

THE SECOND LIBERTY BELL CLASSIC

MERION V FRANKFORD TO DETERMINE THE CHAMPIONS OF PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA (Aug. 20-23, 1873) – The inaugural Liberty Bell Classic was...well...a classic. The series between Frankford Arsenal & Mercantile B.C. went the full five games, with Mercantile conquering Frankford in the winner-take-all Game Five by the score of 12-10 and 1B Benjamin Warnock taking home Most Valuable Player honors.

Thanks to a scorching-hot finish, Frankford took West Philadelphia by four games and were back in the final series of the PCBL season looking to avenge that tough defeat. On the other hand, Merion did things the hard way: a 3-7 final ten games to lose their West Philadelphia lead before taking the three-way playoff by winning twice away from home.

Frankford, the best offensive team in the PCBL, was led by mostly the same group as last year. They had the now 22-year-old LF Jonathan Evans, the most complete player in the league. CF Francis Brown (65 RBI, 2.0 WAR) held down the middle of the lineup again. Charlie Grenier (19-17, 2.64 ERA) & Walter Denman (17-8, 2.25 ERA) remained a premier pitching duo. The noticeable difference was at the top of the lineup, where greenhorn 2B Jonathan Toppin (.311, 72 RBI, 2.7 WAR) immediately proved himself to be one of the best infielders in the league.

Merion, for all their late-season flaws, still couldn't be taken lightly. They had star #1 Jonathan Atkins (20-15, 2.39 ERA, 6.1 WAR), impressive CF Wallace Wagner (.322, 59 RBI, 3.0 WAR), reliable RF Clifford Martin (.320, 61 RBI, 3.1 WAR), and a total of five .300 hitters in a lineup that only had one weak spot. That, and as one of the three B.C.C. teams they automatically commanded respect, or perhaps jealousy, given their impressive organization and facilities.

One team was back looking to right the previous year's wrongs, and the other was somewhere they felt they belonged. Now it was time to see who would be crowned the second champions of baseball in Philadelphia.

GAME ONE (Frankford Park)

MBCC 9-3 FRA – Jonathan Atkins (P, MBCC) CG, 7 HA, 0 ER, 2/5, 1 R

The LBC opener was a surprise: Merion dominating with hosts Frankford offering little resistance. Unanswered runs by the visitors in the 1st, 3rd, 5th, & 6th put them ahead 7-0, and with Jonathan Atkins pitching that was easily a big enough lead to beat Frankford and go up 1-0.

GAME TWO (Frankford Park)

MBCC 21-9 FRA – William Norman (1B, MBCC) 6/7, 2B, 3 R, 3 RBI

If Game One was a surprise, then Game Two was a stunner. Merion didn't care that Frankford scored four times in the bottom of the 1st. All that did was make their margin of victory twelve runs instead of sixteen. Norman had six hits, CF Wallace Wagner was 5/7 (5 R, 2 RBI), 2B Everton Woods was 4/7 (3 R, 3 RBI), & RF Clifford Martin was 3/7 (3 R, 3 RBI).

GAME THREE (Cheswold Lane Cricket Grounds)

[FRA 9-10 MBCC in 10](#) – James Cray (LF, MBCC) 3/5, 2 2B, SAC BUNT, 2 R, 2 RBI, GW HIT

Given how they ended the season nobody expected a Merion sweep, and yet there it was.

Game Three was bizarre. After some early scoring saw Merion ahead 4-3 at the end of the 5th, nobody crossed the plate until a Joe McGee sacrifice in the top of the 9th tied the score 4-4 and forced extra innings. Then, the game *really* took off.

Frankford scored five times in the top of the 10th on a three-run Double by Burton Hyde and a pair of Singles, and with a 9-4 lead it looked to all in attendance as if it was time to get ready for Game Four. As it turned out, Merion had other plans. After an Error opened B10, a Double, a one-run Single by PH Robert Clark, a Base on Balls, a one-run Single by PH Joseph Wanser, another one-run Single by sub RF Ed Skonieczny, and a Sacrifice Fly by Clifford Martin plated a total of four runs to make the score 9-8. Then, with two men on Cray drove them both in with a Double that won the game and completed a Merion sweep of the second Liberty Bell Classic.

LIBERTY BELL CLASSIC MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

William Norman (1B, MBCC) – .562 (9/16), 1.299 OPS, 6 R, 2 2B, 6 RBI, 2 BB, 1x PotG

Game Two's PotG took the Liberty Bell Classic MVP honors. The 23-year-old Norman was the most productive hitter on either side, with three more hits than anyone else in the LBC as well as being the only player with 6+ Runs and 6+ RBI.

LIBERTY BELL CLASSIC SUMMARY

Merion B.C.C. win series, 3 to 0.

Game 1: Merion B.C.C. defeat Frankford Arsenal, 9 to 3:

Road Win Lifts Merion B.C.C. to 1-0 Lead in LBC

W: J. Atkins (1-0) L: C. Greiner (0-1)

HR - None

Boxscore Game Log

Game 2: Merion B.C.C. defeat Frankford Arsenal, 21 to 9:

Merion B.C.C. Tops Frankford Arsenal Again, 21-9

W: A. Cave (1-0) L: W. Denman (0-1)

HR - None

Boxscore Game Log

Game 3: Merion B.C.C. defeat Frankford Arsenal, 10 to 9:

Merion B.C.C. Sweep Liberty Bell Classic

W: C. Frankfort (1-0) L: G. Hart (0-1)

HR - None

Boxscore Game Log

Series MVP: 1B William Norman (Merion B.C.C.)