

LARRY LAJOIE TELLS SECRETS OF BATTING

Former American League Hitting King Tells What Players Need to Star in Batting Averages—Batters Born, Not Made.

Napoleon Lajoie, one of the greatest batsmen of all time, was telling some of the boys at the National Association meeting in Louisville, about his methods of hitting.

Lajoie said that of course every good batter must start with an equipment consisting of a good keen pair of eyes, a natural stand at the plate and a free swing. In addition to the physical qualities he must have plenty of nerve and resourcefulness. Yet there are many batters with all of these important qualifications who do not succeed in becoming leaders in the art of putting the sphere out of reach of the fielders.

"The one thing which many batters neglect," said Lajoie, "is to make a close study of every opposing pitcher. It is worth a great deal to the man at the plate who is constantly trying to outguess his opponent in the box, to know what kind of a ball the pitcher is going to toss up. Pitchers gain the advantage by fooling the batter, or at least by keeping him in ignorance of the kind of delivery they are going to use in any particular case.

All Have Similar Move

"But I have found in my career that practically every pitcher makes some motion when intending to pitch a curve ball slightly different from the one he uses when he is going to pitch a fast one. Pitchers, of course, attempt to conceal their delivery, and they are pretty successful in doing so, unless the batter is right on his toes. But they all have some very slight motion, often purely unconscious which can be detected by close and careful observation. If a batter will put his mind on it, he can almost always detect some little shift of the elbow, or some insignificant twist of the fingers, which will signal to him the sort of ball that is about to be thrown.

Pitchers are smart, but each one has his little peculiarities of delivery. It takes time and strict attention to discover these things, but it can be done. If a batter will devote his time while sitting on the bench to a close study of the opposing pitcher's delivery, he will discover a lot of things to his benefit. Once in a while he will make a mistake, and he takes a chance of being hit by a fast ball when he is looking for a curve, but he will be right most of the time, and his knowledge, gained by close observation, will be of the greatest help to him."

Presses Harry Davis
Lajoie went on to say that Harry

Davis, captain of the Athletics for so many years when they were in their prime and in a class by themselves as a slugging outfit, was a pastmaster in the art of detecting the battery signals of the opposition.

Davis studied the opposing pitchers with great thoroughness, and he kept a record of the batters what was being served up, from his post on the coaching lines. He taught Chief Bender and others of the team to do the same thing, and some of them became very proficient in solving the mysteries of the style of the battery defence.

All of the Athletic players always tried to steal the catcher's signals when they got down to second base. Several members of this great team owe a large part of their reputations as hitters to the foxy methods of obtaining the signs of the pitcher and catcher. Every batter knows very well what a relief it is to be sure of the kind of ball that is going to be thrown to him. If they are sure that a fast one is coming, it is easy to set one's self for a hard wallop. If it is a curve ball that is going to come to the plate, the batter is prepared to judge it properly and straighten it out.

Take Pains to Study

If every young batter would take the pains to study pitchers, as Lajoie has done all his life there would be a great improvement in hitting, and some players would stand very much higher in the averages than they do now.

Manager Mathewson of the Cincinnati team, listened to Lajoie's talk, and then said:

"Nape, you have the right dope, and it has always surprised me that more batters do not study pitchers closely. But you must remember that the pitcher himself can use a little camouflage, too. I developed the habit of throwing my left leg up and forward when making the delivery. I soon found that smart batters were getting wise to me and would be looking for the fade-away whenever they saw my leg come forward. So I would fool them by sometimes shedding a fast one through with that same motion of the leg, and how surprised they would look. I used to smile to myself sometimes at their discomfiture."

All of which goes to show that great ball players, whether batters or pitchers, use their brains continually in an effort to deceive and bewilder the enemy, and much of their success depends on this clever outguessing of their opponents.

SPORTING COMMENT

Geo. Kircher, who, when it comes to being a baseball comedian, is to the minors what Nick Atrock and Germany Schaefer are to the majors, has a fine recipe for curing hitting slumps. While with the Nashville club in the southern association a few seasons ago, Kircher's batting average dwindled until a microscope was necessary to uncover it. He would pop up, foul out, strike out and every other way to extinguish himself, but to break out of his slump he seemed absolutely unable to do.

One day, after whiffing with the bases full, George told the boys on the bench that he was going to break his slump or his backbone, and that he'd cash in with a homer when he did.

"I'm not going to shave or take a bath until I do either," said George. His team-mates protested loudly as to the bathing part, and finally George agreed to eliminate that part of his agreement.

"Well, then, I'll not shave until I get a home run if it's a thousand years. I'll strain all my soup until I crack one for four sacks."

Kircher went along for three weeks without getting but few base hits and nothing which resembled a homer. He was gradually disappearing in the maze of underbrush on his map, and was completely invisible as he looked like a Russian Bolshevik leader.

George was hoping he would get his homer before the team got to Birmingham, for that was where Mrs. Kircher-to-be resided, and Kircher hated to go to see her in that condition. He was afraid the family purp wouldn't know him and take off a large slice of his trousers.

The Nashville club invaded Birmingham and Kircher was still homerless. He was desperate, and on the second day every time up he almost broke his back swinging. On his last trip to the plate, he took two vicious lunge, and on the third lunge he hit the ball on the end of his bat, and down it went on the first base line. It rolled along until it encountered a small hole in the fence and then disappeared outside. It was a home run.

It is needless to say that George was happy, and he didn't wait for the game to end, but beat it right to a convenient lawn mower before which the accumulation of weeks disappeared and George breathed free once more. He was cured, however, of making any more rash promises.

as they discovered he was sensitive about it.

One day during a game in a minor league city, Case got a base hit, and was unusually proud when he landed on first. The next batter followed with a single and Chuck set sail for second. He was digging up the turf and working steam in all cylinders, and was Dan Patching it in great shape.

Just then his cap flew off. With his naked pate to the wind, Chuck threw in his emergency, and plied his sand, choked his engine and came to a full stop. He then whirled around and beat it back towards first while the populace wondered at his astounding conduct. They thought Chuck had lost his mind.

But Case paid no attention to the yell of his mates and, instead, he drove up alongside his cap, picked it up, placed it upon his glistening curls, and then walked to the bench, as the outfielders had already played the ball to second for a forecourt.

Chuck had thrown a monkey wrench into the home team's rally and had cheated his teammate out of a base hit, but did he worry? Not a whit!

He had kept his sacred dome from the cruel gaze of an unsympathetic and jeering world and he was satisfied.

Gene Paulette, the Lebanon Frenchman who takes care of the first sack for the St. Louis Cardinals, is a genius when it comes to selling things. He could dispose of razor blades to a Cossack easier than the general run of bigges could sell ham sandwiches to a hungry mob.

Before Gene took up hotel clerking as a means of earning a livelihood during the winter, he tried out a number of jobs, among which was that of travelling salesman for a shoe manufacturing company. Gene went all through Dixie with his wares, carrying a trunkful of samples consisting of about 150 different makes, the shoe of a kind.

While he was on one of his tours, the factory suffered a disastrous fire, and when Paulette came home off his trip, the mates to all the shoes had been carrying had been destroyed. Now samples were necessary, so Gene took his trunkful of old ones and dumped them into a box.

In a couple of days, a Jew from down south came into the factory on a hunt for job lots at a bargain and Gene showed him the box of samples which he had recently discarded. The Jew looked them over and then quoted a ridiculously low price.

"Sold," almost yelled Gene. They were boxed right then, and the Jew was off, confident he had made a fast strike, headed homeward.

When he arrived there he discovered they were all for the left foot.

Nothing was ever heard from him, however, he evidently feeling that he had been made the goat while trying to make one out of the foxy Gene.

Miller Huggins says that the only umpire who ever caused him to lose his temper was Bill Byron. Bill is a little bit trying at times.

Heine Berger, the old Cleveland spitball pitcher, once became allied at a scorer because he gave a batter a hit on a ball hit to Berger and the pitcher sat down in the muddy turf trying to hold it. It happened during a season when every club that came to town was lamming everything Heine threw close to the plate. The only batters who didn't hit were either hit or walked.

One day after losing the first game of a double-header, Heine appeared in the third base coaching line during the second game, he being a favorite with the bleacher woles.

A batter on the home team hit one down the third base line, narrowly failing to amputate the third

"Shall Canada's effort in this war be maintained or withdrawn? Such is the issue."

Sir Robert Borden, at Halifax

United in the Cause of Liberty

UNION Government in Canada, clearly became necessary for the successful prosecution of the war. In it are united the representative men of the two great political parties.

These men have joined forces to make Canada's effort in the war most effective in the support of our men at the front with additional forces, and to direct and control the industrial and economic life of Canada to the one end of winning the war.

If this policy represents your judgment of Canada's duty, you should

Support Union Government

Four hundred thousand of Canada's manhood have gone into Khaki. THEY are united in the cause of liberty. Today the insistent, the imperative call is for an additional hundred thousand re-inforcements. The policy of Union Government is to raise this force quickly and impartially under the provisions of the Military Service Act.

The Election Issue is Clear

If you are in favor of supporting the men at the Front you will vote for the Unionist Candidates. If you prefer that our soldiers should NOT receive the reinforcements they so urgently need, the Referendum proposed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his adherents is the instrument through which you can sacrifice the men already at the front, who have set aside their business ambitions and have given up their home life and loved ones in the defence of YOUR liberty, and indeed, the liberty of the world.

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(From Friday's)

He seemed to her the kindest, most lovable creature. Further the mystery of his manliness. In his eyes there strange, shy promise of

She called it "wicked innocence and was sweet." "What shall I do if he me?" she thought in a panic.

As the day passed and more to do a faint of itself felt, which she cognize.

As if moved by a com they kept their conversation floating in the safe miniscences of childhood them much humorous did most of the talking.

"Once when I was a they dug up the street our house for a drain, an Indian burial ground and I played alonipias walk with the stultic, stable arrested us. What was!"

"I should say so!" including a virtuous indle he savages!"

"Why?" said Ralph "Old bones are all right like their nice, earthy."

"Horrible!" said Ki "Did you ever see asked Ralph. He apoc teacup in his extended poor Yorick! I know ratio! He was a fellow jest!"

Ralph acted out the her with improvisations. Kitty was obliged to deny, and to hold her was one of those sh easily shocked, and ea laughter first that ins the highest flights of

"Speaking of bones," on: "when I was a st Gill, my roommate and enough to buy a whole properly articulated, peach! We kept it in hanging from a clothes "Mercy!" said Kitty, cious shudder.

"The landlady had a had a beau, and the w used to make us fellow their goings-on. They half an hour at the foot saying good night. Y like a cow drawing its boggy place!"

"Aren't you awful! blushing."

"We decided that so he done," Ralph went some phonetic radi painted the skeleton a fastened a long line to his skull that was used up by."

"And that night, w of them came out in the stairs, and turned down crept out on the upper leamed over the rail a. Bones go walking slo step, down the stairs, lovely blue color; eve out."

"You might have ki fright!" said Kitty.

"No such luck!"

"They didn't hear him he was half-way down tled him a little. Ge never heard such an in your life!"

"Both of them! T the front door, and mad, and couldn't g laughed so hard the out of my hand and h down the rest of the up just like a person—smash! Oh, my! O

"I don't think it w all," said Kitty. Bu and her eyes confes ation of his dreadful

"Next day we move solemnly.

CHAPTER X

The Trial

On the following da Ralph's stay in Milb was strong enough to more freely.

Jim Sholto took hi to show him the exc was secretly hoping th would find a workin place of one of the a

Being past the pe troubles himself, the introducing a strange an ly young man into h had not suggested ita

While they were worked about the e mode way widely diff usual deft serenity. S to a stand staring bea a little smile wreath of her lips; rousing start.

She would fly abou If her life depended only to fall into ano sently picking things ped them in fresh pl sently started hunti again.

Snatches of improv ed up from her hea higher until her voice broke. She continual mirror, by turns an scorers, a favorite wh what she saw there.

Every three minu the door and looked see if he were comin

On one of these heard her name soft her. Whirling abou preaching by the tr river a graceful figu skin skirt and blue