

MASCHERINO TO KNICKERBOCKER; MOVES TO 2B

LEGENDARY INF WILL BE 37 ON OPENING DAY; HOPES ARE SWITCH WILL EASE WEAR & TEAR

MANHATTAN (Jan. 2, 1876) – It was painfully obvious that an infield overhaul was needed after Knickerbocker's last-place finish in 1875, and one signing alone could complete the job.

On the second day of the new year, the club announced the signing of 13x Golden Glove winner Anthony Mascherino, who had spent the previous six seasons playing in Manhattan with main rivals Orange B.B.C. Along with the signing, it was announced that the legendary SS will move to 2B starting next season.

The reason for the position switch is that Mascherino will turn 37 in February and is coming off his "worst" defensive season in the A.P.B.L, with 103 Errors and a Zone Rating of +14.2. It is believed that moving to the other side of the middle of the infield will help keep Mascherino a world-class defender as long as possible.

If the plan is successful then Knickerbocker should receive quite a season from Mascherino in 1876, as he had A.P.B.L. highs in Batting Average, On-Base, Slugging, OPS, and Extra-Base Hits playing for Orange last season while finishing 1875 with 4.5 WAR, good for second-best in the A.P.B.L. among batsmen.

Mascherino wraps up his time as a SS with thirteen Golden Gloves and a career Zone Rating of +435.4, an all-leagues record that looks absolutely unbreakable except if Sons of the Ocean's Peter Jones can keep up his performance for a long time.

Is it possible that the signing of Mascherino alone could pull Knickerbocker back into Metropolitan Conference contention. Indeed it is. 4x Golden Glove winner Leslie Arnett had the worst season of his career in 1875 (-0.1 WAR) and retired as a result, so replacing him with the sport's most revered active infielder while pairing him with a highly competent defensive SS in Louis Johnson should give the team a massive boost in the Runs Allowed department in 1876.

If Knickerbocker also makes the rumored move of promoting part-time SS Arthur Groff to full-time 3B ahead of Werner Verstegen, then their defense issues should be solved and improved results should follow.