

THE 1882 NORTHEASTERN LOWER LEAGUE PREVIEW

NORTHEAST U.S.A. (May 9, 1882) – For the first time, the semi-professional season in the Northeast will be starting on a Tuesday instead of a Wednesday, meaning that a day earlier than usual it's time for the leagues below the A.P.B.L. to begin play. The N.B.B.O., the competition that started it all, will begin its 26th season when Granite hosts Portland at the Kalivas Union Grounds, with the first pitch scheduled for 11:10. The Coastal Conference will begin its fifth season, and the Philadelphia City League will play out campaign number ten.

Last year, National brought the new Adams Cup to the nation's capital after defeating fellow first-time cup finalists Frontier 3-1 in the final. It marked the end of a year of change for the N.B.B.O., with three of the four league finalists having reached the L.C.S. for the first time. The P.C.B.L. also saw a new champion, as Minerva wrapped up their historic 54-16 season by winning the Liberty Bell Classic 3-1 vs Schuylkill. However, matters remained the same in the Coastal Conference, with Bridgeport taking their third consecutive title by no less than a dozen games over the runners-up.

1882 will be another year of change for the lower leagues after there were a record number of transfers to the A.P.B.L. New stars will take the place of those who have left for the professional game, and at the same time teams who haven't tasted much success could make their way to the top.

In the N.B.B.O., while Frontier is expected to repeat as the N.Y.L.'s best team New England whiz kids Quinnipiac are projected to top the N.E.L. Win-Loss charts for the first time, setting up the possibility of another cup final involving a team that's never made it that far before. The P.C.B.L. looks somewhat similar, with Minerva expected to make it back to the championship series again and Overbrook picked to face them after taking what would be their first pennant since 1878. However, once again the C.C. is expected to remain the same, with Bridgeport favored to win title number four on the trot in spite of numerous changes over the winter, surely leaving everyone else wondering just what it will take to beat them.

Year #26 of league baseball is here. The fields have been prepped, the bats have been sanded, the balls have been stitched, and the tickets have been bought.

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

NATIONAL BASE BALL ORGANIZATION PROJECTED FINISH & ANALYSIS

NEW YORK LEAGUE

BROOKLYN CHAMPIONSHIP

- Favorites: Continental (55-29)
- Atlantic & Eckford 7 GB, Marathon 11 GB
- Empire 16 GB, Bedford 17 GB, Nassau Co. 21 GB, Star 23 GB

The Writers Pool has decided to tempt the fates and make Continental the Brooklyn favorites again after coming up two games short last year. Their Pitching Duo of Howard Shepherd & Henry Spencer should be one of the five best in the entire N.B.B.O., while they'll have a lineup led by 3B William Denham & RF Michael Akhverdov, two of the best players in the N.Y.L.

Atlantic will have a new C, 1B, 3B, & LF this year, and consensus is that the changes will leave them too weak to take their sixth pennant in seven years. Eckford, whose 35-35 record last year was their worst since 1871, should be well above .500, but with their stars, especially 3B Isaac Kelly, another year older they probably won't be able to keep up with Cont'l. Marathon has some good batsmen – C George McDonough, LF Francis Brewer, CF Jacob Chartier – who should keep them above .500.

Among the projected bottom half, Empire & Bedford have the potential to finish over .500. Empire is ranked in the top half of the N.B.B.O. at four positions – 1B, LF, RF, P. Bedford has some good bats and signed former Kings Co. CF George Miller after transferring William Napier the other way, but their pitching is ranked just 42nd/48.

NEW YORK CITY CHAMPIONSHIP

- Favorites: New York Athletic Club (53-31)
- Mutual 2 GB, Hilltop 5 GB, Baltic/Harlem/Metropolitan 11 GB
- Union 13 GB, Mercury 33 GB

N.Y.A.C. finished 2nd via one-game playoff last season, but they're the favorites again. The obvious reason: the combination of Charles Rhodes with quality defense across the Infield. It was offensive issues that did them in last year, and they've addressed that by adding two Greenhorns – 1B Cleveland McLain & 3B James Brennan – who rank 5th/48 at their positions.

If N.Y.C. goes to a playoff again this year, it's Mutual who's expected to make it happen after they managed to snag former Gotham LF William Tillman when it was decided we was the fourth man in their Outfield. Hilltop, whose Pitchers will likely lead the league in Strikeouts, should give close chase with a lineup led by 1B John Hassell & 12x All-Star RF Ned Morganti.

Defending champs Metro are expected to fall back to .500 after losing key SS Frank Morrison to the N.E.L., with Baltic & Harlem joining them and Union just behind. What's happened to Mercury over the past two years is a mystery, but they look a safe bet to finish the year as the N.B.B.O.'s worst team.

UPSTATE NEW YORK CHAMPIONSHIP

- Favorites: Frontier (57-27)
- Minuteman 5 GB, Victory 8 GB, Syracuse 11 GB, Eagle 14 GB
- Utica 21 GB, Columbia 27 GB, Binghamton 31 GB

Frontier lost Edward Pelham to the N.E.L., but replaced him excellently by signing both Charles Sturch and former A.P.B.L. All-Star Charles King. The rest of last year's lineup is intact, and that should make Frontier the N.Y.L. #1 again.

Minuteman will make things difficult for Frontier thanks to the best Middle Infield in the N.Y.L. – Sam Jackson & Jules Thomas – with Francis Molinari pitching in front of them. Victory enters their 1st year after the Henry Nabors era with a solid lineup led by CF William Webb. Syracuse has a fine Infield and their Pitching Duo of Jacob Wesolowski & Edward Koch will be very good. Eagle's small-market resourcefulness should see them finish just above .500.

The only big surprise among the projected bottom three is Utica, picked to finish the season under .500 for the first time since all the way back in 1858, with the closest they've come an even .500 (35-35) in 1864.

NORTHEASTERN LEAGUE

COASTAL CHAMPIONSHIP

- Favorites: Philadelphia Baseball & Cricket Club (59-25)
- Maryland 6 GB, National 7 GB
- Diamond St. 20 GB, Brighton/Bunker Hill 24 GB, Trenton Utd. 25 GB, Lord Balt. 27 GB

P.B.C.C slipped from 1st to 3rd last year, but after signing 3x All-Star Bernard Puckett to man 1B they'll enter 1882 with a lineup that ranks in the top ten at seven positions and also has a Golden Hands fielder at SS (Frank Morrison). Their 1-2 punch of James Burke & Leroy Moore is the best outside of the A.P.B.L., and it will more than likely carry them to a great season.

The Coastal will be a three-team race, and it's no surprise that the other two teams are Maryland & National. Maryland revamped their Middle Infield by signing former A.P.B.L. All-Star Ralph Knight and 8x Golden Hands honoree Peter Jones, and they've paired Hamilton Wiggins with 1876 pro P.o.t.Y. Simeon DiStefano, who'd fallen out of favor at American. Inaugural Adams Cup champions National brought back the whole lineup except for a change at P2, but the additions made by the other two teams are expected to push them down the standings.

Not much to say about the other five teams, except that Massachusetts native and 7x A.P.B.L. All-Star Albert Stoffers should immediately become the best 3B in the N.B.B.O. upon donning the Brighton shirt, even though he's 39 years old.

INLAND CHAMPIONSHIP

- Favorites: Susquehanna (55-29)
- Lancastra Brit. 9 GB, Pioneer 10 GB, Reading A.C. 11 GB, Scranton 13 GB
- Squirrel Hill 16 GB, Lake Erie 20 GB, Merrimack Mills 23 GB

Of course, Susquehanna are the favorites once again. They've taken nine of the last eleven Inland pennants, and this year should end similarly after they added 6x All-Star Manuel Romeiras to be their new RF. Factor in that all-league 2B John Porretta enters his 2nd season and 20 y/o LF George Drury has had development time, and this is a very dangerous team.

Lancastra will be led, as always, by the duo of 2B Lennon Haley & CF William White, but it will mean another 2nd-place finish. Pioneer has a balanced lineup led by CF Robert Wolf. Reading rates in the top half of the N.B.B.O. everywhere but SS with no standouts. Scranton should finish an even .500 due to a fine Infield led by 8x All-Star 2B/3B Frank Thomas.

Among the expected bottom feeders, the points of interest are that one A.P.B.L. veteran has decided to finish out his career with an Inland Club – 36 y/o, 6x All-Star Fred Bartholomew with Squirrel Hill – and, more surprisingly, 27-year-old 3B Jerry Rockford joined Lake Erie after four okay seasons with Quaker St.

NEW ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIP

- Favorites: Quinnipiac (61-23)
- Salem 11 GB, Green Mtn. 18 GB
- Portland 21 GB, Cantabrig's 22 GB, S.o.t.O. 24 GB, Granite 26 GB, Oceanic 28 GB

Pennant holders Quinnipiac have been picked by the Writers Pool to be the N.B.B.O.'s #1 team this season. They have a pair of Top 20 batsmen, 3B Columbus Young & LF Francis Edwards, the 4th-ranked 2B (Charles Taylor), above-average batsmen everywhere else, and an All-Star Pitching Duo now that they've added Ed Pelham from Frontier to go with Vilhelm Adriansen.

Quinnipiac is the only team expected to take their pennant by 10+ games. The two other teams in New England expected to finish .500 or better are Salem & Green Mtn. Salem has two excellent talents in 3B William Winship & SS Ashely Stretton, while Green Mtn. will be led by 5x T.o.t.Y. C Bertrand Bosley and some fine young batsmen, most notably RF John Robbins.

The other five teams will be playing for pride this year. Portland is a long way from its cup final peak. Cantabrigians has two good Pitchers but a weak Infield. Sons of the Ocean projects as very poor in attack aside from the veteran trio of Hal Brinks (C), Jesse Craig (1B), & Peter Huff (LF). Granite has star CF Chris Becker but not much else. Oceanic is weak everywhere.

AWARD FAVORITES

- N.Y.L. Batsman of the Year: William Tillman of Mutual (LF, age 31) – proj .354, .905 OPS, 72 RBI, 29 SB
- N.E.L. Batsman of the Year: James Burke of P.B.C.C. (CF, age 39) – proj .399, 1.039 OPS, 81 R, 69 SB

- N.Y.L. Pitcher of the Year: Charles Rhodes of N.Y.A.C. (age 33) – proj 26-14, 2.40 ERA, 146 K over 360.2 IP
- N.E.L. Pitcher of the Year: Edward Pelham of Quinnipiac (age 30) – proj 28-9, 2.53 ERA, 43 K over 341.2 IP
- N.Y.L. Fielder of the Year: Jules Thomas of Minuteman (SS, age 30)
- N.E.L. Fielder of the Year: William Cruise of Portland (SS, age 31)
- N.Y.L. Greenhorn of the Year: George Wittrock of Minuteman (C, age 23)
- N.E.L. Greenhorn of the Year: Edwin Gallagher of Brighton (LF, age 28)

TEAM OF THE YEAR FAVORITES

NEW YORK LEAGUE

- P: Charles Rhodes of N.Y.A.C. (age 33, 5.0/5.0*; rated 4.5/4.5* relative to APBL)
- C: William Butcher of Frontier (age 29, 3.5/3.5*)
- 1B: John Hassell of Victory (age 24, 5.0/5.0*)
- 2B: Jonathan Toppin of Mutual (age 34, 3.5/3.5*)
- 3B: Isaac Kelly of Eckford (age 36, 4.5/4.5*)
- SS: Jules Thomas of Minuteman (age 30, 4.0/4.0*)
- OF: William Tillman of Mutual (age 31, 5.0/5.0*)
- OF: Ned Morganti of Yonkers (age 38, 4.5/4.5*)
- OF: Jack Anastasio of N.Y.A.C. (age 29, 4.5/4.5*)

NORTHEASTERN LEAGUE

- P: Edward Pelham of Quinnipiac (age 30, 4.5/4.5*)
- C: Bertrand Bosley of Green Mtn. (age 34, 4.5/4.5*)
- 1B: Jesse Craig of S.o.t.O. (age 35, 4.5/4.5*)
- 2B: John Porretta of Susquehanna (age 25, 5.0/5.0*)
- 3B: Albert Stoffers of Brighton (age 39, 5.0/5.0*)
- SS: William Cruise of Portland (age 31, 3.0/3.0*)
- OF: James Burke of Philadelphia B.C.C. (age 39, 5.0/5.0*; rated 4.5/4.5* relative to APBL)
- OF: Francis Edwards of Quinnipiac (age 24, 5.0/5.0*)

- OF: Fred Bartholomew of Squirrel Hill (age 36, 5.0/5.0*)

TOP GREENHORNS (by position)

- P1: Craig Deeney of S.o.t.O. (age 23, 4.0/5.0*)
- P2: Harold Andrews of Metropolitan (age 24, 4.0/4.0*)
- C: George Wittrock of Minuteman (age 23, 4.5/5.0*)
- 1B: Cleveland McLain of N.Y.A.C. (age 28, 3.5/4.0*)
- 2B: James Fried of Diamond St. (age 25, 3.5/3.5*)
- 3B: James Brennan of N.Y.A.C. (age 27, 4.0/4.0*)
- SS: Noah Jones of Brighton (age 25, 3.0/3.0*)
- OF: Edwin Gallagher of Brighton (age 28, 4.5/4.5*)
- OF: Charles Diggs of National (age 23, 3.5/3.5*)
- OF: Homer Baysden of Mercury (age 29, 3.0/3.0*)

TOP RESERVE TEAM PROSPECTS (by position)

- P1: William Whitlock of Bunker Hill (age 21, 2.5/5.0*)
- P2: Calvin Smith of N.Y.A.C. (age 21, 2.0/4.5*)
- C: George Phillips of Lord Balt. (age 21, 2.5/5.0*)
- 1B: Ernest Moulton of Metropolitan (age 19, 1.5/4.0*)
- 2B: Garland Boone of Quinnipiac (age 19, 1.5/4.0*)
- 3B: Robert Coyle of Bunker Hill (age 21, 2.0/4.0*)
- SS: Forrest Greene of Mutual (age 21, 2.0/4.0*)
- OF: Edward Glasgow of Baltic (age 19, 1.5/4.5*)
- OF: Andrew Keenan of Baltic (age 20, 2.0/4.0*)
- OF: Thurman Nicholas of Oceanic (age 19, 1.5/4.0*)

COASTAL CONFERENCE PROJECTED FINISH & ANALYSIS

- Favorites: Bridgeport (52-32)
- Capitol City 2 GB, Olympic 4 GB, Sportsman's 8 GB
- Essex Co. 12 GB, Camden & Amb. 16 GB, Lynn 17 GB, Highlander 18 GB

It was a winter of transition for the 3x defending C.C. champions, but Bridgeport should still have enough to win the title yet again. They replaced Tom Hauser, Edward Koch, & Robert Murphy with younger P's, and will start the year with five-star men Charles Crowley (22 y/o) and Fred Werner (24 y/o) as their Pitching Duo. They transferred 2x B.o.t.Y. Jacob Overfield to Gotham for a hefty sum, and replaced him at 3B with A.P.B.L. vet Harold McMichael while bringing in quality Greenhorn Dennis Gardner to play RF. They won't be as dominant as last year but remain the team to beat.

Presuming star P John Baker stays fit the whole season, Capitol City should be the biggest obstacle to a Bridgeport four-peat. However, Olympic's addition of two A.P.B.L. veterans – backup 1B Daniel Howard & SS Jonathan Richards – to go with the nearly completed development of five-star P prospect Nep Sweatt makes them a serious threat as well. Sportsman's has done well in putting together the conference's best Infield after selling stars Johnny Holcombe & Butler Stout over the past two winters, so they'll be lurking.

Among the bottom half of the conference, the most interesting team is Camden & Amboy because they have the league's best CF, William Claxton, as well as two batsmen who rank 3rd/8 at their positions: C Johnathan Brumback & 2B Lacy LeGendre.

AWARD FAVORITES

- Batsman of the Year: Louis Beane of Bridgeport (age 34) – proj .350, .826 OPS, 86 RBI, 13 SB
- Pitcher of the Year: John Baker of Capitol City (age 26) – proj 23-14, 2.68 ERA, 103 K over 335.2 IP
- Fielder of the Year: Lacy LeGendre of Camden & Amb. (2B, age 36)

TEAM OF THE YEAR FAVORITES

- P: John Baker of Capitol City (age 26, 5.0/5.0*)

- C: Jesse Renwick of Olympic (age 25, 3.5/4.0*)
- 1B: Euan Graham of Bridgeport (age 35, 3.5/3.5*)
- 2B: Noah Skiles of Olympic (age 30, 3.5/3.5*)
- 3B: Edward Lindsey of Sportsman's (age 26, 3.0/3.0*)
- SS: Louis Beane of Bridgeport (age 34, 3.5/3.5*)
- OF: Dennis Gardner of Bridgeport (age 27, 4.0/4.0*)
- OF: William Claxton of Camden & Amb. (age 29, 3.5/3.5*)
- OF: Lewis Zeeryp of Lynn (age 32, 3.0/3.0*)

TOP GREENHORNS & PROSPECTS (by position)

- P1: Nep Sweatt of Olympic (age 22, 5.0/5.0*)
- P2: Charles Crowley of Bridgeport (age 22, 5.0/5.0*)
- C: William Christianson of Camden & Amb. (age 25, 2.5/2.5*)
- 1B: David Pendley of Lynn (age 20, 1.5/2.5*)
- 2B: Otis Griffin of Highlander (age 22, 2.0/2.5*)
- 3B: Elroy Robinson of Essex Co. (age 22, 1.5/2.5*)
- SS: Neal Hanson of Essex Co. (age 26, 2.5/2.5*)
- OF: Dennis Gardner of Bridgeport (age 27, 4.0/4.0*)
- OF: Lane Simmons of Camden & Amb. (age 23, 2.5/2.5*)
- OF: Fiorenzo Napoleoni of Lynn (age 24, 2.5/2.5*)

PHILADELPHIA CITY LEAGUE PROJECTED FINISH & ANALYSIS

EAST PHILADELPHIA

- Favorites: Minerva (55-29)
- Frankford 2 GB, Queen Vill./Sons of Ben/Spartan 12 GB
- Keystone/Yorktown 20 GB, Pt. Richmond 24 GB

The East should be a two-team race in 1882, with Minerva coming down a bit from their historic 1881 campaign and Frankford Arsenal possibly catching them. Minerva has the whole lineup back except LF Edward Dobbs, but after transferring him to Knickerbocker in the A.P.B.L. they replaced him admirably with former Sons of Ben LF Arthur Hall. Frankford returns their entire lineup, and with 5.0* SS Paul Ward's 5.6 WAR Greenhorn season behind him he could be utterly terrifying this year.

Queen Village will finish above .500 thanks to their combo of 2B Caesar Sorensen & 3B Abraham Hardin. Sons of Ben should have a decent year but could flounder after selling OF Henry Yoder to Mass. Bay. Spartan has a fine lineup led by 1879 league M.V.P. Richard Norris at SS.

None of the three teams projected under .500 offer up much, although it will be interesting to see if inaugural league M.V.P. Benjamin Warnock can earn yet another set of twin Golden Hands & Team of the Year nominations, which would be his sixth, as Yorktown's 1B.

WEST PHILADELPHIA

- Favorites: Overbrook (51-33)
- Merion/Schuylkill 3 GB, Bartram Vill. 10 GB
- Mercantile 12 GB, Germantown/Independence 13 GB, Penn 16 GB

Overbrook were the favorites entering 1881 but finished runners-up instead, seven games behind repeat West title winners Schuylkill. They're favorites again after Robert Nygren looked the best he ever has during April Training (25.1 IP, 0.36 ERA, 12/2 BB/K), meaning their average lineup should be good enough to take the pennant.

Merion is one of two teams expected to finish just a few games back, thanks to a quality lineup that features the league's best 2B, Louis McKenzie. Pennant holders Schuylkill lost leader Harrison Comstock to retirement, but quality Greenhorn Frank Miceli is there to replace him at LF. Otherwise, everyone else from last year's lineup has returned.

The other five teams are expected to finish 10-16 below the top spot in the West. Mercantile has some very talented batsmen, notably league-best 1B Samuel Harris, C Thomas Kirkpatrick, & RF James Skiver, but they have too many weaknesses. Germantown has the same issue with their lineup led by league-best LF William Penn. Independence made some good moves with their money after selling John Smith to Orange, but after a 23-47 season they're not ready for .500 yet. Surprisingly, it's Penn tipped to finish last after a couple of winter losses have given them the West's weakest infield.

AWARD FAVORITES

- Batsman of the Year: Paul Ward of Frankford (SS, age 24) – proj .361, .998 OPS, 102 RBI, 12 SB
- Pitcher of the Year: Robert Nygren of Overbrook (age 27) – proj 25-15, 2.45 ERA, 148 K over 345.2 IP
- Fielder of the Year: Archie Bell of Minerva (SS, age 29)
- Greenhorn of the Year: Frank Miceli of Schuylkill (LF, age 24)

TEAM OF THE YEAR FAVORITES

- P: Robert Nygren of Overbrook (age 27, 5.0/5.0*)
- C: Thomas Kirkpatrick of Mercantile (age 31, 3.0/3.0*)
- 1B: Benjamin Warnock of Yorktown (age 36, 4.5/4.5*)
- 2B: Jonathan Auriemma of Minerva (age 32, 3.0/3.0*)
- 3B: Vance King of Bartram Village (age 26, 4.5/4.5*)
- SS: Paul Ward of Frankford (age 24, 5.0/5.0*)
- OF: William Penn of Germantown (age 25, 4.5/5.0*)
- OF: James Harris of Frankford (age 35, 4.0/4.0*)
- OF: Charles Taylor of Penn (age 31, 3.5/3.5*)

TOP GREENHORNS & PROSPECTS (by position)

- P1: William Hubbell of Independence (age 27, 3.5/3.5*)
- P2: Henry Mull of Merion (age 20, 2.0/5.0*)
- C: Garrett Bryant of Independence (age 27, 3.5/3.5*)
- 1B: William Dickinson of Spartan (age 24, 2.5/2.5*)
- 2B: Nathaniel Fields of Independence (age 22, 3.0/4.5*)
- 3B: Jonathan Cummings of Pt. Richmond (age 23, 2.5/3.0*)
- SS: Edward Ferris of Mercantile (age 26, 2.5/2.5*)
- OF: Frank Miceli of Schuylkill (age 24, 3.0/3.5*)
- OF: Ted Jones of Spartan (age 26, 2.5/2.5*)
- OF: Charles Behrens of Sons of Ben (age 26, 2.5/2.5*)