

EXCELSIOR & KINGS CO. BATTLE FOR BROOKLYN SUPREMACY

TOP TWO IN BROOKLYN SLUG IT OUT FOR FIRST, BUT STILL HAVE TO BE WARY OF TEAMS BELOW

BROOKLYN (July 28-Aug. 1, 1869) – The past week saw the series of the year in the Brooklyn Championship: Kings County vs Excelsior at K.C.'s home grounds of Washington Park. It was a fight between the two clubs that have won the last eleven Brooklyn titles – K.C. seven & Excelsior four – and that meant some epic base ball figured to be on display.

The Brooklyn standings ahead of the series:

- 1st: Kings Co. at 35-25 (.582), +101 RD
- 2nd: Excelsior at 34-26 (.567), 1 GB, +36 RD
- 3rd: Atlantic at 33-27 (.550), 2 GB, +44 RD
- 4th: Eckford at 32-28 (.533), 3 GB, -73 RD
- 5th: Continental at 31-29 (.517), 4 GB, +87 RD
- 6th: Nassau Co. at 30-30 (.500), 5 GB, -60 RD

If would be fair to assume that whoever exited the series with the upper hand would be the favorite to be crowned champions of Brooklyn again, but given how tight the standings were as of the last week of July a close series meant that teams like Atlantic and Eckford could go neck-and-neck with them.

The results:

- Game 1: EXC 11-10 K.C. – Excelsior scored eight times in T9 to win
- Game 2: EXC 6-9 K.C. – Henry Fitzgerald (SS, K.C.) 2/4, 2B, 1 R, 3 RBI
- Game 3: EXC 11-4 K.C. – Ben Smith (CF, EXC) 2/6, 3B, 2 R, 2 RBI, SB
- Game 4: EXC 1-3 K.C. – Theodore Kohlberg (2B, K.C.) 3/4, 2B, 1 R, 1 RBI, 2 SB
- Game 5: EXC 9-12 K.C. – Garfield Koonce (1B, K.C.) 3/5, 2B, 3B, 3 R, 1 RBI

Game 1 was incredible. With Kings County breezing along and enjoying a 10-3 lead going into the top of the ninth, Excelsior proceeded to score EIGHT times, the winning hit being a two-run single by substitute infielder Joel Roethlisberger. It was a comeback that could easily have crushed Kings County's spirits, but the hosts would not let one game do them in.

Kings County rebounded well to win Game 2 as they had a late 9-4 lead before allowing two consolation runs. Then, Excelsior took a win back in Game 3, enjoying their own 9-4 lead before adding on two late runs, as if Jim Creighton needed them. Game 4 was the tightest game of the series: a 3-1 defensive showcase in which the teams combined to commit just three fielding errors. For perspective, an average contest typically sees the two teams' gloveless fielders make eleven errors over the course of play.

That meant Game 5 would decide whether Kings County & Excelsior would be tied in the standings with one week to go, or if K.C. would have a two-game lead on Excelsior. It was an exciting affair – 10-9 to Kings County after six innings thanks to a two-run single by 3B Leen van Rooij. Substitute P Leonard Sbarro held Excelsior off the scoreboard for the final three innings, and Kings County added runs via errors in both the seventh & eighth to pad the lead and take the series.

Here is how the Brooklyn Championship looks after the 3-2 series win by Kings County:

- 1st: Kings County at 38-27 (.585), +101 RD
- 2nd: Excelsior at 36-29 (.554), 2 GB, +36 RD
- 3rd: Continental at 35-30 (.538), 3 GB, +94 RD
- 4th: Atlantic at 35-30 (.538), 3 GB, +51 RD
- 5th: Eckford at 34-31 (.523), 4 GB, -74 RD
- 6th: Nassau Co. at 33-32 (.508), 5 GB, -67 RD

The top five teams are still mathematically eligible to win the championship outright, while Nassau County could still conceivably force a playoff if a miracle happens.

Atlantic has the easiest schedule for the final week – home vs 23-42 Bedford. Kings County at 26-39 Empire is next. Excelsior is home against Nassau County. Finally, Continental plays at Eckford.

Kings County remains likely to stay in first and take another pennant, but with Brooklyn this close going into the final week anything remains possible.