

METROPOLITAN TITLE DECIDED AT ELYSIAN FIELDS

EXCELSIOR & KNICK TWO GAMES APART WITH THREE GAMES AGAINST EACH OTHER LEFT TO PLAY

MANHATTAN (Aug. 17-19, 1877) – For one half of the A.P.B.L., the race to claim the pennant went down to the final weekend of play.

In the Colonial Conference, St. John's had the pennant wrapped with a week remaining, taking an eight-game lead over Niagara with six left on the schedule. For the mighty men from Providence, the last week of the season would be spent preparing for the Founders' Cup, their fourth trip to the series and their first in four years.

This was not the case in the Metropolitan Conference, where the neck-and-neck race between Excelsior & Knickerbocker continued into the final week. At the start of the last week of play, Excelsior (54-30) had a two-game lead on Knick (52-32). Both teams then went 2-1 in their week-opening series, with Excelsior's at home vs Gotham and Knick's played at Kings Co.

That meant the gap between the two teams remained two games with just three left in the season, and the two would be playing those games against each other at the venerable Elysian Fields in Manhattan. With Knickerbocker able to boast of a 31-11 home record in 1877, it meant a sweep that would rip the pennant out of Excelsior's grasp on the final day of the 1877 season was entirely possible.

How would the series unfold?

GAME ONE (Elysian Fields, ATT. 4,089)

EXC 7-14 KNI – 2B Anthony Mascherino (KNI): 4/5 (2B, 3B), 1 R, 2 RBI, DEF DP

The series opener wasn't much of a contest. The hosts scored all fourteen of their runs over the first six innings, after which they had a 14-2 lead. Elmer Seabold struggled (3.0 IP, 11 HA, 5 ER), and it was the living legend Mascherino who led the charge that left Knickerbocker just one game behind Excelsior with two to go.

GAME TWO (Elysian Fields, ATT 4,085)

EXC 9-2 – P Jim Creighton (EXC): CG, 6 HA, 2 ER, 1 BB, 2 K, 2/4 (2B), 1 R, 1 RBI

Just as a living legend led his team to victory in the opener, it was time for another to lead his team to victory in the middle game of the series. Jim Creighton took the ball for Excelsior and was masterful, holding the league's #1 offense to a pair of Runs and six Hits while batting 2/4 and hitting a Double during the six-run rally in the eighth that sealed the Excelsior win.

The result moved Excelsior back to two games ahead of Knickerbocker with one game left. Excelsior had clinched the Metropolitan pennant for the first time, and would be making their first postseason appearance since 1867 in the N.B.B.O.

GAME THREE (Elysian Fields, ATT 4,071)

EXC 3-4 KNI (10) – 3B Hugh Harris (KNI): 2/5 (3B), 1 R, 2 RBI, GW HIT

The final game of the season was one for preparation for Excelsior and one for pride for Knickerbocker, but that didn't stop the two from putting on a fine contest. The offense was sparse, and after a scoreless ninth inning the game would go to the tenth tied 3-3. Excelsior went down 1-2-3 in T10, and in B10 Harris came to bat with two out and Singled in P Robert Goodman to win the game.

The [Metropolitan Conference top two](#) looked like this to end the season:

- #1: Excelsior at 57-33 (+119 RD)
- #2: Knickerbocker at 56-34 (+182 RD)

Knickerbocker had the superior offense and Run Differential, but Excelsior had legendary pitching, fine offense, decent defense, and a better record in one-run games (11-5 vs 12-12). It was now time for Excelsior to take on St. John's to see if Jim Creighton could finally win his first major championship. For Knickerbocker it was their second straight runner-up finish, but it was a four-win improvement over last year and a sign that, perhaps, the best was yet to come.