

McGOWAN: NOT THE MOST TALENTED - JUST THE BEST

LED THE N.E.L. IN WINS FIVE STRAIGHT SEASONS BEFORE SURPRISE MOVE TO N.Y.C.

PROVIDENCE, R.I. & NEW YORK CITY (Dec. 12, 1863) – Ask the Writers Pool who the ten pitchers in the National Base Ball Organization with the most raw talent are, and they will give you the following ten names:

- Jim Creighton (Excelsior, 2x All-Star) – 26-4, 2.29 ERA, 69 K, 7.0 WAR, TRIPLE CROWN in 1863
- Grover Wright (Niagara, 4x All-Star) – 19-10, 3.35 ERA, 29 K, 5.9 WAR
- Carl Bancroft (Empire, 3x All-Star) – 14-19, 3.38 ERA, 38 K, 5.3 WAR (20+ Wins 1859-62)
- Bernard Schmidt (Niagara, 2x All-Star) – 22-9, 3.00 ERA, 47 K, 4.9 WAR
- Clydesdale Jackson (Harlem, 1863 All-Star) – 21-12, 2.69 ERA, 29 K, 5.5 WAR
- Joe Cunningham (Shamrock, 2x All-Star) – 19-12, 3.08 ERA, 28 K, 4.9 WAR
- William Titus (Gotham, 2x All-Star) – 22-12, 3.38 ERA, 32 K, 5.3 WAR
- Archie Green (Bedford, 2x All-Star) – 10-22, 4.51 ERA, 32 K, 4.6 WAR (20+ Wins 1860-62)
- Rainier van der Hout (Orange) – 17-7, 3.96 ERA, 28 K, 4.6 WAR
- James Goodman (Minuteman) – 11-22, 4.66 ERA, 64 K, 3.2 WAR, 80+ Stuff

Nowhere in that set of ten names will you find John McGowan, the long-time pitching ace for St. John's Baseball Club. While McGowan can deliver the ball in a number of different ways – believed to be six in all – the speed of his delivery is not the fast, the balls he delivers are not the hardest to hit, and he does not have better control over the ball than all of his peers. However, there is one area in which McGowan reigns supreme: victorious pitching.

McGowan has never led the Northeastern League in Earned Run Average, Strikeouts, W.H.I.P, or Walks per Nine Innings. Instead, the 33-year-old led the N.E.L. in Wins each of the past five seasons and has won twenty or more games in each of the past six. Perhaps the only reason McGowan failed to win twenty games in the N.B.B.O's inaugural season of 1857 was that he did not have the chance, only starting nine games as St. John's third pitcher and finishing 8-4 overall.

McGowan's career resume makes for one tall order and some intimidating reading:

- 1857: 8-4, 2.97 ERA, 94.0 IP, 5 CG, 16 BB, 7 K, 1.40 WHIP, 0.9 WAR
- 1858: 22-4, 2.94 ERA, 245.0 IP, 21 CG, 42 BB, **39 K**, 1.19 WHIP, 4.2 WAR
- 1859: **25**-8, 2.78 ERA, 297.1 IP, **27 CG**, 38 BB, 36 K, 1.29 WHIP, **5.7 WAR**
- 1860: **23**-12, 3.01 ERA, 295.2 IP, **27 CG**, **4 SHO**, 33 BB, 39 K, 1.22 WHIP, **5.8 WAR**
- 1861: **25**-10, 2.74 ERA, **305.1 IP**, 23 CG, 49 BB, 38 K, 1.33 WHIP, 5.2 WAR
- 1862: **23**-7, 3.63 ERA, 290.1 IP, 22 CG, **3 SHO**, 37 BB, 32 K, 1.34 WHIP, 5.1 WAR
- 1863: **24**-11, 3.58 ERA, 291.2 IP, 22 CG, 35 BB, 30 K, 1.39 WHIP, 5.0 WAR

- 3x N.B.B.O. Champion (1857-58, 63)
- 3x N.E.L. Champion (1857-58, 60)
- 7x New England Champion (1857-63)
- Postseason Record: 19-4, 3.01 ERA, 21 K, 3.8 WAR in 230.1 Innings

- 5x All-Star (1859-63)
- 4x N.E.L. Team of the Year (1859-62)
- 6x 20-game Winner (1858-63)
- 5x N.E.L. leader in Wins (1859-63)
- 2x N.E.L. leader in Pitching WAR (1859-60)
- 2x N.E.L. leader in Shutouts (1860, 62)

- Career leader in Wins with 150 (Joe Cunningham 2nd with 134)
- Career leader in Postseason Wins with 19 (Grover Wright 2nd with 11)
- Career leader in Win % with .728 (150-56 record)

Many members of the Writers Pool, especially those in the New York half, have taken McGowan granted under the belief that St. Johns' dominance as the only big club in the New England Championship combined with the team's annually stout defense have allowed the pitcher to rack up win after win without displaying an elite level of talent.

In return, McGowan's supporters ask the haughty New York set to consider one thing: if McGowan has been coasting to 20+ Wins year after year without much talent, how does he have nearly twice as many playoff victories as any other pitcher while sporting a lower career postseason ERA (3.01) than regular season ERA (3.11)? Also, how has he been able to 10-0

over the two years of Tucker-Wheaton Cup round robin play with an ERA under 3.00 if he is merely an adequate pitcher surrounded by a great set of teammates?

In 1864, the New York half of the Writers Pool will have the opportunity to see if their downcast opinions of John McGowan are correct, as exactly one month ago he stunned St. John's and everyone else in the base ball establishment by announcing that he was moving to New York City with his family to start a new job and join the Knickerbocker club. Digging by the writers did not uncover evidence of any extra under-the-table cash, but instead led to the conclusion that McGowan simply wanted a new challenge and a chance to pitch in the grandest park in existence.

What the assumptive writers have not factored in is that McGowan might actually be in a better situation for his pitching with the Knickerbocker club. While the second-oldest club in existence has only been able to hover around the .500 mark in the New York City Championship each of the past four seasons, club president Doc Adams has worked with the front office to upgrade several positions. Thanks to the recruitment of new players at second base, third base, and right field, the team not only has more talented batsmen but their defense grades to a 60/80 or better at every position except first base. On top of that, the Elysian Fields' famous 517-foot center field boundary makes it the N.B.B.O's most intimidating field to hit in (AVG Factor: .909).

John McGowan is the winningest, most decorated pitcher in the brief history of organized baseball, both in the regular season and postseason. While it has been assumed that his storied career has unfolded thanks to his existence with a team that has steamrolled all attempts at competent opposition in the New England Championship, McGowan now finds himself with another storied club, and his reputation might reach even greater heights.