

THE 1862 T.W.C. FIELD IS SET!

ALL SIX REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS DECIDED IN FINAL WEEK; THREE BY 1-2 GAMES

NORTHEAST U.S.A (Aug. 11, 1862) – Another season of play in the National Base Ball Organization has come to its end, and this one just might have been the most exciting one yet. All six regional championship subdivisions were decided in the final week of play, with only the Coastal Championship being decided by more than three games (five).

There were no truly dominant teams this season, and every regional championship except New England saw four or more teams finish with a record over the .500 mark. While the first edition of the revamped Tucker-Wheaton Cup will feature many familiar faces, none of the six entrants had an easy time making it there.

BROOKLYN – The biggest stunner of the six saw Brooklyn – in 4th place at 22-18 on July 1 – go 22-8 over their last thirty games to shove aside Atlantic, Empire, and long-standing #1 Excelsior to take top spot by three games the season after Grover Wright left. The Excelsior collapse was positively tragic. They were 35-15 & six games clear with four weeks left to play, only to 6-14 over the remaining schedule as their weak batting (16th in Runs, 19th in AVG) finally caught up to them.

NEW YORK CITY – Going into the final week of play, Orange had a one-game lead over Mutual and a two-game lead over Gotham. They went 4-1 to keep the other two at bay and win the N.Y.C. title. Mutual, which was 33-17 in mid-July, went 9-11 over their last twenty games to fall from 1st to 3rd.

UPSTATE – Incredibly competitive as always, the trio of Utica, Syracuse, & Niagara were a game apart going into the final week of play. Niagara had the lead by one game, and mediocre play from all three teams let them win Upstate by two games in the end. Niagara failed to win Upstate for the first time even though they had Grover Wright and the best offense in the NBBO (.340 AVG, 8.5 R/G). Their batsman-friendly venue just might be both the ultimate blessing AND curse.

COASTAL – Dubbed the cup favorites in preseason, Shamrock never had a giant lead in the Coastal Championship but it was always a comfortable one. They enjoyed a 3-5 game lead for much of the season and kept it around five before clinching the pennant in the opener of the final week of play.

INLAND – Alleghany was 7th in Runs Scored & 3rd in Runs Allowed in the N.E.L, but that only added up to a 41-29 record and they were only able to clinch the Inland title with two days left in the season, seeing off a challenge from surging Susquehanna. Still, Alleghany was in first place from July 7th onward.

NEW ENGLAND – With four weeks to play St. John's & Green Mountain were tied for 1st place at 30-20. St. John's then proceeded to do what they typically do late in the season, going 14-6 over the last four weeks of play to take New England by three games over G.M. and five over Sons of the Ocean, with Portland falling out of the picture thanks to a 14-21 second half.

With the playoffs set to begin it is important to remember that there are no playoff series this year, with one ten-game group final taking place instead. This came about due to dissent from clubs in the tougher regional championships last offseason, and the irony of it is that if there were playoffs this season the Shamrock Club would have finally earned the #1 seed they were claiming they had been unfairly denied by virtue of playing in the Coastal Championship.

Here are the entrants:

TUCKER-WHEATON CUP

BROOKLYN CHAMPION: Kings County Base Ball Club (44-26)

NEW YORK CITY CHAMPION: Orange Base Ball Club (44-26)

UPSTATE N.Y. CHAMPION: Utica Base Ball Club (41-29)

COASTAL CHAMPION: Shamrock Baseball Club (45-25)

INLAND CHAMPION: Alleghany Baseball Club (41-29)

NEW ENGLAND CHAMPION: St. John's Baseball Club (44-26)

FORMAT: Each team plays every other team twice, for a total of ten games. The team with the best record wins the cup. Extra games will be played if there is a tie for 1st.

Whether the cup consists of one large group or a single series, the baseball on offer in this edition should be fascinating. Shamrock had the best record in the entire N.B.B.O. this season at 45-25, which represents the fewest wins ever for the #1 overall team. Three others were 44-26, and the other two were 41-29.

While Shamrock can lay a claim to having the most talented team, just as the Writers Pool did in preseason, the difference between them and the other five competing for the cup is very thin, and because of that it will really be anybody's guess as to who will lift the cup this year.