

PCBL BATTING RACE GOES TO FIVE DECIMALS

CLOSEST BATTING TITLE IN BASEBALL HISTORY NEEDED SLIDE RULES TO DETERMINE WINNER

PHILADELPHIA, PENN. (Sep. 15, 1878) – Among the various subplots that took place across the sport of baseball during the 1878 season, perhaps none had a more fascinating finish than the race to win the P.C.B.L. Batting Title.

Going into the final day of games, Sons of Ben's fantastic Greenhorn LF Henry Yoder was leading the league with a .362 Batting Average. Just two points behind him was the Catcher of repeat East Philadelphia champs Queen Village, Milton Foster, at .360. The teams played each other at S.o.B.'s Franklin Field to end the season, so the two would be going head-to-head to determine who took the crown.

Queen Village won their Liberty Bell Classic tuneup by the score of 25-9 to finish the season with an even fifty wins. On the visiting side, [Foster hit 3/7](#) – all Singles – with three Runs and one RBI, placing his final Batting Average at .361. For the home side, [Yoder hit 1/3](#) – a Single – while scoring two Runs and drawing two Bases on Balls. This also left him with a final Batting Average of .361. Going by the standard Batting Average format, they had finished the season tied.

- [QV C Milton Foster](#): 120 H in 332 AB; **.361 AVG**
- [SoB LF Henry Yoder](#): 116 H in 321 AB; **.361 AVG**

However, P.C.B.L. officials figured that since Batting Average was a matter of Mathematics and the two men had different amounts of Hits & At Bats, a deeper dive was needed to see who the true Batting Champion was. So, they went to four decimal places.

That was when they ran into a problem:

- [QV C Milton Foster](#): 120 H in 332 AB; **.3614 AVG**
- [SoB LF Henry Yoder](#): 116 H in 321 AB; **.3614 AVG**

The two men remained tied when taking Batting Average out to the TEN THOUSANDTHS place. Undeterred, the number crunchers working for the P.C.B.L. sharpened their pencils and went further:

- QV C Milton Foster: 120 H in 332 AB; **.36145 AVG**
- SoB LF Henry Yoder: 116 H in 321 AB; .36137 AVG

After breaking Batting Average down to the HUNDRED THOUSANDTHS position, the P.C.B.L. finally had their Batting Champion: [Milton Foster of Queen Village](#).

Queen Village led the P.C.B.L. in Runs (752; 10.7 R/G), Hits (938), Batting Average (.311), On-Base % (.336), Slugging % (.384), & OPS (.720). It was a team that had six of its regulars hit over .300, a P.C.B.L. first. The two men that didn't hit at least .300 finished the season batting .296 & .287. They also became the first team to have seven regulars with 50+ RBI, and the one who failed to reach that mark had 45. Q.V. was also the first team in P.C.B.L. history to score 10+ Runs per game.

Upon a quick glance, it seemed natural that one of Queen Village's stars would take home the P.C.B.L. Batting Title for 1878. However, what was wholly unique was the fact that it took an office and a small group of Mathematicians to confirm that they'd earned it.

The only other time a Batting Title race has ever been this close occurred in 1870. During the final season of play in the N.B.B.O. before the league split, both Cormack Alexander & William Dickerson hit .418 for Quaker State. The N.B.B.O. went to four decimal places and found that Alexander had bested Dickerson by the final tally of .4183 to .4182, or one ten-thousandth of a point. However, since the two were teammates the N.B.B.O. decided to let Alexander & Dickers share the honor, calling the Batting Race a tie for the first, and to date, only time in baseball history.

There will no doubt be many exciting and interesting stories to follow next season, and in the seasons after that, but it will be quite some time before baseball sees battle for a major statistical champion quite like this one.