

THE 1877 PHILADELPHIA CITY BASEBALL LEAGUE PREVIEW

PHILADELPHIA (May 9, 1877) – Season number five of the P.C.B.L. begins this afternoon.

Last year looked like it would end in a surefire Philadelphia B.C.C. repeat. They set high marks for wins (55), Run Differential (+255), Runs Allowed (4.8 RA/G), and a host of pitching & defensive metrics. Instead, Frankford Arsenal **FINALLY** won the Liberty Bell Classic on their fourth try, beating P.B.C.C. in four games to send Joseph Evans off to the A.P.B.L. in grand style.

It should come as little surprise that P.B.C.C. is expected to be the best team again this season, given that their star players are back **AND** they added N.B.B.O./A.P.B.L. veteran and 5x All-Star Wilbur Graff as their new 1B. Frankford replaced Evans admirably, signing 4* A.P.B.L. backup James Harris to be their new LF with Francis Brown moving to CF. They also signed 5* Greenhorn Oliver Greene to improve their pitching duo.

Still, it feels like East Philadelphia will be wide open territory now that one of the top five batsmen in the sport has moved on. Minerva & Spartan both have rosters with no shortage of talented batsmen, and Queen Village used the money they received for 2B Herman Stanley wisely.

Now that Joseph Evans has moved to St. John's, the man to take over the mantle of P.B.C.L.'s marquee player is Merion's William Norman. The 1B hit .406 last year, a new league record, while leading the league in RBI for the second season in a row. He's been Most Valuable Player, a Golden Glove 1B, and finished in the top three for Batsman of the Year twice. Now the major individual awards feel like Norman's to lose.

Based on his work last season there's no reason to believe P.B.C.C.'s Robert Benson can't repeat as Pitcher of the Year, but he obviously can't repeat as the league's best Greenhorn. Consensus is that new Schuylkill CF George Oman will be the man to take that award this season, as he's projected to be one of the top ten batsmen in the league.

And with that, it's time to play ball!

PHILADELPHIA CITY BASEBALL LEAGUE PROJECTED FINISH

East Philadelphia

- Favorites: Frankford Arsenal at 46-24 (+120 RD)
- Minerva 2 GB, Spartan 5 GB, Queen Village 11 GB

West Philadelphia

- Favorites: Philadelphia B.C.C. at 47-23 (+215 RD)
- Merion 6 GB, Mercantile 7 GB, Germantown 11 GB

Liberty Bell Classic favorites: Philadelphia Baseball & Cricket Club

EAST PHILADELPHIA – Frankford lost the best player in the league's short history, but they've brought in a quality replacement and every other star batsman has returned, with the team adding a 5* Greenhorn to their pitching duo. Minerva should be right there with Frankford in the race to take the pennant, for their best players are back, Greenhorn Archie Bell should be a big upgrade at SS, and they've also added a 5* P: Bud Forster. Spartan added quality P James Kilgore and C Richard Gantner from the N.B.B.O., giving them a well-balanced lineup. Queen Village brought in former N.B.B.O. All-Star William Holcomb to anchor infield and Graham Gross should be an upgrade at #1, but their outfield is very weak.

WEST PHILADELPHIA – What else can be said about P.B.C.C.? They rank 1st-3rd out of the sixteen teams at SEVEN positions: C (Hearst), 1B (Graff), 2B (Pike), 3B (Hunt), SS (Steiger), LF (Kirby), & RF (Moore), and while Benson is ranked 5th at P on talent he had the most dominant season in league history last year. That means a Merion team featuring William Norman and loads of talent will be stuck looking up at P.B.C.C. in the standings. Mercantile, who will be led by Benjamin Warnock again, will be stuck in the same situation, and Germantown will finish 3rd out of the three B.C.C. teams.

PCBL AWARD FAVORITES

Batsman of the Year: William Norman (1B, Merion) – projected .392/.413/.588, 2 HR, 85 RBI, 5 SB

Pitcher of the Year: Robert Benson (P.B.C.C.) – projected 28-9, 2.39 ERA, 78 K over 347.0 IP

Most Valuable Player: Jonathan Toppin (2B, Frankford) – projected .348/.371/.496, 1 HR, 74 RBI, 17 SB

Greenhorn of the Year: George Oman (CF, Schuylkill) – projected .352/.379/.489, 1 HR, 65 RBI, 29 SB

PCBL TEAM OF THE YEAR FAVORITES

P: Robert Benson (P.B.C.C.), C: Jonathan Noble (MERC), 1B: William Norman (Merion), 2B: Jonathan Toppin (Frankford), 3B: Ben Roberts (Merion), SS: Moody Steiger (P.B.C.C.), OF: Sigmund Siemens (Germantown), OF: James Howard (Frankford), OF: Leroy Moore (P.B.C.C.)