

Quick Facts about the 1903 World Series

Compiled by Shari Scribner

Each club provided one umpire: Hank O'Day (NL)
Tommy Connolly (AL)

Ball hit into roped-off crowd in outfield counted as a ground-rule double or a triple, depending upon the game. This decision had an effect on every game played in the series.

Pirates owner Barney Dreyfuss challenged the Boston team to a post-season championship series: "The time has come for the National League and the American League to organize a World Series. It is my belief that if our clubs played a series on a best-of-nine basis, we would create great interest in baseball, in our leagues, and in our players. I also believe it would be a financial success." Boston owner Henry J. Killilea agrees to participate after assuring AL president Ban Johnson that Boston would win the series.

Agreement to play a series not determined until the second week of September.

Boston – 3 games

Pittsburgh – 4 games

Boston – 2 games (if still needed)

Series would last
for 8 games.

Boston was a city of 600,000; Pittsburgh a city of 350,000. It was a 23-hour train ride between the two cities.

Boston doubled the admission price of tickets. Bleacher seats and standing room only sold for fifty cents, grandstand seats for \$1.00. Souvenir cards sold for ten cents. Speculators and ticket scalpers made a bundle reselling tickets, especially during the later games of the series. Boys would make extra money by selling whatever boxes, etc. could be found for standing on as overflow crowds became a problem.

Wagers were made before, after, and during games. Boston fans didn't think the odds in Pittsburgh were as good as had been given in their city. Fans looking for action would create crazy bets or even bet against their own teams to get better action.

Approximately 100,000 tickets would be sold for the 8 games for a grand total of \$75,000.

* Boston players split with owner 75/25, each receive \$1,182.

* Pittsburgh players receive 100%, receive \$1,316.

(This team's checks made out to the players' wives.)

American League: Boston Americans *or* Pilgrims (referred to as both in sources)

Players sometimes referred to as “Collins’s Boys” after their captain/manager/third baseman Jimmy Collins.

Play at Huntington Avenue Grounds – LF fence 350 ft.
RF fence 210 ft.
CF fence 530 ft.

Players:

1st base – Candy LaChance
2nd base – Hobe Ferris
3rd base – Jimmy Collins (player/manager)
Shortstop – Freddy Parent
Left field – Pat Dougherty
Center field – Chick Stahl
Right field – Buck Freeman
Catchers – Lou Criger, Charley Farrell
Pitchers – Cy Young, Bill Dinneen, Long John Hughes
Pinch hitter – Jack O’Brien

Royal Rooters: boisterous Irish fans of Boston baseball

- * Dressed in Sunday dress for games, including black suits, high white collars, and “Continental Special” bowler hats. Game tickets would sometimes be placed in the hatband. Used tin horns and would run up and down the aisles to create enthusiasm. Some waved American flags.
- * Had reserved bleacher seats behind first base. During Game 8 of Series sat with hired band in front of grandstand wall (so were inside stadium).

*Famous rooters included:

- Charley Lavis (who served as the group’s “Master of Ceremonies”)
- John “Honey Fitz” Fitzgerald (politician who served as a congressman and mayor, also the grandfather of John F. Kennedy, Jr.)
- James J. Corbett (prizefighter)
- John L. Sullivan (“most celebrated boxer of 19th century”)
- John I. Taylor (would build Fenway Park in 1912)
- Mike “Nuff Ced” McGreevey
 - Owned the Third Base Saloon, “last stop on the way home”
 - Led Rooters in songs and cheers, danced Irish jigs on roof of dugout
 - He and Lavis hired the bands, were sued by the first one for breach of contract. (The band claimed had been hired for

four days, Rooters claimed only for the first day.)

- Songs played by the band included:

Ain't It A Shame
Won't You Come Home, Bill Bailey
What A Difference A Few Hours Makes
I've Got Mine, Boys; I've Got Mine
In the Good Old Summertime
Hiawatha, My Indian Maid
We Love You In The Same Old Way
Good Night, Gentle Folks, Good Night
and TESSIE

*"Tessie" – song from musical The Silver Slipper (1901).

The Royal Rooters would sing "Tessie" over and over throughout games 5-8. Additional lyrics were created that McGreevey said would "charm the Pittsburgh players so that when they hear [the lyrics] their eye will lose its keenness and their arms their brawn." Said the Pirates' Tommy Leach: "Sort of got on your nerves after a while. And before we knew what happened; we'd lost the World Series."

Chorus lyrics to "Tessie": Tessie, you make me feel so badly,
Why don't you turn around?
Tessie, you make me feel so badly,
Babe, my heart weighs about a pound.

Other lyrics sung by Rooters:

To their own Jimmy Collins: Jimmy, we love you dearly.

To Pirates' Honus Wagner: Honus, why do you hit so badly
Take a back seat and sit down
Honus, at bat you look so sadly

(last part shouted) Hey, why don't you get out of town.

To Pirates' Brickyard Kennedy: Kennedy, you seem to pitch so badly
Take a back seat and sit down.
Kennedy, you are a dead one
And you ought to leave the town.
Pittsburg needs a few good pitchers,
Such as Boston's pennant lifters.
Phillipi, you are the only, only, only,
one.

National League: Pittsburgh Pirates

Note: Pittsburgh will be the spelling used as that is how the town is known. However, the U.S. Board of Geographic Names had dropped the “h” from the spelling between 1890 and 1911.

Pittsburgh is the favored team as well as the more experienced one. Pirates had won the NL pennant in 1901, 1902, and 1903. (1902 was a capital year – they beat the second-place team by 17½ games and remain the only team in baseball history to complete a season without ever experiencing 3 consecutive losses.) In 1903 they won the pennant by 6½ games with a season of 91-49.

Play at Exposition Park – LF fence 400 ft.
RF fence 400 ft.
CF fence 450 ft.

Players:

1st base – Kitty Bransfield
2nd base – Claude Ritchie
3rd base – Tommy Leach
Shortstop – Honus Wagner
Left field – Fred Clarke (player/manager)
Center field – Ginger Beaumont
Right field – Jimmy Sebring
Catchers – Ed Phelps, Harry Smith
Pitchers – Deacon Phillippe, Sam Leever, Brickyard Kennedy, Bucky Veil

Pirates would name their fans the “Loyal Rooters” or “Champion Rooters.”

- Parade through town to get to last few games, cheering & band playing.
- Carried brightly colored umbrellas & wore pins that said, “We are all Pittsburgh rooters”.
- Hired bands to use for Games 7 and 8. Band songs included:
 - Hail, Hail, the Gang’s All Here
 - Down Down Down Where The Wurzburger Flows
 - The Smoke Goes Up The Chimney
 - Just The Same

Pittsburgh down to two pitchers, both with injured arms. 3 infielders had hand & leg injuries.

Miscellaneous baseball stuff:

- * At the turn of the century:
 - Baseballs tended to last a whole game (rubber-core balls cost \$1.25 to produce). Would retrieve foul balls, etc. *Maybe* would use 3-4 balls in a game. Balls became soft and sometimes misshapen as the game progressed.
 - Overhand pitching since 1885.
 - In 1903, the pitching mound height was standardized at 15 inches. Also began tradition of having home team bat last.
 - 1901-1904: pitchers completed 85% of their games.
 - Players not due to bat coached the baselines (until about 1907). Announcer with a megaphone would call out who was at bat.
 - Only one umpire generally worked a game.
- * No numbers on the backs of uniforms until 1929.
- * Until 1953, gloves were left on the field when the team came to bat.
- * Batting helmets would not be mandatory until 1971.

Sources include:

The First World Series and the Baseball Fanatics of 1903. Roger I. Abrams. 2003.
Autumn Glory : Baseball's First World Series. Louis P. Masur. 2003.
When Boston Won the World Series : a Chronicle of Boston's Remarkable Victory in the First Modern World Series of 1903. Bob Ryan. 2003.