

The Corner Stone of the Cleveland Club

Neither Speaker, Chapman, Nor Morton Could Make Cleveland a Winner Without Steve O'Neil

By JOHN J. WARD

THE amazing showing of the Cleveland Club has been a surprise to many people. But it is no surprise, to those who know Stephen F. O'Neil.

Speak of Dunn's Club and visions of Speaker rise to the imagination. Of course the mighty Tris, greatest outfielder in the game, known wherever baseball creates the slightest ripple of interest, is the club's chief luminary. And with Speaker mention must be made of Chap-

man, prince of American League shortstops, of Turner, the oldest veteran on the circuit, and of Joe Wood, once a peerless pitcher, now a star of the outfield. But with these great names, it seems passing strange that so little mention is ever made of the quiet, hard working, but really brilliant catcher, the keystone of the entire club defense.

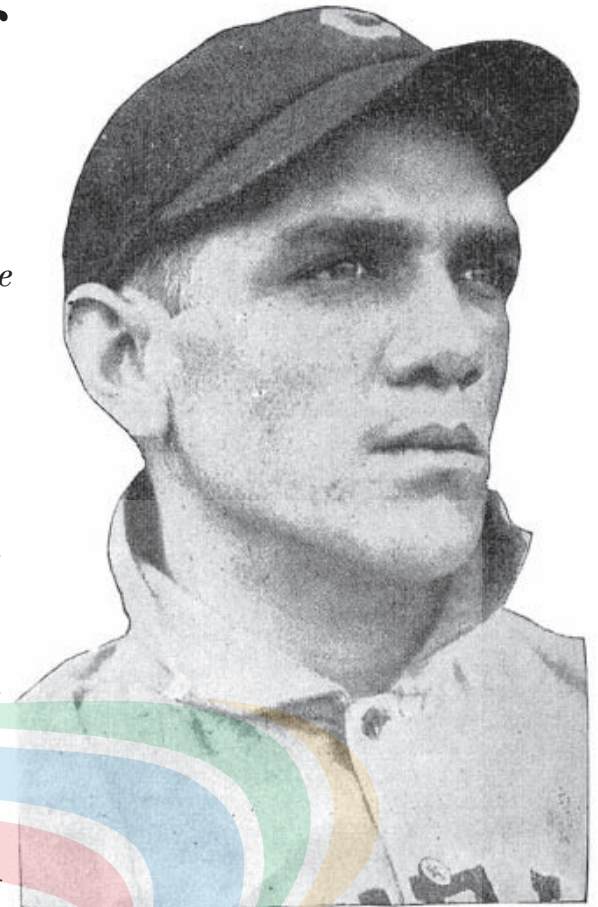
O'Neil is one of those unassuming personages whose work is so uniformly good in quality that its very excellence is accepted as a thing of course. Always in form, ever dependable, absolutely master of every detail of the catcher's complicated craft, O'Neil acknowledges in the superiors in the entire American League circuit.

Some years ago Ray Schalk, young, agile, slight of build and fleet of foot, broke into the league and immediately captivated the popular fancy by his spirited play. Ever since that time, Ray has basked in the full-noon tide of popular favor. There is no discounting the fact that he

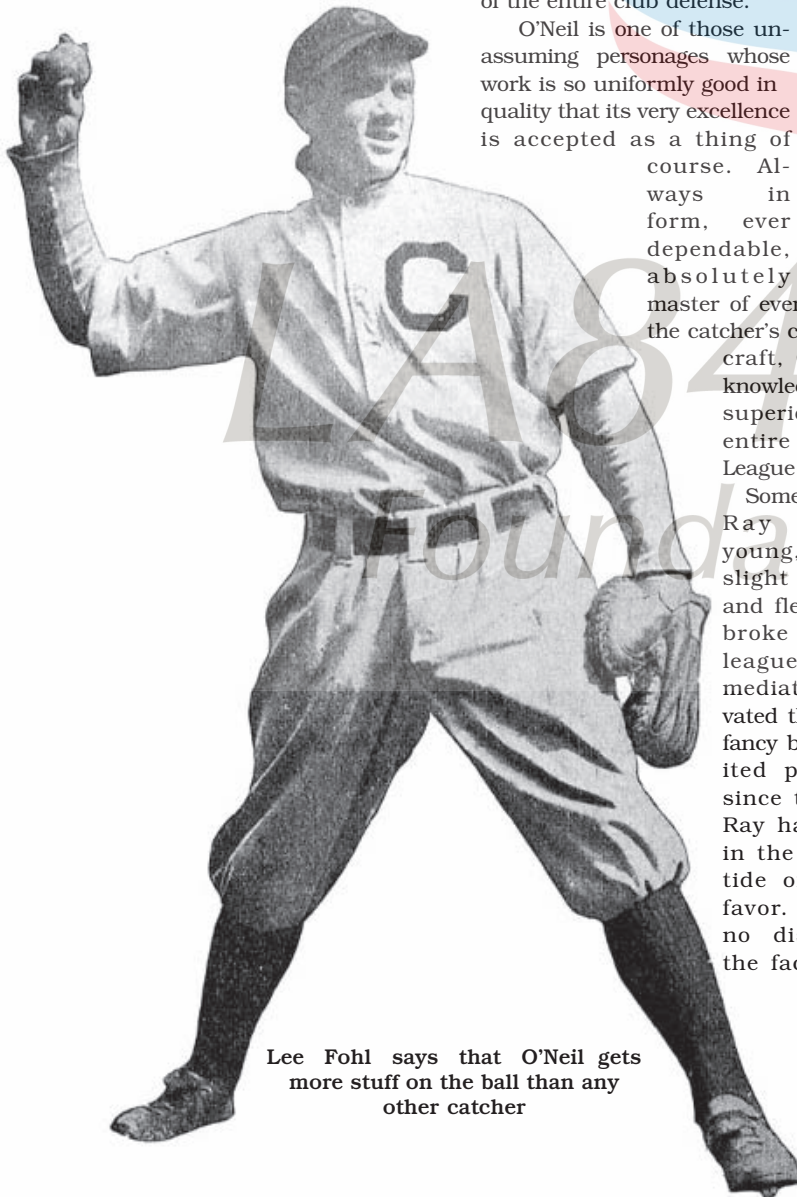
is, or rather was, a star back-stop in every sense of the word. But there seems a settled conviction among the players, at least, that Ray, though still great, is not quite as good as he used to be.

"Why do you give so much credit to Schalk," said a big league player recently; "In what way is he a better catcher than Steve O'Neil? In my opinion he isn't as good." Nor is this an isolated view American League players on various clubs have voiced the same opinion.

A player's own manager is naturally somewhat biased. And yet Lee Fohl's views carry weight, for there is no more competent judge of a back-stop's ability than he. "O'Neil gets more stuff on the ball than any catcher in the circuit," says Fohl. "He sometimes starts his throw a trifle late, but he shoots the ball with such speed and such unerring aim that he nails the base runner almost every time. His particular hobby is throwing out Ty Cobb. Ty used to come down to Cleveland and stand our boys on their heads. He stole everything but their uniforms. But since O'Neil got Ms deadly peg to second base, working in good style Ty hasn't been taking such liberties with us. Not only is O'Neil a great man on the throw, but he is great in every way. He is also a player with a lot of endurance who can stay in there day after day, doing



Steve O'Neil



Lee Fohl says that O'Neil gets more stuff on the ball than any other catcher

