

The Supreme Court of Baseball

A Brief Glance at the Organization of the National Commission. The Important Part it has Played in the Development of the National Game. Its Rapidly Increasing Official Duties and a Word on the Prospects of the Cincinnati Club

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THE prosperity of baseball dates from the establishment of the National Commission. Prior to that most important event, organized baseball, so-called, was not really organized at all. To be sure, a set of rules had been devised, designed to cover the game very thoroughly, but there were numerous loop-holes, and important angles of baseball were not adequately covered by the laws then in existence. Owing to this chaotic state of affairs, players, owners and leagues as a whole took advantage of all sorts of technicalities to further their own selfish ends. The manifest lack of system fostered unscrupulous dealings and numerous opportunities towards sharp practice offered themselves for those inclined to exercise their doubtful talents in these directions. Affairs were rapidly drifting to a state where the very existence of the game was imperilled, and drastic measures were necessary to insure its proper development. At this crisis the National Commission was inaugurated, and under its competent direction these difficulties were speedily righted.

As the Supreme Court of baseball, the tribunal of last resort, the National Commission has promulgated laws and rules to meet any possible contingency which may arise. It is an invariable rule that justice based upon equality and fair play is assured every person having dealings with the Commission. Through its operation the "downtrodden player" and the "double dealing magnate" no longer figure in baseball. To the player rights have been established that he never dreamed he possessed, and that he never

could have enforced under the old order of things. To the magnate, especially that type of diplomatic owner of former years who was continually taking advantage of his more simple and direct competitor, there is now no field open for technical juggling. The National Commission has eliminated such sleight-of-hand methods from baseball and has served to place the game on a solid foundation where business may be conducted in an open, fair and sportsmanlike manner.

In no respect has the good work of the Commission been more in evidence or more widely appreciated than in the conduct of the annual series of world's championship games. This is shown in the increased attendance, the increased receipts and the increased confidence which mark the big games year by year.

The National Commission was organized to benefit every element in baseball: the player, the owner, the league, and last, but by no means least, the patron. That it has accomplished and is still accomplishing its object is demonstrated by the increased salaries and general condition of the players, the increased prosperity of the owners, the growth of the leagues and the ever-increasing attendance at the games of men and women in all parts of the country from the best and highest types of citizenship.

In my own experience as a magnate I have found that the continued and growing popularity of baseball depends principally upon two conditions. First, keeping the game above reproach, and second, giving the patrons the best possible class of sport under the most favorable con-

ditions. In both these respects I believe the Cincinnati club has offered its patrons more during the past season than ever before in the history of the game. By erecting new concrete stands with a seating capacity of 23,000, by making every seat in these stands comfortable and commanding a good view of every angle of the playing field, the club has provided its patrons with conveniences surpassed by no ball park in the world, at a total outlay of over \$400,000. Every effort has been made by the management to secure a team that would be a credit to the league, to Cincinnati, and its new surroundings.

The splendid start made by the Reds at the very beginning of the season, where they were in first place for six weeks, gave promise of a year of unprecedented prosperity. Fate had, however, decreed that this position could not be maintained by the club, but with all the vicissitudes which marked their sea-

son's campaign they finished in fourth place, a higher position than had fallen to their lot at the close of the season for several years. If any evidence were needed—and it was not—that a winning team pays as a financial proposition, no matter how much it may cost to get together, the club's experience with the Flying Reds in the early part of last season furnished that evidence. And with this in view the club is sparing no expense to make the Reds of 1913 what the Reds of 1912 promised to be during the first few weeks of the season. A position in the first division is a good start toward a still higher standing, and I shall be the most disappointed spectator among the good people of Cincinnati who have supported the game so loyally in the past if their club and mine do not fulfill our hopes when next October brings pennant days and the accompanying contests for the world's championship.

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