

McGraw's Review Of the Big Leagues

By JOHN J. MCGRAW, Manager of the Champion Giants (Copyright, 1913, by John J. McGraw)

John Evers of the Cubs says the Giants are lucky to be in the lead today. Did anybody ever observe how the breaks for a winner? The old Chicago crowd in the days of Chance and penants, was lucky very consistently, was it not, John?

The Giants are the luckiest ball players in the land," says Evers in a recent interview. "Everything breaks for them. They seldom have men crippled. They are leading the race now because they went to Philadelphia last week and caught the Quakers in bad shape. The Brooklyn were crippled when they dropped four straight to the Giants and at present they are meeting the Cubs with Zimmerman, Archer, and Bridwell out of the game. I will not admit that the Cubs have been beaten for the flag this year until they show me figures that will prove we are out of it."

Evers is right and wrong. The Giants are lucky if, by a lucky club, Evers means a team which is receiving good pitching, which is hitting the ball, and which is running the bases all at once. The results of these combined efforts make it look as if everything was breaking for us. But I did not hear Evers declaring that the Cubs were lucky when they won the pennant from my club in 1908 on an Evers technicality. The Chicago machine was going at top speed then. I do not think so myself. More over, you can hardly declare any team out of a flag pursuit in the middle of July. The Giants have been going at their topmost gallop lately. I call it their normal pace. But they are liable to fall below normal before the end of the race. It is my intention to urge them so far ahead before this slump overtakes them that they will have plenty of room in which to fall. Then there is always the danger of injuries to regulars, which break up a team.

At present, the Cubs, which club I now reckon to be the Giants' strongest rivals, are handicapped by injuries to players, Zimmerman, Archer, and Bridwell were all out of the game in the series with the Giants. Zimmerman and Archer have always been dangerous men in the contests with my club.

Both Philadelphia and Brooklyn are foundering in the thralls of bad slump at present. These two teams are still pennant possibilities, but not probably. The decline in Brooklyn was started when several players were injured at the same time the club met the Giants going at their best. Wheat, both Fishers, and all the veteran catchers were out of the game at once. Rucker was complaining of a sore arm.

Most of the injured regulars have been repaired now, and have returned to the lineup, but the club got the losing habit in the meantime and, just as it is hard to stop a team when it takes on a winning streak, so it is difficult to pick one up out of the slough of defeat. That is what has been ailing Brooklyn, and the team will have to catch its feet soon to stay in the race at all. It cannot afford to waste any more games if it is to finish in the first division. The Pirates are closing in fast.

They Miss Wagner. Pittsburgh and Cincinnati improved greatly within the last week of play, just as I predicted there. Two clubs would, but each is making a very late start towards the top. The Pirates piled up their biggest string last week, and the one before. They are apt to nip up considerably on this eastern trip, as the club is much better on the road than at home. The loss of Wagner and O'Toole will hurt the chance of Clark's crowd, especially the absence of Honus from the infield defence and batting order. He has left a big vacuum in that batting order.

From all that I hear in the gossip of the game, Honus has a very bad leg and may be out of the going for the rest of the season. With him in the lineup the Pirates would have a good chance of crashing through the league yet and pushing themselves up into the final row for the pennant. That team has always been a desperate finisher, but an exceedingly weak starter. If it once gets a start in a flag race, it will bear a lot of watching. Even now it is dangerous because the most sapient never know how things are going to break in a pennant chase. Nothing can be assumed, so to speak.

The Pirates made a bad start back in the season of 1909 when they finally won the world's championship, but not quite such a poor one as they got away to this year. That season they had Wagner at his prime, too, to be in there helping them finish. This summer nearly everybody but Honus, himself, concedes he will be out of the regular going for the rest of the schedule.

"I'm nursing this leg of mine along, and I'll be back in there," Wagner said the other day. "You can't keep me out of the game this weather."

And I am even more optimistic about it than Clarke is. The Pittsburgh manager has apparently given up hope of using the Dutchman further this year and is endeavoring to break Butler in as the regular shortstop. I believe Honus will return yet this season. I would like to see him back. He is a game man and a great ball player and everybody has to admire these two qualities.

The recovery of form by the Pittsburgh pitching staff was what put the team back in the race. It is doubtful how much the loss of O'Toole is going to affect the chances of the Pirates. He has never been very lucky at the game since such a big price was paid for him. He seemed to be always laboring with that price on his mind. He has pitched a good ball since he has been in the league, but is very erratic. Hendrix however, looks fine now. He stepped into a delicate game the other day in Philadelphia with the bases full and two runs needed by the Quakers to tie it in the tenth. He fanned Cravath and ended the battle right there. Adams and Cannitts are also moving smoothly, but Cooper has not yet struck into the stride expected of him. Watch the Pirates pick up on this trip.

cline of the Quaker twirlers weakened Philadelphia. Just when Doolin's pitching team badly reversing the Giants stormed into Philadelphia at the top of their batting stride and banged the pitchers to a pulp. My club was hitting better than at any previous time this season in that series. I do not figure the Phillies to rally for the championship again unless the pitching staff can come back. This cannot be done without resting some of the overworked veterans. It would not surprise me to see the Cubs move up to second place before they return home.

Evers, while he was out there predicting, remarked that he expected to see the Giants drop back on their next trip through the west. If my club falls down on that junket as it did on the last one over the same territory, I will be very well satisfied. You will recall that it was on our first western trip that we caught our upward stride. The weather may be better during this next road campaign, but being away from home does not reduce the efficiency of my club any. It is a good road team. If the Giants can clean up on that return trip as we did on the last, I will predict that we are very close to the third consecutive pennant. Up to the point, I do not care to do any predicting.

American League. And talking about pennants, I'd like to observe here that there would be a nice race in the American League this season if the Athletics had not happened to be in the organization. They have spoiled the nip and tuck stuff so far. Cleveland, Washington, Chicago, and Boston would have made a pretty battle of it if Philadelphia had not been entered. But what interest is there in a race among four evenly balanced clubs with another out so far in front that you can hardly recognize it as belonging to the same set at all?

I do not see how they can beat the Athletics. The only possible chance any of the other clubs have of overtaking Mack is for his pitching staff to give way under him. Plank and Bender are the main supports in this, and the disabling of either one of these two might make trouble, but there is an enormous gap for any team to close up before can-catch the Athletics, and the injured veteran would have a lot of time in which to get repaired while the Purser was healing the gap.

If the pitching staff of the Red Sox had found itself at the beginning of the season as it is going today, there might have been a race in that league. The Athletics are stronger in the infield than the Red Sox, and the outfielders about balance on paper. The Boston pitching staff should be more brilliant and powerful than the Philadelphia one. But it just refused to shine in the first part of the season. I admired Stahl's crop of pitchers during the world's series last fall. Particularly did I like the steadiness of that kid, Bedient, who stood up so well under fire. I rated him as the most valuable sort of a player, the kind who arises, meets, and stamps on an emergency.

But the pitching staff failed woefully at the beginning of the season, and the Red Sox slipped down through the league. From their present form I predict that they will climb over a lot of clubs standing between them and the Athletics now, but they will never top the Athletics, I believe. That pitching staff of Boston's would carry any club a long way. Why, they even put the uniforms of the St. Louis Browns on the Red Sox the other day, when they lost theirs, but you could not fool them. They won, anyway; they were playing the Browns.

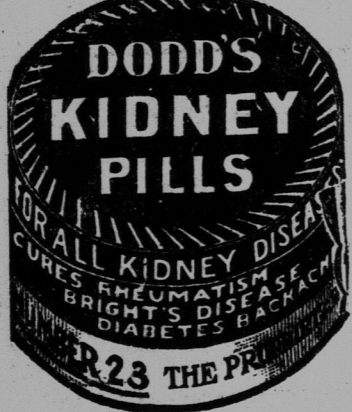
The Chicago American League ball club is a much better looking team today than it was two months ago. Its pitching staff has been largely responsible for its improvement. Walsh, "Death Valley Jim" Scott, Benz, and Russell, the Sox should finish pretty well. It would not surprise me to see them pass Washington and Cleveland and the final fight result in a dispute between the two Sox teams, Red and White, for second place.

The Yankees are about the same. Just when he thought he had an infield, Chance discovered that his new first baseman, Boston, would not do and let him go. He was very slow, I am told. Chance has nothing left to do except to build. He might mount over Detroit and St. Louis, but it will take a prodigious spurt. He is now last by more than five games.

"What's the matter, Rube?" I asked him. "Bad luck," he answered. "A photographer took a picture of me when I was warming up the day I lost and broke my winning streak in Chicago last year. I'd throw the ball at a camera before I would let anybody put a jinx like that on me again."

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Table listing Great Straw Hat Bargains During the Sale with prices and reductions. Includes items like \$1.50, \$2.00 Straw Hats, \$5.00 Panama Hats, etc.

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