## **May 31, 1909**

## Three-I Overtime

In the first game of a scheduled Memorial Dav double header at Bloomington's South Side Grounds, the Decatur Commodores defeat the Bloomington Bloomers 2-1 in a game that lasts 26 innings and takes four hours and 30 minutes to play.

The contest, which is one inning shy of three complete games, remains to the longest game in professional baseball history until 1965 when the Elmira (N.Y.) Pioneers and the Springfield (Mass.) Giants of the Eastern League play a 27-inning game.

DECATUR AT BLOOMING MAY 31 (P. M. and P. M.).—Bloomington and Decatur established a new world's record for base ball, a pitcher's buttle going 26 innings. In the last session Fisher, of Decatur, was hit by a pitched ball and Purtell sorred him with a three-bagger. A protest was entered by Bloomington, on the grounds that Fisher, who screed the winning run, should have advanced on introduced the winning run, should have a run to third base. The home team, therefore, claims that Purtell's hit was only a single and that the side was out when Purtell failed to touch second, two batters having been retired previously. The nearest approach to this record by professional teams was a 25-inning scoreless game at Grand Forks, S. D., between Fargo and Grand Forks, on July 18, 1891. The Bloomington and Decatur teams started at 2 o'clock to play a double-header, and the game lasted until after 7 o'clock. The fielding was excellent, considering the length of the game and the fact that rain had put the grounds in bad shape. Burns for Decatur and Clark for Bloomington pitched the whole game. Score:

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In the top of the 26th ining, with two outs and the bases empty, the record-setting marathon is decided by two of the game's unlikeliest heroes – Decatur's 25-year-old catcher Bert Fisher and 18-year-old shortstop Mark Purtell ... hitless in his first eight at bats, Fisher is hit by an Ed Clark pitch on a 0-2 count ... one pitch later, the light-hitting Purtell follows with a line drive down the right field line scoring Fisher with the go ahead run ... Fisher finishes the season hitting .187 (14-for-75), which is 53 points higher than Purtell's anemic .135 mark (43-for-319).

Amazingly both pitchers, Bloomington's Ed Clark and Decatur's Otto Burns, go the distance ... Clark strikes out 11 and walks seven and allows only 11 hits ... in his first career start on the mound, Burns, usually the Commodores' backup second baseman, strikes out six and allows only a first inning run on 13 hits and one walk over the 26 innings.

Bloomington and Decatur are members of the Illinois-Indiana-Iowa (Three-I) League ... 1,200 fans are on hand when the game gets underway at 2:00 p.m. ... the game is interrupted for a half-hour rain delay in the fifth inning ... Bloomington right fielder James Novácek is thrown out at the plate in the bottom of the 23rd inning ... in the bottom of the 26th inning, Bloomers' manager William McNamara pinch hits for Clark in the only substitution of the game ... Decatur has bases loaded in the seventh, 13th and 17th innings, but can not score.

One week later, saddled with a 9-18 record, McNamara resigns as the Bloomers' manager ... McNamara later signs with Decatur and replaces Fisher in the Commodore lineup ... Bloomington will finish in fourth place in the Three-I League with a 71-67 record ... Decatur will end up in seventh place at 63-73.