

THE “PENTAGON”:- THERE WILL BE PRO BALL IN ‘71

GROUP OF FIVE CLUBS WHO PUSHED PROFESSIONALISM LAST AUTUMN PROPOSE PRO LEAGUE

NEW YORK CITY (Mar. 14-18, 1870) – As always, the middle of March is filled with five days of meetings among the players, coaches, managers, & front office men who make up the NBBO's Executive Committee – meetings in which the rules and regulations of the NBBO are discussed. Hence, they're always called the “Spring Rules & Regulations Meetings”. However, the “Regulations” part of those meetings would be slammed straight onto the table from the start of day one by the same group of clubs that demanded the chance to turn the game professional at the Autumn Meetings.

At the start of the Spring R&R Meetings, the representatives of the “Pentagon” of clubs who pushed for professionalism last November – Alleghany, Kings County, Knickerbocker, Shamrock, & St. John's – came armed with a new proposal, one that was altogether different than their previous one.

The proposal went like this:

- Since NBBO executives argued at the Autumn Meetings that allowing some clubs to turn fully professional would create a “two-tiered” competition, instead those clubs who wish to turn professional should be allowed to form a new competition comprised only of those professional clubs and their teams. This would ensure fair competition for the semi-pro teams and fair competition for the professional teams.
- Any professional league would begin during the first week of May in 1871. This would be done in order to do give clubs that sign up adequate time to prepare for the move up from semi-pro ball, as well as to allow the NBBO enough time to find replacements for any clubs that turn pro.

The five clubs were adamant that this was the only way forward for the game of base ball, and given that the books showed how profitable clubs like Kings County were it was quite difficult to push back against them. Not only that, but these were the most successful & respected clubs in the sport. Knickerbocker president Doc Adams [literally wrote the original version](#)

[of the rules](#) each of the 48 teams in the NBBO was playing its games by, and if a man so revered by his peers thought some clubs should be allowed to turn professional then who was going to look at him and say “no”?

With that, professional baseball became an inevitability, and it was up to the NBBO and its officials to decide how to respond. The response was quick: the “Pentagon” and any other clubs wishing to turn professional would need to inform NBBO headquarters by midseason so potential replacements could apply, and the two entities would work together to set up the sport’s first fully-professional competition.

The five clubs of the Pentagon informed the NBBOEC that they were hoping to begin play next year with a league consisting of ten to twelve clubs in total, a schedule that was ninety games in length, ticket prices of 25¢ - up from 10¢ - and roster rules similar to those of the current NBBO.

From there, it was now going to be a matter of deciding who else would get to turn professional, convincing fans that base ball could be a professional sport, that the hike in ticket price would be worth it, and filling in any finer details as needed.

Professional base ball was on its way, and in one year’s time a new chapter, perhaps even a whole new book, would begin for the sport.