

## Radio Pioneer Graham McNamee Critiqued (1927)

SOURCE: *New York Sun*, October 5, 1927

*In the midst of its comprehensive coverage of the performance of the Yankees in the 1927 World Series, the New York Sun complained about the performance of Graham McNamee, the first man to announce a baseball game (and other sporting events) on the radio. Later in the Series the Sun published another article stating that McNamee had improved considerably. McNamee added his own perspective on announcing the 1927 Series in "My Adventures in Broadcasting Sporting Events," American Magazine 106 (July 1928).*

### M'NAMEE'S EYE NOT ON THE BALL

#### Radio Announcer Mixes Up World Series Fans

Graham McNamee, announcing the world series game between the Yankees and the Pirates this afternoon to radio listeners from New York to California, struggled unhappily through base hits and double plays and interrupted himself to demand, in the end a little plaintively: "You know what I mean?" And from most of those tuned in there went up a despairing negative, which he happily could not hear.

He mixed players and innings and teams in his often interrupted story. He told of the spectacle about him while players hit safely or retired to dugouts. He made right handed batters left handed and announced triumphantly on occasion that the Giants were leading—which must have been rather a surprise to McGraw. He put players on bases where they weren't and left them off of bases where they were. The radio audience, most certainly, didn't know what he meant.

#### OFTENER WRONG THAN RIGHT

Firmly, early in the game, he announced that Dugan and Traynor were left handed, which neither is. He interrupted his ball by ball account of Waite Hoyt's trip to the plate in an early inning to announce that One Eyed Connolly had at last appeared. At the moment Hoyt had two strikes and three balls—when the thrill of Connolly's arrival had passed the Yankee pitcher had gone out on an infield play.

Harris of the Pirates hit into a double play in the last half of the second and McNamee hit into a blind alley. He announced both men safe, he grew excited, he discovered that everything was confused. He divigated for several minutes, while everybody hung breathless. Suddenly, apologetically, he discovered that there had been a double play. He was still almost too apologetic for coherence a moment later when Smith grounded to Gehrig. . . .

The first half of the third went along easily enough until there was a man on second and another on first. The announcer explained that this was the world series being broadcast by the National Broadcasting Company. Suddenly he interrupted himself to exclaim, excitedly: "They missed it!" Some time later it devel-

oped that Smith had let a throw from Traynor by and Lazzeri had advanced a base. Mr. McNamee then announced the score as 4 to 1 in favor of Pittsburgh. The Yanks were leading at the time. . . .

He got a number of telegrams at the start of the seventh inning and began to read them. He read a letter and interrupted himself to announce that Combs had struck out. He explained that his watch was not in the pocket he thought but in another pocket, forgetting altogether the position of the diamond. But he improved as he went on, interrupting himself now and then to demand whether "that was plain enough." Finally it was.

"You know what I mean?"