

The Exclusion of African Americans from the NABBP (1867)

Source: *Ball Players' Chronicle*, December 19, 1867

It is presumed that whites and blacks sometimes played against and with one another during the 1860s. Yet when the Pythians of Philadelphia, an African American club, applied for membership in the NABBP in 1867, the nominating committee unanimously voted to bar any club "composed of one or more colored persons."

After the roll call the reading of the minutes of the last Convention came up in order; but as they included all the reports of the committees, the reading was, on motion, dispensed with. The reports of officers being next in order, the Recording Secretary reported verbally that he had attended to a voluminous correspondence on subjects appertaining to his office, and had written 379 letters in reply during the year. The subject of the order by the President changing Rule 10, last season, then came up. The President made an explanation of the case, stating that he had been convinced, by representations made to him by the chairman of the Committee on Rules, that the rule as printed was erroneous, and he had therefore ordered its correction. A long and rather personal discussion was about to ensue, when the Convention, taking the same view of it that the President did, by a majority vote, decided to close the discussion. This done with, the report of the Nominating Committee, through the acting chairman, Mr. James W. Davis, was presented, the feature of it being the recommendation to exclude colored clubs from representation in the Association, the object being to keep out of the Convention the discussion of any subject having a political bearing, as this undoubtedly had. The following is the

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

To the National Association of Base Ball Players:

The Nominating Committee beg leave respectfully to report:

First—That eight State Associations, representing 237 clubs, have applied for admission, and your committee recommend they be elected members, waiving such irregularities as are named in schedule No. 1 attached to this report.

Second—That they have elected eight clubs probationary members, according to Art. III, sec. 5 of the Constitution, and report favorably upon their election by the Convention, waiving such irregularities as are noted in schedule No. 2.

Third—That they report favorably upon the admission of twenty-eight clubs whose applications are correct as named in schedule No. 3.

Fourth—That they recommend the admission of eight clubs whose applications are more or less irregular, particulars of which can be found in schedule No. 4.

Fifth—That they find two memoranda received from the Recording Secretary (no doubt intended as applications from the Excelsior of Philadelphia and Crescent of _____), which are too informal to be noticed by your committee.

Sixth—Your committee would beg to add, that it has been quite impossible for them to ascertain the condition, character, and standing of all the clubs, in different parts of the country, as required by the Constitution, and can only assume that the applications made are based upon good faith. It is not presumed by your committee that any club who have applied are composed of persons of color, or any portion of them; and the recommendations of your committee in this report are based upon this view, and they unanimously report against the admission of any club which may be composed of one or more colored persons.

WM. H. BELL, M.D.

JAS. WHITE DAVIS.

WM. E. SINN.

Philadelphia, Dec. 11, 1867.

Source: Dean Sullivan, *Early Innings* (1995)