



Photo by International Film Service

A Group of Giant Stars Warming Up at Marlin, Texas. Merkle Second from the Left, Though a Veteran of Many Seasons, Was Traded to Brooklyn Late in 1916

The Secret of the Giants' Twenty-Six Straight Wins

How a World's Record of Thirty-Two Years' Standing Was Shattered

By J. C. KOFOED

A World's Record isn't broken every day. And when it is broken there's a reason. The Major Leagues had proceeded on their way for thirty-two years since Providence won twenty straight games away back in 1884 and never equalled that grand mark. Then came the Giants of 1916 and not only tied the record, but shoved it ahead six more games. How did they do it? Read the following sketch for the inside dope.

FRANK BANCROFT, the wonderful old business manager of the Cincinnati Club, was calmly smoking a cigar in the lobby of his hotel when the news that New York had won its twenty-first straight victory was brought to him. Banny shook his grizzled locks, and laughed.

"So the old record's gone," he said. "Big league managers have been shooting at it for thirty-two years before McGraw brought it down. I have lived to see the old record smashed, but they had to wait until I was past the seventy mark. I won the National League pennant in 1884 through setting that record,

and of the twenty games Charley Radbourne won eighteen. They haven't got iron men like that in these days."

The Giants did not stop there. They won five more combats before Lefty Tyler's arm and bat smashed their winning streak. And because they did not have a pitcher of Radbourne's type their record is all the more to be marveled at.

With the acquisition of Herzog and Zimmerman, the New York infield became the best in the league; their outfield held that reputation throughout the year. McCarty and Rariden caught magnificently, But the one big flaw in

the diamond was the lack of a consistent pitching staff. Tesreau, a wonderful twirler when right, had grown erratic. Benton was wild and not to be depended on. Perritt, a youth of manifold talents, could not win consistently. The veteran Sallee was ill. Anderson, the Federal League marvel, flivvered sadly, while the youngsters, Schupp, Smith and Ritter had shown little to enthuse over.

The greatest team in the world could not win with the sort of pitching the Giants received before they began their sensational winning streak, yet, so contrary is baseball, it was those much maligned twirlers who were the sensation of the most sensational effort baseball ever saw.

Offensively the team was strong, but not extraordinarily so. During the twenty-seven games played (including the one tie), they averaged but 4.52 runs per game. On only eight occasions did they score more than five runs, and twelve times they were held to three runs or less. There is nothing startling in that. It has been done many times before.

Their defense was brilliant, for they averaged less than one error per game, and their play was replete with daring efforts. But again nothing was done that had not been accomplished before.

Insofar as individual averages are concerned, only Benny Kauff hit much better than his season's record, and only George Burns fell far below it. So we may safely concede that the Giants played at the gait to which a high-class team is accustomed. If that is true, then what is the secret of that wonderful twenty-six straight.

Let me whisper it:

"It was the pitching!"

This was the record of the despised New York twirling staff in those final sixteen contests:



Jeff Tesreau, the Giants' Great Spitball Pitcher

In only four of the twenty-seven games did the twirler who started the game fail to finish it. The work of the moundsmen in the first eleven games was splendid; during the last sixteen it mounted to the point of wizardry.

If any pitching staff in the history of the game ever compiled a record the equal of that I, for one, have never seen it. In none of those sixteen games did an opposing team score more than twice in a single contest, and they accomplished that on only four occasions. Eight

G	R	ER	H	TB	SO	BB	WP	BK	HB	*	**	Average
16	12	10	85	104	83	20	0	0	2	84	7	Earned Runs 0.625

* Left on base. ** First on errors.

**HOW THE GIANTS WON
TWENTY-SIX GAMES**

Sept. 4 —Brooklyn	4—1
“ 8 —Philadelphia	9—3
“ 9 —Philadelphia	3—1
“ 9 —Philadelphia	3—0
“ 11 —Philadelphia	9—4
“ 12 —Cincinnati	3—2
“ 13 —Cincinnati	3—0
“ 13 —Cincinnati	6—4
“ 14 —Cincinnati	3—1
“ 16 —Pittsburg	8—2
“ 16 —Pittsburg	4—3
“ 18 —Pittsburg	2—0
“ 19 —Pittsburg	9—2
“ 19 —Pittsburg	5—1
“ 20 —Chicago	4—2
“ 21 —Chicago	4—0
“ 22 —Chicago	5—0
“ 23 —St. Louis	6—1
“ 23 —St. Louis	3—0
“ 25 —St. Louis	1—0
“ 25 —St. Louis	6—2
“ 26 —St. Louis	6—1
“ 27 —St. Louis	3—2
“ 28 —Boston	2—0
“ 28 —Boston	6—0
“ 30 —Boston	4—0
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Totals	121 32



Heine Zimmerman, a Wonderful Natural Player

times the Giants blanked their opponents, and four times held them to a single run.

As a matter of fact, the regulars who won twenty-four of the contests allowed only 0.84 earned runs per game—which is a record that should stand almost as long as did Providence’s twenty straight victories. This record was compiled against every team in the league, and at a time when several of them were going at their fastest clip:

Runs per Game Total Hits

	G	W	None	One	Two	Three	Runs	One	Two	Three
Schupp	6	6	4	1	1	0	3	1	2	2
Tesreau	6	6	1	3	0	1	10	0	0	0
Benton	7	5	2	0	2	0	5	1	0	1
Perritt	6	5	2	2	1	0	4	0	0	1
Sallee	2	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Anderson	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Smith	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
Ritter	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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		27	10	6	4	1	34	2	2	4

Over the entire distance of the big streak New York opponents scored an average of only 1.11 earned runs per game. On two occasions Tesreau eased up with his games won; another time McGraw started an untried collegian, Smith, who was knocked out of the box, and saved only by Perritt's fine work. Otherwise, the average earned runs per game would have been under one.

Narrowing the issue still further, the pitching of Ferdinand Schupp, a slender young southpaw, was the crowning achievement of the sprint. Schupp pitched and won six games, but he did more than that. In four of those games he blanked his opponents; in five of them they averaged only a trifle over two hits a game. He was touched for only seventeen hits and three runs in the six contests, and in that period he outclassed Alexander, Mamaux, Pfeffer, Rixey and every twirler in both leagues.

Another point should be remembered in going over the pitching of the last sixteen games. Aside from Anderson, whose work throughout was disappointing, the pitchers gave an average of less than one base on balls per game; a record that shows minute control.

Consider the enormous strain all the men, and particularly the pitchers were under, yet in tying the old record Schupp twirled a two-hit shut-out, and Perritt blanked the Cardinals until his team had a five-run lead, thereby breaking the record. And in the last eleven games McGraw's pitchers worked in seven shut-outs, and were scored on but five times. Truly, it is one of the most marvelous pitching feats ever recorded.

As for gameness, Bob Steele blanked

them for eight and two-thirds innings and held a two run lead himself only to be beaten out in the tenth inning, because of Herzog's triple, and the splendid pitching of Benton, Smith and Ritter.

It would be unfair not to mention a few of the more dramatic hits. Herzog's triple just mentioned was one of the most brilliant of these. Holke won a game for Schupp, also with a triple, this time with the bases full, Fred Toney being the victim.

Three separate times Benny Kauff's home runs kept New York on the winning path. In the tie game Perritt twirled against Pittsburgh, he would have been charged with a defeat had not fiery Benny cracked a four-base clout off young Burleigh Grimes. He annexed a game for Schupp when he drove a home-run off Pat Ragon's delivery with the bases full, and he handed the same dose to Eppa Rixey.

The wonderful Giant record would have been impossible without the cooperation of every man on the team. Every man jack of them gave the very best that was in him—and that best was enough. But, when the story of McGraw's "twenty-six straight" goes down in history the names of Ferdinand Schupp, William Perritt, John Benton, Thomas Jefferson Tesreau and Harry Sallee should have the place of honor, high above the rest. They set a mark which no other twirlers in the history of the game ever reached.

They broke a record within a record when the greatest pitching ever seen won twenty-six straight games.

WHY?

Why on earth does the modern ball player always meekly surrender the advantage and the right of way, as it were, to the pitcher when the call is two and three? The old-time batsmen didn't try to make things smoother for the pitcher, or to treat him with parlor courtesy. Not those birds. They jumped and danced and snorted; they pawed up the dust; they capered up and down the batting range, and, in every possible manner, endeavored to rattle the hostile hurler and make him heave that last one wild. Nowadays, the batters stand up like so many solemn sheep, often bending back from the plate to give the pitcher a good chance and a clear vision, and then wonder why they miss the bullet so often!