



PREFACE.

In the compilation of *THE GUIDE* for 1879, the aim has been to give in a complete yet concise manner all the information in the form of legislation, reviews, or statistics, which the limits of the publication would allow. The favor which the public extended to the work of last year justifies the belief on the part of the publishers that a like flattering reception will be accorded to the present one, which, while preserving all the valuable features of its predecessor, will be found to contain a large quantity of new matter of an interesting and important nature.

With regard to the individual and club averages, no pains have been spared in gathering the most reliable data, and while absolute correctness is not guaranteed, it is believed justice has been done to every one, and that an exact and valuable record has been obtained.

The late changes in the playing rules have been duly noticed and commented upon, and in view of their possible effects upon the game at large the views expressed will well repay the closest study and attention of every friend of the game.

In addition to these and many other attractive features, we have added a full copy of the *League Book*, the right to publish which we have purchased from the National League, and which, containing as it does the *Playing Rules*, makes the possession of a copy by every player not only desirable but even imperative.

In the hope that the coming season will realize the sanguine expectations of the most ardent supporter of the game, the present volume is respectfully submitted to the kind favor of a discriminating public.

HISTORY OF THE GAME.

To the early history of the game there is little new or of interest to be added. Its origin must always be obscured from want of sufficient data to establish its beginning, and it still remains a question as to how much we are indebted to the old English game of Rounders for the germs which have developed into the scientific pastime under consideration.

It is also difficult to note distinctly the time when professional ball playing was first generally recognized as such; as many professedly amateur clubs, previous to the professional system coming in vogue, made a practice of employing one or more players in their nines, awarding them sinecure situations, or otherwise indirectly paying them for their services.

For a long time the contests were only of a local character; and it was not until 1867, that an extended tour was undertaken by any club, one made by the National Club of Washington, whose success was very marked, the organization only sustaining one defeat, on the trip, that administered by the Forest City Club of Rockford, Ill., the latter club being generally recognized as the pioneers of the game in the West.

In 1869, the famous Red Stocking Club, of Cincinnati, met with unprecedented success; and to the fine exhibition of skill, and the gentlemanly bearing of the players of this club, is due, to a very large extent, the present firm foothold which the game has taken in the estimation of the American public.

In 1870, Chicago entered the professional arena, and by defeating the fine Cincinnati organization in a series of exciting and closely-contested games, awakened an interest which has ever since made the Garden City prominent in the championship contests, and entitled her to a commanding influence in the League, which has always been exercised in the highest interests of the game.

In 1871, the Boston Club was organized, and was successful in winning the championship for four consecutive years. The great popularity which now attended the game at home invited the hope that it might be made an international one, and for the purpose of introducing it to the favor of the English people, in the Summer of 1874 the Boston, and Athletic Club of Philadelphia, made a trip to England. But the game did not prove to be the strong rival of Cricket which had been expected, and while the exhibitions of fielding were greatly admired, but little was accomplished, although a late English writer admits the possibility the game yet becoming naturalized with them.

In 1876, The National League of Professional Base Ball Clubs was formed; the growing importance of the game demanding the formation of a strong central organization, whose object being to encourage, foster, and elevate the game, should have full powers delegated of enacting and enforcing such disciplinary or punitive measures as might be deemed necessary for its proper conduct and exhibition.

The efforts of the League in this direction have been thus far pre-eminently successful; and the year 1879 gives promise of witnessing a series of contests for the championship, not only of the most interesting and exciting nature, but characterized by a freedom from those abuses which in times past have been so often such sources of regret and mortification to the true friends of the game. Besides the League, there is the International Association, which numbers among its members clubs of the highest standing, and from whose ranks will come this season several new contestants for league championship honors; and the Pacific, North-Western and New England associations, composed of the leading professional and semi-professional clubs of their respective sections. It is to be hoped all these organizations will fully appreciate the fact, that the life and perpetuity of the game depend upon the favor of the public, and that this sensitive and exacting body, only bestowing its patronage to the extent that it feels satisfied

CURVED PITCHING.

As curved pitching continues to be the general style exhibited, we reproduce the views set forth in the Guide of '78, premising simply that under the changed rules, effective pitching will require more headwork than ever, all the modifications having been made in the interest of the batter. It is not necessary to waste space to prove that the ball can be made to change its course to right or left after having left the pitcher's hand and gone part of the way toward the batsman. Any professor can in his study prove from the books that the thing is impossible, and many ball players can show him in the field that it is not only possible but common. The only real question is, whether the change of direction is instantaneous or gradual—that is, whether it is an angle or a curve. The effect is the same—that the ball deceives the batsman by coming over, or past, the home-plate a distance from him which he cannot, and does not, judge accurately. For example, if the ball starts, as the batsman believes, to come past him about where he would like to have it, he makes up his mind to hit at it, and very likely does so, though the ball, having taken a curve in or out, passes the plate away beyond the reach of the batsman, or else so near to his body that he cannot hit it with any force, if he touches it at all. Such a power of changing the direction is very valuable to the pitcher, and, for the purpose of enabling young players to get some idea of the way the "twist" is put on, the following cuts have been made. They are drawn from photographs taken from life. It should be premised that all curve pitchers do not take the ball in hand alike. One prominent pitcher always seems to have the ball in the hollow of his hand, no matter how he expects to curve it. Most players, however, hold the ball differently for each delivery.

each and every contest is played upon its merits, makes clear the necessity for general and uniform action looking to the maintenance of the highest standard of honesty and faithful service.

Concerning the game at large there were in 1878 no special features developed; the swift underhand throwing and curved pitching, which was somewhat of a novelty and innovation in 1876-7, being the prevalent style displayed, and with the exception of confining the pitcher to a narrower range of territory from which to deliver the ball, and the infliction of a penalty for wilfully hitting the batsman, the style of pitching was not interfered with.

A somewhat radical change was made in the batting order, the striker now being the player following the batsman who has completed his time at bat, instead of the one following the third hand out, as was formerly the rule.

The foul bound catch was also done away with.

As to the wisdom of the changes, a season's play can, and will, best demonstrate how far they are improvements. They will all have the tendency to increase the batting, the first by depriving the pitcher of a part of his effectiveness in restricting him to a space four feet wide instead of six; the second by compelling him to exercise more care in the delivery of the ball, thus checking his speed or wild throwing; the third, by allowing the strong batters to come to bat in their order every time instead of, as has heretofore been the case, permitting the weak batter, who had forced a base-runner in the preceding inning, to again take his turn at the bat; and fourthly, the abrogation of the foul bound rule, now giving the batter a life, where before he would have been out.

A suggestion was also offered allowing the use of other than round bats, but the League considered any change in the implements as unadvisable, and beyond the adoption of the Spalding League Ball as the one to be used in all championship contests, no alterations were made.

The first illustration gives the delivery used for the in-curve by Reis, late of the Chicago Club. He closes the



Position of Hand for the In-curve to a Right-Hand Batter, or Out-curve to a Left-Hand Batter.

third and last fingers, and holds the ball with the first and second and the thumb. Raising his hand nearly to the height of the shoulder and back of him, he takes a step forward, and bringing his hand down even with his waist, delivers the ball with his wrist turned well back and a sort of snap motion which can be compared to nothing so well as to the "cracking" of a whip. The whole point in this

delivery is to have the ball leave the two fingers last. It should, in fact, roll off those fingers, as one might say, and thus get a rotary motion, which will give it the curve. This will be made clear enough by taking a ball in the hand and allowing it to roll off the fingers to the side.

The second illustration presents the method of delivery used in the out-curve. It appears more difficult than the



Position of Hand for the Out-curve to Right-Hand Batters, or In-curve to Left-Hand Batters.



The above cut represents the position of A. Dalrymple, of this year's Chicago, the champion League batter of 1878. He has a very steady and easy position, and makes no move to hit the ball until it is very near him, and then throws his whole force into a short swing, and decisive strike. The wonderful batting success of this young player is due more to his position in striking than any other cause.

other, but is much more common in practice. The swing of the arm is of course nearly the same in both cases; but for the out-curve the ball should leave the ends of the fingers last, and the thumb should be kept out of the way. By examining the illustration and conceiving of the ball as leaving the forefinger last, a clear idea of a circular motion opposite to the former one can be gotten. It is plain, of course, that the rotary motion of the ball in this case must be exactly opposite to that which would produce the in-curve. The learner will find that it is not the work of a day, or a week, or a month, to learn curve pitching. It is doubtful if one could name twenty pitchers in the country who have good command of the ball together with power to curve its delivery.

BATTING.

While it may be urged that the best position is that which is the most natural, for each individual player, the beginner can well study to advantage, the example of representative batmen, and we have therefore given cuts showing the attitude taken by A. Dalrymple, the leading batter of 1878; James White who led the country in 1877; George Wright, the well known short-stop late of the Boston club, and A. G. Spalding, (see cover) now retired from active playing.

One of the first things necessary to improve the player who wishes to become a first class batter, is to induce him to take a proper position, which can be better shown by the following illustration than by words. The successful batter in taking his position at the bat preparatory to receiving the ball from the Pitcher, will strike a natural and easy attitude, and not strain the muscles of his limbs or arms, until the pitcher makes his first motion to deliver the ball, and at the moment his bat comes in contact with the ball, he should have both feet planted firmly on the ground, and as strong a grip on the bat as he can possibly make.



The above picture gives the attitude taken by James White, captain of this year's Cincinnati Club, who led the country in 1877. He stands well to the rear of his ground and takes much more spread, or brace, than is common, or even generally advisable for young players. His hold of the bat and whole attitude are, however, models for left-hand batmen.



The above picture gives the position taken by George Wright, the well-known short-stop for many years of the Boston Club, but now captain of the Providence Club. It will be noticed that he holds himself well together, and is prepared, if necessary, to go a little out of his tracks after a ball, as well as to get away from a wildly-pitched one if necessary.

The secret of effective batting is in ground or line hitting, as when the ball is elevated in the air, the chances for an out are largely increased; but a hard hit ground or line ball requires calculation in stopping, judgment and

accuracy in throwing, and skill in holding, and as each handling of the ball gives a chance for an error, the consequent advantage to the batter is made apparent. The player therefore, who has the success of his nine alone in view, should not strive to make those long showy hits, which occasionally evoke the applause of the audience, but which as a general rule, only are effective, in retiring him to his seat on the bench; but should rather endeavor to so hit the ball, as will cause the greatest number of errors on the part of his opponents, for it is a pretty well established fact, especially among old players, that a fielding error on a hard hit ball, is more valuable to the batting side than a perfect base hit, inasmuch as the error tends to demoralize the player making it, and also the whole fielding nine.

BASE RUNNING.

Following consideration of batting, naturally comes that of base-running; one of the most interesting features in the game; in fact base ball may be said to be divided into three distinct heads, Batting, Fielding and Base-running, and every year the latter becomes more and more prominent as an essential feature of a successful nine. The requisites of a model base-runner, are fleetness of foot, alertness, or readiness for action, quickness of perception and judgment in drawing the ball from his opponents, thus inviting errors in the way of wild throws, etc.

The changes in the rules favoring increased batting will modify somewhat the necessity which has heretofore existed, of taking desperate chances in stealing bases, and it will be a nice point for players and captains to determine how far free or daring base-running will be prudent or justifiable, as opposed to the policy of waiting to be batted around.

FIELDING.

Having treated of batting and base-running, the positive or aggressive part of the game, we come now to fielding, which may be looked upon as its negative or defensive side.