

**SENSITIVE BALL PLAYERS
HURT THEIR OWN CHANCES.**

BILL SWEENEY of the Boston Nationals, a man of five years' experience playing with a tail-end team, said the other day that the player who is oversensitive to criticism is hurting himself and will not do his best work if he is constantly worried over what may be said about him if he makes a mistake.

"I had a good lesson on this subject," said Bill. "It was about three years ago, when I was playing third base for Boston. Bill Dahlen was playing shortstop, and the bugs who congregate in the third base bleachers in Boston and bet on the game got sore on Bill and could not give him credit for anything. If he missed the hardest kind of a chance they would roast him unmercifully, and would never see him at all when he pulled off a good play.

"They were so unfair that I finally got sore at them and bawled them out a number of times for the remarks they made to Bill. This turned them against me, and for a while I just couldn't do anything right in their eyes. If I made a fumble or a bad throw they were after me hot-foot, and even when I got

(Continued on page 5)

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(Continued from page 4)

through a game without mistakes they would still hand me a few hot shots.

"At first they had me going, but after a while I began to ignore them, and then I got along much better. The experience showed me that a ball player is a fool to pay any attention to what is said to him on the field, whether it is good or bad. My advice is not to swell up when applause is handed out, and, above all, not to get sore and grouchy when some of the bugs dish you up a roast. Most of the fans mean well, and would rather applaud than not.

"Of course, there are a few who are prejudiced against certain players, but the athlete who will not stand the gaff will not be doing his best work. The same is true of the comments in the newspapers. There is no reporter who would not rather boost than knock, but you can not expect so many nice things to be said about a losing team as about a winner. Whenever any one takes a rap at me I try to remember that the last time I cleaned up with a hit at the right time the same writer had me in the headlines and gave me a dandy boost.

"A player who expects nothing but boosts when he is playing baseball is making a big mistake. He can be sure that he will get the hand when he is delivering the goods, and the bitter must come with the sweet. I try never to get sore when I am criticised, for I know that it is deserved in nearly every case. If I play bad ball I expect criticism. The best way is to pay as little attention as possible to what is said about you, but just go along and deliver the goods as well as you can. It doesn't pay to swell up over a good notice or get sore over a bad one."

This sort of talk shows just how sensible and fair-minded Sweeney is. It gives a glimpse of the state of mind which has kept him playing great ball on a tail-end club for nearly five years. Bill went to Boston during the season of 1907. Since that time the Beans have finished in sixth place once and in eighth place four times. There is little in such surroundings to arouse a player's ambi-

tion or inspire him to put forth his best efforts.

Probably the majority of athletes would grow careless under such circumstances, and worry along as best they could from day to day without trying any top hard. But Sweeney has not only held his own, but has kept on improving in his work, until now he is rated as one of the best infielders in the league, and is being seriously considered for the management of a big league club. Six or eight offers for him were made by other clubs last year, but all were turned down by the Boston management.

The most promising of these was a liberal offer made by James McGraw, who tried to get Sweeney for the Giants. It was pretty tough for Bill to have to go along with a tail-end club, knowing that he might have had the New York job and its rich pickings.

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