

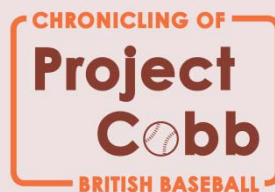
# BASEBALL Mercury.

Issue 11

<http://www.gbbsa.org.uk/mercury.html>

December 1975

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# BASEBALL

## Mercury.

No. 11. DECEMBER 1975.

### NICOLS TRIUMPH

On Sunday 21st. September at the Pim Mulier Stadium, Haarlem, Netherlands, a sell-out crowd saw the local club Haarlem Nicols defeat their arch-rivals Rotterdam Sparta in the final of the European Cup. Nicols won a thrilling contest 7 - 6, thus taking the European Cup for the third time.

Nicols got away to a fast start, in the first inning against the pitching of John van Westrenen, Jenken, Steitz, and Boudewijn Maat each got a walk, Harry van der Vaart, the game's MVP, and Robert Maat got a hit apiece. The Rotterdam coach Herkemij removed van Westrenen, and put in Fred Beckers to pitch. Beckers managed to close the inning but not until Harm Schildmeyer came through with yet another hit, and Nicols were four runs ahead.

Going into Sparta's half of the 7th inning Nicols led 7 - 2, Sparta scored three runs, to narrow the score 7 - 5. Harry van der Vaart had to face the three top Sparta hitters in the 9th inning Hamilton Richardson, Henk Daniels, and Fred Beckers. Richardson brought hope back to the Sparta fans by smashing a ball over the right-field fence to make it 7 - 6.

In addition to this great victory Nicols this year won the Netherlands Cup competition and the Netherlands League Championship. The Netherlands Cup Final win was gained over OLA-UVV on October 4th. The Netherlands Championship was achieved by beating OVVO in the play-offs.

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### MERSEYSIDE LEAGUE by Norman Wells

We on Merseyside, feel, we have had quite a successful season, with not one game having to be postponed because of the weather, this must be a record. Our season started with the England v. West Germany game at Southport. Bromsgrove did not enjoy as much baseball as the other clubs in our league. This was due to a conflict of fixtures between the Bromsgrove baseball and cricket teams, consequently the baseball team was not able to supply the correct dates for the availability of the ground until just before the start of our programme. One or two clubs on Merseyside were also reluctant to travel, this somewhat marred our season's activities.

League Winners, after a play-off game, NALGO Tigers with 26 points. Runners-up Liverpool Trojans also with 26 points. Then followed 3rd Nottingham Lions 18 points, 4th Burtonwood Yanks 10 points, 5th Birkdale Royals 8 points. Birkdale Bootleggers finished in a tie for the 6th spot with Otis Dynamos, each gaining 4 points. 8th and last place went to Bromsgrove Dodgers 2 points.

Burtonwood Yanks won three of our competitions namely the Lancashire Cup, the Robertson Trophy, and the Artco Trophy. The other competitions outside of our League saw Liverpool Giants, a representative team, win the Kosta Trophy, and Humberside win the Orford Trophy.

The inter-area games resulted in a win for Humberside over Merseyside 4 - 3 at Hull. Merseyside beat Humberside 7 - 0 at Liverpool.

Finally, the British Amateur Baseball Federation's National Cup, the Merseyside team qualifying were NALGO Tigers, who met and defeated in the semi-final Sutton Braves 10 - 7. Sutton had previously defeated Thames Board Mills in their area to qualify for the semi-final. Quite a good crowd saw the NALGO v. Sutton game. In the National Final, NALGO Tigers met and defeated Nottingham Lions 5 - 3, again before a fairly good attendance.

Our Annual Awards are as follows. Player of the Year - Dave Taylor (NALGO Tigers): Pitching Award - Dave Taylor, he won 17 games. Home Run Award - Arthur Bolton (Liverpool Trojans) with 8 homers. Most Improved Player - Andy Gillies (NALGO Tigers). Rookie Award - J. Lawler (Birkdale Bootleggers). Merit Award - Bob Hooper (Umpire, Burtonwood).

To conclude, the League is now in the process of a football treble competition which has proved quite successful and will enable our section of the B.A.B.F. to meet our share of the present liabilities of the B.A.B.F.

One final item, we on Merseyside are becoming more and more convinced of the need of a national Senior or Major League again, and will, in the off-season, be making moves to achieve this end.

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The next issue of Baseball Mercury should appear in April. The subscription for three issues is 30p. Any subscriptions and items for publication in future issues should be sent to William Morgan, 89 Sterndale Road, London, W14 OHX.

Checking on the previous ten issues of Baseball Mercury, I discover that nineteen items have appeared which have been credited to a specific individual. Most of the other material has been gathered by myself as a result of reading newspapers and magazines published in South Africa, Rhodesia, Japan, the U.S.A., and the Netherlands. I appeal to all readers to assist my efforts by writing to me regarding their own clubs and leagues, and to send any interesting cuttings that they may come across in newspapers.

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#### FOREIGN PLAYERS

Although there have been rules by a number of leagues and associations in England in the past restricting the use of foreign players, I believe that no organisation has such a rule at the present time. If any league has such a rule I would welcome full details.

As for the other European countries, I understand that with the exception of the Netherlands and Belgium, they all have restrictions, particularly regarding the use of foreign pitchers. Below are given some details of such regulations.

Spain. In the highest class only three foreign players may play for a club. In the second class, only two. In neither class may a foreign player pitch.

Sweden. In the highest class only two foreign players per team are allowed. They are permitted to play in any position except pitcher. They must be members of the club concerned, and they must have been in Sweden for at least three months before playing.

France. In all classes three foreign players are permitted to play for a team in a game, but a club may have more than three foreign players as members. A foreign pitcher is not allowed to pitch for more than three innings in a game.

West Germany. Three foreigners per team, but no pitchers. The foreign player must have lived for at least fourteen days in West Germany before registration, they must be club members, and must have paid a full year's subscription before being permitted to play.

Belgium. There are no restrictions as there are scarcely any foreign players. If there were any numbers of such players then restrictions would probably be introduced, almost certainly aimed at barring foreign pitchers.

The Netherlands. Appear to have no restrictions and it is there that controversy has arisen, especially regarding the use of foreign pitchers. It is felt by many that relying on foreign pitchers, and as in all countries foreign usually means American, will hamper the development of native pitching talent.

Italy. The rules are much more complex than elsewhere. Each club may only have two foreign players, only one of whom is allowed to play at a time. A club may also have two Italian-American players, who must be registered with the Federation before the first of March. An Italian-American who has lived continuously in the country for two years automatically becomes Italian. No foreign pitchers are permitted. The regulations concerning clubs in the top league are as follows.

Each of these clubs plays three games each week. In the first game it is compulsory to use four players who are under 19 years old. In such a game no foreign players nor Italian-American players may take part. The pitcher must also be a youth player. In the second game, the Italian-Americans may play, as also the foreign players, the latter only one at a time however. The pitcher must be Italian. In the third game it is compulsory that two players under 19 years of age are used, and foreign players are not permitted to pitch.

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#### SPALDING'S GUIDE 1919

Mr. Jack McGrath, formerly Vice President of Hillerich and Bradsby, has been kind enough to lend me copies of Spalding's Official Baseball Guides for the years 1905 - 1906 - 1908 - 1919. The first three had some material on the controversy which then raged over the origins of baseball, and the findings of the commission

headed by A.G. Mills, which was set up and charged with discovering the true origin of the game. Having read quite a deal on the subject I found much of the material unimpressive. Anyone who is interested in the subject can find it dealt with in the following Encyclopaedias, all incidentally American controlled, Britannica, Colliers, and Americana; all recent editions of these publications agree that the Mills Commission did not do a very good job. For a fuller treatment of the subject I recommend readers to read the first chapter of "Baseball. The Early Years" by Dr. Harold Seymour. A less scholarly, but even more devastating account of the controversy and the activities of the Mills Commission appears in "Nice Guys Finish Last", published in England last year. The author's name escapes me at the moment, from the internal evidence of the book I conclude that he is English.

The issue of 1919 I found of great interest and I will touch on some of the items which appeared.

An account of the first team to be formed in France, which was organised in 1913 under the title of "Association of Baseball of the Lycee Condorcet". Its captain and founder was Comte Jacques de Saint Maurice, later a lieutenant in the American Expeditionary Force. During 1913 and early 1914 a number of other teams were formed and affiliated with the A.B.B. as the pioneer group was called. A number of games were arranged between these French teams and teams of Americans resident in France. In 1915 the Comte de Saint Maurice organised a number of teams at Dieppe, aided by Andre Lemercier, the Paris tennis champion. The Dieppe teams were particularly favoured in being regularly invited by the colonel of the Canadian troops stationed in the Dieppe area to play against Canadian army teams.

In 1916, the French military academy, St. Cyr, adopted the game. The instructors at St. Cyr were all famous French sportsmen who had been intensively coached in baseball skills. The reason for this interest by the French military establishment was that it was considered that skills acquired in playing baseball would increase the proficiency of French soldiers in the throwing of hand grenades.

Another item dealt with the introduction of the game to Spain. Early in 1918 Americans in Madrid in the service of the U.S. Embassy, Military-Attache, Naval Attache, and War Trade Board began to play scrub variants of the game. A number of Spaniards who had been in the U.S.A. or The Philippines became interested, and after a number of practice games it was decided to stage a grand game Americans v. Spanish to arouse the interest of the public. A number of Spaniards who knew a little about the game tried to educate their fellow nationals through the press.

The Royal Sporting Club was to inaugurate a new field, at the opening of which the King had promised to be present (though His Majesty was unable to attend owing to the then existing conditions), and they scoured the country for Spaniards able to play the game. After what seemed centuries the long awaited day arrived, and on July 5, 1918 the first official baseball game to be played on Spanish soil was contested. The Yanks were the victors by a score of 11 - 5.

Among the other items were baseball in Panama, Mexico City, and Venezuela. In the latter country the game was just beginning to catch-on, largely as a result of visits by Puerto Ricans.

Other interesting items were Australia v. United States, May 5, relating the first game played between troops of these two countries in France, Australia winning 4 - 3; and industrial baseball in America. In the latter section I came across an item headed "The Reading (Pa.) Steel Casting Company", dealing with their winning the industrial championship for 1918, it gave the line-up for the final game which they won against the Harlan Shipbuilding Co., there were ten major-leaguers listed, including Rogers Hornsby, Joe Jackson, and Babe Ruth.

There were a number of items dealing with baseball in England, the longest dealing with the game on July 4, 1918 at Stamford Bridge Ground, and The Anglo-American League. The game at Stamford Bridge I mentioned in the first issue of Baseball Mercury, newspapers estimated that there were 45,000 spectators present.

Reading about the game by those active at the time both in France and England one is struck by the confident prophecies that the game was going to become a major sport in each country. The subsequent history of the game in both countries showed how wide of the mark these prophets were.

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## INTERCONTINENTAL CUP

The second Intercontinental Cup Tournament was played in Canada from August 14 to 31, at Montreal and Moncton. Countries taking part were Canada, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, South Korea, U.S.A., Japan, Italy, and Colombia.

Colombia was invited at the last moment as Cuba withdrew shortly before the tournament was due to begin, much to the annoyance of the host country. Canada had arranged a number of games for the visiting countries prior to the tournament, some of them internationals, some versus All-Star Provincial teams, in cities across the country, naturally Cuba would have been a big draw, possibly the biggest, and their late withdrawal cost the Canadians a loss of 30,000 dollars.

The B pool was won by the U.S.A., this pool also included Italy, Colombia, and Nicaragua. Meanwhile Japan won the A pool, which also contained Canada, South Korea, and Puerto Rico. In the cross-over semi-finals which matched the two top teams from each pool, the U.S.A. beat Canada, and Japan beat Nicaragua. Japan was beaten by the U.S.A. in the final. Placings were 1st. U.S.A. (9 - 0), 2nd. Japan (7 - 2), 3rd. Nicaragua (4 - 5), 4th. Canada (4 - 5), 5th. Puerto Rico (3 - 4), 6th. South Korea (3 - 4), 7th. Italy (2 - 5), 8th. Colombia (0 - 7).

The 1st Intercontinental Cup had been won by Japan in Italy in 1973.

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## MISCELLANY

Women's Softball. The Netherlands and Italy contested a six game series in the Netherlands this year. The Netherlands sweeping the series six games to nil. Scores, Netherlands - Italy 9 - 2, 15 - 0, 9 - 5, 13 - 0, 6 - 1, 7 - 3.

The Zambia national softball teams, men's and women's visited the Netherlands in September, on the 11th. Zambia Men beat Mid-Netherlands 6 - 4, and on the 13th lost to Actie '68 Kinheim 15 - 10. On the same dates Zambia Women lost 8 - 5 to ORWO-HCAW, and to The Netherlands 18 - 2.

On 4th - 5th October the Belgian national baseball team was in The Netherlands in order to play Netherlands B. Netherlands B won two games, 1 - 0 (10 innings) and 8 - 2.

With the exception of Roberto Clemente, only three men born outside of the U.S.A. are enshrined in the National Baseball Hall of Fame at Cooperstown, New York. The three men are Harry Wright, Henry Chadwick, and Thomas Henry Connolly, all of whom were born in England. Following are brief biographies taken from a guide published by the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Henry Chadwick was dean of all baseball writers and did probably more than any person to popularize the game in its early years. He helped organize original National Association of Base Ball Players in 1858 and during next decade, as chairman of rules committee, introduced changes in rules which shaped present game. Son of prominent English journalist came to U.S. with family at age 13. He started as music teacher, but as baseball sprouted, he developed interest in game and became baseball writer in early 1850's. Prolific writer who contributed to numerous journals, he authored many books on how to play, including Beadle's "Dime Baseball Player" of 1860; edited DeWitt Baseball Guide and the Spalding Guide from 1881 until his death. Born October 5, 1817 at Exeter, England. Died April 20, 1908 at Brooklyn, N.Y. Elected to Hall of Fame in 1938.

Harry Wright. Born January 10, 1835 at Sheffield, England. Died October 3, 1895 at Atlantic City, N.J. Elected to Hall of Fame in 1953. William Henry (Harry) Wright has been termed "The Father of Professional Baseball" because he organized and managed the first pro. team, famed 1869 Cincinnati Red Stockings. Originally a professional cricket player, he proved real trail blazer, being responsible for more innovations in baseball than any other man. Besides starting first pro. team, he was first manager to use knicker uniforms, introduce co-operative teamwork and make foreign tour. Following retirement as manager in 1893, he became N.L.'s first chief of umpires. Adept handler of men, he was most skilful and successful manager of his day, guiding Boston to six pennants in seven years, 1872 - 1878. His high integrity and knowledge of game commanded respect of all.

Thomas Henry Connolly was born 31 December, 1870 at Manchester, England. Died April 28, 1961 at Natick, Mass. Elected to Hall of Fame in 1953. Tom Connolly umpired in majors for 34 seasons, only two fewer than Bill Klem's record 36 years. Starting with National League in 1898, he switched to American in 1901 when Ban Johnson, acting on Connie Mack's recommendation, hired him. Connolly remained active in A.L. until June, 1931, when he became league's umpire supervisor. Quiet, unobtrusive operative, he was considered tough disciplinarian. Nevertheless, he ejected probably fewer players per season than any other arbiter.