

WHO HAS THE BEST BATSMAN PROSPECT? NATURALLY, ST. JOHNS!

STJ AGAIN HAS BEST RAW BATSMAN, WHILE FLOUR CITY HAS INCREDIBLY PROMISING TEENAGE PITCHER

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (May 1, 1861) – As the first pitches of the base ball season are thrown today, much has already been made of the kind of first-year talent that will be regularly taking to fields in the Northeastern United States this summer, especially the quintet of untested talents that Gotham B.B.C. brought in over the offseason. There are plenty of other newcomers expected to play big roles for their teams this year, and once again most of those men will be participating for clubs in the Northeastern League.

That having been said, those are older men – ages 24-30 – who are fully-formed ball players, already at the peak of their skills after having been scouted playing for informal clubs in the region or perhaps showing up for a try-out and impressing the coaching staff. What of the younger ones who have a way to go to reach the best of their abilities? The lumps of coal that have yet to turn into diamond?

Going into the new season there is one young batsman who appears to have far more talent than any other, and it should surprise nobody who he plays for: the St. John's Baseball Club. The player in question is [20-year-old outfielder Nelson Townsend](#), who has been lauded as a five-star talent by observers & scouts who watched him train with the team and take part in the April Training games.

Townsend is from Fair Lawn, N.J., centered roughly 3.3 miles from Paterson, home of Olympic B.C. in the N.E.L.'s Coastal Championship. However, it was obvious St. John's had their eyes on him for some time as the then nineteen-year-old joined STJ just three days after the end of last year's Tucker-Wheaton Cup. He hit 10/28 (.357) with a double during the April Training schedule and showed flashes of considerable potential. Here is what was written about him by those who observed:

NELSON TOWNSEND – OF, St. John's – 20 y/o, 5'10", 145 lb. from Fair Lawn N.J. – 2.0/5.0 ★

- **BATTING:** Contact 50/**80+**, Gap 60/75, Eye 40/65, Avoid Ks 35/75
- **DEFENSE (OF):** Range 65, Error 55, Arm 70
- **POSITIONS:** LF 55/75, CF 40/55, RF 45/70
- **OTHER:** Speed 70, Stealing 70, Baserunning 70, Bunt (Sac.) 75, Bunt (Hit) 65

Townsend was playing center field for a small club in Paterson when he was signed, but since throwing ability is his main asset in the field St. John's sees right field as his best position. However, once Townsend receives the same two years of Reserve Team development time that Konrad Jensen had he will likely go into the St. John's lineup at left field since Jensen is their right fielder.

To give one an idea of how much more potential observers & scouts believe he has than other youngsters, the second-highest rated younger batsman is Nassau County's William Strausbaugh (22 y/o SS), rated at a 3.5-star potential. Tied for third are William Gillette (20 y/o SS) of Shamrock & Alfred Span (21 y/o LF) of Reading, who are both rated at 3-star potential.

Townsend was not the only player with massive potential signed during the offseason, as the same day he joined St. John's the Flour City B.B.C. brought on a [teenage pitcher named Preston Lilly](#). This was another case of a club having had eyes on a player for some time, as Lilly was pitching for an informal club in Galway, N.Y. (pop. 2,427), around thirty miles northwest of Albany.

Pitching prospects are much harder to figure than young batsmen, and Lilly did not have the ball much during the April Training schedule. The word on him comes from those who watched him in Galway and have seen him work with the Flour City Reserve Team.

PRESTON LILLY – P, Flour City – 19 y/o, 6'0", 175 lbs. from Galway, N.Y. – 0.5/5.0 ★

- **PITCHING:** Stuff 30/60, Movement 40/**80**, Control 35/**80**
- **DEFENSE (INF):** Range 40, Error 35, Arm 50, D.P. 25
- **POSITIONS:** P 60/60
- **OTHER:** Tendency: Ground Balls, Velocity: Avg., Stamina: **80+**, Hold Runners: 35

It is said that his underarm delivery is "free & easy & repeatable as a metronome. Every time he pitches it looks identical." The belief is that as he matures and gains more control of the ball his delivery has the potential to make him unmatched in pitch placement, and it will allow him to pitch the entirety of games almost at will.

Those are the two new young players to watch in upcoming years: one a bright young outfielder in a place well-suited to coach him to his potential, and the other a pitcher from a small town who may develop into a premier talent.