

1866: THE HALFWAY POINT

ST. JOHN'S HAS BEST RECORD; SYRACUSE LEADS N.Y.L; UNION IS SURPRISING N.Y.C. LEADER

NORTHEAST U.S.A. (June 18, 1866) – Week Seven of the N.B.B.O. season ended with St. Johns' 15-11 home win over Sons of the Ocean on Sunday afternoon, and with that half of the season has been completed. Not surprisingly, St. John's has hit the halfway mark with the N.B.B.O's best record at 28-6 (one rainout) thanks to their twenty-game winning streak, and as hard as the Sons of the Ocean are trying to keep up it looks as if the New England Championship may have already been decided. The other regional championships are closer, with leaders ahead by margins ranging from 1-4 games.

Here are the leaders of the six regional championships:

- Brooklyn: Excelsior at 24-11 (+68 R.D, Bedford 1 G.B.)
- N.Y.C: Union at 22-13 (+26 R.D, GOT, KNI, HILL, MET, & ORA 1-5 G.B.)
- Upstate: Syracuse at 24-10 (+20 R.D, Niagara & Utica 2.5-4.5 G.B.)
- Coastal: Shamrock at 25-10 (+83 R.D, Mass. Bay & Quaker St. 4 G.B.)
- Inland: Alleghany at 23-12 (+43 R.D, Lake Erie & Susquehanna 3-5 G.B.)
- N. England: St. John's at 28-6 (+119 R.D, Sons of the Ocean 7.5 G.B.)

The only one of the Writers Pool's six preseason favorites not currently leading their regional championship is Knickerbocker in New York City, but they are only one game behind Union of Morrisania.

General observations from the first half of the season, via the Writers Pool:

- Excelsior & Bedford are the two clear leaders in Brooklyn. P Jim Creighton is having another fantastic season for Excelsior at 14-3, but RF Uwe Schneider (.327, 29 RBI) is playing like he may repeat as an All-Star while 2B Benjamin Lovette (.338, 1.4 WAR) & CF Archie Mask (.359, 25 RBI, 1.6 WAR) look like locks to make their All-Star

Game debuts. Bedford has not been led by one particular player – their best batsman has been newcomer 2B Pontius Hedman at .323 – but they are 5th in the N.Y.L. in runs, Rainer van der Hout has given them good pitching after a year with Shamrock, and #2 pitcher Harvey Cataldo is 12-2 with a 2.98 E.R.A.

- Union is the surprising #1 in N.Y.C. thanks to a comeback year from John Carlton (.324, 25 RBI) who should make his 4th All-Star Game in five years. They are also getting .350 batting at 1B from former longtime Shamrock star Daragh Adams. They do not have a star pitcher but are still 2nd in the N.Y.L. in runs allowed. They are going to have to fight to the death to stay atop the standings, as there are no less than five teams within five games of Union.
- Syracuse's attack was iffy to start the season but has come to life recently. Thanks to that and a 15-5 home record they are atop Upstate like they were projected to be. 1B Mario Fusilli is batting .360, OF Zarek Polakowski (.318, 21 SB, 1.4 WAR) is again playing like an All-Star after coming over from Nassau Co, and newcomer Henry Neal (.331, 1.5 WAR) is having a splendid season at SS. Main competitor Utica has received a brilliant 12-5 start from newcomer P John Brown, while 2nd-year 1B Johnnie Sands is batting over .340. Niagara's former Gotham stars – 2B Hamish Barclay & CF Taliesin Buckley – started slow but have played much better over the past month, and that makes the Buffalo men a threat for the second half of the season.
- No surprise – Shamrock leads the Coastal Championship by four games thanks to the best defense & pitching in the N.E.L. Their new pitchers, Tom Ricks (11-4, 2.60 ERA), & Thomas Smith (11-5, 3.01 ERA) have been great, and SS Anthony Mascherino (.344, 27 RBI, 24 SB, 2.0 WAR) has been every bit the superstar they hoped he would be. Mass. Bay is getting .382 batting from ever-steady 1B William Robbins and a .344 average from All-Star C Ruby Watson. Quaker St. is getting another fine season from CF Gregersen Rorhmann (.322, 1.2 WAR), but 1B John Bateman (.342, 22 RBI) has looked very good after two years on the Shamrock bench and 22-year-old RF Ned Morganti (15 G, .370, 1 HR, 17 RBI, 0.8 WAR) has been a revelation over the 15 games he's started. Speaking of revelations, Jonathan Jenkins (9-7, 2.15 ERA, 3.8 WAR) is nearly matching Jim Creighton's strikeout totals.
- Once again Alleghany is leading the Inland Championship thanks to its offense. Perennial stars Waltrip & Kessler are only batting around .300, but LF Royal Altman (.420, 44 RBI) is crushing the ball while 1B Willie Smith & RF Kieran Bullock are both batting around .360. They are also getting another great season from P Fred Richards (12-6, 2.94 ERA). Susquehanna is keeping pace thanks to two stars: SS Theodore Kolberg (.377, 26 RBI, 21 SB, 1.8 WAR) and P Elmer Seabold (11-6, 2.12 ERA, 59 K, 3.5 WAR). Lake Erie is holding on at five games back, but they are 18-17 and

only CF Franklin Petty (.310, 35 RBI, 1.7 WAR) is playing like a star.

- St. John's is in total control of New England. CF William Johnson (.265, 16 RBI) is having his first truly down season, but to make up for it RF Konrad Jensen (.444, 34 RBI, 42 SB, 3.1 WAR) is putting together what could be the best ever season by an outfielder. Their offense is back on top of the N.E.L. in runs, on-base, & stolen bases, while pitchers William Tighe (14-3, 2.68 ERA, 2.4 WAR) & Harold Perry (10-2, 2.62 ERA, 2.4 WAR) have been amazing.
- Teams are back up to an even 7.0 runs per game in both leagues this season. St. John's is averaging 9.3 R/G, nearly a full run per game more than any other team. They are also on pace to become the first team to draw 200 bases on balls in a season. It does not look like they will come close to the record of 4.5 Knickerbocker set last season, but Shamrock leads the N.B.B.O. in allowing 5.1 R/G.
- Knickerbocker has followed up its record-breaking championship season with a decent first half of 21-14. Again their defense & pitching are the best in the N.Y.L, but they are only 13th in runs scored even though their batsmen are 7th in average because their baserunning has been a major issue.
- Kings County, the six-time Brooklyn champions and two-time cup winners, fell to 12-23 over the seven weeks of the 1866 season, their worst mark for the first half of a season. They have never finished under .500, but look certain to do so. Their normally feared offense is 18th in the N.Y.L. in runs, as beside Cormack Alexander & Declan Brice they have had little to no positive value from other positions in the lineup. They are also last in the N.Y.L. in runs allowed.
- Cantabrigians is currently the worst out of all 48 teams in four main defensive metrics after 35 games: Errors (233, 6.7 E/G), Fielding Percentage (.848), Defensive Efficiency (.566), and Zone Rating (-49.9). They are on pace to be the worst team in N.B.B.O. history at all four.
- Edward Huntley is on pace to have his greatest season. The Knickerbocker SS has led the N.Y.L. in Batter W.A.R. seven times in its nine seasons, but in 1866 he is on a pace to cross the 5.0 W.A.R. barrier for the first time. After 35 games he is batting .385 (.973 OPS) with 20 extra-base hits, 28 R.B.I, 22 steals, and a +6.6 Zone Rating.
- While Huntley is aiming for his best season, St. Johns' OF Konrad Huntley is currently on pace for the greatest individual season in N.B.B.O. history. He currently leads the entire N.B.B.O. in Batting Average (.444), On-Base (.515),

Slugging (.632), O.P.S. (1.147), O.P.S. Plus (225), Runs (55), Stolen Bases (42), Bases on Balls (23), Win Probability Added (3.5), & Batter W.A.R. (3.1). As things stand, he is on pace to set new records in all of the listed categories except Bases on Balls, and he could become the 1st batsman to cross 6.0 W.A.R. in a season.

- Jim Creighton's E.R.A. is unusually high at 3.00, but he is still 14-3 with 74 strikeouts in 150 innings. The Writers Pool thought he could become the first pitcher to cross the 150-K barrier this year, and while he is on pace to come up just short at 148 he could just as easily do it.
- Cormack Alexander currently leads the N.Y.L. by 23 points with a .414 Batting Average, placing him in prime position to win his third consecutive N.Y.L. Batting Championship.
- Charles Darnell is the surprising Northeastern League E.R.A. leader. After 145.1 innings the Quinnipiac pitcher has a 12-4 record with a 1.98 E.R.A. The team's #2 pitcher, William Crane, is 6-12 with a 3.09 E.R.A.