

THE NATIONAL GAME

News of the Week Among the Ball Players.

There is nothing to wait for but May 24.

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It is reported that Joe Cantillon has signed with Jacksonville.

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Ed Cline, who umpired in this league last year will play first base in the Virginia state league.

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Hugh Nicol just owns Rockford. The *Register-Gazette* prints his picture in a different pose every day and the dry goods stores have bulletin boards where the female enthusiasts can learn who has signed for next year. Whenever Nicol appears on the streets he is followed by a crowd of admiring small boys.

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Contrary to the expectations of Omaha, Sioux City and Rock Island the circuit of the Western Association was not changed at the meeting in Quincy on Tuesday. The schedule made up by Mr. Hickey was adopted and Lincoln will open the season at home with Peoria. On the Fourth of July we will have Hugh Nicol and his Rockford team and we finish the season at St. Joe on Sept 25th.

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The strongest clubs, on paper, in the Association up to the present time are Lincoln, Omaha, Peoria and Des Moines in the order named. The Omaha and Peoria clubs are both filled up with players who can hit the ball. The Lincoln team is composed of gentlemanly players, all of whom are easy to control and when the manager lays his head on his pillow to sleep he can do so happy with the thought that the players are not at some saloon. The team this season will bat much better than last year and in fielding they are much faster.

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One who did something to gain the title of "Old Sport," has just passed away in Mr. Joseph Elliott, who was first sporting editor of the *New York Herald*. The paper was not such a large affair at its start in 1835, and Mr. Elliot, who was a printer, was made superintendent of the building, and did the sporting department in addition. Later on he did sporting work exclusively and remained connected with the *Herald* to the day of his death. How much personal enjoyment Mr. Elliott accumulated cannot be known, but he witnessed a great deal of fun in the aggregate as enjoyed by others.

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One of the best things the magnates of the Western Association did at the Des Moines meeting was to pick the colors for each club, having no two alike. Last season when Jacksonville or Peoria played here it was a difficult matter for people to pick the players of the different clubs there being a sameness in their uniforms. This year Lincoln will wear a grey uniform with white caps, belts and stockings, which is one of the very neatest uniforms that could be selected. Of course navy blue did not show the dirt, but Manager Ebricht will see that the uniforms are kept clean and the players will make a very neat appearance.

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THE COURIER is in receipt of the following from an Omaha crank—"If consistent with your views, will you kindly use the following: 'Says an Omaha "Fan" in a letter to the papers in that city: 'Are we going to have a base ball park this season?' This is a question we hear asked nearly every day now, and perhaps it is not the wrong time to call attention to the fact, that should the management attempt to force the public into witnessing the game the coming season on their cigar box grounds at 19th and Charles streets, they will surely receive anything but the encouragement they got last season. Complaint was almost, if not universally, bitter, among the patrons last year on this score, but owing to many obstacles the management had to contend with, the management was comparatively mild. The base ball patrons will demand to see base ball the coming season and it is useless to claim that the national game can be produced on the Charles street grounds. To a casual observer and ardent admirer of the game this appears a good subject for Messrs. Row and McVittie to give sound consideration. "HEW."

All of the National league clubs are now in the south and are getting limbered up and in shape to begin the seasons' work. None of the minor league clubs have the necessary to make a southern trip hence each club will get in condition on their own grounds. As yet Manager Ebricht has not notified the players to report but it is thought they will be here between the 1st and 5th of April. Several exhibition games have been arranged and if the weather is good the team will be in excellent shape to open the season. Some of the National league teams will probably return via Lincoln and if they do we shall have the pleasure of seeing our pets pitted against a National league club. There will be sixteen players without Strauss who will report here. At present there is nothing new in the Strauss matter but it is hoped that he will be awarded to Lincoln. Manager Ebricht deserves credit for the great team that he has got together to represent Lincoln the coming season. Never before has base ball enthusiasm run so high; the daily papers, with one exception are running a base ball department and lending their support to the team. We will have a number of small men on the team this year and some good sized ones. The small men are Speer, Hollingworth, Kennedy, Cole and Taylor; the big boys are Ebricht, Maloney, Simons, Gragg and Hill. The balance of the players are medium sized. When the team arrived from the coast last season we boasted of but one pitcher, McGraw; this year we have seven and it is a sure thing that four of them will be winners. It is too early to say who the four will be but Kimerer and Barnes will be two of them. Manager Ebricht will carry four pitchers the first month after which time the force will be reduced to three. The park will undergo considerable changes, one of which will be important, that of swinging the diamond more toward left field, the right field fence will be brought in as there are few balls hit over it.

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St. Louis is agitated over the action of the lower house of Missouri's legislature in passing an anti-Sunday base ball bill. The St. Louis Star-Sayings has printed a variety of letters from professional and business men, and the following is one from the ministerial rank: The Rev. D. S. Phelan, pastor of the Church of Our Lady of Good Council and editor of the *Sunday Watchman*—"The lower house of the legislature of Missouri has passed a Puritan Sunday law. It does honor to the sturdy Christian men. We can truly say and what we say is the result of thirty-three years' experience with the youth of this city, we regard Sunday base ball as one of the greatest moral agencies Providence has provided for the young men of large cities. It is healthy for mind and body. And we have no faith in any civilization that does not care for the public health. The young men of our large cities have no parlor in summer but the green sward of our suburbs and the blue vault of heaven overhead. Who will deny them entrance? When upon the green, breathing the pure air of the country, with a bright sky overhead, who will prevent them from being frisky? It is inhuman to make a healthy boy look solemn in such circumstances. Let them play by all means. Our legislators from the country do not know what a blessing to our young men a whiff of country air is. They are used to it seven days in the week. The young men of our large cities enjoy it only a few hours in one day of the week. The other days they are in a dark and dingy factory, breathing dust and peering in the twilight. The change from the work shops to the green fields is to them a healthy intoxication and to bid them to be still were a cruelty and an inhumanity. Will our friends from the interior stop to consider that the denizens of large cities are human beings? We never see each other in St. Louis except when we meet on the Rialto on business and filthy lucre bent. We have no time for even a friendly salutation. The only day in the seven which permits us to shake each others hand and exchange a word of human greeting is Sunday, and we do it by means of a call or social gathering. The thousands of young men of our city, as human as the heart beat by which we live, exchange their greetings on the green, in the environs of our cities, and spend a few hours in rollicking recreation and social converse. Who will say them nay?"

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The National league meeting was held in New York Wednesday, and one of the first things they did was to award Jakey Strauss to Minneapolis.

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THE COURIER will print the schedule of the Western Association next week.