

THE 1874 NATIONAL BASE BALL ORGANIZATION PREVIEW

NORTHEAST U.S.A. (May 13, 1874) – With its eighteenth year of play about the begin, the National Base Ball Organization has reached adulthood and it's time to celebrate the start of another season of baseball!

Last year, Quaker St. came back to the pack and the result was the closest set of regional pennant races to date, with all six being decided during the final week of play and New York City needing a one-game playoff for the second season in a row. During the playoffs, Q.S. was upset by Portland once again, who then upset overall #1 Pioneer in the NELCS before again falling in the Tucker-Wheaton Cup, this time to first-time champions Utica in four games.

Defending cup champions Utica are expected to finish atop Upstate New York again and to do with the same 45-25 record they had last season, as the team returns its entire set of regulars expect for 1B Joseph Lindblom, who was replaced by seventeen-year veteran Frank Darcy, a former All-Star who was a backup for St. John's in the APBL last year.

This season might end up even closer than last, as three teams are expected to share the honors for best record, with Eckford, Susquehanna, & Trenton United all expected to finish 46-24 and Quaker St. expected to miss the playoffs for the first time in four years.

No teams are expected to make a significant improvement (10+ Wins), but the Writers Pool believes that defending Inland champions Pioneer will fall from 46-24 to 32-38, a reduction of fourteen Wins from their team-best campaign.

Once again, New York City is expected to be the closest region from top to bottom, with the top six teams – Baltic, Harlem, Metropolitan, Mutual, N.Y.A.C., & Union – expected to finish within ten games of each other.

Even though multiple changes were made to the field of play ahead of the season, offense is expected to remain close to last season's improved levels, although Stolen Bases are expected to fall off a bit.

And with that, it's time to play ball!

NATIONAL BASE BALL ORGANIZATION PROJECTED FINISH

Brooklyn Championship

- Favorites: Eckford of Greenpoint at 46-24 (+135 RD)
- Atlantic 3 GB, Bedford 7 GB, Continental 8 GB

New York City Championship

- Favorites: Metropolitan at 43-27 (+115 RD)
- Union 2 GB, Mutual 3 GB, Harlem 6 GB

Upstate New York Championship

- Favorites: Utica at 45-25 (+105 RD)
- Syracuse 2 GB, Victory 3 GB, Frontier 8 GB

Coastal Championship

- Favorites: Trenton Utd. at 46-24 (+120 RD)
- Quaker St. 1 GB, Newark 9 GB, Tiger S.C. 10 GB

Inland Championship

- Favorites: Susquehanna at 46-24 (+135 RD)
- Lancastra 4 GB, Lake Erie 9 GB, Sportsman's 10 GB

New England Championship

- Favorites: Portland at 44-26 (+125 RD)
- S.o.t.O. 4 GB, Quinnipiac 5 GB, Oceanic 7 GB

Tucker-Wheaton Cup favorites: Portland B.C.

BROOKLYN – Defending champs Eckford return most of their regulars, and at C they've added five-star greenhorn Robert Borut to the mix. That addition is considered a bigger one than the signing of former APBL regular Jackson Wright (Gotham) at 1B for Atlantic, and thus they're the favorites. Bedford & Continental are expected to put up a decent fight.

NEW YORK CITY – Metro lost Troy Oberst & Jerald Peterson to the APBL, but they've brought in five-star greenhorn 1B Zeke Cornaro and star CF Francis Smith is back. That's why they're favored over a Union team that returns every regular and a Mutual side that lost All-Star 1B Wilbur Graff. Harlem added All-Star 3B Hoyt Woodford, but they're expected to come up short.

UPSTATE – Utica will go with "Pitching by Committee" again, and that doesn't bother the Writers Pool because it didn't keep them from lifting the cup last year. Syracuse lost Ashley Atkins (Star), but their new #2 looks good and they signed All-Star 3B David Bertolet. Victory has reining BotY Henry Nabors and a new #1 that should keep them in contention, and while Frontier's attack is weak their pitching duo of Carl Bancroft & five-star greenhorn Ed Pelham should keep them above .500.

COASTAL – Quaker St. replaced very talented SS Jonathan Quarles from within by making Charles Hull a regular, and the W.P. thinks that's enough to tip the scales in favor of Trenton Utd., who returns every regular from last season under the assumption that #1 Francis Molinari won't miss a month again and All-Star CF Manuel Romeiras will be back in peak form. Newark should be near .500 thanks to quality offense, and Tiger should be around .500 thanks to their defense.

INLAND – Pioneer is expected to fall off by about ten wins this season, and that opens Inland up for Susquehanna, who are expected to finish 1st due to a combination of excellent offense and quality pitching. Lancastra might not be far behind, but they have just a bit less talent. Lake Erie has a fine infield, and Sportsman's has good top-end talent.

NEW ENGLAND – After consecutive trip-ups at the final hurdle, the Writers Pool thinks this will finally be Portland's year to lift the cup. Their intimidating pitching duo of James Dressman & Grover Wright is back, they added 6x All-Star OF Luc Billon, and five-star greenhorn infielder Alfred Williams joined the team as well.

Sons of the Ocean will give Portland a tough time thanks to their crew of top-tier defensive talents, with SS Peter Jones back after setting defensive records last year. Quinnipiac doesn't excel at any one thing, but they should be highly competitive. Oceanic was hurt by the loss of George Sturgis, but they should still stay close to the top.

NBBO AWARD FAVORITES

NYL Batsman of the Year: Henry Nabors (SS, Victory) – projected .387/.417/.491, 2 HR, 74 RBI, 14 SB

NEL Batsman of the Year: Ned Morganti (CF, Quaker St.) – projected .380/.413/.531, 1 HR, 74 RBI, 28 SB

NYL Pitcher of the Year: Richard Majors (Metropolitan) – projected 25-14, 2.61 ERA, 23 K's over 344.2 IP

NEL Pitcher of the Year: Ross Gill (Quaker St.) – projected 26-12, 2.53 ERA, 25 K's over 334.1 IP

NYL Most Valuable Player: Isaac Kelly (3B, Eckford) – projected .340/.354/.425, 1 HR, 66 RBI, 2 SB

NEL Most Valuable Player: Manuel Romeiras (CF, Trenton Utd.) – projected .337/.361/.490, 2 HR, 65 RBI, 61 SB

NYL Greenhorn of the Year: Edward Pelham (P, age 22, Frontier)

NEL Greenhorn of the Year: Alfred Williams (3B, age 26, Portland)

NBBO TEAM OF THE YEAR FAVORITES

NEW YORK LEAGUE – P: Charles Rhodes (N.Y.A.C.), C: William Lovato (Cont'l), 1B: Paul LaGuerre (Minuteman), 2B: Chester Alexander (Syracuse), 3B: Isaac Kelly (Eckford), SS: Henry Nabors (Victory), OF: Herb Verrett (Atlantic), OF: Francis Smith (Metro), OF: Martin Craven (Syracuse)

NORTHEASTERN LEAGUE – P: Ross Gill (Quaker St.), C: Bertrand Bosley (Green Mtn.), 1B: Gerhardt Berg (Quaker St.), 2B: Frank Thomas (Pioneer), 3B: Alfred Williams (Portland; GH), SS: Earl Seals (Trenton Utd.), OF: Ned Morganti (Quaker St.), OF: Manuel Romeiras (Trenton Utd.), OF: Peter Huff (S.o.t.O.)

MOST TALENTED GREENHORNS (by position)

P: Edward Pelham (age 22, Frontier) at 5.0*, C: Robert Borut (age 29, Eckford) at 5.0*, 1B: Ezechiele Cornaro (age 26, Metro) at 5.0*, 2B: Jemke van Zutphen (age 25, Star.) at 4.0*, 3B: Alfred Williams (age 26, Portland) at 5.0*, SS: Gerrie Bos (age 28, Mutual) at 2.5*, OF: Walter Braden (age 24, Susquehanna) at 3.5*, OF: Jonathan Cooper (age 28, Harlem) at 3.0*, OF: Frank Tucker (age 28, Minuteman) at 3.0*

MOST TALENTED RESERVE TEAM PROSPECTS (by position)

P: Henry Spencer (age 21, Cont'l) at 2.5/5.0*, C: Carl Nevers (age 22, Olympic) at 2.5/5.0*, 1B: Harold Roberts (age 23, Star) at 2.5/3.5*, 2B: Chester Dudek (age 19, National) at 1.5/5.0*, 3B: Earl McKeon (age 20, Maryland) at 1.5/4.0*, SS: Stephen Barley (age 22, Susquehanna) at 2.5/4.5*, OF: Jonathan Nabors (age 22, Susquehanna) at 2.5/4.5*, OF: Arthur Kanellopoulos (age 20, Maryland) at 1.5/4.0*, OF: James Lipsey (age 24, Cantabrigians) at 3.0/3.5*