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SPORTS OF THE SEASON.

The biggest fiasco of the season occurred at the Shamrock grounds last Saturday, when 1500 persons assembled to see a game of ball. They lost their afternoon, some of them their admission, and saw no game, because two league committees either knew too much or too little about their business. I have no doubt they thought they knew all about it, the people who lost their time and sport were sure they knew nothing.

Both were right.

It almost seems like raking old ashes to touch the dispute and disappointment of last week, the first of the season—and I hope the last between the Shamrocks and the St. Johns. Yet for the sake of those who are kind enough to read this column and perhaps look for it, I will stir up the embers and let them smoke a trifle.

It was all a question of umpires. Some of the St. Johns' pitchers and catchers asserted in the most positive fashion that Umpire Connolly was robbing them of games by being off color on balls and strikes. The St. Johns had a new man in the box, and in order to give him a fair show it was suggested that the umpires alternate. Secretary Ferguson carried the request to Manager Keefe, of the Shamrocks, a little before noon, and says that he told him then that unless the Shamrocks agreed there would be no game. Mr. Keefe could not decide and said he would see the committee and decide on the grounds. They decided against the request on the grounds and there was no game.

The right or the wisdom of the St. Johns raising such a question, and standing by it to the extent they did, has been questioned. They have been criticized and had a good many hard words said about them on that account. They have been accused of "fudging," and borne many other insinuations that were unpleasant and unjust.

The right to demand alternate umpiring was certainly theirs—not, mind you, that their umpire should umpire Howe and Connolly umpire Sullivan—could anything more ridiculous be conceived?—but that Christie should umpire one whole inning behind the bat and Connolly the next whole inning. I hold that they had a perfect right to demand that, and I cannot imagine why the Shamrocks or any other club should refuse it. The Shamrocks say that the St. Johns wanted Christie to umpire Howe and Connolly Sullivan, which they could not agree to. The St. Johns' refusal to play the game cannot be defended, when you consider that there were 1,500 people waiting for their sport. It was not their fault that the dispute arose; it is to them that the ball clubs look for direct and indirect support, and their pleasure should have been the first consideration. On these grounds alone, the game should have gone on.

I was amused at the indignant declaration of one of the Shamrock committee, that the St. Johns' request was an insult to Umpire Connolly, and that on that ground alone they were justified in refusing. Oh no, you won't go so far as that. When an umpire fails to give satisfaction you can't call a request for a change an insult.

The committees of the clubs met Monday and left the decision to the league board, and of course the decision was against the St. Johns. Unless there is greater justice in the board than I give it credit for, I imagine that all and any disputes between the St. Johns and Shamrocks will be settled in just that way. To show how much Moncton wants the Shamrocks to win after their own club I give you the story for what it is worth that Charlie Nevins, ex-manager of the smoky city team and an old St. John man, stood on his head the evening of Dominion day when the news flashed over the wires that the green stockings had won the two games. Then, you have heard me speak of this before, the Frederictons have a natural dislike for the "Nationals" as they call them.

I saw President Skinner, and found him in better humor than I expected. In fact, he was in the best of spirits, and before I left him I found out the reason: he thinks the committee is right in last Saturday's contention. He said that their proposition was for alternate umpiring, which meant for Connolly to take one whole inning and Christie the next whole inning, and not, as the majority of the people think, that Connolly should umpire Sullivan and Christie Howe. He says further, that the St. Johns were prepared and offered to the Shamrocks Monday what they asked Saturday on their grounds. I asked him why an exhibition game was not played Saturday, and he replied that had the proposition been made when the clubs found they could not agree, they would have accepted it without hesitation, but the Shamrocks did not do that; they waited until umpire Connolly had called the game, and then proposed an exhibition to the St. Johns. They were refused.

All this shows that there are two sides to a story, and that, after all, there is not Dyspepticure acts mildly.

so much, if anything, in the blazoned assertion that the St. Johns refused an exhibition game.

Manager Keefe has been interviewed by the daily press and his ideas published. In my talk with him he laid especial stress upon the idea that the request was made late in the day and upon the absurdity of Christie umpiring Howe alone and Connolly doing the same for Sullivan. He declared to Secretary Ferguson Monday night that it would have made no difference if the request had been made a week before, the Shamrocks would not have agreed to it.

With all deference to the Sun, I cannot see so much difference between the Shamrocks' request at Fredericton and the St. Johns' request here. The Shamrocks asked for the change to protect themselves from a new man who might roast them, and the St. Johns asked for the change to protect themselves from an old umpire who, they said, would roast them. Not so much difference after all, is there?

There is another game Wednesday. The people know what Howe can do, and the umpire will give him a square show.

Just what Scorer Berry had done to get the Shamrocks down on him, I cannot tell you. I am always ready to give my evidence in his favor as an unprejudiced scorer. Rather an amusing outcome of the feeling, however, is the appointment of Boden "private scorer for the Shamrocks," perhaps with the lurking hope that he might get his scores with the Telegraph which he represents in the North End. He has not been generally as successful in this as he would like to be and feels like throwing up the job in consequence, especially as he finds it hard to go away to every game with his club. All of which is very laughable and shows that baseballists are but human, after all and will look for records.

It will take considerable to kill the base ball interest in St. John. Indeed, what most people looked upon as a severe blow at the game proved to increase the interest. I had to smile when I saw dozens of my friends come into the grand stand Tuesday, who, Saturday and Monday, did almost nothing but proclaim that they were disgusted with base ball, and wouldn't go to see another game. But they turned up, just the same.

It was hard to tell whether the champions had got into their old form again, for they had but few chances in the field, and took the most of them. Parsons doesn't strike me as a great success on third. He has had more errors in the games played lately than the third baseman of the St. Johns should have, and Tuesday, when he threw the ball to Kennedy, when the runner was almost on first, and threw it wild, he seemed to have lost his head altogether.

Howe is one of the best, if not the best, pitcher that has ever visited St. John. To keep a team like the Shamrocks down to 1 safe hit, and strike out seventeen men, is a quality of pitching that we have not been seeing every day. It was his drops that deluded the Shamrocks, and they all fell victims to them, with the exception of Donovan who was the only man not to experience a strike out, and the only one to get a safe hit, and make a score.

I have heard a good deal of speculation upon what the decision of the league board will be upon the two games to be referred, viz: the tie at Fredericton and the game declared forfeited by the St. Johns to the Shamrocks last Saturday. There is no doubt that the decision should be prompt. I have heard the opinion generally expressed that the Fredericton game should be played over again, and that the Shamrock-St. John game should be played. The Shamrocks don't want any games of that kind placed to their credit. If they win the pennant they don't want to do it by a forfeited game, nor by a tie score game. They are as good, if not better, than any league team, and they can't afford to win their spurs by such dummy games.

The league board made a fatal omission when it neglected to define and regulate the duties of the umpires. The games are being played under the national league rules, which does not provide for two umpires, and, in consequence, there are no rules for the N. B. league umpires to go by.

I am sorry Jimmie Christie has resigned. A more conscientious umpire never judged a game. He is tired of doing his level best, and getting abuse from all quarters. The recent fiasco on the Shamrock grounds disgusted him.

The Shamrocks and Frederictons are playing while this is being printed. Both the Celestials and Monctonians have performed the give and take act again since last Saturday. The St. Johns have downed the Monctons in an exhibition game, and today play two league games in the smoky city.

It is a mistake for the league umpires to be under the control of the clubs. The league board should engage the umpires and direct their movements, and should have the power at any time to reprimand

Dyspepticure cures Indigestion.

or discharge any one of them. If that were the case it would not be possible for an old St. John man to be calling balls and strikes for his own club, or for an old Shamrock to do the same. The league could order either one of them or both to Moncton to umpire for the Frederictons and Monctons, and send the Moncton and Fredericton umpires here. I think you will all agree that this would solve the problem, and that no man could then think that any umpire was favoring his own club.

An umpire never hesitates," said Umpire Gaffney the other day. "He must give his first impression of the play and not wait for the grand stand or the bleaching boards to decide for him. Of course the umpire makes mistakes, but he should be as well up in his business as the players are in theirs." It makes a game lively when the crowd commences to yell murder and doesn't rattle the umpire if he is up to his business.

The fines and penalties against John McCoy at present amount to \$875, which he will have to pay before he or any horse in which he has an interest can trot on a National association track. I understand that McCoy still denies that he knew anything about Earle when he trotted him, and further claims that he has had to stand the brunt of another's fault. He has tried in one way and another to get on to the track at Moosepath lately, and his failure to do so may result in the nominal transfer of his stable to another party. McCoy drove to the track himself behind one of his flyers and met Messrs. Johnson and Magee on the spot. They had a friendly chat by which McCoy understood that he would have to settle scores with the National association before he could be admitted to any of the track privileges. The board of review does not meet until December, and the prospects are that McCoy will not enter any horses in his own name this season.

Absent Minded.

The professor, drawing a letter out of his pocket: "It is very strange. I'm sure I put this letter in the letter box," but, searching further, "goodness gracious, where's my handkerchief!"—Philadelphia Times.

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