

THE AMERICAN WAY

AMERICAN HAS TAKEN THREE OF LAST FOUR APBL TITLES BECOME SPORT'S DOMINANT TEAM

PHILADELPHIA (Oct. 1, 1875) – Exactly [one month ago](#), American Baseball Club beat Alleghany 13-7 in Game Seven of the Founders' Cup. The win gave American their third A.P.B.L. title in four years, and with St. John's missing the playoffs in consecutive seasons for the first time it was apparent that American was now baseball's most prominent club.

So, how did American get there?

While playing in the National Base Ball Organization, American wasn't much of a force to be reckoned with. They finished under .500 five times in the competition's first eight seasons, and their 16-54 record in 1858 still stands as the third-worst single-season record in N.B.B.O. history.

During the six years before the league split American showed signs that they were a proper big-city club. After finishing 3rd in the Coastal Championship in 1865, American finished runners-up in each of the next two seasons before taking the pennant for the first time in [1868](#) with a 48-22 record that bested long-time Coastal masters Shamrock by three games. They were led by 1B William Busby with his still-standing record of thirteen Home Runs, and he was joined by All-Stars Werner Verstegen (3B), Willie Davis (CF), Peter Boyce (2B), & Tom Hauser (P). American only finished 5th in the Tucker-Wheaton Cup, but they had finally found a winning formula.

American hovered around .500 each of the next two years before the league split, and they were offered the chance to be Philadelphia's representative in the American Professional Baseball League ahead of Quaker State, which had a longer record of mediocrity. American happily accepted, and they were one of the sport's [first twelve professional clubs](#).

American was competitive in the A.P.B.L.'s inaugural season, finishing 46-44 and tied for 3rd place in the Metropolitan Conference. That winter they took [Franklin Petty](#) away from Metro champions Orange, and that tipped the scales as they

won seven more games, finished atop the Metropolitan, and beat a St. John's team five wins better than anyone else in a [seven-game upset](#) in Founders' Cup II.

It was then that American made their ultimate statement of intent to the rest of the A.P.B.L. over the winter of 1872-73 they signed four-star Greenhorn SS Martin Prince from independent ball, 2x 30-game winner John Henry from Gotham, and then [pried CF James Burke from Shamrock](#) in a signing that was viewed as an absolute stunner.

The results? A [65-25 record](#), the best single-season in the A.P.B.L.'s short history, and a +284 Run Differential, also the best of the A.P.B.L.'s short existence. Burke had [100+ Runs, Runs Batted In, & Stolen Bases](#) – a first. Prince had a league-best +27.0 Zone Rating at SS while finishing with 4.2 WAR and winning Greenhorn of the Year. John Henry was 30-5, his [third 30-Win season](#), with a 3.14 ERA. On top of that, Frankling Petty hit .335 with 78 RBI and 80 SB with 3.6 WAR while Peter Boyce had a .334 Average, 85 RBI, a +18.0 Zone Rating at 2B, and 3.4 WAR.

Considering the level of competition, American had the best season in baseball history. Still, they had to clear one hurdle, and that was St. John's in Founders' Cup III. The series was an [unforgettable classic](#), going seven games with the final contest ending [16-15 to American](#) after a rally in the bottom of the 8th. The Philadelphians' place in baseball history had been fully set in stone.

1874 saw the team slip to 48-42 and a tie for 3rd in the Metropolitan in what turned out to be the final season of the [legendary career of Willie Davis](#). After some retooling American went back to the top of the conference in 1875, although not without an incredible fight to the finish, and they took Founders' Cup V against Alleghany in another seven-game classic.

American's 1875 team will be remembered for its mighty offense and especially their first five batsmen, who had the best season ever for a lineup's 1-5:

- #1 Franklin Petty (RF): .365, .837 OPS, [130 R](#), 160 H, 26 XBH, 2 HR, 70 RBI, [79 SB](#), [6.2 WPA](#), 4.0 WAR
- #2 William Busby (1B): .348, .783 OPS, 97 R, 147 H, 21 XBH, 1 HR, 94 RBI, 5 SB, 4.4 WPA, 2.6 WAR
- #3 James Burke (CF): [.401](#), [.950 OPS](#), 111 R, [173 H](#), [41 XBH](#), 1 HR, 93 RBI, 77 SB, 5.7 WPA, [5.9 WAR](#)
- #4 Peter Boyce (2B): .322, .742 OPS, 96 R, 136 H, 25 XBH, 2 HR, [111 RBI](#), 38 SB, 3.5 WPA, 3.0 WAR
- #5 Martin Prince (SS): .348, .780 OPS, 90 R, 135 H, 24 XBH, 1 HR, 98 RBI, 21 SB, 2.8 WPA, 3.8 WAR

Not only did American's front-end batsmen set multiple records, but they also dominated the [RBI leaderboard](#):

- #1: 111 by Peter Boyce (American)
- #2: 98 by Martin Prince (American)
- #3: 94 by William Busby (American)
- #4: 93 by James Burke (American)
- #5: 92 by Eamonn Todd (St. John's)
- #6: 91 by Mario Fusilli (St. John's)
- #7: 89 by Cormack Alexander (Knick)
- #8: 85 by Jerald Peterson (Alleghany)
- #9: 83 by Ralph Knight (Flour City)
- #10: 82 by John Meier (Alleghany)

American batsmen finished #1-4 in the A.P.B.L. in Runs Batted In. During the history of the N.B.B.O. & A.P.B.L., the only time a team had finished with players in places #1-3 in a statistical category was when St. John's players were #1-3 in Runs in the Northeastern League in 1868, and here was American with the top four run drivers in the toughest league in the sport.

That feat speaks to how American has become three-time A.P.B.L. champions in the space of four years. They have constructed a team that bludgeons opponents to death starting straight from the top of the lineup, with pitching and defense good enough to ensure that they won't be outscored on a regular basis.

What makes American even scarier is that they have learned from past mistakes with their pitching and now have six pitchers age 25 or younger with at least 2.5-star ability and three-star potential, signifying that all are capable of being regular A.P.B.L. pitchers. In the past their pitching lacked depth & consistency on a yearly basis. Not anymore.

This past season, St. John's finished under .500 for the first time in its nineteen-year history, also missing the postseason in consecutive years for the first time in its history. With that occurring at the same time as American's third A.P.B.L. cup triumph, it looks like it's time to anoint American as the model club for all others to follow.