



# A World's Record in Baseball Attendance

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A UNIQUE ACHIEVEMENT IN THE  
NATIONAL GAME

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*Dr. Tompkins a Thirty-third Degree Fan*

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By John E. Quinn

*Many fans have had an unbroken attendance at every major league contest in their home city throughout a whole season. Many thousands more would like to have such a record and would have had it too if time and money allowed. But Dr. Tompkins is justly entitled by his unique record to the title of World's Champion Short Distance Fan.*

**E**UREKA! I have run to earth the greatest fan in the realm of baseball, the holder of the world's most unique record, undisputed, unchallenged, no matter how opinion may divide on the freest batter, the boldest base pilferer, the fastest fielder, or on any other element entering into the game of games.

The fan to whom I refer is now a resident of Ocean Grove, N. J., a dentist practicing his profession in the adjoining city of Asbury Park—Dr. George L. D. Tompkins.

Attend, if you please, while I present Dr. Tompkins' claim to a pedestal in the baseball hall of fame.

Thousands of fans times innumerable have sat through a double-header on a summer's afternoon, and hundreds of these, possibly, have attended a morning game, too, giving them a total record for the day of three games. A very fair record, you will say. Yes, but their performance is only as a Lilliputian to a Brobdingnagian when compared with the achievement of Dr. Tompkins.

The latter in one day paid admission to, and witnessed, four different games of professional baseball, played in four

different cities, by the representatives of four different leagues!

Lest the reader fail to grasp at a casual glance the full import of this announcement, let me repeat it, paragraphically, in this wise:

Four games!

Four leagues!

Four cities!

One day!

And every game, mark you, a full nine-inning contest. Indeed, one game went twelve innings and was called on account of darkness.

Can you beat it?

Here is how the thing happened, and for fear there should be some captious critic to declare it an utter impossibility, I go into particulars and give all the details.

Necessarily, the four games were played on a holiday. Equally necessary, the cities were close together, so that the time of traveling from one to the other was reduced to the minimum.

The holiday was Labor Day, Monday, September 3, 1888.

The cities were Newark, Jersey City, Brooklyn and New York.

On the morning of the day named, the first game was played at Newark. The opposing forces were the Newark and Allentown (Pa.) teams of the Atlantic League. Newark won, 4-0.

Score one for Dr. Tompkins.

This game took place at an early hour to allow the fans time to hike over to Jersey City and see later in the morning an exhibition game between the Jersey City team of the Central League and the New York Nationals, a chance not to be missed. In 1888 Jersey City had a corking good aggregation of ball players, and on that memorable morning of September 3, the lowly Skeeters humbled the mighty Giants to the tune of 8-2.

Score two for Dr. Tompkins.

Then came an early afternoon game in Brooklyn between the American Association teams of that city and St. Louis. Arlie Latham was the bright particular star of this game, but, although Arlie brought into service every wile for which he was famous, St. Louis fell down before Brooklyn, 1-0.

Score three for Dr. Tompkins.

This game was played in almost record time, and then having nothing special to demand his attention, and still yearning for more baseball, Dr. Tompkins took himself quickly across the bridge to New York and thence up to the Polo Grounds, where the New York and Philadelphia National League teams were scheduled for a four o'clock game. The Doctor reached a seat in time to hear the umpire's welcome cry, "Play ball!" For twelve innings the Giants

and the Quakers fought it out, neither side scoring, until finally darkness put a stop to hostilities and an end to Dr. Tompkins' feast.

By candle light the genial Doctor wended his way homeward, sighing for more baseball worlds to conquer. However, until years later in conversation with the writer, it never dawned upon him that he had achieved a remarkable record, and that, too, unwittingly, as he had no intention at the outset to attend but a morning and an afternoon game. Chance played into his hand all through the day.

Where are the men who participated in these four games twenty-three years ago—players whose names once were high on the scroll of fame? Clements, Farrar, Thompson, Delahanty, Gleason, of the Phillies; Ewing, Keefe, Connor, Whitney, O'Rourke, of the Giants; Latham, Robinson, Comiskey, White, O'Neil, of St. Louis; Pinkney, Foutz, Orr, Burdock, Radford, of Brooklyn; Casey, Coogan, Fields, Duffy, Howe, of Newark; Tomney, Ward, Brennan, Meister, Brady, of Allentown. Some of them still associated, directly or indirectly, with the national pastime. Some engaged in other pursuits and to be seen frequenting, as often as may be, the scenes of their former triumphs, cheering the same feats for which in the olden days they modestly received the honest plaudits of the multitudes. Some have "struck out" forever, and their names remain only as a fragrant memory.