

CAN A TEENAGER PULL EXCELSIOR OUT OF LAST PLACE?

BROOKLYN (April 18, 1860) – On November 30th, Excelsior B.B.C. sent a telegram to the National Base Ball Organization offices telling them that they had signed a player from independent club Star B.B.C. in Brooklyn: an eighteen-year-old pitcher & first baseman named [Jim Creighton](#).

There were a couple of other clubs in Brooklyn & New York City keen on the young man, but aside from that there was not much of a fuss made when word went out that Creighton was joining Excelsior. Why would there be, given the club's results over the first three years of the N.B.B.O.?

- 1857: 29-41 (.414), Run Diff. of -63, 6th place in Brooklyn Championship (15 GB)
- 1858: 25-45 (.357), Run Diff. of -110, last place in Brooklyn Championship (21 GB)
- 1859: 24-46 (.343), Run Diff. of -125, last place in Brooklyn Championship (23 GB)

The rest of the clubs in the metropolitan area figured that if a player was happy to join a club mired in that kind of putrefaction then he must not be of a terribly high standard.

To say that those clubs are wrong is putting it lightly. Creighton, also an avid cricketer who became a regular bowler for the [American Cricket Club](#) of New York City last year, showed up to the April training games and delivered the ball at such a pace that left observers bewildered. After Excelsior's training game against elder club Gotham last week, players and executives from the opposition demanded to see Creighton close-up to determine if he was somehow slipping an illegal element into his cannon-like delivery of the ball. Although there were about a dozen men surrounding him on three sides, nobody could spot an element of Creighton's pitching repertoire that had to be struck down.

What spectators of Creighton's pitching described was a delivery in which the ball left his right hand from roughly one foot off the ground and then proceeded with never-before-seen speed toward the plate, reaching the batsman at chest or shoulder level. Those on the 36-man Gotham training roster who attempted to hit it were flummoxed.

That was not the only trick Creighton had up his sleeve. He also showed the ability to put a significant amount of spin on the ball, so if an opposing player were to have his speedball timed properly and squared up he could change what he was pitching, and deliver a slower ball that curved away from the bat.

As if his terrifying pitching arsenal were not enough, Creighton also showed [significant proficiency with bat](#), no doubt present due to his experience as a cricketer for American C.C. Thankfully, he does not appear to be a locomotive on the basepaths in addition to everything else.

After two weeks of April training, here is what the club scouts and the Writers' Pool collectively had to say about him:

JIM CREIGHTON – P/1B, Excelsior B.B.C. – 19 y/o (4/15/1841) from New York City – 6'1", 200 lbs.

- **PITCHING:** Stuff **85/125**, Movement 55/75, Control 50/80, Stamina 95, Hold Runners 50
- **REPETOIRE:** Fastball 65/70, Slider 45/70, Change-up 35/65, Sinker 65/80, Curve 35/65
- **DEFENSE (INF):** Range 45, Error 45, Arm 75, D.P. 20
- **POSITIONS:** Pitcher 75/75, First Base 40/60
- **BATTING:** Contact 50/75, Gap 40/65, Eye 40/60, Avoid K's 50/70
- **OTHER:** Speed 50, Stealing 50, Baserunning 55, Sac. Bunt 80, Bunt for Hit 50
- **FINAL GRADE:** Current Talent: 5.0 Stars, Potential Talent: **5+ Stars**

The Writers' Pool is still predicting Excelsior to finish last in the Brooklyn Championship this year, due to their absolute lack of batting talent outside of Jesse Johnson and Henry Watt. However, if their new teenage prodigy hits the proverbial ground running then things will start to look up in short order.