

ATLANTIC SWEEPS EXCELSIOR; TAKES COMMAND OF BROOKLYN

NBBO'S BIGGEST SURPRISE BEATS CREIGHTON THREE TIMES TO TAKE FOUR-GAME LEAD

BROOKLYN (July 20-24, 1870) – Excelsior had Atlantic right where they wanted them. Even though the most important series of the season in the Brooklyn Championship was taking place at Atlantic's Capitoline Grounds, Excelsior had won nine of their previous ten games – their last game 16-3 vs Continental – and were expected to have Jim Creighton pitch three times against an Atlantic team that had just lost three of five games to under-500 Bedford.

The standings going into the series:

- #1: Excelsior at 37-18 (+160 RD)
- #2: Atlantic at 36-19 (1 GB; +105 RD)
- #3: Kings Co. at 34-21 (3 GB; +31 RD)

Kings County was playing at Bedford, and given the gap between the two teams three K.C. wins were likely there. Based on recent results it appeared as if Atlantic was looking at exiting the week in third place after having spent most of the season at the top.

The results:

- GAME 1: EXC 7-10 ATL – Walter Dudley (1B, ATL) 4/5, 2B, 1 R, 2 RBI, 5 TB
- GAME 2: EXC 9-11 ATL – Walter Dudley (1B, ATL) 4/5, 2B, HR, 3 R, 6 RBI, 8 TB
- GAME 3: EXC 6-11 ATL – Walter Dudley (1B, ATL) 3/4 (all 1B), 4 R, 1 RBI
- GAME 4: EXC 4-9 ATL – Euan Strachan (3B, ATL) 3/4 (all 1B), 2 R, 1 RBI
- GAME 5: EXC 6-9 ATL – Walter Dudley (1B, ATL) 3/5, 2B, HR, 1 R, 3 RBI, 7 TB

It was an incredible turn of events. Not only had Atlantic stopped red-hot Excelsior, but they had taken them out in a clean sweep while beating Jim Creighton three times. This wasn't a result that anybody had anticipated.

The key man for Atlantic was clearly All-Star Walter Dudley, who had the week of his life in taking home four Player of the Game honors in five days. He hit 16/24 against Excelsior with a pair of Home Runs, *thirteen* RBI, an OPS over 1.700, 0.8 WPA, and 0.6 WAR over just five games. In no surprise at all he also earned NYL Player of the Week honors.

As for Creighton, it was one of the most frustrating weeks of his career. In 18.2 innings over three games, Creighton was 0-3 with an ERA of 8.68, allowing a whopping 36 hits to an Atlantic team that simply couldn't miss against the sport's premier pitcher. It was as if there was a seasoned witch in the stands that had put a hex on him, and it worked perfectly.

The standings after the weekend:

- #1: Atlantic at 41-19 (+123 RD)
- #2: Excelsior at 37-23 (4 GB; +142 RD)
- #3: Kings Co. at 36-24 (5 GB; +29 RD)

Kings County was only 2-3 at Bedford so Atlantic is now in control of the Brooklyn Championship, ahead by four games with just ten still to play in the 1870 season. Atlantic's final two series are full of winnable games against Eckford (21-39) and Empire (26-34) while Excelsior & Kings County play each other in the final week, so if they allow Excelsior or Kings County to snatch the pennant then Atlantic will only have themselves to blame at the end of what has been an extraordinary season for a team that has always been somewhat good – 517-453 (.533) all-time – but never quite good enough.