

LATE SPORT NEWS AT HOME AND ABROAD

BATTING SLUMPS PLAY HAVOC WITH BASEBALL TEAMS

An American league umpire says:—"The entire team is in a batting slump. We can't expect to win until the boys start to hit." Often during the summer the above reason is given for the poor showing of a team. What is a batting slump? No best of ball team.

The average baseball manager in response will quite readily tell you that a batting slump is the best excuse in the world to offer when your team can't hit the opposing pitchers. Seligson does a manager give credit to the opposing pitcher; instead he discredits his own.

Early in the 1914 season the Boston Red Sox were unable to win with any regularity. There was no question as to the ability of the club, it was a team with a punch, but somehow the Bostonians couldn't get started in the right direction. The Boston pitchers were going far better than the average, but the slugging Red Sox team were falling to come through with the timely hits.

Speaker slumps to .300. Naturally much was expected of Tris Speaker, the brilliant Boston outfielder. Prior to the start of the season Speaker was widely advertised as the highest salaried athlete in captivity.

Perhaps this feature had much to do with the fans in expecting so much more from him. During the first five or six weeks of the campaign, Speaker, always a .300 hitter, was never the .300 mark. Time and again he had chances to win different games with a hit, but the break never favored him.

"Speaker isn't hitting." That was invariably the answer last spring when anyone expressed surprise over Boston's failure to be up in the race. That it was a logical reason for the failure of the Red Sox to win consistently was proved by the work of the club later in the race.

Suddenly Speaker started to hit the ball. The box score each day would show a single and a double for Speaker, a double and a home run. Just as soon as Speaker began to whittle the ball to all corners of the lot did the Red Sox start their winning streak.

From a second division berth the club rose slowly but surely, until it was the only real contender for the pennant honors with the Athletics. Incidentally the work of Speaker seemed to have its effect on the entire team. Other good hitters at once on the club began to batter to better advantage.

Texas was Worried. Just what caused the spring batting slump of Speaker remains a mystery. Some will perhaps blame it on condition, others will insist it was due to the excellent spring form of the pitchers, while many will claim it was over-anxiety, because Speaker realized how much the public expected of him because of the immense salary he was drawing for his services. No doubt Speaker was worried because of his failure to get a flying start. In all probability his work was affected by his great desire to deliver the goods.

In this connection I recall a game played in Boston early in the spring. Despite his efforts, Speaker couldn't do a thing at the bat, and in the field he also failed to shine. Harry Hooper, in right field, had a big day of it; he made several sensational catches,

and by his batting Boston was able to tie up, then win the game. It was Hooper who looked like the million dollar beauty. For the time being many of Speaker's one has ever explained the real reason for a "shrinkage in hitting, which happens every now and then, to even the sensational performances were forgotten. Some of the fans insisted that he should split part of his salary with Hooper; others told him the Federal League wouldn't have benighted any with him, and so on down the line. Speaker took all the remarks good-naturedly, for he knew he was due to strike his gait sooner or later, and then the same fans would be saying nice things and taking back all the unkind remarks.

Fans Chide Wallop. One would imagine that Speaker would be in the best possible position of anyone to explain his failure to hit. Before the start of one of the spring bashes talking to Tris. He was worried because of his failure to hit, more so than the fans who were chiding him for his inability to get them safe. "Am I hitting at bad balls, Bill?" asked Speaker. "No, you are not," I replied. "Every ball you struck at yesterday I would have called a strike if you had let it go by. That isn't your trouble, but you are popping up the good ones that you usually murder."

Good Hitters Have Keen Eye. Speaker appeared relieved, for good hitters who have keen eyes at the plate always hate to be hitting at bad balls. Follows like Cobb, Speaker, Crawford, Wagner and the other good hitters always look them over with wonderful judgment at the plate, and as a rule offer at mighty few bad balls. They work the pitcher to the limit. The only explanation Speaker could offer was baseball's oldest reason for failure to hit safe, the hitting of every ball right at a fielder. Believe me, Speaker made many a pitcher suffer for that spring slump.

Very often an entire team will strike a batting slump. That is, of course, one of the reasons offered for the failure of the Athletics in the world's series. Other critics will say it was the superb pitching of Rudolph, Tyler and James. I am inclined to think it was a little bit of both.

Undoubtedly the Boston Braves have a crack trio in James, Tyler and Rudolph, but they are no better than the pitchers in the American league of the Johnson, Scott, Benz, Dubuc, Mitchell, Olicotte, Keating and Hamilton type. It is the unusual thing for a team with the known batting strength of the Athletics to average around five hits a game for four straight contests, as they did in the series.

Naps Severe Slump. The Cleveland club of the American league suffered from a number of serious ailments last summer, among them being several batting slumps. One of the severest slumps that the club experienced happened during the first week in June. It is the exception for a team to be let down without a hit in nine innings during the entire season, but the Cleveland club narrowly escaped that fate three times inside of five days.

On May 31 Joe Benz of the Chicago club beat Cleveland 6 to 1, the Naps not getting anything that looked like a hit. Two errors on the part of Chicago infield enabled the Naps to cross the plate. Two days later, June 2, Wylie Taylor of the St. Louis Browns shut out Cleveland 3 to 0, allowing only one hit. For eight innings not a safe drive was made, but Turner opened the ninth with a single, spoiling Taylor's record.

Two days later Jim Scott blanked Cleveland 2 to 0. He allowed only one hit, a drive by Jackson that fell safe. Only one other man reached first, Leibold, on a pass. Not a Cleveland player reached second, as both Jackson and Leibold died stealing.

Slumps Injurious to Stars. Batting slumps are a mighty serious ailment for a star or a team as a whole. Nothing makes a team look worse than lack of hitting power; nothing makes a club look better than the apparent ability to get a base hit when most needed. Individuals and teams will continue to have batting slumps as long as the game is played, managers will continue to offer such an excuse for failure to win, but the cause of these batting slumps will remain as big a mystery as ever.

LOCAL BOWLING SATURDAY

ON THE VIC ALLEYS. Saturday night on the Victoria alleys on Charlotte street, Percy Howard put up a new record when he rolled 151. The previous record was held by Archie McDonald, who rolled 149. Howard had seven spares, and his score was: 18, 27, 36, 55, 71, 81, 100, 116, 134 and 151.

BENDER HAS SIGNED HIS BALL CONTRACT

Baltimore, Md., Dec. 7.—"Chief" Bender, former pitcher for the Philadelphia American Baseball Club, has signed a two year contract to play with the Baltimore Federal League Club, it was officially announced today.

ATHLETIC ANNUAL MEETING

Ottawa, Dec. 6.—Thomas Boyd, of Winnipeg, succeeded Dr. Johnston, of Charlottetown, P. E. I., on Saturday, as president of the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada. The annual meeting of the governing body took place at the Chateau Laurier.

The boxing championships were awarded to the Quebec branch of the Union and they will be held in Montreal. The dates have not yet been decided on. The wrestling championships were awarded to the Winnipeg, Y. M. C. A., but decisions as to the track and field meets were left in the hands of the championship committee. The question of sending representatives to the Panama Exposition was referred to the Board of Governors; also the question of choosing the scene of the next annual meeting.

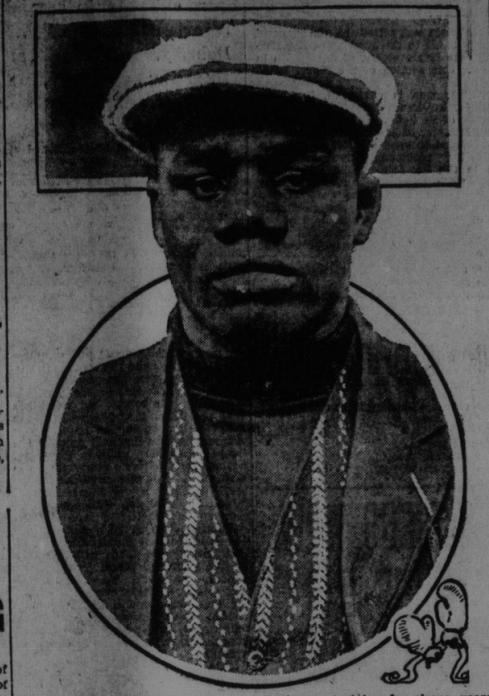
President Johnston, in his annual address, advised all the athletic forces to link up with the militia in the defence of the Empire. He alluded to the fact that many of the Union members have already enlisted. The following officers were elected: President, Thomas Boyd, Winnipeg; first vice-president, Thomas Brownlee, Toronto; second vice-president, Dr. J. G. Davidson, Vancouver; treasurer, Dr. D. B. McDonald, Toronto; secretary, Norton H. Crow, Toronto.

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LANGFORD CAME NEARER BEING GREATER FIGHTER THAN OTHERS



A sporting writer says: "Them wins." That announcement following the desperate battle in which Sam Langford, the negro fighter, beat Harry Willis, marks the climax of what is perhaps the most remarkable career in the prize ring. Langford, beaten all the way, fat, old and out of condition, out losses a short arm jab to the jaw that knocked the saddle-colored coon silly and paved the way to the quick knock-out.

They may sing their praises of fighters; but Sam Langford comes nearer being the greatest prize fighter of the time than any other. I have before me a record of 152 fights he has fought since 1903, when as a young unknown he came down from Nova Scotia and commenced fighting. In these fights he has a record of 1,106 rounds, which means about six rounds to the battle—and all I can find in the record is four legitimate defeats.

Them has fought them all. In one season he met Joe Gans and Jack Johnson—which is considerable range of weight for anyone, and he has fought all over the world. In one year he fought in New York, San Francisco, London, Winnipeg and Australia and France, which caused him to travel some.

Langford was born, according to the dope, on March 4, 1886, at Weymouth, Nova Scotia. There are rumors that the date is not accurate, but Thom vows that is the time as far as he remembers. He was a little bit of a fellow, just getting over five feet six inches, but, like his prototype, Joe Wolcott, he is large of the shoulders and chest, with wonderful recuperative powers. His arms are short and heavy and his grin is imperishable. He can get mad in a fifth of a second and be lagging before that second is ended, which is another of Wolcott's peculiarities.

One of the odd things about his record is the number of times he has battled with the same opponents. There are four goes with Jim Flynn and six with Sam McVey, but the honors of having been beaten up by Thom remain a tie between Jim Barry and Joe Jeannette with Jeannette still having a chance to win that honor. Jim Barry and Langford fought eleven times before Barry finally would admit that he could be beaten and thus far Jeannette and Thom have fought eleven times. Langford has practically been in

KID WILLIAMS, DANISH KING OF THE BANTAMS

Kid Williams celebrated his 21st birthday on Friday last, and he was born a subject of the Danish monarch, Copenhagen, which Bat Nelson made famous by being born there, is also the native city of John Gutenko, which is the Kid's right and proper label. His parents emigrated to America and settled in Baltimore, where the Kid was a newsboy for several years before he took up the padded mitt game. One of the staples of conversation in the Maryland metropolis is "Why, I used to buy papers from that kid when a penny looked bigger to me and had only one draw."

Williams started boxing for money in 1910, and it wasn't long before Baltimore fans were calling him another McGovern. Like Terrible Terry—who was also a newsboy before he began scrapping—Williams was not a slapping artist, but waded right into his man and fought him off his feet. Before he met Coulton the first time at New York, in October, 1915, Williams had more than half a hundred bouts under his belt, and had won about four-fifths of them with knock-outs. He had never been defeated, and had his only one raw.

The Baltimore kid surprised the New York fans by going after the veteran champion so hard that he was entitled to at least a draw. After several more victories, Williams went to California and fought Eddie Campi, the San Francisco bantam, winning the decision in twenty rounds. A little later he was matched with Charlie Ledoux, the clever little Frenchman, at Vernon, and knocked him out in the fifteenth. He started this year by another session with Campi at Vernon, and this time he put the native son to sleep in the twelfth chapter.

There was nothing for then but for the heavyweight title. Jack Johnson never wanted any of his game, even though he won from Thom in 1906. A complete list of his battles would be interesting. On those that have been recorded Thom has fought two days, seven hours and eighteen minutes against almost a hundred of the toughest batters produced.

Coulton to emerge from his long retirement and risk his title in a championship battle with the Baltimore Dane. They were scheduled to fight twenty rounds in the Vernon arena, but Williams put over the sleep punch a stiff right-hander to the chin, in the third round, and game, clever, gentlemanly old Johnny became an "ex." In his recent bouts Williams has found it difficult to make the bantam-weight limit, 116 pounds ringside, and it is likely that he will soon be forced to enter the featherweight ranks. When he does a certain young Cleveland Irishman had better go into immediate training to defend his title, for he'll need everything he's got—possibly a little more—to stop the aggressive Dane. At that, the Kid had better be sure he's right before he goes ahead, for Kibane's speed and generalship, with the advantage of several pounds in weight, would make him by far the most formidable man the white-haired Dane has ever tackled.

The Kid's victory over Coulton gave him about the clearest title to a championship now held by any fighter, and the battle at Vernon last June is also noteworthy as the last in which a title changed ownership in California. If the Kid is wise he will be content with his present honors for a time before going after bigger game.

A WRESTLING MATCH. (From the Kansas City Star.) At a cafe in this town one of the patrons was much annoyed by the vulgar manner in which his neighbor at the table ate. He tried to take no notice of the offending one, but after watching him pick a bone in an extremely primitive fashion he could not control his feelings any longer, and, leaning over, said: "Pardon me, but don't you think you'd be more comfortable if you took that bone out on the mat?"

Police Court. Two drunks were sentenced to a fine of \$3 or two months in jail each. Harry Nichol, charged with using profane language and being drunk was fined \$8 or two months in jail on each charge.

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Jeff Plays a Little Shell Game on the Preacher

Q: MY HEAD CERTAINLY HOTS?

MY GOOD MAN! WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH YOUR HEAD?

I WAS STRUCK BY A SHELL.

OH, THEN YOU WERE AT THE FRONT I TAKE IT?

AT THE FRONT? OH NO!

WELL, IF YOU WERE AT THE FRONT, HOW DID YOU GET WOUNDED BY A SHELL?

ME?

OH, MUTT HIT ME WITH AN EGG!

EGG ACTLY!

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