

THE 1877 NATIONAL BASE BALL ORGANIZATION PREVIEW

NORTHEAST U.S.A. (May 9, 1877) – It is time to start the twentieth season of play in the N.B.B.O.

1876 began with Trenton United favored to repeat as Tucker-Wheaton Cup champions in spite of the loss of Manuel Romeiras, but it wasn't to be. They were beaten by 1874 champions Susquehanna in the N.E.L.C.S., and in turn Susquehanna was beaten by Minuteman over five games in the cup final, with the cup going to Albany, New York for the first time.

Minuteman will not be favored to repeat after losing three regulars over the winter. Instead, Syracuse is expected to beat them to the Upstate pennant, while Atlantic is favored to finish 1st in Brooklyn and New York Athletic Club is expected to top New York City for the first time. On paper, Atlantic appears to be the New York League favorites.

In the Northeastern League, 4x New England champions Portland brought on two top-fifteen pitchers over the winter, and that has the Writers Pool thinking they'll go back to the playoffs and take the cup for the first time. Record-breaking Susquehanna is expected to top Inland again, and Quaker St. should be back in the playoffs after a two-year absence.

No teams are expected to make any massive moves up or down the standings this year. Portland is expected to improve by ten wins, but they finished 2nd in New England last year. Quaker St. is similarly expected to win ten more games, but they were 3rd in the Coastal last year.

The most competitive region this year should be Brooklyn. While Atlantic is expected to top Brooklyn with 43 wins, the Writers Pool has Bedford & Marathon finishing tied for last with 28 – a fifteen-game spread from top to bottom. In contrast, the projected 3rd place finishers in New England, Cantabrigians, are expected to finish sixteen games behind Portland.

One team to watch this year is National B.C. They are only projected to finish around .500, but they return two Greenhorn All-Stars in 3B James Kinney & RF Walter Little, and they have 5*, 24-year-old #1 Ben Lauppe, 3* Greenhorn SS James Gentile, and the most talked about Greenhorn batsman ahead of the season: 4*, 22-year-old 2B Chester Dudek.

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

NATIONAL BASE BALL ORGANIZATION PROJECTED FINISH

Brooklyn Championship

- Favorites: Atlantic at 43-27 (+115 RD)
- Eckford, Continental 4 GB, Nassau Co. & Star 8 GB, Empire 10 GB

New York City Championship

- Favorites: New York Athletic Club at 45-25 (+140 RD)
- Union 5 GB, Mercury 7 GB, Baltic & Metro 8 GB

Upstate New York Championship

- Favorites: Syracuse at 45-25 (+150 RD)
- Frontier, Minuteman, & Utica 5 GB, Binghamton 7 GB, Victory 8 GB

Coastal Championship

- Favorites: Quaker St. at 49-21 (+140 RD)
- Trenton Utd. 4 GB, Pt. Jersey 10 GB, Newark 14 GB

Inland Championship

- Favorites: Susquehanna at 52-18 (+275 RD)
- Lancastra 2 GB, Merrimack & Pioneer 14 GB

New England Championship

- Favorites: Portland at 52-18 (+185 RD)
- S.o.t.O. 6 GB, Cantabrigians 16 GB, Oceanic 17 GB

Tucker-Wheaton Cup favorites: Portland B.C.

BROOKLYN – Atlantic returns every regular from last year, and they've added 3.5* LF MacKenzie Wilson from Cantabrigians, giving them the most talented lineup in the N.Y.L. That gives them the slightest of edges over Eckford, who also returned all eight regular batsmen but replaced #2 P Robert Cook with a slight downgrade in 3.5* Greenhorn Robert

Hall. Continental will again have the best pitching duo in the competition, but their lineup has big holes at 1B, 2B, & SS. Nassau Co., Empire, & Star all have the potential to contend, but weaknesses should hold them back.

NEW YORK CITY – N.Y.A.C.'s poor luck in close games last year cost them at least five wins, and the W.P. doesn't expect that to happen again this season as defending P.o.t.Y. Charles Rhodes just turned 28 and could be better than ever. In a similar vein, the W.P. doesn't expect Union to have another incredible 11-2 record in one-run games this year. Mercury offers a very balanced roster with multiple All-Stars that could cause trouble. Metro & Baltic both have some big weaknesses.

UPSTATE – Defending cup winners Minuteman lost 3* CF John Kinder to Mercury, 3* SS Hugh Mercer to Lancaster, & 3* 3B Charles Veverka to Empire, with the only equal replacement being 3* CF Jonathan Ovaska from Portland. Thus, they'll fall back to the pack. Syracuse, with its brilliant 1-2 punch of 2B Chester Alexander & RF Lon Duffy, is expected to take the reins upstate. Frontier has a decent lineup, while Utica has a lot of offense and very little pitching.

COASTAL – For the first time in a four years Quaker St. didn't lose any big stars, and they upgraded at RF with 3.5* St. John's backup William Wimple. That makes them Coastal favorites over Trenton, who lost T.o.t.Y. 2B James Lanagan to Utica & All-Star P Francis Molinari to Portland. Pt. Jersey has young 5* P Charles King ready to take over for George Burroughs, but they rate below average at each OF position. Newark is an afterthought, but their OF is very good.

INLAND – This should be a two-team race between Susquehanna & Lancaster. The cup runners-up brought everyone from last year's record-breaking team back, while Lancaster moved 21-year-old Phil Little back to the bench and replaced him with Minuteman SS Hugh Mercer, who will be a big upgrade at the team's one big weak point last year. The rest of Inland looks like cannon fodder.

NEW ENGLAND – Portland had cash reserves instead of a shortfall this winter, so even though they lost longtime star #1 James Dressman to the A.P.B.L. they brought in a pair of 5* P's – Robert Dressen & Francis Molinari – to replace him. That vaults them over S.o.t.O., who brought in 3* 2B Robert Nelson from Maryland and 4.5* Greenhorn P Weldon Petrie. Like Inland, outside of the projected top two the rest of the region looks like cannon fodder.

NBBO AWARD FAVORITES

NYL Batsman of the Year: Chester Alexander (1B, Syracuse) – projected .372/.418/.445, 1 HR, 84 RBI, 6 SB
NEL Batsman of the Year: Jesse Craig (1B, S.o.t.O.) – projected .373/.413/.471, 1 HR, 65 RBI, 2 SB
NYL Pitcher of the Year: Charles Rhodes (N.Y.A.C.) – projected 24-15, 2.13 ERA, 129 K over 337.1 IP
NEL Pitcher of the Year: William Hawk (Susquehanna) – projected 25-13, 2.48 ERA, 95 K over 340.2 IP
NYL Most Valuable Player: Manuel Romeiras (CF, N.Y.A.C.) – projected .345/.380/.505, 1 HR, 70 RBI, 66 SB
NEL Most Valuable Player: Ned Morganti (CF, Quaker St.) – projected .365/.408/.486, 0 HR, 76 RBI, 29 SB
NYL Greenhorn of the Year: Thomas Smith (P, age 28, Union)
NEL Greenhorn of the Year: Chester Dudek (2B, age 22, National)

NBBO TEAM OF THE YEAR FAVORITES

NEW YORK LEAGUE – P: Charles Rhodes (N.Y.A.C.), C: Cale Jones (Union), 1B: Chester Alexander (Syracuse), 2B: Augustus McGhee (Harlem), 3B: Isaac Kelly (Eckford), SS: Ben Gagliardi (Atlantic), OF: Manuel Romeiras (N.Y.A.C.), OF: Francis Smith (Metro), OF: Herb Verrett (Atlantic)

NORTHEASTERN LEAGUE – P: Robert Dressen (Portland), C: Bertrand Bosley (Green Mtn.), 1B: Jesse Craig (S.o.t.O.), 2B: Lennon Haley (Lancastra), 3B: James Kinney (National), SS: Earl Seals (Trenton Utd.), OF: Ned Morganti (Quaker St.), OF: John Schultz (Susquehanna), OF: Thomas Fetterman (Newark)

MOST TALENTED GREENHORNS (by position)

P: Albert Franklin (Salem, age 23, 5.0/5.0*), C: William Martin (Trenton Utd., age 26, 3.0/3.0*), 1B: James Poindexter (Trenton Utd., age 25, 3.0/3.5*), 2B: Chester Dudek (National, age 22, 4.0/4.5*), 3B: John Hanson (Minuteman, age 25, 2.5/3.0*), SS: James Gentile (National, age 23, 3.0/3.0*), OF: Nicholas Woolridge (Tiger S.C., age 26, 3.0/3.5*), OF: John Ruppel (Portland, age 29, 3.0/3.0*), OF: Chris Becker (Granite, age 23, 2.5/3.0*)

MOST TALENTED RESERVE TEAM PROSPECTS (by position)

P: Harold Sutton (Utica, age 21, 1.5/5.0*), C: John Bachant (Nassau Co., age 19, 1.5/3.5*), 1B: Byron Cross (Victory, age 21, 2.0/4.0*), 2B: Julius Smith (Salem, age 19, 2.0/3.0*), 3B: William Winship (Salem, age 20, 2.0/4.0*), SS: William Reed (Pioneer, age 22, 2.5/3.0*), OF: Jonathan Cobb (Granite, age 20, 2.0/5.0*), OF: Francis Edwards (Quinnipiac, age 19, 2.0/5.0*), OF: Arthur Capone (Maryland, age 23, 3.5/4.0*)