



LAWRENCE DOYLE, CAPTAIN OF THE NEW YORK NATIONAL CLUB

The Captain of the Giants

The Man Whose Remarkably Heavy Hitting, and Fast Fielding Have Been a Powerful Factor in the Winning of the Pennant by the New York National Club

By FRANK KENNEDY

Just what part the captain of a club plays in a short series like the World's Series is not certain. His work as captain may be of the last importance and it may cut no figure at all. But Lawrence Doyle, captain of the Giants, whatever he accomplishes as field leader of that great club, is sure to play a most important part in the coming games with the Red Sox. Doyle's speed and his tremendous hitting are almost certain to be a conspicuous factor in the World's Championship of 1912.

FRANK CHANCE, on his last visit to New York, said "The Giants are not a great club. Their pitching staff started the season well and they are fast, but they are not of pennant-winning calibre."

That the Giants are not a perfectly rounded club is true. Their main strength throughout the season has been their pitching staff. Their outfield has not been over strong, and the infield has been shaky. Perhaps the club is not fully, as Chance asserts, of pennant-winning calibre. If so, all the more credit to McGraw that under his leadership it has won a pennant. But there is one man in the club outside the batteries who, whatever his team mates may be, is himself of pennant-winning calibre, and that man is Lawrence Doyle, captain of the New York Giants.

McGraw's career has been one long succession of acts which were severely criticized at the time by the press and the public, but his sound judgment has been repeatedly verified by the result.

In 1909, when he purchased Lawrence Doyle of the Springfield Three I Club for \$4,500, many fans thought he was securing a gold brick. The Three I League is rather far down in the minors and Doyle was hardly twenty years old. Furthermore, as he had hit for .290 in sixty-six games and fielded .918 at third base, there seemed to be nothing in his record

brilliant enough to warrant an investment of that magnitude. \$4,500 for a green, untried young player from a very minor league looked like a gamble, at least so it seemed in 1907, but on the eve of the second world's series in which he has competed the papers of Greater New York and those fans who hope to be lucky enough to get a seat at the Polo Grounds when the great games come off, agree that no \$4,500 of John T. Brush's money was ever invested more advantageously than in this same daring deal.

Larry Doyle, everybody calls him Larry, was born at Caseville, Ill., on the 31st of July, 1886. Caseville is a town of about 2,000 people and no special business interests. Nothing occurred in the younger years of Gotham's future captain to indicate his subsequent renown on the diamond.

Like all other boys at Caseville, Ill., and elsewhere, he played baseball from his earliest years, playing every position which offered with the utmost willingness. He caught, pitched, played the outfield, and may possibly have umpired, although he refuses to admit this and without evidence it should not be charged against him. Most of his time, however, was spent in covering third base, and here the youthful Larry garnered up that fund of experience which was to stand him in such good stead in future years.

Third base has always been consid-

ered the most difficult corner of the diamond, and that Doyle fielded it acceptably from his earliest years is an indication of that great speed and base-running ability which has characterized his play since he became a star on the Giant team. All records of the many hard-fought contests in which Doyle and his team mates struggled for the championship at Caseville, like many other priceless records of antiquity, have been wholly lost.

In fact, history fails to show any light upon his career until the Doyle family, when Larry had reached the ripe age of twelve years, moved to another town in Illinois rejoicing in the name of Breeze. Breeze is practically a suburb of St. Louis, so that Doyle may be fairly said to have become a resident of the city of Anheuser Busch and the St. Louis Browns. This thriving little hamlet numbers near 3,000 souls, who manage to eke out an existence in the sultry climate of the Mississippi Valley by reading the latest bulletins of those contests in which their most famous townman has distinguished himself. Breeze, like every other locality in which he has ever resided, liked Larry Doyle, and he evidently reciprocated that feeling, for he has continued to make his home there ever since.

When Doyle had passed through fifteen winters, he obtained a job playing third base on a local semi-pro team. The name of the team was the Breeze Blues. It was semi-pro in name more than in fact, and the name Blue was incorporated as its official signature upon the first casual glimpse at the receipts from a Sunday game. The wicked people of the Mississippi valley, far from Plymouth and its Puritan traditions which still exist in the blue laws of the Eastern States, have for many years shown their innate depravity in Sunday baseball. They usually patronize any good club which desecrates the Sabbath day, provided the games are stirring enough to warrant their paying over a quarter and sitting for two hours in the hot sun on a hard plank. But Doyle, in spite of the fevered excitement which always rages throughout the Middle Western States wherever baseball is mentioned, speedily came to the conclusion that his dreams of realizing immense wealth were rooted in barren soil at Breeze,

The opportunity which always knocks once came to Doyle in the spring of 1906 in the shape of a contract with Mattoon, of the K. I. T. League. It was in this poetic locality that Doyle commenced his professional career. In the first season playing third base as usual, he took part in ninety-one games, batted for .225 and had a fielding average of .876. This was not so very good, but Doyle, who was only nineteen, showed promise.

That same season he passed to Springfield in the Three I League, where he also played third base, took part in sixty-six games, batted for .290 and fielded for .918. Many critics could see in this record nothing to warrant a cash investment of \$4,500, but John McGraw saw it and he cheerfully laid down a large roll of John T. Brush's money in exchange for the fast improving third baseman.

When Larry went to the greater city and realized that he was a full-fledged big leaguer at the age of twenty, he found before him a far more difficult experience than commonly falls to the lot of a ball player. Never, in all his experience since his days at Caseville, had he played second base, but that was the position for which McGraw and the demands of the occasion speedily designed him. At second base Larry was started, and at second base, new as the position seemed, he speedily made good. In his first season he took part in 69 games, batted for .260 and fielded for .917, and the critics still moaned about the lost \$4,500. But McGraw took no part in that moaning. He saw from the first that the thick-set, brown-eyed, strikingly fast infielder had the making of a great second baseman, and he proceeded to carry out his part of the contract in remodeling 170 pounds of raw material into a finished big league star.

In 1908 McGraw's claims were well rewarded, for in this season Doyle took part in 102 bloodless encounters, fielded for .935 and crossed the mystic .300 mark with the grand batting average of .308. In 1909 he took part in 144 games and batted for .302. In 1910 he was on the diamond in 151 encounters and batted for .285. In 1911, when the Giants won the pennant, Doyle was their leading infielder, played in 141 games, batted for .310 and fielded for .944. During the

last World's Series Doyle was the most valuable man on the Giant squad outside the pitching force. He batted for .304, stole two of the club's four stolen bases, made three two-baggers and a triple and scored three of the club's thirteen runs. He fielded for .967, having a single error registered against his account. The end of the spirited series found the world's pennant floating far from the Polo Ground from the flagstaff at Shibe Park, but if all the Giants had played as brilliant a game and batted as heavily as their captain those cloudy days in mid-October would have told a different story.

This year Doyle has far exceeded all his previous best efforts. He has been a tremendously heavy hitter from the beginning of the season, and in addition to batting often, he has made many long hits for extra bases. His record abounds with triples and home runs. Doyle is without a question the most valuable player in either infield or outfield on the Giant squad. It is impossible to compare his work with that of such a man as Evers of the Cubs, for Evers' strong bid for fame rests more upon his shrewd and cunning brain than in his heavy batting, though he has had a great season this year. Doyle is not the clever tactician that Evers is, but in the driving force of his heavy hits and in his fast, snappy work on the bases, he is the superior of the brainy Cub.

Doyle is not, as some assert, a disappointing fielder. It is true that he makes many errors on second base, but most of these errors are booted balls on very easy flies, and generally count little in the final records of the game. On the hard trys which really require genuine ability to field in good shape at critical moments in the game, Doyle is as steady as any of them. Fielding records generally tell very little of a player's real ability, and they are exceptionally misleading in the case of Larry Doyle.

Doyle has, as we have seen, distinguished himself greatly in the last World's Series which was his first experience. On the eve of a second experience with a club which has not in recent years competed for that honor and whose members therefore lack experience, Doyle finds little advantage on the side of the Giants in that respect.

"I do not think it makes very much difference," says Doyle, "whether a player has been in a big league series before or not. No player takes part in enough big series contests to get really used to them, and after all, they are not so much different from many other games during the season. A player, at least in New York, often has to face a crowd of 30,000 people, and it is not so much worse in a World's Series. The only difference is that the games have more at stake for the player, and that it makes, roughly, \$1,000 difference to every man on each club whether the team wins or loses. It is safe to say that every man on either team will play for all he is worth throughout the series, and he could not do better than that anywhere or under any circumstances.

"I do not know very much about the Red Sox of this season, as I have not had a chance to see them play. I believe that in a series pitching is the all-important factor and here the Giants are certainly strong. I consider speed as a very important thing in the work of a club. The Giants have won the pennant this year mainly with their speed, and we hoped to accomplish a good deal by our speed in the Series of 1911. But what makes speed of secondary importance in a World's Series is the fact that the opposing club will bring out its best possible pitching talent and the men who do not get on bases can't steal. No matter how fast a player is he has to reach first or his speed won't do him much good. Fielding is very important, but does not count as heavily in a World's Series as batting and nowhere nearly so much as pitching. The records show that many games in a World's series have been marred by ragged fielding, while the errorless games have been very few. The men are playing at too high a pitch oftentimes to do themselves justice, and it shows in their fielding records.

"Jack Pfeister, of the old Chicago Cubs, used to be the worst pitcher in the game for me to face. Since Jack is out of it now, it is not easy for me to say, but I believe Rucker, of Brooklyn, is about the toughest pitcher in the business for me to hit. Richie is also a hard man, especially for us. Other clubs seem to

beat Richie often enough, but we can't do it. He is a hard man for me to bat to, for he never gives me a good ball. Those that are over the plate are in the hardest possible position to hit. He generally does not have very much stuff on the ball, but he places his hits where he wants them, has great control and uses his head. Head work plays an important part in pitching, and Richie certainly has our number."

Larry Doyle, since he was appointed captain of the club, has been an almost ideal leader. He has an easy-going, accommodating disposition which makes him naturally popular, and this way of his, as well as his own great hitting and fast fielding, make him the logical leader. McGraw's choice of a fielding captain was a final compliment to the player for whom a large sum of money was paid before he had a possible chance to show his ability.

Doyle is fond of sports of all kinds, though baseball is of course his favorite. He has never played basketball or football. He likes the National Game so well that in the winter time he plays indoor baseball in the vicinity of St. Louis. This is his principal occupation through the winter months when he is not taking a tour with the Giants in Cuba or around

the world.

Doyle usually takes part in about two games a week, and as usual he plays second base. Indoor baseball has been a promising offshoot of the summer game for several years. While it has never obtained much popularity in the East, in the Middle Western States it finds an enthusiastic reception. The game is already too much in its infancy to hazard an opinion as to its ultimate success, but there is certainly a large place in the public mind for any game even remotely like its greatest of all games, baseball.

Doyle is about five feet eight and one-half inches tall and weighs 170 pounds. He has light brown eyes, rather dark complexion and a very pleasant manner. As yet Doyle is alone in the world, having escaped all the pitfalls of nine months of leap year. "I am not married," says the breezy captain of the New York Giants, "and haven't any immediate idea of being. Of course, you never can tell, but you can say for me that I won't be married now at any rate until after the World's Series. I have too much to think about between now and then trying to see whether I or somebody else on the Red Sox will get that extra \$1,000 which goes to every man on the winning club."

