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### SPOTLIGHTS ON SPORT

by JACK KEENE

THREE big league ball clubs enter the training grind for the 1924 campaign still harboring some hope that they may eventually win a pennant despite the fact their efforts never have been so rewarded.

These three outfits are St. Louis and Washington in the American league and St. Louis in the National. That St. Louis, with two clubs in the major circuits, never has had the thrill of claiming a flag winner seems almost impossible. Dame Fate has mocked continually at the Cards and Browns. Leo Fohl and Branch Rickey both seemed destined to break the hoodoo in the last few seasons, but neither could make the grade. This despite the fact that Fohl had Sisler, greatest first baseman and super-dynamo of baseball, around which to build his team, and Rickey had Hornsby, wonder second baseman and champion batsman of the National league, as the mainspring of his outfit.

Jim Delehanty, fourth member of the famous family of baseball menderers of years ago, is going south again with a big league ball club. But not as a player. President Barnard of the Cleveland Indians has hired him to join the team as its spring umpire. He will officiate in the games in which the Cleveland team appears late in the training season and on the exhibition tour northward. Delehanty is more than glad of the opportunity offered, as he is booked to umpire in the American association the coming season and wants to get his eye tuned up.

Incidentally, Delehanty's appointment as an arbiter in the A. A. recalls the fact that he was not a troublemaker for umpires when he was in the game. He was put out of the game but five times in his ten-year career, and he insists that one of those five occasions was "phony." "I was with Washington then," he explains it. "It was the last game of the season and I wanted to catch a 6:30 train for Cleveland. The game wasn't going to start until 4:30 p. m., so I fixed things up with Umpire Tim Hurst.

"When I went to bat in the seventh inning it was 5:30.

"Tim, my train leaves in an hour, I whispered when I stepped to the plate.

"Don't worry, leave everything to me," replied Hurst.

"The first ball pitched was two feet outside the plate.

"Strike," yelled Tim.

"What's that? I yowled.

"I said 'strike,' Mr. Delehanty, and I hope yer not deaf."

"I'm not deaf, but you're blind," I yelled back.

"You're out of the game and, what's more, you're out for the rest of the season," yelled Tim.

"I caught the train."

\*\*\*

The New York Yankees hope to obtain by trade or purchase Mr. Biblicus Falk, sterling young outfielder of the White Sox, before many moons rise and set, 'tis said.

Falk's name was brought into rumors connected with the long discussed Eddie Collins deal. Then the outfielder dropped out of the discussion. Now, it seems, Huggins would like to get Falk if he doesn't get the great second sacker.

Hug has plenty of outfield material, but is satisfied with only two members of it—Babe Ruth and Bob Meusel. Whitey Witt is erratic. Hinkey Haines and young Earle Combs may give him a run if Hug doesn't acquire anyone else. Falk would fit in nicely.

Falk has not been a star with the White Sox, but it is said he is dissatisfied with his berth and consequently isn't putting his heart in his game.

\*\*\*

To most big league ball players a demotion to the minors is a sad blow. But Josh Billings, former Cleveland and St. Louis Brown catcher, is mighty glad to be shunted off to the Pacific Coast league. When Billings was with the Cleveland club for several seasons Steve O'Neill hogged the catching work. Then Josh moved to St. Louis, only to find himself playing second fiddle and catcher to Hank Severid and Pat Collins.

Now, with Los Angeles in the Pacific Coast circuit he will be the main work, with a chance to work most every contest of the 200-game sched-

ule. The bench-warming job never appeals to a real ball player.

\*\*\*

Art wins another victory. Years ago Art Demaree was torn between two burning desires. One was to become a cartoonist and the other was to become a big league pitcher. Baseball offered him immediate return for his pitching ability, so he took "the easiest way," so to speak. But he did not throw down his other love. In the off months he made bean money at least turning out baseball cartoons. Now he has given up baseball entirely to devote his time to cartooning, finding the latter more profitable these days.

Demaree rendered a good account of himself in the big show, and later in the minors.

\*\*\*

Boxing fans seldom end a general discussion of old-time favorites without bringing into the chat the famous crouch that helped make Jim Jeffries a great ring figure.

Many of the fans believe that Jeffries had that crouchy style when he started his ring career. But Tommy Ryan is given credit for making that crouch famous, if not for developing it entirely. Jeffries' greatest natural asset when he started his career was a man-killing left. Ryan showed Jeffries how to use that left more effectively by bending low into a set position. Jeffries soon found that one wallop from that crouch was enough for anyone.

Those who saw the second battle between Jim and Bob Fitzsimmons say that Jeffries forgot that crouch for the first time for a few rounds, and the shift in position almost spelled his ruin. As Jeff straightened up Bob hooked a long one to his chin and Jeffries shook from stem to stern.

In the second round, however, Jeffries shot one into Bob's ribs from the crouched position and Fitz dropped—dead to everything.

\*\*\*

Carl Wellmann, the beanpole southpaw who did brilliant service for the Browns at times from 1912 to 1918, was drawn into a fanning bee the other day and the discussion turned to wrecking crews.

It was recalled that Wellmann was about the only pitcher in the game who could check the terrific batting of Sam Crawford, Ty Cobb and Bobby Veach when that outfield combination was hitting on high. Over a four-year span from 1913 to 1916 Wellmann faced the trio of ball murderers in something like 23 games. And the best the three heart breakers could do was to amass a grand batting average of .166.

Veach batted .322 in that stretch, Cobb .176, and Crawford—the mighty Wahoo—averaged just .118.

Despite their meek showing against Carl, the lanky southpaw came to bat with the remark that Sam, Ty and Bob formed the most dangerous outfield at bat that the American league boasted during his period of servitude.


Which is some little tribute to the slugging propensities of the Detroit trio.

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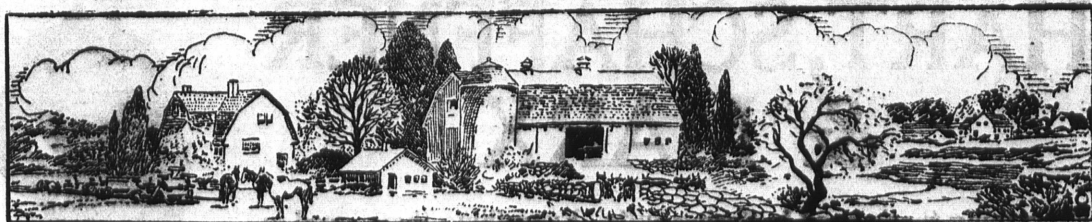
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