



# BASEBALL

## Mercury.

No. 22. AUGUST 1979.

MIDLAND NEWS by Sheila Williams.

Baseball is going well in our area. We had one or two set backs at the beginning of the season, with both Clifton Cougars and Nottingham Lions deciding that they were unable to join the Midland League. We are very hopeful that both of them will swell our numbers again next season.

League-wise the position is:- Senior : Bromsgrove Dodgers are running away with the Midland League, not having lost a game. Southglade Hornets are lying second followed by Top Valley Tigers, Perry Barr Hawks and Pressac Panthers. Junior : Southglade Eagles head this league, with Lion Cubs second, followed by Top Valley Tigers and Rugeley Raiders.

One day tournament competitions :-

Bert Inms Memorial Trophy. In its first year this was very fittingly won by Bromsgrove Dodgers. Four clubs competed, in the semi-finals Hornets beat Pressac Panthers, and Dodgers beat Top Valley Tigers. Dodgers won the final against Hornets by 11 runs to 7.

Nottingham Cup. This was won by Southglade Hornets, who beat Pressac Panthers in the semi-final, and Top Valley Tigers got through to the final, beating Perry Barr Hawks. Although Top Valley Tigers managed to hold Hornets for the first couple of innings, Hornets ran out winners in the end by 14 runs to 5.

Lol Whelan Junior Tournament. Southglade Eagles took this for the third year in succession, toppling Top Valley Tigers in the semi-final. Rugeley Raiders -v- Lion Cubs produced a tight game, with Cubs snatching a win in the last inning. Eagles won the final by 22 runs to 7.

B.A.B.S.F. Area Championships: Midland Mets have played five games to date, winning four and losing one. Their recent game away to the Southern All-Stars proved a real nail biter, an extra inning having to be played to produce a winner. Mets managed to take the points with a one run lead. Result, Southern All-Stars 10 - Mets 11.

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TROJANS IN AMSTERDAM by Norman Wells.

Liverpool Trojans, the British Champions, were invited by Canon De Spartaan of Amsterdam to take part in a six club tournament in that city. Trojans visited that city from April 13th. to 16th.

In order to strengthen our squad, due mainly to the retirement of Stan Windross, we invited three guest players to travel with us. These were Hugh King (Liverpool Tigers), Marty Jewer and Rick Soan of Crawley Giants. We embarked on North Sea Ferries at Hull on the 13th. April, on what turned out to be a prolonged journey, due to engine failure. We arrived at Europort some six hours late, only to be whisked into two waiting mini-buses, supplied by De Spartaan and driven by us, following a guide, at breakneck speed to Amsterdam. We arrived just in time to see the final innings, of the final game of Pool A. In fact, to see Skarpnacks beating the U.S. Servicemen, Rhein-Main Rockets by one run. However as all teams in Pool A had each won one game, the U.S. Servicemen, won through, on run difference.

We were allowed the use of the ground for one hours practice, and uniforms had to be worn. We were then given a meal, and guided to our accommodation, approximately ten miles from the ground.

These premises were a new but as yet unoccupied school on a new building site. The Americans and the Swedes shared our accommodation, each squad being in a different classroom; the classrooms being rigged as dormitories.

After a trip by metro to Amsterdam, we managed to bed down by 2.00 a.m. Sunday morning.

Our first game was scheduled for 10.00 a.m. on the Sunday, versus Dutch 2nd. division team Celeritas.

We intended to use Art Bolton to pitch the first game, and Marty Jewer the game versus De Spartaan. Unfortunately, "the best laid plans of mice and men", Art threw his arm in the first inning. Marty had to take over, nevertheless we ran out 12 - 8 winners over Celeritas, despite a shaky start, and trailing for most of the game. Hugh King hit a home run, clear out of the park in this game.

After a respite of one hour, we went in against Canon De Spartaan, at 13.00. Marty Jewer, having just pitched seven innings, was called upon again to face De Spartaan. De Spartaan proved far too advanced and skilful for our boys. Marty was relieved on the mound by Carl Moody in the 4th. inning. We went down by a 20 - 0 score, in an almost "no contest" affair, despite there being the best attendance of the tournament up to then.

Whilst we showered, changed, and took refreshments, De Spartaan were giving a similar hiding to Celeritas, winning 19 - 0. This left the fixtures for the final day as follows. 10.00 a.m. Den Haag v. Celeritas to decide places 5 and 6. 12.30 Trojans v. Skarpnacks to decide places 3 and 4. 3.00 p.m. De Spartaan v. Rhein-Main Rockets to decide places 1 and 2.

We used the evening to spend more time in Amsterdam, some say, not too wisely. Suffice to say, our opponents for the following day were abed by 9.00 p.m., I refrain from giving our retirement hours.

Nevertheless, we were on the diamond as per schedule, next morning, after our speedy rush to the ground and breakfast.

We played, what I believe was our best performance of the tournament. Two double plays and some excellent fielding, plus some sound batting, wiped away a 3 - 0 lead held by the Swedes until the 5th. inning. We were all tied-up in the 6th. inning at 5 to 5. But then our luck gave out. All games were scheduled to last no longer than 1 hour 40 minutes; and in the 7th. inning, with Skarpnacks going into a one run lead, we were ruled to have reached our time limit. Just when we felt we really had their measure. However, the final score was 6 - 5 for the Swedes.

After our game, we were hastily presented with the 4th. place trophy, given a packed lunch, and piled into our mini-buses for a mad rush to Europort to catch our ship at 6.00 p.m.

As we left the park, we saw the Americans taking some heavy stick from De Spartaan in the 1st. inning of the final.

Despite promises given, we were never informed of the eventual winners.

A few items of interest to baseball fans could be included here. De Volewijckers (Den Haag), a Dutch team in the 1st. Division (as are also De Spartaan) finished in fifth place.

The Dutch 1st. Division, is not to be confused with the Dutch Super League, which De Spartaan are aiming to gain promotion into this season. Skarpnacks, 3rd. in the tournament, finished 3rd. in the Swedish League in 1978, and their pitcher is the Swedish National Number 1 Choice.

De Spartaan - what can one say about them. Only that they have what every baseball enthusiast in Britain must desire.

A fantastic sponsorship from Canon Cameras. A ground which must equal those of many non-major league clubs in the U.S.A., and an amount of equipment that left our lads spellbound. Such as forty or more aluminium bats of all sizes, plus numerous batting helmets, lined up in an impressive display beside the dugout.

They also had a pitching machine and a batting cage! During our practice, we were allowed the use of this facility.

Prior to the tournament, De Spartaan had been on a spring tour of Florida (as part of their sponsorship, and their aim for the Super League). I believe they won all four of the games they played in Florida, I am not certain of the opposition they faced.

They have also a club house on the ground, where all refreshments are to be purchased, and where all of the club's many trophies are on display. They are a highly organised outfit, that runs, I believe, a total of eleven baseball and softball teams from the very young upwards.

I suppose this did more to depress me personally, than our performance on the playing field. One wonders, how can we ever reach the standard of management and organisation, both at club level, and federation level, that the game has achieved in Holland

One point came through very strongly to me, and that is, that baseball, is

to their players and everyone associated with the game, their number one sport, not as is the case with the majority of us, where baseball is a second-ary game, which serves to fill in the off-season, until soccer or rugby league commences again.

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BRITISH AREA CHAMPIONSHIP.

	W.	L.	%	GB.
Midlands	4	1	.800	-
South	2	2	.500	1½
Humberside	2	2	.500	1½
Merseyside	0	3	.000	3

SOUTHERN BASEBALL LEAGUE.

	W.	L.	%	GB.
Golders Green Sox	7	0	1000	-
Crawley Giants	5	0	1000	1
Wokingham Monarchs	4	4	.500	3½
Sutton Braves	3	3	.500	3½
Croydon Bluejays	2	4	.333	4½
Thames Board Mills	1	5	.167	5½
Regents Park Eagles	0	6	.000	6½

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SOFTBALL.

The U.S. Amateur Softball Association recently sponsored coaching and ump-iring clinics in Africa. The coaching/umpiring group from the United States spent 10 days in Botswana, travelling thousands of miles within the country conducting a series of clinics that included playing and coaching techniques, as well as sessions on game rules and umpire mechanics.

Equipment donated by several U.S. manufacturers was used during the clinics and later presented to the Botswana Softball Association. Also the A.S.A. provided several technical films to be used during the clinics. The expense for the clinics was borne by the U.S. Amateur Softball Association.

Don Porter, ASA Executive Director, said, "The ASA is pleased to help and assist in the development of softball in Africa through coaching clinics such as the one just completed in Botswana."

Don Porter expects to visit England in October to discuss with officials of the B.A.B.S.F. means of assisting the game to grow in the British Isles. It is possible that teams from the U.S.A. will pay a visit to England in 1980 to play a series of exhibition games.

In September of this year a men's team from the Guernsey Softball Associa-tion, and a women's team from the Netherlands may visit Yorkshire.

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BASEBALL IN DERBY(II).

In issue No. 17 of Baseball Mercury I wrote on this topic, getting as far as 1892. In that year there was a tremendous development of interest in the playing of the game in Derby.

Baseball clubs were formed in connection with St. James's and St. Thomas's schools, they were allowed to use the Baseball Ground for their practices.

A fillip to the game's growth was provided by Mr. Francis Ley. He promised to supply any properly organised junior club having at least twelve members, with bats and balls. He also offered to put up a pennant, and medals for the players in the final ties, for both a Senior and a Junior competition.

As a result of his encouragement a three team Senior competition took place, and also a thirteen team Junior competition. The three senior teams were St. James's, St. Thomas's, and Vulcan. Senior in this context meant aged 16 years or more.

The thirteen junior teams were named : - St. Andrews, Derby Wanderers, Litchurch, Alexandra, Pear Tree Swifts, Shaftesbury, Ley's Foundry, Ley's Fitting Shop, Malcolm Stars, Ley's Annealing Shop, St. Thomas's Juniors, St. James's Juniors, and Crescent. Some of the names may sound a little odd to my readers, as they indicate industrial teams; but one must remember that children started work at eleven or twelve years of age at that time.

These junior players were allowed to practice at the Baseball Ground, where Mr. Ley maintained a professional, rather on the lines of cricket clubs. This professional, Colford, was available for coaching. The junior champion-ship games were played every evening except Saturday at the Baseball Ground.

The Senior Championship was won by St. Thomas's who beat St. James's in the

final tie. The Junior Final was played immediately prior to the Senior, and was won by Shaftesbury, the losers being Crescent. Mr. Ley's custom was to present the players of the Senior Championship winner with gold medals. The players of the defeated Senior finalist team, and both finalists in the Junior Championship were presented with silver medals.

In 1892 the three Senior clubs also took part in the competition for the Spalding Cup for the Amateur Championship of England, this was run on familiar knock-out lines. Other clubs whose names were published as having taken part in the draw for the competition were :- Middlesbrough, Darlington St. Augustine's, Elswick, City of Newcastle, Wallsend-on-Tyne, Liverpool, Preston North End Amateurs, and Manchester. I have never come across details of 1892 cup-ties which should have been played by the three clubs at the end of that list.

Derby St. Thomas's reached the final, and travelled to meet Middlesbrough, the final being played on that club's home ground which was the Middlesbrough F.C. ground. Middlesbrough won 26 - 16. One account of the game described the weather as atrocious, and stated that there were large pools of water in the outfield. This account also reported that in spite of the appalling weather about 1,200 spectators were present. A feature of the final was the youth of the St. Thomas's team, only one of their players being older than 18 years.

The Medal competitions played in Derby in 1892 appeared to be run on the lines of a draw being made as is common for cup competitions. But to proceed to the next round a team had to beat its opponents twice.

In 1893 league competitions were organised; and following the end of the league competitions, the medal competitions were played. As the latter were completed in about three weeks in August, it appears that they were run on a simple one game knock-out system.

The Senior League consisted of Vulcan, St. Thomas's, St. James's, St. Mark's, and St. James's Institute. The Vulcan club consisted largely of players who had played for Derby Baseball Club in the years 1890 to 1892.

The Junior League consisted of St. Andrew's, Ley's, St. James's Juniors, St. Thomas's Juniors, Litchurch, and Crescent.

In the St. James's senior team that season appeared the name of Steve Bloomer, who played as an infielder. Bloomer was one of the most famous soccer players of his era. At the time of his retirement as a player he held the Football League record for total number of goals scored. Oddly enough, when one considers what a minor sport baseball has been in England, the player who broke Bloomer's record for total Football League goals scored, W.G. "Dixie" Dean, of Everton, was also a very useful baseball player. Dean was a player for a number of seasons with Caledonians Baseball Club, Liverpool.

During 1893, two games between selections of the best players in the town were played; these were designated Derby v. Rest of the League. The first such game drew more than 1,000 spectators to the Baseball Ground. Derby winning 26 - 22.

The Senior League Championship was won by Vulcan, with St. Thomas's in second place, and St. James's in third place. The Junior League Championship was won by St. Andrew's. The Senior Medal Competition was won by Vulcan who beat St. James's in the final 32 - 4. The Junior Medal Competition was won by St. James's Junior who defeated Litchurch 12 - 9 in that final.

There appears to have been no contact at all in 1893 on the playing field between Derby and other baseball areas.

The Derby Baseball Association emerged from its isolation in 1894, and one newspaper mentioned that Derby had joined the National Baseball Association. In addition to the league competitions within Derby; a Derby team similar to those of 1890 to 1892 had games arranged with teams from other areas. Most of these would be described as "friendlies", but the team also entered for the Spalding Cup. Derby played games versus Thespians, English Championship winners in 1893; Newcastle, Middlesbrough Ironopolis, "J's" (London), and Remington Typewriter's (London).

The first of the inter-area fixtures was against Thespians (London). This club was made up of American music hall artists, the most famous of whom was R.G. Knowles. The Thespians travelled to Derby in a special saloon car arranged by the Midland Railway. About 1,000 spectators saw Derby win 15 - 13. The game was advertised to start at 2.00 p.m. as the Thespians had to return to London to appear at various theatres and music halls the same night.