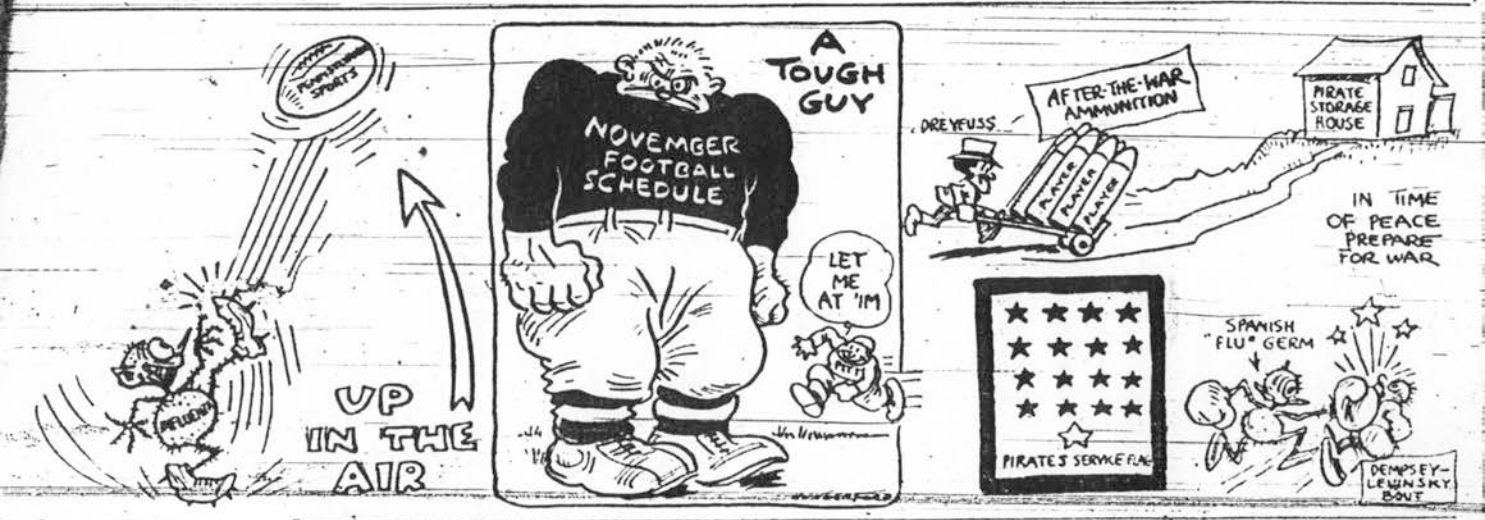
PITTSBURGH, FOR FIRST TIME, SEES ALL SPORTS SUSPENDED

Sporting Review of the Week



By JAMES J. LONG,
Sporting Editor of The Sun.

SPANISH influenza has helped up to complete the job it was started by the war in bringing sports to a standstill. What little was left of sport activity in this section after war conditions and rulings had wrought havoc in the ranks of the game has now been punished by the single blow by the Health authorities to prevent the spread of the malady which has been raging in the eastern part of Pennsylvania and elsewhere in the country, and for the first time in the memory of the well-known oldest inhabitant there is a complete shutdown in athletic pastimes in Pittsburgh.

Nothing has escaped the sweeping order of the state and local health officials, which closed all places of indoor amusement and also prohibits all outdoor attractions that would be likely to attract crowds.

Football, bowling, skating, billiards, bowling and other contests at which fans might congregate in numbers are gone under the ban, and there will be nothing stirring in any of these departments for an indefinite period or until all danger is considered past and the order is lifted.

It leaves local sportdom in the worst plight of its career. There wasn't much life left in it after the war had dealt its blows, but now it's a total case of suspended.

The loss of football is the hardest blow, as after the premature closing of the baseball season the enthusiasts had been looking forward more eagerly than usual to the gridiron pastime.

Even when the state ban on public amusements was announced it was generally believed that football would not be interfered with, inasmuch as the authorities counseled the people to spend as much time as possible in the open air, but the city health department interpreted the ruling to apply to any attraction that would draw a crowd, so the gridiron sport had to go the way of the rest.

The result is that the opening of the intercollegiate season here is postponed indefinitely, and the most popular inaugural in years goes by the board in the cancellation of the contest scheduled for this afternoon between the University of Pittsburgh team and the soldier aggregation representing the Great Lakes naval training station. The jackies looked strong enough on paper to threaten a break in Pitt's sensational run of 26 straight victories—the Panthers have not lost a game since W. & J. downed them November 7, 1914, and the calling-off of the game was a keen disappointment in the gridiron enthusiasts.

Other cancellations later may be necessary. The duration of the ban will depend on conditions, and until it is lifted all college, school and independent teams here will have to remain idle and similar orders against the gridiron contests probably will be issued by other parts of the state, keeping football, as well as boxing and other sports throughout Pennsylvania, in an inanimate state. Nothing that might draw a crowd will be permitted.

Meanwhile the lot of the sport fan will be a sorry one. About the only thing open to him is solitaire.

PANTHERS' HARD PROGRAM.

NOTHING was further from the thoughts of Colonel Rees than the interests of Pittsburgh football fans when he put the official ban of the war department on over-night trips by college teams.

A harder program than that to be handled during November could hardly be put together. Within a period of 25 days the Blue and Gold must play hard games with such opponents as Lehigh, Penn exercise, W. & J. and Penn State, and incidentally must make long trips to South Bethlehem and Syracuse for two of the contests.

In addition, whereas the Saturday before Thanksgiving has always been left open to give the Washington a rest for the Turkey day clash with Penn State, the Locals must this year play their tough game with W. & J. on that date.

Meeting W. & J. and Penn State within the brief span of six days is a huge contract in itself, and with two long trips and games with Lehigh, Penn and Syracuse preceding these engagements it is no exaggeration to say that the Panthers will be confronted by the hardest job ever tackled by them or any other team.

Coach Warner's skill and the endurance of the players will be tested as never before to get through that hard stretch without disaster.

PIRATE CHIEFS LOOK AHEAD.

THE old saw "In time of peace prepare for war," has been reviewed by President Barney Dreyfuss and Manager Hugo Bezdek of the Pittsburgh club to fit the present situation in the baseball world. "In time of war prepare for peace" is the new slogan of the Pirate officials, and they are adhering closely to that policy by taking advantage of every opportunity to strengthen the local team for the dismood revival that is to follow the smashing of the Huns.

While eager to do, in every way possible, their respective bits toward the winning of the war, both Bluecaneer owners are at the same time keeping their eyes on Pittsburgh's baseball interests for the future, and it will not be due to any sleeping on the part of the Corsairs are not found well prepared for a pennant scrap when the National frolic is resumed.

The standpatter in baseball generally lands among the trailers. The successful one usually is the man who looks ahead, who gives some of his attention to the future as well as to the present and who is constantly building up for tomorrow.

Even a strong club would slip into the rut in a short time under the wear and tear of pennant battling if not kept in a state of repair by an ever-working process of renewal and replenishment, and the team chief who is not prepared to stick in new players where breaks occur is bound eventually to be left in the lurch and outdistanced by his rivals.

During the present baseball shutdown it is even more imperative than usual that club heads keep an eye peeled to the future.

The reason for this is that no magnate or manager can tell at this early date just how much or what quality of material he will have to start out with again when the game is resumed.

Ordinarily it is only a short wait from the ending of one season to the beginning of another, and every pilot knows just what he will have and what he will need. But the big leagues are now facing a situation different from any other in all their history. The length of the shutdown will depend on the length of the war, and even when the pastime does start up again it is a question how much of its old material any club will find fit for service.

The future of many a player active during the past season is in doubt. The club holds title, in addition to Manager Bezdek, this number including the four men recently drafted—Terry, Barbare, Lee and Ryan.

There isn't one department in which the Pirates are not well supplied with material. They have four catchers, without counting Lee, the new man, who is said to be a capable receiver, as well as a clever outfielder. 15 pitchers, 11 infielders and nine outfielders.

In peace years each club in the majors has been limited to 25 players for winter training, but on account of war conditions all restrictions were removed for the present off-season, and each team may carry as many men as it desires. No club has taken advantage of this to a greater extent than Pittsburgh in guarding against future emergencies, and it is doubtful if any other team in the big show has so many athletes at its command.

Following is the complete list of players that Manager Bezdek will have to select his team from when the game starts up again:

Catchers—Schmidt, Smith, Shaw and Blackwell. Total 4.

Pitchers—Cooper, Hamilton, Mayer, Frank Miller, Carlson, Adams, Evans, Hill, Comstock, Harbison, Ponder, Sanders, Napoleon, Mails and Winn. Total 15.

Infielders—Melwitz, Gibbons, McKechnie, Caton, Saier, Boeckel, Terry, Barbare, Ray Miller, Warner, Webb, Pitler, Eisam and Geis. Total, 14.

Outfielders—Carey, Southworth, Roberts, Stengel, King, Leach, Hinchman, Lee and Lohr. Total, 9. Grand total, 42.

GAVE 17 TO SERVICE.

MANY local fans, no doubt, have been under the impression that several of the men named in the above list were no longer on the Pirate roster, as it was understood they had been released some time ago, but these players reverted to the Pittsburgh club through the operation of baseball law.

Pitcher Walter Mills, for instance, again became Bluecaneer property when he left the Portland club; so did Jake Pitler when he declined to play with Newark and Gus Geis when he refused to join the Indianapolis team. Outfielder Lohr belongs to the local club, though he never reported when title to his services passed from Cleveland to Pittsburgh. First Baseman Vic Saier did not change his status when he announced his retirement and remained out of the game last season.

The absence of Lute Boone's name from the roll is explained by the fact that he was engaged merely to help out the team temporarily and was let go when the season ended. Toledo now claims his services.

Of course there are a number of players on the list who cannot be rated good enough for big league jobs. One of these is Shortstop Roy Eisam, who finished the season here. It will not be surprising if Eisam is released in the near future, and several others who clearly will be of little or no use to the Bucs also will be disposed of before another pennant fight gets under way.

But even with these "duds" dropped, Bezdek will still have more timber than the average manager with which to build his team.

Walter Schmidt last season proved himself capable of catching practically every day. One year—the shut-down is not likely to be for a longer period—should not make much difference in his form, and with Smith, Shaw and Blackwell as second-string workers, an acceptable catching staff is assured.

The death of Marcus Milligan, the only active ball player yet killed in service, deprived the Pirates of one of the most promising young pitchers in the country, but from the 41 men remaining on the list it will be easy for Bezdek to select a twirling corps as strong as any in the majors. In Cooper and Hamilton he has two of baseball's best left-handers, without reckoning the possibilities of Mails and Winn, the other southpaws on the list, and there is a most promising batch of right-handers even if some of the older members of the staff should slip during the off-spell.

The addition of Terry and Barbare, and the probability that Saier will want to play again, gives the Pirate skipper extra material for all hard positions, and without [illegible] to look a great outfield from Carey, Southworth, Roberts, Stengel and King.

Pittsburgh fans therefore may confidently look forward to having a satisfactory team when the war is over, as with that big bunch of talent the management will be prepared to patch up a break anywhere in the lineup.

At that the Pirates have made a great showing in the war, [illegible] other club in the majors. Word comes that Steven Biggers is to enlist at Camp Lewis, American Lake, Wash., next month, and when he is enrolled the Pittsburgh club will have given no fewer than 17 players to the service. Mil can already has given his life, and other Pirates in the army or navy are Hamilton, Carlson, Evans, Ponder, Mails, Stengel, King, Ray Miller, Warner, Webb, Caton, Blackwell, Winn and Lee, with Mayer at work in another branch of the service.

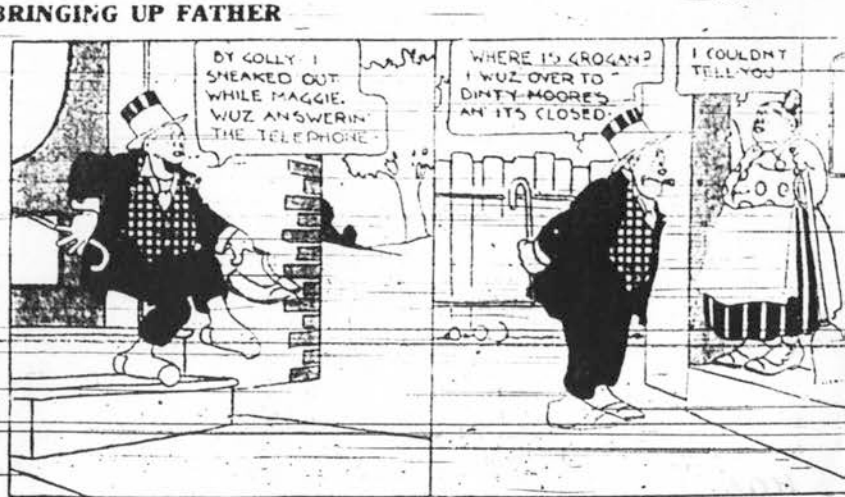
The great outlook for the Buccaneers when hostilities cease therefore cannot be charged to any failure on their part to do their full share in the war.

MAY STOP LEVINSKY.

THOUGH the sport shutdown in Pennsylvania resulting from the closing orders of the health authorities will kill a number of ordinary boxing shows throughout the state, particularly in Philadelphia, only one big bout of more than average importance is affected, that being the 20-round match between Jack Dempsey and Battling Levinsky, originally slated for next Wednesday night in the Quaker City.

Dempsey's followers are hopeful that arrangements can be made so that the show will be merely postponed instead of being called off altogether, and that the men will be brought together on a later date, as they are the match's attraction, for fans to have lost it wasn't lack of class that caused it.

BRINGING UP FATHER



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