

1861 NEW YORK LEAGUE REVIEW

NEW YORK LEAGUE SEASON SUMMARY

The 1861 New York League season was a bit of a mirror image of the previous one: Kings County ran away with the Brooklyn Championship while New York City & Upstate took until the final days of the season to decide. On top of that, Grover Wright was the most successful pitcher and the toughest baseball again flowed through New York City.

The Brooklyn Championship played out almost identically to last year, as Kings County and Atlantic fighting for top spot at the halfway point – K.C. ahead by one game at 22-13. For the second season in a row K.C. pulled away late, though they did not need a sixteen-game winning streak to do it this time. They were six games up by mid-July and won the pennant K.C. by nine games over Bedford. Atlantic went 13-22 over the second half to slump to a fifth-place finish.

The New York City Championship was tighter at the end than it was last year. Metropolitan was in the lead at the halfway point, with four games separating the top five teams. Three weeks later Gotham had raced to the front of the pack with a four-game lead and never relinquished it, besting Orange by two games, and Knickerbocker/Mutual by four.

Surprisingly, the Upstate Championship was a two-team race, with the two being Syracuse and Utica. The pair were tied with 23-12 records at the halfway mark, and with three weeks left they were both 35-20. Syracuse & Utica were still level with one week to play – both 42-23 – and the difference between them ended up being Syracuse going 5-0 over the final week versus Utica going 4-1. Niagara finished third at a dozen games back, an oddity in a subdivision that has had seasons where the spread of all eight teams at the end of a season has been as little as ten games.

Even though the base ball is tougher in New York City, Syracuse was seen as legitimate favorites in the N.Y.L. Semi-final due to Gotham's heavy reliance on first-year players to make the playoffs. However, that didn't matter...

- **GAME ONE (SYR 11-7)** – Gotham started the series right, with three runs in the top of the first. Syracuse responded with two in the first, one in the second, and five in the third to lead 8-3. They scored three more times in the fifth, and an 11-3 lead was more than enough of a cushion to absorb some late Gotham runs.
- **GAME TWO (GOT 24-4)** – The second game in Syracuse saw an almighty Gotham comeback from their poor play in the opener. The visitors scored multiple runs in the first (3), second (2), fourth (7), seventh (5), eighth (2), & ninth (4), with one other run giving them a total of 24 on 26 hits. Seven players recorded three or more hits, while first-year outfielder Taliesin Buckley both scored and drove in five runs.
- **GAME THREE (GOT 15-10)** – Back in N.Y.C., Game Three again featured plenty of offense. Gotham was ahead 6-5 after three innings. Syracuse chipped away with five runs over the middle innings to take a 10-6 lead, but three Gotham runs in the sixth, five in the seventh, and one in the eighth saw the hosts turn a four-run deficit into a five-run victory.
- **GAME FOUR (GOT 7-2)** – Gotham closed out the series in easy fashion. They scored four runs over the first three innings, and that was plenty as they went on to win 7-2 an advance to the N.Y.L. Championship Series.

The New York League Championship Series was Brooklyn vs New York City for the third year in a row, with this year's series a much better contest than last year's...

- **GAME ONE (K.C. 12-7)** – The opener in Brooklyn was close most of the way. Gotham was ahead 2-1 after three innings and 5-4 after the top of the sixth, but after that it all fell apart for the upstart visitors. K.C. scored twice in the sixth, five times in the seventh, and three more times in the eighth to exit the opener with a big win.
- **GAME TWO (GOT 11-8)** – Gotham decided to get the offense going early for antidote to the late-game jitters, and it led to a much better result in the second game. The visitors rushed out to a 5-1 lead after three innings and were still up by four (6-2) after six. Gotham then scored three in the top of the seventh, and with a 9-2 lead they were able to withstand another late-game Kings County rally while scoring a couple of insurance runs to even the series.
- **GAME THREE (GOT 6-4)** – In N.Y.C., Gotham ditched the late-game nerves and it led to another win. With the hosts up 3-2 going into the bottom of the sixth, Gotham scored three times to take a four-run lead that was easily able to

take on two late Kings County runs. The playoff debutants were now one win from the Tucker-Wheaton Cup series.

- **GAME FOUR (K.C. 16-12)** – This was the most action-packed game of the series. Kings County never trailed. They scored twice in the top of the first, had a 6-2 lead after three, and were ahead 7-3 after six. The late innings provided most of the excitement. K.C. scored five in the seventh to run the score to 12-3, but Gotham responded with six runs to make it 12-9. K.C. scored once in the eighth and three times in the ninth to lead 16-9, which meant a Gotham rally during their last time at bat was nowhere close to enough to force extra innings.
- **GAME FIVE (K.C. 6-5)** – The final game was unforgettable, at least for the hosts. The score was even 2-2 after three before Kings County scored a run in the fourth to take the lead. Gotham then responded with two in the fifth to go ahead, and they scored once more in the seventh to go up 5-3. That was the score going into the bottom of the ninth. The way the game was unfolding it looked like Gotham would win, but two singles and a Passed Ball allowed a K.C. run and a Soren Thomsen double evened the score. With Soren Thomsen on second and John Francis at the plate, consecutive Passed Balls on first-year catcher Wilbert Schrader allowed the winning run to score. K.C. was going to defend the Tucker-Wheaton Cup, and Gotham was left to wonder if Schrader will ever mentally recover.

Kings County would play first-timers Alleghany in the Tucker-Wheaton Cup series, and it was a five-game classic. The two teams would alternate wins over the five games, with three of them decided by one run. In the end K.C. will thank their lucky stars that it was the N.Y.L.'s turn for home field advantage, as Game Five in Brooklyn provided K.C. with the boost they needed in the tightest of series, with Grover Wright finally settling down and pitching K.C. to a 5-3 win and a successful defense of the cup.

There was no clear-cut favorite for Batsman of the Year. Flour City catcher James Hoddle was the N.Y.L.'s only .400 hitter (.404) and drove in 58 runs. Teammate Thomas Branagh led the league in O.P.S. (.939) while finishing with a .393 average. Surprise Binghamton star Oliver Stein was #1 in Slugging % (.502) while hitting .393. Syracuse's Edward Neyland was near the top in average (.379), R.B.I. (63), & W.A.R. (2.5). First-year Niagara outfielder Arvi Hämäläinen led the league in Home Runs (6) while driving in 59 runs and hitting .362.

With so many good candidates, that meant many voters defaulted to the .400 hitter: Hoddle, who became the first catcher to win Batsman of the Year in either league. Stein finished second, and Neyland finished third.

The Most Valuable Player vote saw the Writers Pool do something that hadn't been done since the N.B.B.O.'s first season. There is still no Pitcher of the Year award, and during the season Kings County's Grover Wright put up a 29-6 record while setting N.B.B.O. records for Innings, Complete Games, W.H.I.P., and Pitching W.A.R. That simply could not be overlooked, so even though Edward Huntley of Orange led the league in W.A.R. and Defensive Zone Rating once again it was Wright who was named M.V.P. – the first pitcher to win it since John Anderson won thirty games for Scranton in the N.E.L. during the inaugural season. Huntley was second, and Knickerbocker outfielder Zarek Polakowski finished third.

There was a cornucopia of candidates for Newcomer of the Year. After all, N.Y.L. finalists Gotham alone had half a dozen first-year players who were regular contributors: Hamish Barclay (2B), Wilbert Schrader (C), Sullivan Jackson (3B), and Taliesin Buckley (LF) to go with pitchers Ralph Dodson & William Titus. Other highly productive first-year regulars (*1+ WAR for batters, 2+ WAR for pitchers*) were William Strausbaugh (SS, N.C.), Arvi Hämäläinen (LF, NIA), Thomas Branagh (1B, F.C.), Wesley Leone (3B, EXC), Jonathan German (OF, UNI), Fred Beckwith (2B, K.C.), Gus Huber (RF, MET), Gennaro Calabresi (C, MIN), Nik Madsen (LF, N.C.), James Peters (P, EAG), & Charles Pittman (P, ECK).

Going into the season it seemed likely that the N.o.t.Y. would be one of Gotham's six new talents. However, only one first-year player was named to his league's Team of the Year, and that was Flour City first baseman Branagh thanks to his .393 average, 56 R.B.I. and league-leading .939 O.P.S. He took the award, with Gotham's Titus & Schrader finishing 2nd & 3rd.

If there was an award for Performance of the Season, it would be tempting to give to Flour City outfielder James Hoyt since he was the only N.Y.L. player with six hits in a game. However, on May 22nd Empire Club center fielder Van Patterson was 5/6 with two doubles, four runs, and half a dozen R.B.I. His resulting Game Score of 106 earned Patterson top spot.

Looking ahead, Kings County will enter next season as the first N.Y.L. team to win the Tucker-Wheaton Cup twice in a row. They have also had the league's best record each of the last three seasons. The main question that will be asked about them will be the same that was asked of St. John's after they won the first two cups in 1857 & '58: "What will it take to stop them, who will stop them, and how will it be done?"

NEW YORK LEAGUE STANDINGS

BROOKLYN	W	L	PCT	GB	R	RA	RD	N. Y. C.	W	L	PCT	GB	R	RA	RD
Kings Co.	48	22	.686	--	544	379	+165	Gotham	41	29	.586	--	537	432	+105
Bedford	39	31	.557	9	423	439	-16	Orange	39	31	.557	2	545	441	+104
Excelsior	38	32	.543	10	466	476	-10	Knickerbocker ¹	37	33	.529	4	459	456	+3
Eckford	37	33	.529	11	422	395	+27	Mutual	37	33	.529	4	516	494	+22
Atlantic	35	35	.500	13	495	445	+50	Metropolitan	35	35	.500	6	432	397	+35
Continental	30	40	.429	18	373	446	-73	Harlem	31	39	.443	10	406	515	-109
Nassau Co.	27	43	.386	21	441	525	-104	Hilltop ¹	30	40	.429	11	388	461	-73
Empire	26	44	.371	22	460	519	-59	Union	30	40	.429	11	454	541	-87

UPSTATE	W	L	PCT	GB	R	RA	RD
Syracuse	47	23	.671	--	528	376	+152
Utica	46	24	.657	1	473	374	+99
Niagara	35	35	.500	12	522	512	+10
Flour City ¹	34	36	.486	13	528	525	+3
Eagle	34	36	.486	13	432	463	-31
Victory	33	37	.471	14	410	436	-26
Minuteman	27	43	.386	20	441	503	-62
Binghamton	24	46	.343	23	416	561	-145

1 = Won Head-to-Head Results tiebreaker

2 = Even on Head-to-Head, won Run Differential tiebreaker

NEW YORK LEAGUE PLAYOFFS

SEMI-FINALS: #3 Gotham B.B.C. defeats #2 Syracuse B.B.C. 3-1

- Game 1: GOT 7-11 SYR – P.o.t.G: Oscar McNabb (2B, SYR); 2/5, 2 R, 2 RBI
- Game 2: GOT 24-4 SYR – P.o.t.G: Taliesin Buckley (LF, GOT); 3/7, 3B, 5 R, 5 RBI
- Game 3: SYR 10-15 GOT – P.o.t.G: Wilbert Schrader (C, GOT); 4/5, 3 R, 1 RBI
- Game 4: SYR 2-7 GOT – P.o.t.G: Hamish Barclay (2B, GOT); 3/5, 2 2B, 2 RBI
- M.V.P.: Taliesin Buckley (LF, GOT) – 10/21 (.476), 3 2B, 1 3B, 10 R, 8 RBI, 1 BB, 1 SB
- NOTABLE: Gotham scored 46 runs over their three wins

LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP: #1 Kings County B.B.C. defeats #3 Gotham B.B.C. 3-2

- Game 1: GOT 7-12 K.C. – P.o.t.G: Brannigan Williams (C, K.C.); 3/5, 2 R, 1 RBI, 3 GOT CS
- Game 2: GOT 11-8 K.C. – P.o.t.G: John Fischer (SS, GOT); 4/5, 2B, 3 R, 2 RBI, 1 DEF DP
- Game 3: K.C. 4-6 GOT – P.o.t.G: Sullivan Jackson (3B, GOT); 2/5, 2 R, 2 RBI
- Game 4: K.C. 16-12 GOT – P.o.t.G: Declan Brice (CF, K.C.); 3/6, 2B, 3 R, 2 RBI
- Game 5: GOT 5-6 K.C. – P.o.t.G: Soren Thomsen (RF, K.C.); 3/5, 2B, 1 R, 2 RBI
- M.V.P.: Per Olaf Bakken (SS, K.C.) – 13/26 (.500), 3 2B, 7 R, 2 RBI, 3 SB
- NOTABLE: Kings County won series with three runs in the bottom of the 9th of Game Five
- NOTABLE: K.C.'s winning run in Game Five scored via Passed Ball

TUCKER-WHEATON CUP: Kings County B.B.C. defeats Alleghany B.C. (N.E.L.) 3-2

- Three games were decided by one run, another decided by two
- K.C. SS Per Olaf Bakken (10/23, 6 R, 3 SB) named M.V.P.

NEW YORK LEAGUE AWARD WINNERS

BATSMAN OF THE YEAR: James Hoddle – 31 y/o C, Flour City B.B.C.

- **.402/.433/.476**, .909 OPS, 53 R, 109 H, 16 2B, 2 3B, 0 HR, 58 RBI, 0 SB, 129 TB, 3.2 WPA, 2.4 WAR
- Hit .433 (42/97) during June with 5 Doubles, 20 RBI, 1.6 WPA, & 1.0 WAR (22 Games)
- O. Stein (BING: .393, **.502 SLG**, 26 XBH, 52 RBI) 2nd, E. Neyland (SYR: .362, 21 XBH, 2 HR, 63 RBI) 3rd

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER: Grover Wright – 31 y/o P, Kings County B.B.C.

- **29-6**, 2.46 ERA, **329.1 IP**, **36 GS**, **30 CG**, **3 SHO**, 37 BB, 48 K, **1.12 WHIP**, **6.6 WAR**, **10.9 R9-WAR**
- Set N.B.B.O. Records for Innings, Complete Games, WHIP, & Pitching WAR
- Became 1st player to pitch consecutive Shutouts on July 18th
- E. Huntley (ORA: .337, 41 RBI, **+21.1 ZR**, **4.0 WAR**) 2nd, Z. Polakowski (KNI: .350, 50 RBI, 3.8 WPA, 2.9 WAR) 3rd

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR: Thomas Branagh – 28 y/o 1B, Flour City B.B.C.

- **.393/.447/.492**, **.939 OPS**, 69 R, 99 H, 18 2B, 2 3B, 1 HR, 56 RBI, 8 SB, 124 TB, 3.4 WPA, **2.8 O-WAR**, 1.7 WAR
- Only Newcomer to be named in either league's Team of the Year
- W. Titus (GOT: 23-7, 2.97, 23 CG, 6.0 WAR) 2nd, W. Schrader (GOT: .352, 105 H, 61 RBI, 1.9 WAR) 3rd

GOLDEN GLOVES

P: Henry Oliver (F.C.) – 79 TC, 3 DP, 7 E, 2.2 RNG, +6.3 ZR, 1.13 EFF

C: Martin Elson (UTI) – 89 PB, 41.7 CS%, 2.73 CERA, +18.2 ZR, 0.98 EFF

1B: Grover Curran (EMP) – 693 TC, 56 AST, 13 DP, 11 E, +9.4 ZR, 1.13 EFF

2B: Henry Ciccone (MET) – 492 TC, 183 PO, 266 AST, 43 DP, 31 E, **6.8 RNG**, **+20.6 ZR**, 1.16 EFF

3B: Jerrick Stoner (CON) – 281 TC, 50 PO, 199 AST, 14 DP, 32 E, 3.8 RNG, +8.7 ZR, 1.09 EFF

SS: Edward Huntley (ORA) – 408 TC, 108 PO, **263 AST**, 25 DP, 37 E, 5.8 RNG, +19.1 ZR, **1.19 EFF**

OF: Jasper Carrell (HAR) – 234 TC, 182 PO, 4 AST, 1 DP, 48 E, 2.8 RNG, +6.4 ZR, 1.09 EFF

CF: Declan Brice (K.C.) – 256 TC, 228 PO, 5 AST, 1 DP, 23 E, 3.4 RNG, +7.6 ZR, 1.09 EFF

OF: Raleigh Altstadt (MUT) – 213 TC, 175 PO, 7 AST, 0 DP, 31 E, 3.4 RNG, +8.6 ZR, 1.09 EFF

TEAM OF THE YEAR

P: Grover Wright (Kings County)

- 29-6, 2.46 ERA, 329.1 IP, 30 CG, 3 SHO, 37 BB, 48 K, 1.12 WHIP, 6.6 WAR, 10.9 R9-WAR, M.V.P.

C: James Hoddle (Flour City)

- .402/.433/.476, 53 R, 109 H, 16 2B, 2 3B, 0 HR, 58 RBI, 0 SB, 3.2 WPA, 2.4 WAR, B.o.t.Y.

1B: Thomas Branagh (Flour City)

- .393/.447/.492, .939 OPS, 69 R, 99 H, 18 2B, 2 3B, 1 HR, 56 RBI, 8 SB, 3.4 WPA, 2.8 O-WAR, 1.7 WAR, N.o.t.Y.

2B: Joseph Bentley (Niagara)

- .366/.423/.432, 64 R, 107 H, 13 2B, 3 3B, 0 HR, 46 RBI, 27 BB, 7 SB, 1.6 WPA, 2.5 WAR

3B: Jerald Peterson (Kings County)

- .357/.395/.439, 76 R, 112 H, 16 2B, 2 3B, 2 HR, 41 RBI, 9 SB, 1.5 WPA, 2.0 WAR

SS: Carl Keener (Minuteman)

- .364/.384/.449, 78 R, 117 H, 15 2B, 6 3B, 0 HR, 41 RBI, 18 SB, 4.4 WPA, 2.7 WAR

OF: Oliver Stein (Binghamton)

- .393/.424/.502, 56 R, 116 H, 20 2B, 6 3B, 0 HR, 52 RBI, 7 SB, 3.6 WPA, 2.8 WAR

CF: Wilson Clark (Harlem)

- .355/.386/.454, 57 R, 108 H, 20 2B, 5 3B, 0 HR, 42 RBI, 19 SB, 1.4 WPA, 2.5 WAR

OF: Edward Neyland (Syracuse)

- .362/.379/.455, 72 R, 109 H, 16 2B, 3 3B, 2 HR, 63 RBI, 8 SB, 3.0 WPA, 2.5 WAR

MGR: David Evans (Excelsior)

- 38-32; Excelsior doubled their win total & improved from 8th (last) to 3rd in Brooklyn