

In the Phillies' New Training Camp

By Edward L. Grant

Third Baseman Philadelphia Nationals

IN choosing as training grounds a place but 500 miles from Philadelphia, Manager Murray of the Phillies has worked an innovation for present-day major league teams. Southern Pines, though comparatively northern in situation as compared with other training places, has little northernness in its climate.

As the guide-book would say, situated on the main line of the Seaboard Air Line Railroad, Southern Pines is easily accessible by two daily trains from the North. The trains do not always arrive on time—in fact, hardly ever—yet that matters little, for time is nothing to the people here, inasmuch as it is a surplus quantity.

In this quiet town of about 200 population, the Phillies have laid out their ball-field. It is situated on the golf course, and is of such large proportions as to allow the players to chase the ball, unhampered by any fences. Although the soil of this part of the country is generally sandy, by a careful mixture of loam with sand, an infield has been prepared, which the veteran "Kid" Gleason states is the best he has seen in the South during his twenty annual Southern migrations. In fact, even at the present time, though only laid out a month, it is better than many of the dirt diamonds of the Northern leagues.

In keeping with the condition of the field is that of the weather. Perhaps its one greatest fault is that it is too healthful for ball-players. The air is so clear and bracing that people about to die are brought here and made whole again. With such a condition prevailing, the ball-player after vigorous exercise is apt to acquire such a vivacious

appetite that he suddenly finds himself putting on weight rather than reducing it as he had anticipated.

While not so hot as further South, yet there are advantages in that very fact. Though the very hot weather for the time being allows the player to give full play to his activities, yet later on, by the way of reaction, it has an enervating effect and leaves the player what is termed "loggy," so that each successive exercise requires greater energy to arouse the system. We experienced this especially in Savannah, where, after a hot night, the players got up all feeling, as one expressed it, "like a wet rag." In such a condition, it is evident that it would require a great effort to arouse one to the physical exertion required of a ball-player. Here, on the other hand, the players get up looking for new baseball worlds to conquer.

Another advantage is that the difference in climate between Philadelphia and here is not so marked as between Philadelphia and points further south. After we had experienced the hottest weather in Savannah, we arrived home to find the biting winds so common in the first part of April. Even if we are not in top-notch form on leaving here, yet we will not lose what we have gained which would be the case if we had to suffer from the reaction of the hot South to the cool North. This fact especially appeals to us this year, as we open in Boston April 14, and the weather is very apt to be inclement.

Passing from the advantages, let me say something about the town itself. The population is practically northern; the people are here either in search of health or to escape the rigors of a

Northern winter. So it is not surprising that the players at once became a component part of the community. We had been expected for many weeks and were greeted with delight by the guests, and with open-eyed awe by the natives.

Once established, it did not take long to find the local attractions, for they consist of a moving picture show, operated in a tent, with the extremely advanced idea of a change of pictures every night. This is the Mecca for all the inhabitants every evening—that is, almost every evening, for if perchance the train is late, then the films do not arrive, and there can be no show.

In connection with our arrival, it is noteworthy to notice the disposition of the people toward us. While entirely friendly, they had expected "a number of men who would take possession of the town much after the manner of the Western 'cowboy,' " as the local paper announced. But that weekly organ goes on to say, "they were agreeably surprised to find that the present-day ball-player is very much of a gentleman, " and finishes by congratulating the players on their behavior. Such things as this help to strengthen the national game among all classes.

Though we came in considerable numbers, yet we were not without rivals in the field. We found the game of golf strongly entrenched here. For with an ideal course and ideal weather, it is natural that Southern Pines and Pinehurst—which is but six miles distant—should have numerous golf devotees. But, like Caesar, we came, we saw, we conquered. Where the people once

chased the illusive golf-ball, they now watched the seductive ball game; where the little negroes once carried golf sticks, they now carried ball bats. Near our grounds numerous black boys could be seen engaged in a "six-day game," much after the manner of the Northern boys, but with much less proficiency.

Many people who have had but little connection with baseball have become ardent fans, and now they will never miss an opportunity to see the Phillies. In fact, so strongly have they become attached to the players that they call them by their pet names as freely as do the home-rooters.

Every afternoon all the guests are out to see our practice or the game between the Regulars and Yanigans. And they root hard—not for the Regulars, however, for they are an out-and-out Yanigan crowd, and rejoice at any humiliation they can administer the opponents.

But when we play an outside team, they root for us most vigorously. The few games we have played have been with college teams, and we have met with a strong resistance, for the Southern college team, if not equal to the Northern one, has the advantage of starting training early in February, so that now they are in top-notch form.

On the whole, it seems that the new training camp is a success, and though we have no complaint on the weather score, yet we expect next year it should be better, for this has been an extraordinarily bad spring all through the South. The players are all well pleased and have been so well received that they are all sorry to leave, and look forward to returning next year.

