

THE 1867 SEASON: THE HALFWAY POINT

KNICKERBOCKER BEST IN NBBO; ST. JOHN'S BEST IN NEL; THREE IN NEL BATTING .425 OR BETTER

NORTHEAST U.S.A. (June 17, 1867) – Half of the National Base Ball Organization schedule for 1867 has been completed.

So far this season the NBBO has remained top-heavy, but the regional championships are collectively closer than they were last year. One looks like it has all but been decided, two more have gaps of 4-5 games between 1st & 2nd place, and the other three have teams 1-2 games behind the leader.

Offense in the NYL is close to where it was last year, while the NEL has seen a notable increase in runs, average, and OPS – not a surprise given that the NEL now has thirteen of the top fifteen batsmen in the sport according to the Writers Pool.

James Burke has been every bit as good as advertised during his debut season with Shamrock, while five-star Niagara newcomer Monroe Munson has proven to be the #1 pitcher they needed even if results have been disappointing. Other newcomers, such as Gerhard Berg (1B, S.o.t.O.) and Harvey O'Donnell (C, CAN) have been outstanding.

Three players in the NEL are batting .425 or better, the NYL has the ERA, Strikeout, and Pitching WAR leaders, and it will be interesting to see if these trends – the NEL being the batting league and the NYL being the pitching/defense league – continue over the second half of the season.

Here are the leaders of the six regional championships:

- Brooklyn: Excelsior at 24-11 (+78 Run Differential)
- N.Y.C: Knickerbocker at 28-7 (+128 RD)
- Upstate: Syracuse at 23-12 (+34 RD)
- Coastal: Shamrock at 24-11 (+114 RD)
- Inland: Alleghany at 22-13 (+72 RD)
- N. England: St. John's at 25-10 (+121 RD)

NEW YORK LEAGUE STANDINGS

BROOKLYN	W	L	PCT	GB	R	RA	RD
Excelsior	24	11	.686	--	276	198	+78
Kings Co.	23	12	.657	1	290	217	+73
Bedford	18	17	.514	6	255	281	-26
Empire	17	18	.486	7	216	258	-42
Atlantic	16	19	.457	8	302	279	+23
Eckford	15	20	.429	9	219	253	-34
Continental	15	20	.429	9	234	272	-38
Nassau Co.	12	23	.343	12	249	283	-34
N.Y.C.	W	L	PCT	GB	R	RA	RD
Knickerbocker	28	7	.800	--	332	204	+128
Metropolitan	20	15	.571	8	273	258	+15
Hilltop	18	17	.514	10	228	216	+12
Harlem	17	18	.486	11	225	240	-15
Orange	16	19	.457	12	248	244	+4
Union	16	19	.457	12	222	251	-29
Gotham	14	21	.400	14	220	245	-25
Mutual	11	24	.314	17	220	310	-90
UPSTATE	W	L	PCT	GB	R	RA	RD
Syracuse	23	12	.657	--	253	219	+34
Binghamton	18	17	.514	5	256	245	+11
Eagle	18	17	.514	5	201	230	-29
Flour City	17	18	.486	6	272	250	+22
Minuteman	17	18	.486	6	216	216	0
Utica	17	18	.486	6	248	255	-7
Niagara	15	20	.429	8	251	262	-11
Victory	15	20	.429	8	245	265	-20

NORTHEASTERN LEAGUE STANDINGS

COASTAL	W	L	PCT	GB	R	RA	RD
Shamrock	24	11	.686	--	266	152	+114
American	23	12	.657	1	262	204	+58
Olympic	18	17	.514	6	214	228	-14
Newark	17	18	.486	7	290	267	+23
Quaker St.	16	19	.457	8	220	228	-8
Port Jersey	14	21	.400	10	209	236	-26
Trenton Utd.	14	21	.400	10	210	264	-54
Mass. Bay	14	21	.400	10	188	281	-93
INLAND	W	L	PCT	GB	R	RA	RD
Alleghany	22	13	.629	--	297	225	+72
Pioneer	20	15	.571	2	292	213	+79
Lake Erie	20	15	.571	2	312	285	+27
Sportsman's	18	17	.514	4	270	268	+2
Susquehanna	17	18	.486	5	272	242	+30
Merrimack	17	18	.486	5	247	281	-34
Scranton	16	19	.457	6	257	316	-59
Reading	10	25	.286	12	210	327	-117
N. ENGLAND	W	L	PCT	GB	R	RA	RD
St. John's	25	10	.714	--	346	225	+121
S.o.t.O.	21	14	.600	4	298	261	+37
Quinnipiac	20	15	.571	5	285	264	+21
Oceanic	19	16	.543	6	277	269	+8
Granite	15	20	.429	10	251	270	-19
Portland	15	20	.429	10	249	275	-26
Cantabrigians	13	22	.371	12	234	299	-65
Green Mtn.	12	23	.343	13	242	319	-77

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

- Excelsior is on top of Brooklyn thanks to Jim Creighton, who might be having his greatest season. He is 14-7 with a 1.90 ERA, 55 Strikeouts, 4.6 Pitching WAR, a .380 Average, .918 OPS, and 1.2 Batting WAR. No other Excelsior player is batting over .320, and #2 pitcher Frank Huth has a 4.81 ERA.

Kings County is a game behind thanks to their revamped lineup. New RF James Hoyt is batting .315, new 2B Rosano Bessi is at .317, returned SS Per-Olaf Bakken is hitting .360 (1.5 WAR), newcomer 3B Leen van Rooij has 33 RBI, and fellow newcomer Alex Leininger (CF) is batting .354. They also have a #3-4 combo in Cormack Alexander & Carlton McShane who are batting .394 & .373.

- New York City looks like it is already over. While Knickerbocker did lose their first game against Mutual to end their 17-game winning streak and 19-1 start, they are an NBBO-best 28-7 with a +128 Run Differential that is on pace to better that of the 1859 St. John's team. Knickerbocker leads the NYL in nearly every notable batting category that does not involve baserunning, and their only sub-300 batter is defensive specialist Jacob Johnson (2B). 3B Jerald Peterson is batting .382, while SS Edward Huntley is batting .356 an on pace to have a record-tying WAR of 5.8.
- Upstate, as always, is competitive and arguably strange. Syracuse is 9-1 over their last ten, but their 23-12 record is due to the same tricks they were pulling off last year. Syracuse is 3-0 in extra-inning games and 9-2 in one-run games, both marks best in the NBBO. Their Run Differential of +34 is easily the lowest of the six regional leaders.

If Upstate was sorted by Run Differential, the standings would be Syracuse in 1st, followed by Flour City, Binghamton, Minuteman, Utica, Niagara, Eagle, & Victory. Instead, Eagle is tied for 2nd and Flour City is 5th. The smallest clubs in the region, Binghamton & Eagle, are the two closest to Syracuse. Nothing is never normal in Upstate N.Y.

- Shamrock's offense is only 11th out of 24 in the NEL (7.6 R/G), but they are allowing just 4.3 runs per game, a full run and a half less than any other team and a rate that would break the 1865 Knickerbocker team's record. Still, Shamrock is in a dogfight with American because the Philadelphians boast a team batting average of .321 – 2nd in the NEL – and they have two players – 1B William Busby & 3B Werner Verstegen – batting over .400.

The rest of Coastal is a tightly-packed group of six teams and, shockingly eight-time bottom dwellers Olympic

currently find themselves in 3rd place, although that could easily change.

- Alleghany is once again leading Inland with solid overall play – 4th in the NEL in Runs Scored and tied for 4th in Runs Allowed. They have been led by the devastating Royal Altman – more on him later – but 3B Samuel Kessler is batting .399 while 2B Arran Duffy & CF Arthur Waltrip are batting around .350.

There are two teams within a couple of games of Alleghany, just not the ones expected in preseason. Pioneer has shot up from consecutive last-place finishes thanks to the combination of former Kings Co. CF Declan Brice and a bunch of talented newcomers. It was thought Lake Erie would have a down year, but CF Franklin Petty has been brilliant, 2B James Caldwell is batting .340, and #1 P Bubba Mack has 12 wins.

- St. John's is keeping the rest of New England at arm's length with an offense that has a chance to become the first to score ten runs per game for an entire season. The legendary OF trio of Jensen, Johnson, & Townsend are all batting well over .300, with Nelson Townsend leading the way at .381. Jensen has 25 steals and a .471 on-base, while Johnson has drawn 28 bases on balls.

Sons of the Ocean are surprisingly four games back after losing both Albert Gore and Jerald Peterson, thanks largely to newcomer 1B Gerhardt Berg putting up one of the best debut seasons ever to this point. Quinnipiac is a handful of games behind because they are receiving fine contributions from numerous players – P William Crane (11-6, 3.40), 2B Ernest Lewis (.374, 1.5 WAR), SS Roy Vreeken (34 RBI), and OF Graeme Peel (.344, 34 SB, 1.4 WAR)

- James Burke has been every bit as good as advertised in Boston. Given his home park he would be a .400 hitter with nearly every other team, but he is still batting .392 with 52 runs, 28 RBI, 22 steals, 2.2 WPA, and 1.8 WAR. Monroe Munson, the five-star newcomer pitcher has been good for Niagara, going 11-8 with a 3.07 ERA and 3.5 WAR. Their results have been disappointing, but he has not.
- There are seven men batting over .400 at the halfway mark, all in the NEL. Three are batting .425 or better – Royal Altman (ALL), Gerhardt Berg (SotO), & Werner Verstegen (AME), with Altman & Berg seemingly guaranteed to finish over .400. Altman is batting .469 with a 1.135 OPS (208 OPS+), 55 runs, 48 RBI, 23 steals, 3.9 WPA, and 2.9 WAR – the best first half any batsman has ever had. Berg is batting .459 with a 1.072 OPS, 44 RBI, 3.9 WPA, and 2.1

WAR – a debut season that is overshadowing that of the heralded Burke.

- As great as Jim Creighton has been, there is a chance that he might be dethroned as NBBO Strikeout King this year. James Goodman is 12-9 for struggling Minuteman, but he has matched Creighton with 55 strikeouts. He also has a 2.56 ERA and 5.1 WAR, meaning he could become the first pitcher with 10+ WAR in a season.