

BASEBALL

Mercury.

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BEFORE AND BEHIND HOME PLATE by Ernest Jacklin(Hull).

My initial interest stemmed from my visits to Craven Park, Hull, about the year 1936 and onwards, where I watched semi-pro teams playing. These games were often preceded by school-boy "curtain-raiser": the standard of boys' games was very good, and among the boys that I watched was the present manager of the Great Britain team, Ron Marshall.

A feature of the semi-pro games was the sale of pop-corn, and the non-stop enthusiasm of the commentator. This character roused the considerable crowds to frenzies the like of which I have never seen since at any baseball matches in this country.

A year or so later, prompted by a colleague at work, I joined what was probably one of the earliest Mormon teams in this country, the Hull "M" Men. Although only a junior player, I had a good arm and could clear the backstop net from deep centre-field(and often did - unintentionally!). My batting was rather suspect, but I could generally contact most balls within reach of the bat. I subsequently sat out a local final on Craven Park, when we played Ranks Mills, most of our batters were fanning out, and I sat there - a very disgruntled bencher - while my team was defeated.

When World War II became imminent our American missionary players returned to the States. Eventually, I was shipped overseas. Of the other Yanks playing locally for Ideal-Standard Tigers(Ideal Boilers & Radiators in those days) I have no information.

My recollections of Yankee "M" Men colleagues are confined to two players: Ralph Tingey(who threw a low, wicked curve from the pitcher's plate), and "Babe" Summers(who had played college football) - he never slid when stealing second base, he bunched himself up, rather like a hedgehog, and rolled the last few yards if the play was close... any baseman standing on 2nd. did so at his own risk.. .. and he only did it once when Babe started rolling.

I moved from North Africa to Italy and played one or two softball games with AFHQ Petroleum Section. Later, in Germany I threw a few practice balls with an old IHR Tigers' player, Sid Maddra. In 1946 I was demobbed and the following seasons saw me associated with Beetonville Diamonds, Cavendish Cardinals, Cavendish Coyotes, Hull Giants, and Priestmans.

I went to Burtonwood, with area finalists Cavendish Cardinals,, the rain bucketed down from dawn to dusk, but we went to 5 frames (we could not afford to travel twice), and lost 15 - 3 to the U.S. A.F. team that was never extended. I scored one of our runs.

Hull Giants proved to be my most successful club, we won every local trophy, and the Yorkshire Cup. As for representative teams, I was selected for Hull on two occasions: and had trials at 3rd. base for Yorkshire.

Around 1959 the Priestman's club disbanded, and I had a season "out to pasture". In 1961 I was approached by Herbert McAvan (Secretary of Yorkshire Baseball Association) with a request to try umpiring a few local games. I agreed to do this, and then sought out Baseball Umpires' Examiner, Arthur I. Fisher, and attended instruction sessions. On 3rd. May, 1962 I received my Grade B (Theory) Certificate; two seasons later I gained my Grade A Certificate.

In 1983, while still a registered umpire, I decided to call it a day, handed in my gear, and concentrated some of my energies on jobs around the house and garden.

I spent a lot of time coaching both qualified and prospective umpires in this area, and I pay tribute to Arthur Fisher and the late Wilf "Red" Holmes who earnestly applied themselves to this aspect of baseball for many years. I am pleased that the umpires coaching classes are continuing with the aid of James T. O'Brien and Harry Clutterbuck.

If anyone were to ask me why Hull Giants were so successful, I would say that we fielded a team in which every player who came to bat could be relied on to hit the ball - we were not bad in the field - but batting was where we came out with most credit.

General Remarks: "Don't shoot the umpire - not unless you're ready to do the job yourself!" Umpires cannot receive respect from players unless they earn it. Over the years our activities in Hull have been so closely associated with clubs and players, that often, when a player was thrown out of a game, the umpire concerned probably suffered more remorse than the player.

Players still seem reluctant to attend coaching classes and sit an examination, even though the knowledge gained can often give them an advantage over opponents. Players in their mid-40s should be thinking about putting something back into the game - i.e. umpiring duties: this is the nearest one can get to the game without actually playing it, and you are involved in almost every play. All that one needs is that crucial quality, dedication, and that means turning out smartly dressed and properly equipped, never turning down an appointment unless you are already booked for that day. Acknowledge every appointment, and check with club secretaries prior to leaving home to officiate at a game. One must know and apply an up-to-date knowledge of the playing rules, by attending regularly (every season) coaching classes.

Umpires should be re-examined periodically, I think that every 5 years would be reasonable.

No matter how irate a player or manager becomes, it pays an umpire to hear him out (provided they are not downright abusive or obscene) for there is often a grain of truth in all the chaff that is flying about. I think that if an umpire's performance is not up to standard, he should be marked by the clubs concerned, and, if possible, his overall performance should be judged by a panel of qualified and experienced umpires. This panel would if necessary pass on advice. But where can one get such a panel of people to perform such a task in this country? Most teams are fortunate if they can get one umpire per game! The marking system, however imperfect it may be, should at the end of a season give a fair indication of the umpires who have potential, and those who have made progress. Umpires who fail to turn up at a game without a valid reason should be fined for non-attendance.

The most memorable games that I have umpired, all in Hull, National League All-Stars v. South Africa (South Africa won); National Cup Semi-final, Hull Royals v. Liverpool Mormons (Mormons won, after 11 frames).

Finally, to league officers, club officials and team managers, scorers, players, bat-boys and coaches: to all those I have been associated with as a player and as an umpire I must say that it has been a privilege to serve you all, a very happy privilege indeed.

The next issue of Baseball Mercury should appear in July. Items for publication, and/or subscriptions should be sent to the editor. Subscription is £1 for four issues.

MIDLANDS.

Junior Baseball 1983.

EAST MIDLANDS JUNIOR BASEBALL LEAGUE

	P.	W.	L.	%
Southglade Eagles	10	10	0	1000
Southglade Kestrels)	10	6	4	600
Newark Titans) Tied second	10	6	4	600
Rugeley Raiders	10	5	5	500
Nottingham Tigers	10	3	7	300
Leicester Dodgers	10	0	10	000

Southglade Eagles had a marvellous season (not losing a game). They won the Lol Whelan Cup, when Ian Williams took the Player of the Day Trophy. The Jimmy Goins Trophy; Pete Atkins being selected as the Most Valuable Player. Nottingham Junior Championship and, last but not least, the B.A.B.S.F. Junior Final.

The game that Eagles will long remember was the B.A.B.S.F. semi-final in Hull versus Hull Rebels. Both teams played tremendous baseball and were locked at 2 - 2 by the end of the 7th. inning. At this point (playing to Junior Rules) the pitchers had to be replaced - Ian Williams (Eagles) and M. Lamb (Rebels) had both pitched extremely well. Keith Penwarden came on for Eagles and the tension could not have been greater, but Eagles kept their cool and prevented Rebels from scoring. Eagles then managed to grab the winning run through Tony Penwarden, who found himself flattened at home plate by a mobbing and very happy Eagles squad. It was one of those games where it was a shame to have a loser but Rebels helped produce a thriller which was a credit to baseball.

Junior All-Star Game. Humberside v. Midlands, played at The Alderman Kneeshaw Ground, Hull; this was a great game, with Midlands running out eventual winners 2 - 1, to retain the All-Star Championship.

Cadets All-Star Tournament:- (14 years and under)

This tournament was played at Southglade Park, Nottingham. Midlands v. Humberside, Midlands won by 10 runs to 3. Keith Penwarden (pitcher) was presented with the Player of the Day Award.

General remarks. Unfortunately we lost two Junior teams, Leicester Saints and Birmingham Bears. A really sad note for us was the news that the previously successful Nottingham Tigers Juniors were not to compete in 1984.

On a happier note, Southglade Kestrels and Newark Titans did extremely well in their first season, and the Junior League should provide some close competition in 1984.

Coaching Classes. In 1983, under the auspices of the Soar Valley Education Committee which covers the Leicester area, a course of evening classes covering playing, coaching, and umpiring was conducted under the tuition of Julius Pleasaunce. The course covered baseball and softball, and I understand that many persons attended

these classes, and that a number passed an examination set by the B.A.B.S.F. Youth Officer, Mr. Benny Benson. Also a coaching course is to be operated in Nottingham by Mike Harrold and Alec Williams, this is to consist of 10 weekly sessions at a local hall. It is aimed at practical coaching rather than theory, and is also designed to attract persons who are just becoming interested in the game.

KOREAN BASEBALL HISTORY.

Baseball was introduced to Korea in 1905 by Mr. P.L. Gillet who was a missionary from the U.S.A. The Korea Amateur Baseball Association, which is the governing body of the amateur game in Korea, was founded on 18th. March, 1946.

The game is taken very seriously in Korea, and baseball games were played before any other modern sports events. In this connection the 1st. Korean Baseball Championship Series held in 1920 has been considered as the first Korean National Sports Festival.

Furthermore, the Korea Amateur Baseball Association has been affiliated with the Korea Amateur Sports Association which is the supreme body supervising and controlling amateur sports in Korea; and has also been recognised by the Korean Olympic Committee.

The Korea Amateur Baseball Association is affiliated to AINBA, the organisation which controls amateur baseball throughout the world.

Koreawon the 1st. prize in the 3rd. Intercontinental Cup Tournament held in Nicaragua in 1977, and 3rd. prize in the 25th. World Championship Series staged in Italy in 1978, and shared 2nd. prize with Japan in the 26th. World Championship Series held in Japan in 1980. The high point for Korea was the 1st. place won in the 27th. World Championship Series staged in Korea in 1982.

As a rule, the baseball season starts in March throughout Korea and continues until November. High School baseball is the most popular sport in Korea, attracting jam-packed crowds of about 35,000 whenever the national tournaments are held.

There are more than 50 baseball parks, with about 12 lighted stadiums. A new stadium seating 50,000 was inaugurated in 1982.

AUSTRALIA.

In January, the Claxton Shield Tournament, which is the Interstate Championship, was staged at Brisbane, Queensland. The final game was won by Victoria, which defeated South Australia 3 - 1 at Holloway Field. The 1983 champions Queensland had been eliminated earlier that day.

It was a well earned victory by a well organised squad, which displayed the greatest consistency throughout the series. There was a three way tie on championship points between, Victoria, South Australia, and Queensland at the end of the regular schedule, hence the play-off games. South Australia hustled Queensland out of the tourney 13 - 1.

Victoria took a lead in the 1st. inning, when Matthew Sheldon-Collins walked and then scored on an outfield hit by Bret Ward. South Australia tied the score in the 3rd. inning on a homerun by Tim Bay. Victoria went ahead again in the 4th. inning when Dave Buckthorpe homered to left field. The third run for Victoria was scored in the 6th. inning, when with the bases loaded the South Australia pitcher walked in the run. This was the 14th. Claxton Shield Tournament victory for Victoria.

NORTH WEST AMERICAN BASEBALL & SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION.

Our youth team, Ince Blundell Free-Birds, represented the North West in the National Junior Baseball Championship Final, and although outclassed, gained some valuable experience.

A word about these lads, they formed the team late in 1982, mainly as a result of one of the members of the youth club having been given a baseball bat. The youth club decided to make some use of the gift, contacted me, and after some discussion, decided to form a baseball team.

As we had only three junior teams in this area, we decided to arrange a series of one day events, each of which involved all three junior teams. Five such events were organised, Free-Birds won all five, and so qualified for the B.A.B.S.F. semi-final, which should have seen them facing a representative of the South; and we fully expected to be beaten by the Southern team. However, no Southern representative was forthcoming, so Free-Birds had a walk-over into the National Final.

The heavy defeat by Southglade Eagles has done little to discourage our lads, and their spirits are high for the coming season. Our main problem is the scarcity of opposition in the North West.

A word about softball in our area, we had three teams in 1983. Manson Blue Caps (Liverpool), Skelmersdale Jets, and Litherland High School. These clubs played a series of one day tournaments, and met two teams from Hull, and Leicester Angels, at various venues.

Norman Wells.

SOUTHERN ENGLAND BASEBALL ASSOCIATION.

1983 STANDINGS.

	<u>Group 1.</u>			
	<u>W.</u>	<u>L.</u>	<u>Pct.</u>	<u>GB.</u>
COBHAM YANKEES	13	2	.867	-
London Warriors	10	5	.667	3
Croydon Bluejays	9	6	.600	4
Crawley Giants	8	7	.533	5
Regents Park Eagles	4	10	.286	8½
Essex Raiders	0	14	.000	12½
	<u>Group 2.</u>			
	<u>W.</u>	<u>L.</u>	<u>Pct.</u>	<u>GB.</u>
SUTTON BRAVES	13	1	.929	-
Barnes Barnstormers	7	6	.583	5½
Wokingham Monarchs	7	7	.500	6
Oxshott Orioles	6	7	.462	6½
Ashford Merlins	6	8	.429	7
Rochester City Dodgers	6	8	.429	7
Croydon Borough Pirates	5	9	.357	8
Golders Green Sox	5	9	.357	8
	<u>Group 3.</u>			
	<u>W.</u>	<u>L.</u>	<u>Pct.</u>	<u>GB.</u>
SEVINGE SPARTANS	13	0	1.000	-
Rair Red Sox	9	4	.692	4
Shoreditch Eagles	10	5	.667	4
Ashford Condors	6	7	.462	7
Gants Hill Stingrays	4	11	.267	10
Esher Rangers	0	15	.000	14

I have been informed that a number of new teams are expected to enter SEBA competitions in 1984. The U.S. Navy is expected to field two teams; the U.S. Navy last competed in 1976. Croydon Bluejays

and Crawley Giants expect to run two teams each. Two teams are expected to appear from the Brighton area, Brighton Polytechnic College, and Brighton Jets. There was formerly a club named Brighton Jets which functioned for some twelve seasons, finally disbanding in the mid 1970's, but my informant says that this new club is not connected in any way with the former club of the same name. Clubs may also be formed at Southampton, and Berkhamstead.

FRANCE

As a result of victories in the final pool of the French Championship (National I) staged at Meyzieu, PUC gained the French title for the ninth time since 1970.

PUC beat Pitchers de Pineuilh (9 - 1), and F J E P Meyzieu (23 - 3). Meyzieu, by beating Pineuilh 34 - 6, took 2nd. place, after having been 3rd. in 1982, fifth in 1981, and champion of National II in 1980. Meyzieu by such constant progress promise to be a club to reckon with in the championship National I within the next year or so. For the 4th. spot, Saint-Priest beat Bergerac 23 - 7.

Final Classification 1983. 1. P.U.C.; 2. F.J.E.P. Meyzieu; 3. Pitchers de Pineuilh; 4. Saint-Priest; 5. Bergerac; 6. Sarcelles.

WELSH TROPHIES 1983.

These trophies were presented at the New Ocean Club, Cardiff, on Thursday, 29th. September.

Ivor Beynon Cup. Youth Under 16	- Llanrumney Y.C.
Alexandra Cup. Youth Division	- Llanrumney Y.C.
Gwent Referees Cup. Division 6.	Grange Catholic "C"
Monty Rapport Cup. Division 5.	Grange Albion "B"
Welsh Sports Cup. Division 4.	Hope Stars.
Charles Wall Cup. Division 3.	Grange Catholic "B"
S.D. Lewis Cup. Division 2.	St. Peters.
W.B.A. Shield. Division 1.	Fitzalan O.B.
Argus Cup.	County Division. Llandaff North Athletic.
Dewar Shield.	Premier Division. Llanrumney Y.C.
Sam Cornish Shield.	Intertown Match. Newport.
Welsh Brewers Award.	Intercounty Match. Glamorgan.
St. Albans Youth Cup. Winners.	St. Michael's.
	Finalists. Llanrumney Y.C.
Handicap Cup.	Winners. Llanfrechfa Grange.
	Finalists. St. Woolos.
Snelgrove Cup.	Winners. Alexandra O.B. "C"
	Finalists. Grange Catholic "C"
Ocean Cup.	Winners. Grange Catholic "B"
	Finalists. St. Peters.
W.N.B.L. Silver Bowl.	Winners. St. Albans
	Finalists. Fitzalan O.B.
Welsh Brewers Cup.	Winners. Alexandra O.B.
	Finalists. Old Illtydians
W.B.U. Cup.	Winners. Llanrumney Y.C.
	Finalists. Alexandra O.B.

ITALY AND CHINA.

Mr. Bruno Beneck, President of C.E.B.A., was invited to take the Italian team to play a series of demonstration games in the People's Republic of China. The tour lasted from the 6th. to 16th. October 1983 and was a great success. Games were played in Beijing, Tiensin, Chongqing and Shanghai.

Italy won all four games, beating Beijing 3 - 1; Tiensin 10 - 4; Chongquin 7 - 6; and Shanghai 11 - 3.

Attendances were satisfactory, reaching 10,000 for the game at Chongquin.

The Chinese national team will visit Italy in May, 1984.

BELGIUM

Antwerp Eagles, in the year in which they celebrated 60 years existence, won the Belgian championship for the first time. Under the direction of Cees de Bruin Eagles stormed to the championship, only 2 of their 28 league games were lost, these 2 losses were inflicted by the runners-up, Borgerhout Squirrels. In only one other game did Eagles have problems, this was in a game almost lost with the score 11 - 2 in favour of Luchtbal, Eagles staged a great recovery in the last inning to win 12 - 11.

Luchtbal finished third, and the 1982 champions Berchem Stars ended in fourth place.

Eagles were loaded with talented players, one of whom was Peter Gahan, an Australian international. Peter set a new home run record for Belgium, with 14 for the season.

CANADA

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS 1983.

Senior	Gold:	New Brunswick(St. John Dodgers)
	Silver:	Ontario(Windsor Chiefs)
	Bronze:	Saskatchewan(Saskatoon Patrick Liners)
Junior	Gold:	British Columbia(Victoria Lumberworld)
	Silver: Tie	Host Team(Surrey Sandpipers, B.C.) Ontario(East York Juniors)
Bison	Gold:	Ontario(Barrie Marrow's Marauders)
	Silver:	British Columbia(Delta Dodgers)
	Bronze:	Nova Scotia(Kentville Mets)
Midget	Gold:	Ontario(Welland Rowdies)
	Silver:	Host Team(Windsor Mic Macs, Ont.)
	Bronze:	British Columbia(Tsawwassen)

TEAM CANADA 1983(Summary of a report written by Bill MacKenzie, Technical Director).

For the first time, Canada competed in two international tournaments in a single year, The Intercontinental Cup at Antwerp, Belgium and the Pan-American Games at Caracas, Venezuela.

Thirty-five players reported to training camp, which once again was based at University of Windsor, Ontario; workouts were held daily at Tecumseh Park. Twenty players were selected to go to Belgium. In the Antwerp tournament, Canada played well defensively, and hit well, team batting average was .316. The pitching was terrible, with a team earned run average of 9.34.

The record was one win and five losses. We beat Cuba 12-11, this was Cuba's only defeat in 1983. Among our losses were to Taiwan 7-6 in eleven innings, and to Nicaragua 15-13. With decent pitching, Canada would have defeated Taiwan, Nicaragua, and The Netherlands to have attained a respectable 4-2 record.

Canada took three new pitchers to Caracas, where housing, food, and overall conditions were very bad. Canada was placed in the toughest division, with the U.S.A., Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Brazil, and Nicaragua.

The other division contained Cuba, Venezuela, Netherlands Antilles, Panama, and Colombia. Canada finished with a record of 3-2, tied with Nicaragua and Dominican Republic for second place behind the U.S.A. We lost our first two games, to Nicaragua 10-1, and U.S.A. 10-5. We beat Puerto Rico 12-11, Brazil 10-0, and Dominican Republic 5-2. During the Dominica game, we sat through a four and one-half hour rain delay, and were informed at that time that to go on to the medal round we had to beat Dominican Republic by fourteen runs, as the ruling was that if two or three teams were tied for a placing, the total runs scored with the teams tied would count. We were under the impression that in the round robin, the deciding factor was total runs scored overall.

EUROPEAN WOMEN'S SOFTBALL CUP

22-25 September, Santpoort, The Netherlands. The tournament was organised by the local club, Terrasvogels, on a magnificent new softball field.

The final standings were 1. TERRASVOGELS (Netherlands); 2. SS Lazio (Italy); 3. Bloemendaal (Neth.); 4. General Motors (Belgium); 5. Bagarmossen (Sweden); 6. Democráticas (Spain); 7. Horsholm Clowns (Denmark); 8. Fernmoor (Guernsey).

Individual trophies - Best pitcher, Els Koks (Terrasvogels); Best hitter, Ludy van Mourik (Terrasvogels); Most Valuable Player, Ludy van Mourik.

Terrasvogels beat SS Lazio in the final series by scores of 6-0 and 7-2. Former national coach of the Netherlands softball, Nol Houtkamp has advocated that this competition should be divided into A and B Pools, to avoid so many one-sided games. SS Lazio beat Horsholm Clowns 25-0, while Terrasvogels beat Fernmoor 21-0.

Terrasvogels, which celebrated its 25th. season in 1983, was able to organise the tournament without financial loss, largely because the weather was very good. A total of 5,500 spectators attended the four day event. The total cost was 37,000 guilders, advertising produced an income of 13,500 guilders, admission fees 9,000 guilders. The KNBSB, and the municipality of Velsen aided with subsidies.

AINBA OLYMPIC NEWS.

In October, 1983 AINBA ranked the participants in the 7th. demonstration of baseball in the Olympic Games. These were 1. Cuba; 2. U.S.A.; 3. South Korea; 4. Taiwan; 5. Nicaragua; 6. Italy. Two Divisions, Blue and White were arranged. Blue Division contains Cuba, South Korea, Nicaragua. White Division comprises U.S.A., Taiwan, Italy.

An interlocking schedule of games is taking place; two games a day during the period 31st. July to 5th. August. On Monday, 6th. August, the semi-finals take place - Champion Blue Div. v. Runner-up White Div.; and Champion White Div. v. Runner-up Blue Div. On Tuesday, 7th. August the finals will be played. For the Bronze Medal, the losers of the semi-final games are to meet. The Gold and Silver Medals will be competed for by the Winners of the Semi-final games.

The tournament is being played in Dodger Stadium; the Los Angeles Dodgers have played a very active part in the whole of the organisation. All tickets for the Finals Day have been sold.

Previous Olympic demonstrations were 1900 Paris, 1912 Stockholm, 1936 Berlin, 1952 Helsinki, 1956 Melbourne, 1964 Tokyo. These were all rather make-shift events, unlike the arrangements for 1984 at Los Angeles.