freshmen who have had any experience of athletics at all in their public schools and serve to show that the average freshman entering Amherst is not very well developed in sports. However, as this category probably excludes the men who were trying for foot ball, and who necessarily would be better, it is impossible to characterize them as standard performances for the whole class.

The Second Test. At the end of five weeks of training the same tests were repeated. The average time for running 100 yards had come down to 14 1/2 seconds, the point at which scoring began. The broad jump increased on the average three inches. The shotput made a gain of a foot on the average. The scoring of eighteen feet in the shotput gives zero and each three inches increase adds 1 per cent. For the broad jump every inch over 11 feet 8 inches adds 1 per cent. On the basis of these percentage figures the first test of the class was 25.5 on a basis of 100 and the second 25.5.

The bulletin of the work sets forth: "The gains thus recorded are apparent at a glance even for so short a period of training and it should be said that in the second test the men ran against a very strong wind. The nature of this test cultivates a spirit of friendly rivalry which brings out the best ability of each man. Furthermore, a list of the ten best records is posted and in striving to make the first ten each man unconsciously puts forth his best efforts. It is an interesting fact that while in the first test only one man scored above 50 per cent in the second test nine men were above 50 per cent, some of the individual gains were great, some men improved their doubling their records. It is believed that an average gain of 44 per cent for five weeks work is enough incentive to continue this work."

It is found that the men who have had the least training before entering college, and therefore the ones most in need of it, are the ones who make the greatest gains in their records. The natural athletes require no urging to work out of doors and so come to college better developed than the student body. The tendency of these men, however, is to specialize in the event for which they are best fitted by nature. This will tend to give them development only along certain lines and not all around. The work at Amherst is so divided as to give the man the even development which is desired. "It is a source of satisfaction to note that the man who made the best record in each test was not the man who did the best in any one event, but scored his points by general all round ability. The man who made the fastest time in the 100-yard run finished third in the first ten, the best broad jumper came in second and the man who made the record shotput was tenth. These facts would seem to point in favor of the even development instead of allowing a man to specialize according to his tastes. "For some years statistics have been kept on the height, weight and lung capacity of the men thus training and the effects of the outdoor exercise and invigorating air have produced results which would seem incredible were they not supported by the actual figures to prove them."

MANY COACHES WILL STAY

Ames, Drake and Cornell Certain to Retain Old Men. IOWA CITY, Ia., Dec. 5.—(Special.)—Many Iowa coaches will be retained by institutions in this state for the 1909 foot ball season according to present indications, but the changes in the coaching staffs of the Missouri Valley schools will be more numerous.

Ames, with Clyde Williams, Drake with Ames and Bryan, are satisfied with the conditions which face them in the coaching line and changes are unlikely. Grinnell has had a system of annual changes and while Andrews, the Yale man, may be back, most of the people outside of the school look for a change. Jack Hollister of Morningside, after a disastrous season, seems to have come into his own and he will probably retain his position another season. It is probable that Mark Catlin will return to Iowa next fall. No decision has been made for several changes. W. J. Monilau is fighting a losing game at Missouri so far as foot ball coaching is concerned. Cayou ends his contract at Washington, thus leaving three of the schools, Drake, Ames and Kansas where conditions seem likely to remain as they are.

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By the end of the present academic year there will hardly be in Michigan a man who would have been barred from competition under the three-year rule at the time it was passed. Furthermore, Michigan now has returned in effect to a three-year rule, the same as all the other colleges, with minor proviso that do not affect any games that may be played with any except non-conference colleges. It looks very much from the terms of the new rules that Michigan is preparing to swing back into the good old track. Here are the rules: "Except as below provided, no student shall participate in collegiate athletics for more than three years in aggregate, and any member of a university team who plays during any part of an intercollegiate contest shall thereby participate in that sport for the year. "Exceptions: 1. Playing on freshman teams shall not be counted in the three years allowed; 2. students affected by the retroactive feature of the three-year rule when adopted by the conference shall be allowed to compete a fourth year if otherwise eligible; 3. in view of the fact that the Intercollegiate Association of Amateur Athletes of America (of which the University of Michigan is a member) allows competition for four years, members of teams, if otherwise eligible, may compete a fourth year at meetings under the direction of said association, and, 4. in intercollegiate athletic contests with colleges allowing participation for four years, a fourth year shall be allowed members of the University of Michigan. "The foot ball team shall be allowed to start preliminary training two weeks before college opens. "There are not any very keen differences between these regulations and what the conference provided and it appears very much as if within the next year or so Michigan could easily slip back and become a conference college without altering its rules at all. That main variance is planned no one seems to be able to say.

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