

TWC XV: BRAVE NEW WORLD

NORTHEAST U.S.A. (Aug. 9-20, 1871) – The 1871 edition of the Tucker-Wheaton Cup was the first one since the National Base Ball Organization's perennial postseason players had all left to form the APBL.

The only holdover from last year's cup was Atlantic, but they weren't the favorites. 58-12 juggernauts Quaker State, who'd had the best season in NBBO history, were everyone's favorite to lift the cup. Metropolitan was back in cup contention for the first time since the first season of NBBO play in 1857. Syracuse, behind incredible late-season form, was in the postseason for the fourth time. Susquehanna was in the cup for the second time in three years. Portland was in after becoming just the second team other than St. John's to take the New England pennant.

Going in, TWC XV felt to many like it would be little more than a coronation of Quaker State as the new kings of the NBBO. After all, not only did they have the best record in NBBO history but they were even better over the second half of the season (30-5) than they were during the first half (28-7).

Cup returnees Atlantic were definitely going to have a say about the above thanks to the NYL's best offense, but there were also two teams that won 8-9 of their last ten games and were led by star #1 pitchers: Syracuse (8-2 last 10), led by Ashley Atkins (31-11, 3.16, 6.6 WAR), and Susquehanna (9-1 last 10), led by Elmer Seabold (29-13, 2.65, 5.7 WAR).

Metropolitan & Portland had some struggles over the second half of the season, but Metropolitan would be bringing NBBO Batting Champion Troy Oberst (.439, 1.054 OPS, 4.1 WAR) into the fray and Portland had star #1 James Dressman (29-10, 2.81, 6.4 WAR) they could rely upon when the going got tough.

It was out with the old and in with the new, and the main question was this: could anybody take down Quaker State and take up the cup instead of them?

GAMEDAY ONE

SYR 1-13 QS – William Dickerson (3B, QS) 3/4 (all 1B), 4 R, 1 RBI, BB, 2 SB
PORT 9-13 MET – Orville Usher (2B, MET) 1/4, WALK-OFF GRAND SLAM
SUS 5-11 ATL – Martin Craven (RF, ATL) 2/3 (both 1B), 3 R, 2 RBI, 2 BB, SB

Quaker St. opened the cup by seeing that they were up against a 31-Win pitcher in Ashley Atkins, shrugging, and then beating the snot out of him. Syracuse never had a chance.

Metropolitan v Portland ended with one of the most exciting moments in the history of the cup. With one out, the bases loaded, and the score 9-9 in the bottom of the 9th, Metropolitan 2B Orville Usher uncorked a walk-off Grand Slam over the left field fence in Hamilton Square Park. It was the first Home Run of his career.

Atlantic took an easy win to open the cup, scoring eight Earned Runs against All-Star Susquehanna pitcher Elmer Seabold and enjoying a 10-1 lead after the end of the 6th.

GAMEDAY TWO

PORT 4-10 ATL – Charles Haynes (LF, ATL) 3/5 (all 1B), 2 R, 1 RBI, SB
SYR 6-10 SUS – Raymond Newman (1B, SUS) 3/5 (all 1B), 2 R, 3 RBI, SB
QS 12-10 MET – William Dickerson (3B, QS) 4/4, 2B, 3 R, 3 RBI, 2 BB, 2 SB

Two games and two big wins for Atlantic. This time they put the lumber to 29-game winner James Dressman, and after the 3rd inning the home team was in total control.

Susquehanna jumped out early against Syracuse, going ahead 9-1 by the end of the 4th and coasting from there to make up for the loss at Atlantic the previous day.

Game Two was a closer one for Quaker St., but that was only because Metropolitan scored four times in the bottom of the 9th to cut into a 12-6 QS lead. Likely NYL BotY Troy Oberst was the tying run with two out, but flew out to RF.

Two days in and the two favorites, Atlantic & Quaker St., were the two undefeated teams. Portland & Syracuse were 0-2.

GAMEDAY THREE

MET 8-10 ATL (11 Inn.) – Kenneth Harvey (C, ATL) 1/6, WALK-OFF HR

SUS 10-7 QS – Logan Hickey (3B, SUS) 3/5, 2B, 3 R, 4 RBI

PORT 2-5 SYR – Ashley Atkins (P, SYR) CG, 9 HA, 2 R/1 ER, 0 BB, 2 K

Atlantic moved to 3-0, but it took extra inning heroics. After Metropolitan went up 8-7 on a Single in the top of the 11th, Kenneth Harvey, who was 0/5, hit a three-run HR to left field to rescue Atlantic and become the hero of the day.

Mindless fielding by Quaker St. – all ten runs scored against their pitching were Unearned Runs due to 11 Errors – spelled their doom in a surprising loss. Elmer Seabold went the distance to make up for his Gameday One struggles.

Syracuse took the battle of the winless teams thanks to fine pitching by Ashley Atkins and dominance over the middle innings. Portland was able to get nine Hits off Atkins, but they struggled to find a way across the plate.

The results of Gameday Three meant Atlantic was the only undefeated team left, and Portland was the only winless team.

GAMEDAY FOUR

QS 7-9 SYR – William Dickerson (3B, QS) 3/5, 3B, 2 R, 2 RBI, SB

ATL 3-1 SUS – Jonathan Jenkins (P, ATL) CG, 8 HR, 1 R/1 ER, 0 BB, 1 K

MET 10-2 PORT – Troy Oberst (LF, MET) 3/5, 2B, 3 R, 1 RBI

A three-run rally in the bottom of the 8th, with runs coming via two Singles and a Sac Fly, turned Syracuse from likely 7-6 losers into winners and spoiled another great performance by Dickerson. Quaker St. was now a surprising 2-2.

Atlantic only had four Hits and two Bases on Balls from their batsmen, but that was enough as they cobbled together three scores and Jonathan Jenkins was excellent with the ball in his hands to move the Brooklyn champs to 4-0.

Portland's malaise continued – they were never close against Metropolitan as the visitors scored half a dozen times over the first three innings to put the result away. Oberst was excellent, and Francis Smith was 3/5.

After Gameday Four, Atlantic was 4-0, four teams were 2-2, and Portland was 0-4.

GAMEDAY FIVE

ATL 4-13 QS – Luc Billon (LF, QS) 2/3, SAC FLY, 3 R, 3 RBI, HBP

SYR 5-6 MET – Roy Vreeken (SS, MET) 3/4, 2B, 2 R, RBI

SUS 12-13 PORT (10 Inn.) – Enda Reed (1B, PORT) – 2/4 (both 1B), 2 R, 3 RBI, 2 BB

The two best clubs during the season battled in Philadelphia, and Quaker St. earned a badly needed win thanks to fine defense (1 E), good pitching from Ross Gill, and multiple hits from six batsmen. Atlantic was no longer undefeated.

Five runs in the bottom of the 4th put Metropolitan over the top against Syracuse. Runs via four Singles and an Error put the hosts up 6-2, and that ended up being just enough to hand Ashley Atkins another loss.

Portland finally moved into the Win column with a bases-loaded walk drawn by Reed in the bottom of the 10th. That followed a four-run rally in the bottom of the 9th to force extras. Elmer Seabold struggled again, which wasted some quality offensive work by the Susquehanna batsmen.

The standings after Gameday Five of the 1871 Tucker-Wheaton Cup were as follows:

TEAM	W	L	R	RA	RD
ATLANTIC	4	1	38	31	+7
QUAKER ST.	3	2	52	34	+18
METROPOLITAN	3	2	47	38	+9
SUSQUEHANNA	2	3	38	40	-2
SYRACUSE	2	3	26	38	-12

PORTLAND

1

4

30

50

-20

Quaker St. wasn't running away with the competition, though their Run Differential was by far the best of the six teams. Atlantic were deserved leaders, as they had been playing especially well late in games until they finally met up with Quaker St. on Gameday Five.

Metropolitan was the best of the rest, as a walk-off HR was the only thing keeping them from a 4-1 record over the first half of the competition. It was to Susquehanna's credit that they were 2-3 even though Elmer Seabold had struggled significantly (7.04 ERA over 23.0 IP). Syracuse had displayed the weakest attack of the six teams, which meant they were a bit lucky to be 2-3. Portland's offense wasn't much better, but their pitching had been a major letdown.

GAMEDAY SIX

SUS 9-13 MET – George Brown (MET) 2/4 (both 1B), 3 R, 1 RBI, 2 SB

PORT 2-12 QS – Matthew Williams (C, QS) 4/5, 2B, 2 R, 2 RBI

SYR 9-5 ATL – Earl Feingold (C, SYR), 2/5, 2B, 1 R, 1 RBI, 3 ATL CS

Susquehanna scored seven times in the top of the 1st, but Metropolitan scored 13 of the last 15 runs in the game as they roared back from the early deficit to go to 4-2. Each of the first five batsmen in the Met lineup had two hits.

Quaker St. made no mistakes at home against last-place Portland. They were ahead 5-2 after the 5th and 6-2 after the 7th before plating half a dozen in the 8th to add an exclamation point to the victory. The Q.S. #3-6 batsmen were 10/20.

Three runs in the 3rd and four in the 5th powered Syracuse to an impressive win at Atlantic. Every member of the Syracuse lineup had 1-2 hits, but the standout was Feingold because he also threw out three would-be Atlantic base stealers.

The results meant there was a three-way tie at the top – Atlantic, Metropolitan, & Quaker St. were all 4-2.

GAMEDAY SEVEN

ATL 9-12 PORT – Louis Beane (SS, PORT) 3/4 (all 1B), 2 R, 1 RBI, SB

MET 6-22 QS – Cormack Alexander (1B, QS) 3/5 (all 1B), 5 R, 2 RBI, 1 BB

SUS 6-4 SYR – John Schultz (CF, SUS) 2/4, 2B, 1 R, 3 RBI

Portland opened the day with a stunner over Atlantic. The 1-5 hosts went to bat in the bottom of the 8th tied 9-9, but a two-run Single by Dallas Campanelli and a Sac Fly, followed by a 1-2-3 top of the 9th, meant Portland were unexpected winners.

The above meant Quaker St. had a chance to go alone into 1st, and they did just that with one of the most dominant performances in cup history against 4-2 Metropolitan. The hosts put up a parade of scoring early – no less than twenty runs over the first five innings, and they were able to relax from there.

Susquehanna put in a quality shift at Syracuse – five runs over the first five innings were enough to secure the result. Schultz had a fine afternoon with the bat, and #2 Joseph Gant pitched well (CG, 7 HA, 2 ER).

The results meant that Quaker St. was now alone in 1st at 5-2, with Atlantic & Metropolitan one game behind.

GAMEDAY EIGHT

MET 4-9 SUS – Elmer Seabold (P, SUS) CG, 10 HA, 2 ER, 0 BB, 4 K
QS 11-10 PORT (13 Inn.) – Luc Billon (LF, QS) 4/5, 2B, 2 R, 1 RBI, 1 BB, SB
ATL 8-4 SYR – Walter Williams (CF, ATL) 2/4 (both 1B), 1 R, 1 RBI, 2 SB

Metropolitan fell flat at Susquehanna, allowing four runs during the opening two innings and never coming close after that. In victory, Seabold put in the first performance of the cup worthy of his status as a 3x All-Star.

Portland put up a fight for the second day in a row, but this time Quaker St. was too much in the longest game in cup history. Billon & Cormack Alexander were 4/5 for Q.S., and #2 Henry Giblin earned the Win as he pitched the extra innings.

Syracuse had the upper hand on Atlantic going into the 9th, but a 4-2 lead turned into an 8-4 Atlantic win thanks to a pair of two-run Singles, a Sac Fly, and another Single in the top of the 9th that kept the visitors one game behind Quaker St.

The results of Gameday Eight kept Quaker St. alone atop the standings, while Portland & Syracuse were eliminated.

TEAM	W	L	R	RA	RD
QUAKER ST.	6	2	97	52	+45
ATLANTIC	5	3	60	56	+4
SUSQUEHANNA	4	4	62	61	+1
METROPOLITAN	4	4	70	78	-8
SYRACUSE	3	5	43	57	-14
PORTLAND	2	6	54	82	-28

GAMEDAY NINE

QS 6-2 SUS – Ross Gill (P, QS) CG, 9 HA, 1 ER, 1 BB, 2 K – 1/4, 1 RBI

SYR 9-6 PORT – Henry Neal (2B, SYR) 2/5, 2B, 2 R, 2 RBI

ATL 3-6 MET – Roy Vreeken (SS, MET) 2/4, HR, 2 R, 2 RBI

This time, it was pitching that earned Quaker St. the victory, specifically a fine outing by 33-game winner Ross Gill. Quaker St. was now 7-2, and an Atlantic loss at Metropolitan meant Quaker St. were cup champions.

Syracuse overcame three-run rallies by Portland in the 2nd & 4th to win the battle of the bottom two teams in Maine. Five Syracuse batsmen had two hits each, while Portland's James Heilman drew his 10th walk of the cup over just nine games.

The 6th inning made all the difference in New York City. After Atlantic went down 1-2-3, Metropolitan came to bat and scored three runs via Harold Rowsey Double and William Anderson Single to go ahead 6-3, which was the final score.

The results meant that Quaker St. had a two-game lead on everyone else and thus they were Tucker-Wheaton Cup XV champions, a huge turnaround considering their back-to-back losses early in the competition.

The standings after Gameday Nine:

TEAM	W	L	R	RA	RD
QUAKER ST.	7	2	103	54	+49
ATLANTIC	5	4	63	62	+1
METROPOLITAN	5	4	76	81	-5
SUSQUEHANNA	4	5	64	67	-3
SYRACUSE	4	5	52	63	-11
PORTLAND	2	7	60	91	-31

Gameday Ten would involve five teams playing for pride and one team throwing a party.

GAMEDAY TEN

MET 12-3 SYR – William Strand (1B, MET) 3/5, HR, 2 R, 2 RBI, 1 BB

PORT 6-7 SUS – John Schultz (CF, SUS) 3/5 (all 1B), 2 R, 2 RBI

QS 6-8 ATL – Walter Williams (CF, ATL) 3/4, 3B, 3 R, 1 RBI, 1 BB, 4 SB

Metropolitan ended the competition on a high note, battering 31-game winner Ashley Atkins with four runs each in the 1st, 6th, & 8th while four of their batsmen had 3+ hits: Strande, Troy Oberst, Harold Rowsey, & Roy Vreeken.

Portland's cup was summed up well in this game – bad pitching late doomed them. Ahead 6-4 going into the bottom of the 9th, a pair of Bases on Balls, a Passed Ball, and two Singles turned the lead into a walkoff win for the Inland champs.

Quaker St. at Atlantic was the game everyone thought was going to be the big one – if not the one to decide the cup champions then the one to decide if there was a playoff. Instead, Quaker St. had the cup wrapped up after nine games and thus the finale at Atlantic was for show.

The hosts did well, scoring all eight runs over the first six innings to take an 8-5 lead into the latter stages, and from there #1 Olaf Sorensen pitched well to preserve the win and guarantee a top-three finish for Atlantic.

After the game, Quaker St. players took hold of the cup for the 1st time in team history, at the same time becoming the first Philadelphian club to win the Tucker-Wheaton Cup.

FINAL 1871 TUCKER WHEATON CUP STANDINGS

TEAM	W	L	R	RA	RD
QUAKER ST.	7	3	109	62	+47
METRO*	6	4	88	84	+4
ATLANTIC	6	4	71	68	+3
SUSQUEHANNA	5	5	71	73	-2
SYRACUSE	4	6	55	75	-20
PORTLAND	2	8	66	98	-32

*MET 1-1 v ATL; higher RD

Quaker State were most deserved winners. After their surprising back-to-back losses on the third & fourth days of the competition they responded with the most dominant three-game stretch in cup history: a 13-4 win over Atlantic, a 12-2 win over Portland, and a 22-6 demolition of Metropolitan, good for a Run Differential of +36 over three games. Their 109 runs were a record for ten games in the Round Robin format – St. John's won 15-5 in the 1864 playoff vs Kings County to bring their total to 113 Runs over eleven games. Quaker State's Run Differential of +47 was also a record.

Metropolitan had a fine cup run. They just couldn't get the better of the two favorites, going 1-3 against Atlantic & Quaker St. while going 5-1 versus everyone else. Metropolitan's offense was the second-best in the competition and, one horrible game aside, their pitching & defense were pretty good.

Atlantic's three straight losses during games #5-7 were their undoing, as two of those losses were to 5th-place Syracuse and last-place Portland. Their offense was alright, but it didn't look like the #1 attack in the NYL that it was during the season.

Susquehanna made it to the postseason on the back of fantastic pitching by Elmer Seabold, but a 6.42 ERA over 47.2 IP in the cup didn't give his team a chance. That Susquehanna was 5-5 in spite of Seabold's struggles is to their credit.

Syracuse scored sixteen fewer runs than any of the four teams to finish above them, and that meant no matter how good Ashley Atkins pitched they were going to have a hard time.

Portland's pitching never gave them much of an opportunity to win. 29-game winner James Dressman was the "best" of their three during the cup with a 4.21 ER over 40.2 IP, and it meant they were constantly playing from behind.

1871 TUCKER-WHEATON CUP MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

William Dickerson (3B, QS) – .435 (20/46), 1.118 OPS, 23 R, 4 2B, 2 3B, 11 RBI, 7 BB, 7 SB
3x PotG, .511 wOBA, 197 OPS+, 1.52 WPA, 0.9 WAR over 10 Games

Quaker State had four batsmen hit over .380 during the cup: Dickerson, Cormack Alexander (.400/.426/.460, 12 RBI), Luc Billon (.390/.491/.659, 16 RBI), & Matthew Williams (.383/.408/.447, 16 RBI). Of those four Dickerson was the best, having an On-Base over .500 and scoring a cup-record 23 Runs – an absurd total. It more than made up for the defending NEL Batsman of the Year's lackluster season that saw him fail to be picked for the All-Star Game.

33-game winner Ross Gill also had a fair shout for MVP honors, as he was easily the best pitcher in the competition:

- 4-1, 1.11 ERA, 11 K, 48.2 IP, 4 CG, 0 SHO, 1.17 WHIP, 5.5 K/BB, 1.3 WAR, 1.8 rWAR

His only rough outing was in the 10-7 loss to Susquehanna, but thanks to eleven Quaker State fielding errors all nine of the runs he allowed were Unearned Runs – the loss hardly Gill's fault. It was an outstanding first appearance in the postseason for Gill.

If any player from another team had a credible claim to cup MVP it was Metropolitan SS Roy Vreeken:

- 10 G, 2x PotG, .438 (21/48), 1.104 OPS, 18 R, 4 2B, 2 3B, 1 HR, 11 RBI, 1 BB, 1 SB, 0.68 WPA, 0.6 WAR

He was consistently excellent with the bat and was a solid fielder at shortstop for Metropolitan.