



The Three Big Guns of the Yankee Club. Left to right: President Ruppert, Secretary T. L. Huston and Business Manager H. L. Sparrow.

Wild Bill Donovan

How the Yankee Manager Gained His Baseball Experience

BY MARK ROTH

He hasn't won a pennant for the Yankee club—not yet. But his showing last year in the face of the most discouraging circumstances which a manager ever had to encounter, promises high hopes for his future success. At least the New York owners think enough of Wild Bill's ability to continue him in charge, which is as high a compliment as an owner ever pays his manager.

BILL DONOVAN, the genial manager of the New York Yankees, began his baseball career at the little town of Sunbury, Pa., away back in 1898. The records of his deeds with this small club of the Central Pennsylvania League are very fragmentary. But at any rate Bill achieved notoriety enough to secure better quarters elsewhere. The following season we find him on the roster of the Pawtucket and Waterbury clubs whence he was transferred to Richmond of the Atlantic League.

Here his showing was so impressive that Washington grabbed title to the ris-

ing young pitcher, and he was fairly started on his life's work.

Donovan, no doubt, secured his name of "Wild" Bill when he was pitching against the Scranton Club in 1899. With his terrific speed and fast breaking curves consternation reigned supreme in the ranks of all teams which Bill faced. In that game he gave an exhibition of wild heaving that he will never forget. He had two wild pitches, hit a few batsmen and had ten bases on balls. What is more he had the umpire ducking. But Bill won that same game by the score of 5 to 4. He never became discouraged, in spite of the fact that baseball

experts told him that he would never amount to much with his control or rather lack of control. He kept on trying all the time, and while he was shoved back and forth from one league to the other, he always had the idea in his head that he would be a great pitcher some day, although the scouts and wise baseball men had him tabbed for a sure flivver.

In 1900 Donovan pitched winning ball for the Hartford Club, having a record of sixteen victories and eight defeats. He joined the Brooklyn Club in 1901, and during that season and the next he showed such effectiveness that he was considered one of the best pitchers in the league.

In 1902, just before the war between the American and National leagues, he signed a Detroit contract, and up to the time of the breaking up of the famous Tigers, which was in 1912, Bill was rated as the team's mainstay in the box.

Donovan always had the habit of cutting into the sensational. It was with the Brooklyn Club that he had a great eighteen inning game against the St. Louis Cardinals. Bill fanned thirteen men that day.

In 1907 he had the best year of his career. Baseball fans throughout the country will never forget that great game he hurled against the Athletics. The game went 17 innings to a tie, but it killed the Athletics' chances of winning the pennant just the same. The Mackmen secured six hits in the last ten innings of the game. It was this same season that Donovan had the best year of his long career. He led the leagues the country over in percentage of games won. In fact, his percentage this season is the third highest in the annals of baseball history. Spaulding in 1875

stands first with, .899, and Joe Wood, of the Red Sox, is second, with .872. Donovan's best was 25 won and 4 lost for a percentage of .862, a marvelous pitching record. From September 3 to the close of the season his work was phenomenal. Between the 12th and 20th he pitched four games registering three shut outs. His opponents secured fourteen hits in the four games.

The next season found Donovan still ranking high among the American League pitchers, being second only to the great Ed. Walsh in the matter of winning games. Again he figured in many hard contests and again it was a game pitched by him that decided the pennant. It was up to Donovan to return his team a winner, and he won by a score of 7 to 0. Baseball men who talk about that contest say that they never before saw such speed. The Chicago players said the same thing after the contest.

Donovan has pitched in more critical games than any other pitcher in baseball. And Bill was always there going strong at the finish.

He was made manager of the Providence Grays in 1913, and the following year won the championship. He was appointed manager of the Yankees in 1915.

Under his leadership the Yankees have not yet gained their goal—a pennant. But with the unprecedented train of accidents which befell the club in the season just closed the only mystery is that the team finished so well up the list. Evidently Messrs. Huston and Ruppert thought that a manager should be encouraged who did so well in the face of such obstacles. In any case they signed Bill to manage the team for next season, a choice which the New York public will generally commend.

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