



PRESIDENT TAFT PRESENTING CAPTAIN LINDSAY WITH DIAMOND STUDED FOBS, THE GIFT OF PRESIDENT MCGILL TO THE MEMBERS OF THE DENVER CLUB.

Baseball Above The Clouds

The Pennant Winner of the Western League

By Russell F. Norton

The phenomenal success of the Denver Club has been a striking illustration of the world-wide progress of the national game. Here, more than a mile above the sea, laboring under the most perplexing climatic conditions, the great American game enjoys enthusiastic support. Our readers will be interested in this graphic account of "Baseball Above the Clouds."

THE Western league pennant for 1911 will fly in Denver next season. The Denver Grizzlies won the flag in the greatest runaway race in the history of the league and while the playing strength of the league as a whole was fully up to that of pre-

vious years the Denver management gathered together an aggregation of stars such as never before played outside the majors, the American Association and the Eastern league.

On paper the team showed the same strength at the start of the season that



ROBERT UNGLAUB,
THE MANAGER OF THE LINCOLN CLUB OF
THE WESTERN LEAGUE.

it actually developed later, but it took some weeks under the guidance of Manager John C. Hendricks for the team to strike its stride and then there was but little doubt of where the club would finish. The only real fight for position was between the Pueblo and

St. Joseph clubs for second place, the latter aggregation cinching its position as a runner-up in the last three days of the season.

Early in the Spring President McGill, of the Denver club, announced that he had arranged a training trip for his club such as had never before been undertaken by a team outside the major leagues. A 3,500 mile trip was arranged through Texas and Oklahoma and when it was announced that the club would travel by special train, have special chefs, etc., and spend eighteen days on the road before the opening of the season, various club owners and papers around the circuit ridiculed the idea. It was claimed that the trip would send the players into the race tired and over-weighted and that there would be no beneficial results. The writer accompanied the club on its trip and while from a training standpoint the trip was not an unqualified success, it was the means of getting the players on the best of terms. Each man had a chance to learn the habits of his teammates and Manager Hendricks was able to study his men for three weeks and learn their strong points and their weaknesses. There was nothing that was not open and above board and when the season opened the Grizzlies were as one big happy family.

Besides the Grizzlies, two other clubs were regarded as pennant contenders. The Lincoln club looked strong and the Sioux City Packers had made such a great race in 1910 that many looked upon them as the most likely candidates for championship honors. The followers of these teams were confident that they had the right dope when the season began.

The Denver club opened at Lincoln and dropped two out of three. They then returned home and when ten games had been played the Grizzlies were in sixth place and going slowly. At twenty games they had worked into the first division. So close was the race that in a few days the Denver aggregation was in second place with Sioux City leading. Class had begun

to tell and in the middle of May Denver made a clean sweep of a three-game series at Sioux City and took the lead.

After once getting on top it looked as if Denver would have fair sailing the rest of the way, but they hit a slump and landed in third place. Then came a short struggle with Denver, Lincoln, Sioux City and St. Joseph striving for position. In a couple of weeks the Denver club had come back into its own. Lincoln was still going strong but Sioux City was put out of the running when they started a fourteen-game road trip and suffered thirteen defeats.

At this time the Wichita club was transferred to Pueblo and with the change in the circuit came the biggest surprise of the season. Isbell's Pueblo aggregation jumped into the fight and was in the running up to the time that Denver made sure of the pennant. Another surprise was the showing made by the St. Joseph club. Jack Holland had one of the scrappiest aggregations of players in the league. They battled through to a finish and were always threatening until they went out of the race along with Pueblo.

The general class of play throughout the season was such that Western league fans were treated to the best ball seen in the league in recent years. There was no club that did not possess enough class to give the leaders a battle at all times. True, the Des Moines club finished a dismal tail-ender, but there was never a time that they failed to bob up somewhere during the series and threaten to start something.

The Lincoln club under the management of Bob Unglaub, included in its line-up a number of stars and any game in which the Antelopes appeared was sure to be an attractive one. Paul Cobb, brother of the Detroit star, was one of the outfield stars of the season, while McCormick, another outfielder, was always dangerous with the stick and a man to be feared. Gagnier at short and the veteran, Gus Dundon, at second, made a good combination around the keystone and altogether



LEE MCGRAW,
STAR BACKSTOP OF THE LINCOLN CLUB.

the team was a classy fielding aggregation.

The Pueblo club was a team of sluggers. They carried off the batting honors for the season, but were fifth in team fielding. Their hitting kept



DENVER BASEBALL CLUB, 1911 - WESTERN LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

Top Row - J.C. Mc Gill, President; Hamblis, P.; Kincaid, E.; Coffey, J.S.; Lindsay, J.B.; Scribner, P.; Beall, J.F.; Lee, Haynes, Secretary
Middle Row - Quillen, J.F.; B. Gilmore, C.F.; Hendricks, Manager; Hachman, P.; O'Brien, P.; Cassidy, R.F.; Spahr, C.
Bottom Row - Kenastay, P.; O'Leary, P.; Toume, Hendricks, Mascot; Lloyd, 2nd B.; Farmers, C.

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them up in the race, but poor base-running lost them many games.

The Topeka club made a great start, but soon there was trouble in the management and the team, while never a pennant contender, became one of the least feared in the league.

Omaha failed to show any real class. The team looked promising at the close of last season, but the youngsters failed to develop as was expected and the veterans slowed up to a great extent.

St. Joseph was represented by the best all-around team in the league, outside of Denver. They were not particularly strong either in batting or fielding, but the men worked well together and were a good aggregation of baserunners. They had the advantage of high-class pitching and did not know the meaning of the word quit.

The story of the Denver club is one that practically covers the Western league situation. The other clubs were as strong as the usual Western league teams, but for individual work, teamwork, inside baseball, consistent hitting, good pitching, and in fact in all things that go to make up a winner, the Grizzlies outclassed the rest. The shortstop position had for several seasons been the weakest place in the Denver infield. Jack Coffey was bought from Indianapolis and took care of the position so well that the other shortstops in the league were forgotten. Lloyd at second and Lindsay at first played consistent ball at all times and Quillin at third played the same brand of ball with which he helped Sioux City win the flag a year ago.

The outfield was easily the best that ever represented a club in the Western league. Gilmore was secured from the White Sox when the season was about five weeks old and while he batted a little under .300, his baserunning was always a feature of the games in which he played and his fielding was of high class, Beall played his second season with the Grizzlies and by his heavy hitting became a star throughout the circuit. Cassidy took care of the third

garden and while being one of the best fielding outer-gardeners in the league, he batted .327.

The season just closed stamps Cassidy as one of the most dependable outfielders in the minor leagues. Always batting around the three hundred mark and fielding in great form, he has not missed a game in five full seasons and the last two years he played through schedules of 168 games. The only times that he has been out of the game were when he would retire during late innings to let a right hander bat for him when a southpaw was on the slab.

Throughout the season Hendricks had a catching staff that was thoroughly reliable, Spahr, formerly of the Jersey City club of the Eastern league, and Frambes, a former Topeka player, doing great work.

The Denver pitching staff was one that could have gone to almost any other club in the league and brought it out a winner. Shortly after the season opened, "Buck" O'Brien was farmed to the club by the Boston Red Sox and after being driven from the box on his first appearance, he squared away and won twenty-five games and lost but six before being turned back to the Boston club early in September. Hagerman pitched some remarkable ball for the club as did Olmsted, Kinsella, Harris and Schrieber.

One of the most notable instances of all-around ability was the playing of Kenworthy, the club's utility man. Kenworthy played in the neighborhood of fifty games. He pitched eleven games, winning nine, and played in every other position on the team. He substituted in every infield and outfield position and went behind the bat on the closing day of the season, where he caught like a veteran.

From the standpoint of the spectator the season was a success, every city seeing its share of excellent games, but from the standpoint of a club owner the year was far from a good one for some. Denver, however, drew far more people than any other club in the league and the owner cleared a



THOMAS O'BRIEN,
HE MADE A BETTER RECORD THAN
"MARTY" O'TOOLE, THE FAMOUS
\$25,000 PITTSBURG TWIRLER,
AND IS NOW WITH THE
BOSTON RED SOX.

splendid profit on the season. St. Joseph and Pueblo also came through the year with a profit. It is not definitely known that any club actually lost money and it is probable that the sale of players enabled every club to get at least as good as an even break.

Throughout the circuit there is more or less complaint against the schedule of 168 games. Denver had the pennant tucked away fifteen days before the season ended and with such a lead interest waned. True the Denver fans appreciated the work of the club and turned out fairly well, while Pueblo and St. Joe were also moderately successful, owing to their stubborn fight for second place, but the other clubs scarcely drew expenses and the fans would have been better satisfied had the season closed in the middle of September.

One of the big days of the season in Denver was the day known as "presentation day." When it was seen that the Bears would surely win the flag the fans purchased an automobile for Manager Hendricks and a loving cup for President McGill. The management bought heavy diamond studded fobs for the members of the team and on October 3, when President Taft was in Denver, he journeyed out to Broadway Park and presented the gifts. The Sioux City club were the visitors on that occasion and for the first time in the season the Bears suffered from stage fright and received a lovely lacing to the tune of 13 to 1.

The following day saw the most remarkable game of the entire Western league season. The Denver aggregation broke all records for hits and runs, piling up 25 runs off 26 hits and but one error figured in the scoring. During this game first baseman Lindsay performed the unusual feat of securing two clean home runs in one inning and in addition to his own pair of tallies he drove two more over the rubber.

A peculiar feature of the game mentioned was the fact that the twirler who opposed the Grizzlies on this occasion was Heine Steiger, a former St. Paul pitcher, who had but ten days before pitched a no-hit, no-run game against the Denver club at Sioux City.

While readers of the Baseball Magazine have no doubt heard it stated that the climate in Washington, St. Louis and other cities has its effect on the brand of baseball played it may be surprising to some to know that the "mile high" climate at Denver has a big effect on the game. Twirlers who have plenty of "stuff" in a lower altitude have to work harder to get the same "break" to a ball that they do in lower altitudes. Then, too, many infielders claim that they have to be more careful about shooting them over to first. When "Cozy" Dolan, the youngster who left the Jersey City club and finished the season at third base with the New York Highlanders, reported in Denver a year ago last spring he put

in his first afternoon slamming the ball into the bleachers far over the first baseman's head. He spoke of the ease with which he could whip them over but after he got squared away his control was perfect. Batters also notice the ease with which a ball is driven to the outfield and the only explanation that the players can put forth is that the air is "light."

Another element that must be reckoned with when playing in Pueblo and Denver is the "high sky." Unlike the sky in the East, the rarified air of Colorado does not furnish a background and for that reason many players have dropped fly balls that would have been easy outs had the fielder been able to judge the height of the ball when it begins, to drop. The "high sky" was the cause of a peculiar accident at Pueblo this season when Outfielder Middleton of the Pueblo club lost the ball in the sky and allowing it to go through his hands and fracture a rib.

Going through the records for the season one finds that in all departments of the game the Western leaguers shows the form that is expected of Class "A" players. Several no-hit games have been recorded; double plays have been numerous and in fact all records tend to show that the Western league is much faster than the ordinary minor league. Five players from the Denver club will start the season in the majors next year, while players from practically all the rest of the Western league teams will receive try-outs in the big show next season.

The fact that twenty-seven players in the league finished the season batting .300 or more would make it appear that the lively ball that caused so much discussion early in the year had been in use, but such was not the case. Any batter who was able to hit

.300 got into the select class because of his ability as a slugger and not because of a lively ball that made hitting easy. With few exceptions scores have been close and the batters who have rolled up big averages have been forced to face twirlers of ability.

The double-umpire system has been used all season and this department of the work was not of the best. Every town in the league has been the scene of a near-riot with the exception of Denver. In the other cities the police have been called upon to rescue the indicator handlers in one or more instances. The work of the umpires has not been on a par with the class of ball played and many games which otherwise would have been great exhibitions of the National Game, have been marred by poor umpiring.

As it is a Class "A" league, the Western has no salary limit, consequently many of the magnates are finding fault with the owner of the Denver club for the high salaries paid and are threatening to fix a salary limit. While it is true that some of the cities cannot make money with high-salaried teams the class of ball provided when the players are well-paid and satisfied is so superior to the playing of the low-salaried teams that the fans get corresponding value for their money. It is a fact that the cities which paid the largest salaries were the ones that drew the big money at the gate.

The population of the Western league cities is somewhat below that required of a Class "A" league and it was only by a hard fight a year ago that the league retained its rating. Many of those around the circuit who favor high salaries and high-class baseball are fearful that the rating will be reduced if the present agitation in opposition is continued.

