

Don't Let the Rain Come Down: The 1911 World Series

Bruce A. Rubenstein
University of Michigan-Flint

"We have a great team, and they beat us."
—John J. McGraw

The world champion Athletics breezed to a second consecutive league title in 1911, winning 101 games and finishing 13 1/2 lengths ahead of Detroit. Connie Mack's squad was one of the finest ever assembled, its heart being the inner defense of John "Stuffy" McInnis at first (.321, 3 homers, 79 runs batted in, and a .972 fielding average), brilliant second sacker Eddie "Cocky" Collins (.365, 3, 71, and .966), John "Black Jack" Barry at short (.265, 1, 30, and .944), and John Franklin Baker (.334, a league leading eleven home runs, 115 runs batted in, and .942 in the field) at third. Because of their all-round skills, the quartet was dubbed "the \$100,000 infield," which had nothing to do with the sum of their salaries, but rather the market value attributed to them. Even that might have been underestimated as Babe Ruth inflated their value to a million dollars.¹ McInnis, however, had been hit by a pitch from Detroit's fire-balling George Mullin late in the season and was not expected to see action in the Series. Replacing him was veteran Harry Davis, who had secretly agreed to retire after the 1911 season to become manager of the Cleveland team.² As the overweight and plodding Davis had batted only .197 in limited play, on the eve of the Series the A's infield was viewed by baseball experts as somewhat devalued.

In the outfield, the Athletics boasted Briscoe Lord (.310, 3, 55), Danny Murphy (.329, 6, 66), and Rube Oldring (.297, 3, 59). Behind the bat were Ira Thomas (.273, 0, 39) and Jack Lapp (.353, 1, 26). As a team the White Elephants batted .296, scored 861 runs, and stole 226 bases. Analyzing the Athletics at the plate, Detroit sportswriter E. A. Batchelor stated succinctly: "Nine men who can hit the ball will be in Connie Mack's lineup in every game of the World Series. Nine men, any one of whom is as unwelcome to the opposing pitcher in a pinch as a mouse in the weekly meeting of the church sewing society. Any time that a manager gets together a club that has no weak sisters in the batting order, has no man who goes to bat merely because the rules require it, he has an outfit that is hard for anybody to beat."³

On the mound, the Mackmen utilized a quartet of hurlers who combined for eighty-three victories. John "Colby Jack" Coombs led the league with 28 victories and also had a team-high twelve defeats. The duo of 36 year old Eddie Plank (23-8 with a 2.10 earned run average) and Charles "Chief" Bender (17-5 with a 2.16 E.R.A.), was joined by veteran Harry "Cy" Morgan (15-7, 2.70) to round out a



The \$100,000 Infield of the 1911 Athletics: John "Stuffy" McInnis (first base), Danny Murphy (outfield), Frank "Home Run" Baker (third base), John "Black Jack" Barry (shortstop), and Eddie "Cocky" Collins (second base).

mound corps which fashioned a 3.01 earned run average. As Babe Ruth aptly summarized, the 1911 Athletics were a great defensive team with real offensive strength and fine pitching.⁴

Having been forced to play half the season in tiny Hilltop Park, the home of the American League Gotham entry, because of a fire at their home field, John McGraw's Giants moved into the rebuilt steel and concrete Polo Grounds in late June and finished the 1911 campaign with 99 victories to gain the National League pennant by 7 1/2 games over the defending champion Cubs. Led by John "Chief" Meyers (.332, 1, 61), Art Fletcher (.319, 1, 37), Larry Doyle (.310, 13, 77), Fred Snodgrass (.294, 1, 77), John "Red" Murray (.291, 3, 78), Fred Merkle (.283, 12, 84), and Josh Devore (.280, 3, 50), the Giants amassed a .279 team batting average, but were most noted for their speed, pilfering a major league record of 347 bases and being labeled by McGraw as "the greatest baserunning club" he had ever seen.⁵ At the plate the Giants were, as Batchelor noted, "by no means feeble," but there were "several among them on whom a pitcher could rest up a little if the going has been hard."⁶

On the mound, McGraw relied on his veteran ace Christy Mathewson, who had a 26-13 record but gave up a league leading 303 hits in 307 innings pitched, and lefty Richard "Rube" Marquard, previously known derisively as "McGraw's \$11,000 lemon" because of his three-year major league record of 9-18, but who in 1911 had

achieved stardom by leading the senior circuit with 237 strikeouts and fashioning a 24-7 mark.⁷ Other starters were Leon "Red" Ames (11-10), Otis "Doc" Crandall (15-5), and George "Hooks" Wiltse (12-9). Even though the Giants' moundsmen had a team earned run average of 2.69, they were dismissed by baseball beat reporters as being no more than equal to the Athletic pitchers.

The main difference between the two teams was their leaders. Unlike his New York managerial counterpart,

The Sporting News

Connie Mack rarely argued with umpires, was dignified and courtly in behavior, never used a word nastier than "dadblast," possessed a dry, good-natured wit, and was unfailingly polite.⁸ While McGraw demanded complete control over field strategy, Mack gave initiative to his college educated athletes, saying that "these boys [Collins, McInnis, Barry, Coombs, Plank, and Bender], who knew their Greek and Latin and their algebra and geometry and trigonometry, put intelligence and scholarship into the game."⁹ McGraw and Mack also differed in training techniques, with McGraw favoring hard work in the spring. Mack chose to slowly condition his players so that they would become neither tired nor stale over the course of the season.¹⁰



That Mack's theory proved superior in 1911 was admitted even by a century.

McGraw who lamented after the

World Series that his club "was pretty well worn-out and shot to pieces when we faced the Athletics."¹¹

On the eve of the Series, the press portrayed the upcoming contests as an opportunity for the Athletics to gain revenge for their defeat in the 1905 New York-Philadelphia match, but Philadelphia players did not view it with any such sentiment. When asked why he looked forward to meeting the Giants, one Athletic replied frankly: "Because the new Polo Grounds can accommodate more spectators than any other place in the country."¹² This commercial aspect became even more pronounced because when the new Polo Grounds opened, boastful team officials

erroneously cited a seating capacity of 50,000. During the Series maximum attendance at the packed stadium, including standees, was given by the club at 38,281. Outraged players from both teams, led by Chief Meyers, formally requested that the National Commission investigate why Giant management was cheating them out of gate receipts.¹³ The Commission's terse response was a condemnation of the players for having the temerity to question the integrity of the game.¹⁴

Before the opening game in New York on Saturday, October 14, the superstitious McGraw had his players dress in new broadcloth black uniforms identical to those worn by the world champion Giants in 1905. Before the Athletics trooped past the Giant dugout to get to their bench, McGraw ordered his men to be sharpening their spikes as a warning to the visitors that the New Yorkers were going to be running the bases fiercely.¹⁵

The initial contest turned into a mound classic between Mathewson and Bender. The Chippewa Indian, wearing a smile and chattering at Giant batsmen throughout the game, pitched better ball than Matty, striking out eleven and yielding only five hits, but an error by Collins permitted an unearned run, which proved to be the margin in a 2-1 Giant victory. With their heroes gathering only six hits and exhibiting no outstanding fielding plays, Philadelphia partisans, especially those who did not appreciate fine pitching, found the game rather dull, while an American League manager disgustingly claimed that it "looked like the Athletics died on their feet."¹⁶

The victorious Giants and their supporters saw the game differently. For New Yorkers, the highlight of the struggle occurred in the sixth inning when Fred Snodgrass, who had reached first as a result of being hit by a Bender fastball, was sacrificed to second, and then attempted to move to third as one of Bender's curves bounded away from the catcher. He brought the crowd to its feet with a hard slide which cut Frank Baker's pants "from his knee clear to his hip."¹⁷ Snodgrass later recalled that the trainer "went and got another pair of pants and a blanket, put the new pants on him right at third base, and the game proceeded."¹⁸

After the contest, in the noisy Giant clubhouse diminutive Josh Devore, 5'6" and 160 pounds, gleefully related that in the seventh inning Bender tried to fool him. "Look at little Josh," Bender yelled. "I'm going to pitch you a curved ball over the outside corner." Devore replied, "I know it, Chief," and lined the pitch for double which drove in the game winning run. "When he made that crack," Devore said, "I guessed he was trying to cross me by telling me the truth. Before he spoke I wasn't sure which corner he was going to put it over, but he tipped me."¹⁹

The biggest stories, however, came from Mathewson. First, "Big Six" admitted that he had received information from an American League player on the strong and weak points of the Philadelphia batters.²⁰ Then he confessed using football tactics in the fifth inning by grabbing first baseman Fred Merkle and hurling him at Eddie Collins who was sliding toward first. "That football shove was a brand new play to me in baseball," Matty grinned, "invented on the spur of the second, but it worked."²¹ Most important, he claimed that the Athletics were stealing Meyers' signs

in the early innings, and that as a result McGraw ordered Meyers to change his signals. Meyers concurred, but said that he, not Matty, had discovered the trickery. In his post-game interview, Meyers asserted that he told McGraw: "They're getting our signs from someplace. That coach on third base, Harry Davis, is calling our pitches. Then I told Matty, 'pitch whatever you want to pitch. I'll catch you without signals.'" The Giant backstop added sadly: "But that guy Davis still knew something. I never did find out how he did it."²²

During his post-game interview, McGraw expressed cautious optimism. "We've got a lot of confidence," he growled. "I put Matty in for I knew we could win the first game. Now we'll give them Marquard on Monday, and if we win that game I'll make a little bet we'll win the Series. But it's a little early to crow, so don't ask me to say any more."²³

In the Philadelphia clubhouse, the defeated players were encouraged by the fact that even though their performance was sub-standard they almost won, and Manager Mack was positively cheerful. "A splendid game," he chirped in his high-pitched voice. "A battle of pitchers. The Giants deserve credit for their fine play, but when we get them in Philadelphia on Monday we may teach them something about the national game. Matty and Bender never pitched better ball in their lives. My boys played fine ball. Mathewson has no terrors for us like he had in 1905. The lucky breaks of the game were against us today, but wait until next week. The Giants cannot get them all. McGraw has a fine ball club and so do we. If we had not, we would not be playing for a world championship for the second time in two years."²⁴

Reporters shared Mack's optimism. Marquard had a reputation for not pitching as well in foreign parks and, as one writer noted, when Rube "is not up to his game he gets about the most sincere hammerings of any twirler in captivity."²⁵ Moreover, as E. A. Batchelor observed, the heart of the Giants' batting order "looked like minor leaguers" against Bender's offerings, and they seemed "as if they never had a license to hit good pitching."²⁶ Echoing this view was veteran Detroit hurler George Mullin, who dismissed the Giants as being "about as sad a looking lot at the plate as I ever saw in the major leagues."²⁷

Before leaving for Philadelphia, McGraw and his team were feted at an "admiration convention" sponsored by fans at the New York Theatre. McGraw was presented with a gold watch and diamond studded watch fob, while each player was given a silver trophy, eleven inches high, representing a baseball set upon crossed bats on an ornamental base."²⁸

On the train to Philadelphia, Josh Devore was introduced to Ty Cobb, who was covering the Series as an analyst. Devore sat next to the Detroit batting legend and talked about hitting during the entire trip. Getting off the train, Devore confided in Mathewson the substance of their conversation. "Gee," the naive Devore gushed, "that fellow Cobb knows a lot about batting. He told me some things about the American League pitchers just now, and he didn't know he was doing it. I never let on. But I just hope that fellow Plank works today, if they think I am weak against left-handers. Say, Matty, I could write a book about that guy and his 'grooves' now,

after buzzing with Cobb, and the funny thing is that he didn't know he was telling me."²⁹

Because there was no Sunday ball permitted in Philadelphia, the second game was played on Monday before a sellout crowd of 26,286 in the stadium and scores of others, who paid \$2.50 to \$4 to sit on the roof of houses facing Shibe Park or \$20-\$40 to rent a room inside the upper story of these homes.³⁰ Before the game began, a seed of controversy was sown by Mathewson who charged that the Athletics had watered down approximately twenty feet along the basepaths to minimize the Giants' speed.³¹ Nothing came of the allegation because the Gothamites could muster only five hits off the southpaw Plank, who "mowed down Giants as a skilled bowler knocks over tenpins" in gaining a 3-1 victory.³²

Devore, who had been so eager to face Plank, was utterly helpless at the plate.

The Sporting News



Giant coach Wilbert Robertson, Manager John McGraw, and ace righthander Christy Mathewson.

"It is pitiful to see a grown man," wrote a reporter about Devore, "in full possession of the sight of both his eyes and the free use of his arms, go to bat four times and make four parades back to the bench after fanning out, mostly on good called strikes. He got one rather good foul that went almost to the grandstand. But, unlike the English game of cricket, baseball is sadly lacking in reward for hitting a ball the wrong way. Giving the boy credit, though, he got back to the friendly ministering of the water bucket and the sheltering shade of the bench about as fast as anybody who ever appeared at Shibe Park."³³ In the dugout, Devore finally realized what had happened and said sheepishly to Mathewson, "I guess Cobb and Plank are pretty thick and Ty was giving me a bad steer."³⁴

The offensive star was Baker, who broke up a 1-1 tie in the sixth by hitting a ball one, strike one pitch over the right field wall. Marquard, ignoring the advice of both Mathewson and McGraw on how to pitch to Baker, "chose," wrote E. A. Batchelor, "the shortest possible cut to suicide in handling Baker a ball directly in the groove and right about the height of the initial A that decorates his manly chest. American League curvers who know Frank well realize that such a pitch invariably comes back faster than it goes up to the plate, and the unfortunate who delivers it says a hasty prayer and ducks his head. It wasn't necessary for Rube to duck, however. Some fans who had paid two dollars for the priceless privilege of clinging to the drainpipe of a house opposite the right-field wall did the ducking for the New York pitcher. Baker's expression as he made his gleeful way around the basepaths was a blend of Caesar thrice refusing the crown and Ty Cobb refusing to accept another automobile because he can't afford to hire more than seven or eight garages."³⁵

McGraw was blind with rage, screaming at Marquard as he came off the field: "What the hell kind of pitch was that?" Before Marquard could reply, McGraw silenced him with the curt remark that "a good pitcher isn't supposed to give up a home run in such a situation."³⁶

In his post-game meeting with reporters, the "Little Napoleon" was more reserved. "It was a trying test for Marquard, with such a big crowd to deal with, and under the circumstances he should not be censured. He pitched a good game, and it was just a case of misfortune that Baker should have hammered out that four-bagger just at the right moment. I'll admit that Plank pitched better ball than I expected, but he can't do it every day. We're going to win the Series, and I don't think the Athletics will beat us again."³⁷

Mathewson, who had been paid \$500 to comment on the Series through ghost-writer John Wheeler, was less gracious, blaming Marquard for not paying attention to his warning not to give Baker fastballs, but to feed him low curves on the outside corner. "Baker's homer was due to Marquard's carelessness," Matty continued. "Manager McGraw went all over the Athletics' hitters in the pre-game clubhouse talk yesterday and paid particular attention to Baker. Marquard was told just how to pitch to him. I don't think for a minute that Marquard intended to lay the ball over the plate for him, but he did it and this cost the Giants the game."³⁸

Marquard, in his ghost-written column, began by stating manfully: "I will bear

the blame, for the fault was mine. Meyers called for a curve, but I could not see it. So I threw a high fast ball.”³⁹ In less noble terms, Rube then proceeded to say that his teammates did not play well because of overconfidence, the sun was always in his eyes on the mound, and that Eddie Collins, who had doubled, tipped the catcher’s sign to Baker.⁴⁰

In the Athletic clubhouse, Mack was elated. “If we had known that Marquard was so nervous before the game,” he stated, “we probably would have slaughtered his pitching in the first inning. We didn’t realize it, however, until he had begun to settle down. I think if Marquard had taken the Big Chief’s signs he would have done better. You know Baker could always kill a straight fast ball much more easily than a curve, and when Marquard served him up just what he wanted — why, there was nothing to it. He couldn’t help hitting it a mile.”⁴¹

Game three in the Polo Grounds was one of the most exciting tussles in World Series history. Under dull and drab threatening skies, Mathewson entered the top of the ninth inning nursing a 1-0 lead over Jack Coombs. With one out, Matty got two straight low curves over the plate on Baker, who swung futilely at the first one and took the second for a called strike. Mathewson thought the next pitch was good, but it was ruled outside. Not wanting to go deeper into the hole, Matty, who later said his arm had felt like “lead hanging at my side,” tried to fool Baker with a fastball over the plate, but the result was a towering drive into the right-field seats tying the score and giving rise to one of baseball’s most famous nicknames — “Home Run” Baker.⁴²

As was their habit, Athletic players celebrated by tossing their bats in the air in front of the dugout. Jack Barry, jumping up to throw a bat, cracked his head on the concrete ceiling of the dugout and was stunned so badly he saw “little black flecks floating before him,” but he insisted on staying in the game for the bottom of the ninth.⁴³ The superstitious A’s also had with them for a second season their hunchback batboy Louis VanZeldt, and, because ball players regarded a hunchback as the best of luck, batters rubbed the boy’s back before leaving the bench.⁴⁴ The A’s were so attached to the lad that they voted him a half-share of the World Series money in 1910 and 1911.⁴⁵

In the tenth, Snodgrass led off with a walk and was sacrificed to second. Athletic catcher Jack Lapp was so concerned that the fleet Giant would steal third that he momentarily lost his concentration and allowed Coombs’s pitch to elude him and roll about three feet away. Snodgrass hesitated for a moment and raced for third. Baker had the runner by fifteen feet and was blocking the bag, so Snodgrass intentionally slid in with spikes high trying to force Baker, who had a reputation for being wary of incoming runners, to move. Holding his ground, Baker for the second time in the Series had his pants shredded by Snodgrass’s spikes. Snodgrass was jeered by New York fans as he headed back to the bench after committing what the *Baseball Digest* denounced as “the worst and most deliberate case of spiking ever seen on the ball field.”⁴⁶

In the eleventh, Mathewson was victimized by errors by third baseman Charles “Buck” Herzog, his third of the contest, and shortstop Art Fletcher, which resulted

in two unearned runs. The Giants rallied in the bottom of the inning, but fell short. Symbolically, the final out came when Lapp nailed his fifth allegedly fleet-footed Giant attempting to steal, and the A's left the field with a 3-2 triumph over their old nemesis.

In his newspaper column, Marquard, through his ghost-writer Frank Menke, could not resist getting revenge for Matty's rebuke the previous day. "Will the great Mathewson tell us exactly what pitch he made to Baker?" Rube asked. "I seem to remember that he was present at the same clubhouse meeting at which Mr. McGraw discussed Baker's weakness. Could it be that Matty, too, let go a careless pitch when it meant the ball game for our side. Or maybe Home Run Baker just doesn't have any weakness?"⁴⁷

Mathewson, who was furious at this comment and was cool toward his fellow pitcher for more than a year, minimized the role his pitch played in the Giant defeat. He blamed Snodgrass for failing to get a quick jump on the passed ball, his teammates for over-swinging in an effort to hit extra-base blows, poor fielding, bad calls by umpires, slow base running by Chief Meyers, and "Lady Fortune" deserting the team. As for his work, Mathewson said simply: "I had to pitch my head off all the way, only to lose."⁴⁸

When the Giants got to Philadelphia, the crowd at the train station jeered Snodgrass and someone yelled that Baker should wear a suit of armor. The Giant outfielder stopped and started to reply, but Josh Devore pulled him away.⁴⁹ McGraw brusquely told reporters: "Tomorrow is another day. Just because we lost today is no reason why we should be considered dead. Hock your clothes and bet the proceeds on the Giants to win. I'd like to see you prosper."⁵⁰

Rain began to fall in Philadelphia the night before the scheduled fourth game and ended, as one writer observed, "only thirty-six days behind the world record established by the great wetness of Admiral Noah's time." The monsoon-like conditions not only precluded playing at "Shibe Pond" for six days, but also created a problem for sportswriters needing copy for their columns. T. H. Murnane bemoaned in *The Sporting News*, "the newspaper boys fell back upon the unpleasant incidents of fault-finding among players, alleged rowdiness, and other matters which might not have attained such prominence had the actual playing of the games been there to write about."⁵¹ Bored players eagerly fed writers stories of quarrels and grievances among themselves thereby, as Murnane stated, "violating the principle that should be first among fellow players — speak good of one another or not at all."⁵²

Several accounts were printed regarding Snodgrass' slide into Baker. Correspondents for the *Detroit Free Press* and *The Sporting News* referred to the Giant outfielder as a "butcher" whose style of play "went all right for a while in the coliseum at Rome but has been out of date for eighteen hundred years."⁵³ *The Sporting News* concluded: "If ball players want to keep the game clean and hold the respect of the public, they must get together and demand the elimination of men of the Snodgrass type from carrying the game. This man may have been carrying out orders. If so, he was making a cold-blooded attempt, which is all the more to his shame. It

is now up to the men who control baseball to make an example of the next man, who is savage enough to try to drive his sharpened spikes in the hide of a fellow player."⁵⁴ Shortstop Jack Barry of the A's told a writer that Snodgrass had warned Baker: "John T. Brush bought all of us new shoes and spikes, and the next time I slide into you I'm going to get you."⁵⁵ Ironically the two men with the most at stake in the incident for Philadelphia, Mack and Baker, were not angry. Mack dismissed the spiking as one of the "fortunes of war," and Baker, cut and badly bruised, but not suffering from blood poisoning as a Philadelphia newspaper alleged, refused comment.⁵⁶

New York players responded to charges of "dirty play" with a spirited defense of Snodgrass, with Mathewson asserting that "the Giants in a body stand by Snodgrass and say he was within his rights when he slid into Baker."⁵⁷ Charlie Dooan, hard-nosed Philadelphia Phillie infielder, chimed in not only with a defense of Snodgrass, but also a thinly veiled attack on the lack of toughness on the part of his city's American League team: "All this mollycoddle talk about Snodgrass trying to get Baker seems awfully cheap to me. Baker spiked himself. He caught the ball and dove into the New York man's spikes and couldn't help being cut. So let's forget it. In baseball you must take your medicine and be game."⁵⁸ Snodgrass himself, who had to endure a rumor that he had suffered a critical gunshot wound administered by a fanatic A's fan, seemed unfazed by the commotion. "They are building this up until Baker's bone showed from the knee to the hip," he stated. "I have a clear conscience. I won't be worried by a few jeers and catcalls. There is no danger of me going up in the air."⁵⁹

Other accounts related how McGraw had been censured and threatened with being barred from the Series if he continued to protest umpires' decisions using language which the National Commission thought could "influence a crowd to abuse an arbiter," and how first-baseman Fred Merkle had been fined \$100 for arguing with Umpire Tom Connolly over being called out on an attempted steal.⁶⁰

Another story recounted how Athletic Captain Harry Davis accused Detroit Manager Hugh Jennings of being bitter over losing the pennant and telling McGraw weaknesses of the Philadelphia team. Davis even blamed Jennings for the second spiking of Baker, saying the Tiger pilot had told McGraw that if his players jumped at Baker he would try to avoid them. After the first spiking incident, Davis claimed he heard McGraw yell at the Athletic third-sacker: "You're a quitter. Jennings and the whole Detroit team told us so."⁶¹ Jennings' response was a terse: "I have nothing to say. It's too cheap to be worthy of a denial."⁶²

Tossed in for good measure were the usual charges of ticket scandals, attacks on the National Commission for giving in to National League demands for a late start for the Series, and threats by players of a strike if they were not granted a share of the profits from motion pictures of the Series. As E. A. Batchelor noted: "Every hour has brought some fresh contribution to the campaign of vituperation until, if one believes all he reads in the papers, he must form the conclusion that the electric chair would be too mild a punishment for the various and sundry athletes. Liars, cheats, thieves, assassins, and second-story workers are a few of the milder things

these sportsmen have been calling each other in print, until most of the sane fans have become disgusted to the point of losing all interest in the Series having heard enough rot to last them a lifetime. This World Series will go down in history not as a baseball combat, but as a mudslinging carnival of unprecedented magnitude."⁶³

Heightening the frustration of the writers was having to stay in Philadelphia,

Philadelphia Daily Bulletin



The Athletics' new home, Shibe Park, which opened in 1909.

especially when McGraw permitted his players to return to New York on a Sunday. A Detroit writer complained that since bars were closed on the Sabbath, Sunday was a terrible day because "Philadelphia seen through an alcoholic haze is bad, but viewed with the clear judicial eye of sobriety, it is positively awful."⁶⁴ J. G. Taylor Spink agreed, and added: "Philadelphia is a big town, but it is no joy dream to have to spend a week in it. New York is at least used to entertaining strangers. Philadelphia looks at strange faces in a suspicious sort of way as if it wasn't used to them."⁶⁵

Hugh Fullerton and Bill Phelon were not nearly as bored as their fellow reporters. They put an ad in a local newspaper for models, and, in the words of veteran baseball writer Fred Lieb, "amused themselves on the wet afternoons by measuring dainty ankles and sylphlike hips."⁶⁶

On Tuesday, October 24, game four got under way, with Mathewson facing Bender, who had been told astutely by Mack as he went to the mound: "I think you're going to win this one, Albert. I don't think we'll find Matty as effective as in the first game. He's very tired."⁶⁷ One hour and forty-five minutes later, Mack's prophesy had

become truth with a come-from-behind 4-2 victory.

For three innings, "Big Six" shut out the A's and held a 2-0 lead, but in the fourth Philadelphia used successive doubles by Baker, Murphy, and Davis, a grounder, and a sacrifice by Thomas to take the lead. In the fifth, Collins scored when Baker laced his second two-bagger which "would have rolled until sunset on an open dry field."⁶⁸ When Baker strode to the plate in the seventh, with a runner on third and two out, E. A. Batchelor wrote: "The pitcher's guardian angel said that either he would walk J. Franklin or get a new guardian angel. Thereupon Matty purposely threw as wide as he could without hitting the grandstand."⁶⁹

After the game staid Philadelphians, both men and women, "screeched until they were hoarse, jumped up and down in the stands like cannibals in a barbaric frolic over a newly discovered victim, and snake danced across the field singing: 'What's the matter with Baker? He's all right. What's the matter with Baker? He's out of sight. He's the boy with the old home runs. He's landed two, and there's more to come. What's the matter with Baker? He's all right.'"⁷⁰

Ty Cobb praised the A's for "smashing and slashing away at the ball with supreme confidence even when behind" and criticized the Giants for "making no extra effort to rally and going down to defeat with no resentment."⁷¹ Hugh Jennings concurred with his star, adding: "I have never seen a great pitcher hit as hard as Mathewson. The Giants, on the other hand, were practically helpless against Bender after the first inning."⁷² Mathewson, complaining that the weather was "too cold for pitching," grudgingly admitted that "Bender was good," but added sourly "not as good as he was on the first day."⁷³ A less partial observer differed, saying that "the Indian couldn't have done better work in keeping the plate inviolate had he been assisted by a regiment of soldiers stationed on a line between third and home."⁷⁴ As proof of how feeble the Giants looked, oddsmakers made the A's 10-1 favorites, and money on the Gotham team was said to be "as hard to find as the official oyster in a church supper stew."⁷⁵

To the surprise of many, the Giants rallied from a 3-0 deficit at the Polo Grounds in game five to capture a ten-inning 4-3 triumph. Trailing by two markers in the bottom of the ninth, the Giants got doubles from Fletcher, pitcher Otis Crandall, and a clutch two-out single by Devore to tie the score off Coombs, who was laboring because of a groin pull suffered in the previous frame. In the tenth, reliever Plank was greeted with a double by Doyle who went to third on a bunt single by Snodgrass, but had to remain there when Murray lofted a short fly to right. Merkle then looped a fly along the line to right. Not sure if it would be foul, Danny Murphy raced in, caught the ball, and made an off-balance throw to the plate in an effort to nip Doyle. Philadelphia catcher Jack Lapp, who had to go off the plate to catch the throw, assumed the game was over and failed to notice that Doyle's slide had missed the plate by eight inches. Amid the wild Giant victory celebration, Umpire Bill Klem stood motionless waiting for Lapp to tag Doyle or lodge a protest. When neither was done, he left the field. McGraw came up to him and said, "Did you see it, Bill?" Klem replied, "I certainly did, and I would have declared Doyle out

if the appeal had been made." Walking away, McGraw grumbled: "Well, I would have protected you."⁷⁶

Failing to capitalize on their good fortune, in the sixth game the Giants simply curled up and died, suffering the most complete and awful beating ever given to a ball club with the blue ribbon of baseball at stake.⁷⁷ With the score tied at one apiece, the Athletics scored four runs off Leon Ames, who was victimized by three throwing miscues. After adding a run in the sixth, the A's erupted for seven tallies in the next inning off "Hooks" Wiltse and Rube Marquard. For ten minutes, "there was a parade of white uniformed Athletics around the basepaths that looked like the annual review of the street cleaning department," and Chief Bender cruised to a 13-2 victory.⁷⁸

The usually restrained Harry Cross of the *New York Times* was devastating in his criticism of the Giants, saying that the seventh game "was a joke" and that the National League champions played like "bush minor league tail-enders" and a "lot of schoolboys" who "got so rattled that they jingled like a bunch of keys."⁷⁹ He was lavish, albeit sarcastic, in his praise of Bender, however, saying that the "Chief" now was "the biggest man of his tribe, and at some far off reservation, when they get the news, the aborigines will pass the news from wigwam to wigwam, and the squaws will tell the little papooses that if they grow up and be good Indians maybe they will be like the great Chief Bender and become heap fine flingers."⁸⁰

E. A. Batchelor was equally cruel. "If one can imagine such a thing," he wrote, "McGraw's men looked worse than the score shows. For the last five innings they seemed to be playing to get the game over as quickly as possible. It seemed almost beyond belief that a major league club, and a champion at that, could have so many alleged hitters who would stand stupefied at the plate while perfect strikes sailed past. Not only did the Giants fail to hit, but they failed to show anything that would warrant the belief that they knew anything about the manly art of flattening a baseball. This was a game they can't alibi. It is the conviction of almost everybody who survived the six scraps that were the same clubs to play a hundred times in a season, Mack's men would win seventy-five."⁸¹

The forlorn Giants said little. Rube Marquard admitted the Athletics "beat us in every department."⁸² Mathewson conceded that the "Athletics were the better team in the Series," but also tried to explain his team's collapse. "There was a psychological difference between the two teams," Matty said. "The Athletics had been through the fire of one World Series and knew what to expect. It was all new to the Giants, as most of them are young. The importance of the Series and the amount of money at stake was in their minds all the time. Each time that a player tried to do something he thought about what was at stake. A man would kick a ball and say to himself: 'There goes that new automobile I planned to get.'"⁸³ Clean-up hitter Red Murray, whose 0-21 at the plate contributed mightily to the Giants' horrid .175 team batting average, was defended by McGraw, who was uncharacteristically gracious in defeat, saying: "The Athletics must be a great team. We have a great team and they beat us."⁸⁴

Although the 1911 World Series has been remembered primarily for the rain delay and Baker's hitting, it was notable for other reasons. It was the first World Series to be played on both home fields in new steel and concrete stadiums; it was the first World Series to be covered in a modern publicity fashion, with as many as fifty telegraphers wiring game play-by-play to as diverse points as Tokyo, Japan by trans-Pacific cable and Havana, Cuba; it was the first World Series to which newspapers in the Far West and South sent reporters for game coverage; it was the first World Series publishing ghost-written articles by numerous competing star athletes; and it was the first "big money" World Series, with each of the victorious Athletics pocketing \$3,654, the losing Giant players \$2,400, and club presidents John Brush and Ben Shibe each receiving \$90,118. It was truly the World Series which made the fall interleague contest a national and international spectacle. J. G. Taylor Spink of *The Sporting News* summarized it best in his usual terse fashion: "The World Series of 1911 has been fought and become part of the more or less glorious history of the national game. It was, as Ban Johnson would say 'an artistic success.' Whatever may have been the unpleasant natures attaching to side issues, the games played, barring the collapse of the New York Giants in the final, were splendid exhibitions."⁸⁵

Notes

1. Anthony J. Connor, *Voices From Cooperstown*, (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1982), p. 173.
2. *Detroit Free Press*, October 16, 1911.
3. *Detroit Free Press*, October 6, 1911.
4. Connor, *Voices From Cooperstown*, pp. 173-174.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 174.
6. *Detroit Free Press*, October 6, 1911.
7. Charles C. Alexander, *John McGraw* (New York: Viking, 1988), p. 153.
8. Henry Frommer, *Baseball's Greatest Managers* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1985), pp. 187-188.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 187; *Detroit Free Press*, October 15, 1911.
10. Frommer, *Baseball's Greatest Managers*, p. 187.
11. Connor, *Voices From Cooperstown*, pp. 174-175.
12. *The Sporting News*, October 5, 1911.
13. Fred Lieb, *The Baseball Story* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1950), p. 190.
14. Joseph Durso, *Baseball and the American Dream* (St. Louis: The Sporting News, 1986), p. 105.
15. Lawrence Ritter (ed.), *The Glory of Their Times* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), p. 111.
16. *Detroit Free Press*, October 15, 1911.
17. Ritter, *The Glory of Their Times*, p. 114.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Christy Mathewson, *Pitching in a Pinch* (New York: Stein and Day, 1977), pp. 70-71 (Reprint of 1912 edition).
20. *Detroit Free Press*, October 15, 1911.
21. Mathewson, *Pitching in a Pinch*, pp. 71-72.
22. *Detroit Free Press*, October 15, 1911; Ritter, ed., *The Glory of Their Times*, p. 181.
23. *Detroit Free Press*, October 15, 1911.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Detroit Free Press*, October 16, 1911.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.*
28. *New York Times*, October 16, 1911.
29. Mathewson, *Pitching in a Pinch*, p. 45.
30. *New York Times*, October 17, 1911.
31. Mathewson, *Pitching in a Pinch*, p. 289; *New York Times*, October 17, 1911.
32. *Detroit Free Press*, October 17, 1911. Shibe Park groundskeeper Joe Schroeder angrily replied to the charges of tampering: "Mathewson is saying what is not true, and he is doing it to find some excuse for the Giants losing the game. If we had attempted to wet the base lines any more than the rain did they would have been plain mud. The truth of the matter is that the Giants think Snodgrass is a faster man than Eddie Collins, and they don't like to see their favorite have to take a back seat. When Collins got a hit like Snodgrass he had no trouble stretching it into a double." (*New York Times*, October 18, 1911).
33. *Detroit Free Press*, October 17, 1911.
34. Mathewson, *Pitching in a Pinch*, p. 45.
35. *Detroit Free Press*, October 17, 1911.
36. *This Great Game* (New York: Rutledge Books, 1971), p. 126.
37. *Detroit Free Press*, October 17, 1911.
38. *New York Times*, October 17, 1911; Joseph L. Reichler (ed.) *The World Series* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), p. 52; Peter Williams (ed.), *The Joe Williams Baseball Reader* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1989), p. 11.
39. *New York Times*, October 17, 1911.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Detroit Free Press*, October 17, 1911.
42. Mathewson, *Pitching in a Pinch*, p. 282.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 244.
44. *Ibid.* The equally superstitious McGraw had a team mascot for good luck also in Charles "Victory" Faust, an erstwhile pitcher who worked two innings and had an earned run average of 4.50 in 1911, his only year in the major leagues.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 245.
46. Paul Adomites, *October's Game* (Alexandria: Redefinition, 1990), pp. 169-170.
47. *This Great Game*, p. 127; *New York Times*, October 18, 1911.
48. *Detroit Free Press*, October 18, 1911; *Detroit Free Press*, October 19, 1911.
49. *New York Times*, October 18, 1911.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *The Sporting News*, October 26, 1911.
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Detroit Free Press*, October 18, 1911; *The Sporting News*, October 26, 1911.
54. *The Sporting News*, October 26, 1911.
55. *Detroit Free Press*, October 20, 1911.
56. *New York Times*, October 19, 1911; *New*

York Times, October 20, 1911.

57. *Detroit Free Press*, October 20, 1911; Mathewson, *Pitching in a Pinch*, p. 263.

58. *The Sporting News*, October 26, 1911.

59. *Ibid.*; Ritter, *The Glory of Their Times*, p. 114; *New York Times*, October 20, 1911.

60. *New York Times*, October 20, 1911; *Detroit Free Press*, October 20, 1911.

61. *The Sporting News*, October 26, 1911; *Detroit Free Press*, October 20, 1911; *Detroit Free Press*, October 21, 1911.

62. *Detroit Free Press*, October 20, 1911.

63. *New York Times*, October 21, 1911; *Detroit Free Press*, October 21, 1911; Donald Voight, *American Baseball*, vol. II (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983), p. 87.

64. *Detroit Free Press*, October 22, 1911.

65. *The Sporting News*, October 26, 1911.

66. Lieb, *The Baseball Story*, p. 190.

67. Gene Schoor, *The History of The World Series* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1990), p. 42.

68. *Detroit Free Press*, October 25, 1911.

69. *Ibid.*

70. *New York Times*, October 25, 1911.

71. *Detroit Free Press*, October 25, 1911.

72. *Ibid.*

73. *Ibid.*

74. *Ibid.*

75. *Ibid.*

76. *New York Times*, October 26, 1911.

77. *Detroit Free Press*, October 27, 1911.

78. *Ibid.*

79. *New York Times*, October 27, 1911.

80. *Ibid.*

81. *Detroit Free Press*, October 27, 1911.

82. *Ibid.*

83. *Ibid.*

84. Frank Graham, *McGraw of The Giants* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1944), p. 61.

85. *The Sporting News*, November 2, 1911.