

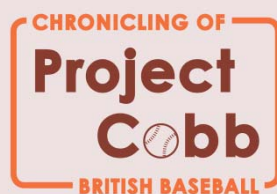
BASEBALL Mercury.

Issue 39

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

July 1985

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BASEBALL

Mercury.

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MIDLANDS.

Unfortunately, our Junior League dwindled to three teams this year - Southglade Kestrels, Southglade Eagles and Birmingham Bears. Sadly, Newark Titans and Leicester Dodgers, who were doing so well, failed to make it but we are hopeful the Newark team will return in the near future. Southglade Kestrels are the strongest team, not having lost a game and they are on course to win everything in our area this year.

Southglade All-Stars travelled to Hull to play in a three-team Invitation Tournament against Menwith Hill and Humberside. They beat Menwith Hill 7 - 0 in their first game. Humberside then played the Menwith Hill team, winning 7 - 2. The final game between Humberside and Southglade proved to be quite a battle, with Southglade trailing 5 - 4 after three innings. However they played themselves back into the game to win 9 - 5 and lift the Eagle Trophy. Mark Callahan - Southglade's pitcher - won the Player of the Day Award.

The Senior League has fared rather better, with six teams in membership, five of whom have managed to fulfil their fixtures so far - Southglade Hornets, Southglade Pirates, Arnold Astros, Birmingham Royals and Newark Giants - the sixth team, Boston Gladiators, are struggling for numbers but, at least, they play whenever they can and hope to build for the future.

Southglade Hornets are at the top of the Senior League, not having lost a game, followed by Southglade Pirates then Arnold Astros. The improvement in the Astros team this year is very encouraging and, at this rate, they will shortly be posing quite a few problems for their opponents.

Sheila Williams.

HUMBERSIDE by Terry O'Brien.

This season the Hull & District Baseball League has expanded to eight teams with the inclusion of teams from Monk Bretton near Barnsley, Hull Mariners and Albemarle Pumas. These new teams added to the four Hull clubs: Giants, Mets, Royals and Warriors, and the Americans of Menwith Hill Station, Harrogate, have gone towards a very competitive league. Hull Mets have again beaten a Liverpool club in the British Cup, and have been drawn to play away to Crawley Giants in the semi-final. The other semi-final pits Southglade Hornets against Liverpool Trojans; both semi-finals must be played by 28th. July.

The Hull League games are now much tighter with playing standards improving all the time. The expansion of the league has put pressure on the clubs in that, with the retirement from umpiring of myself and Harry Clutterbuck, two players from each team have to umpire, leaving the team managers short for their selections.

At the end of April a weekend clinic was held in Hull, to instruct those participating in the mechanics of umpiring, Ted Thesingh came up from Worcester to conduct the clinic, which was

a great success. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ted Thesingh for taking the clinic, and Alan Wilson for putting Ted up for the weekend.

A fortnightly discussion on the rules is held at Hull Aces Club, Newbridge Road on alternate Thursdays, all are welcome to attend, contact Hull Aces for dates.

The next issue of Baseball Mercury should appear in November. Subscription for four issues is £1. Subscriptions should be made payable to William Morgan. Subscriptions and any items for publication should be sent to the editor.

NORTH WEST AMERICAN BASEBALL - SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

We are now well into our season, and at this time the Burtonwood Braves lead the league, having won every game they have played. Burtonwood are closely followed by Crawford Tigers, a game behind, and Trojans, two games behind.

Our season opener was a one day event, the Artco Trophy Tournament, this was won by the Braves. We had something of a reconstructed league for the start of this season. Firstly, a new team was entered, the Journal of Commerce "Tornados"(Litherland); and secondly, the Mersey Monarchs moved to Southport and with the addition of many new members, are now known as the Sefton Mets.

The addition of the Tornados would have increased our league to seven teams, but for the unfortunate and unhappy circumstances in respect of Garringtons, Bromsgrove. This old established club, following a fine and suspension on their manager Bill Casey, declined to re-enter our league, and then apparently disbanded. It was never intended or envisaged that a nominal disciplinary measure imposed for bad behaviour would lead to the loss of a team with such a long history as the Dodgers. Their disbandment is deeply regretted by the members of our association. Attempts were made to persuade Bill Casey to reconsider his decision, but to no avail.

This season we have been asked by an organisation named "Fringe Ltd." to stage a couple of All Star games, one at Kirby Stadium on the evening of June 28th, the other on Sunday, June 30th. at Bootle Stadium. The first game to be the North West v. Venezuelan Stars, and the second is to be, the North West v. U.S. Army. Fringe Ltd. are a commercial organisation, who staged and promoted several events in connection with the 1984 Liverpool Festival. The firm is continuing to promote events with assistance from the Manpower Service Commission.

We are also staging a game at an All American Day at Arrowe Park, Birkenhead, to coincide with the American Independence Day celebrations. Also on the programme are an American football game, a rodeo, Country and Western bands etc. This celebration will be held on Sunday, 7th. July.

League standings to date are:-

Team	Played	Won	Lost	%
Braves	5	5	0	1.000
Tigers	5	4	1	.800
Trojans	5	3	2	.600
Tornados	5	2	3	.400
Mets	5	1	4	.200
Giants	5	0	5	.000

Junior Baseball, this year has lost one team and gained another. Skelmersdale Twins failed for want of a manager and officials.

The new team, Rainford Bees, fortunately allowed us to maintain last season's total of five teams. The 1984 champions, Ince Blundell Freebirds, became Litherland Freebirds, the majority of last year's team, now too old for Ponyball, went to form the Journal of Commerce Tornados(Litherland). At present Ashurst Aces lead the division.

Ladies' Softball, had promise at the beginning of the season, of operating with six teams. However, before the first call was thrown, we learned that neither of the Hull teams would be joining the league, and that the Manchester based Sale Strikers were unable to raise a side this year.

Attempts to include a team from Menwith Hill failed. Blue Caps got a team together using girls from a Litherland Senior School; this gave us a league of four teams. Last week, due mainly to examinations, the Blue Caps withdrew, so we are continuing with a three team league until such time as we can obtain further entries.

Southport Squaws, who have supplied two players to the national squad, are host to a team from Connecticut, U.S.A. in July. It is hoped that TV coverage of World Games II softball in London, will trigger off a greater interest in this game, which we now feel up here, needs only the right kind of publicity, to really take off.

AN N.B.A. MEDAL.

Last week I received a letter and a photograph of a medal, these items seem to have gone astray for more than twelve months. The letter was from a Mr. Eric Douglass who said that his father, Fred Douglass, had won it as a cup winners medal at a game at the Derby Baseball Ground in the late eighteen hundreds. He requested details of the event; he also stated that his uncle James Douglass was the pitcher of the Middlesbrough team, while his father played catcher. Unfortunately for Mr. Douglass, I had to write that in fact it was a medal given to the members of the losing team in The N.B.A. Cup Final of 1897, the result being Derby 30 - Middlesbrough 7. The medal was silver and enamel; the members of the cup winning team were given gold medals. I was able to give him a page full report of the game which was published in a Derby newspaper of the time. I also checked on the Middlesbrough team which won the N.B.A. Cup in 1892, just in case he had confused the year and venue. However, of the 1892 team, none were named Douglass. In fact only one player, McReddie, a well known soccer player of the era, played for Middlesbrough in both cup finals; he was catcher in 1892, and short stop in 1897.

This week I have received a letter from a gentleman concerning a bat and a quantity of balls received from the estate of his father-in-law. It would be quite obvious to almost anyone from the Cardiff or Newport areas as to what the items were. Indeed the imprints on both items are quite clear. The bat was made by a firm, Wainwright of Leeds, and bears the mark of approval of the Welsh Baseball Union. The balls were made by Spaldings, U.S.A., and bear the imprint "made for the Welsh Baseball Union". His father-in-law was involved in organising a baseball league in the South Wales Valleys in the period around 1925.

SOFTBALL.

In issue No. 38. I dealt with the formation of the South of England Softball Association, and the problems involved with British participation in World Games II.

This year the S.E.S.A. has expanded to 50 men's teams, and 18 women's. The women's teams operate in two divisions. The men's in

several, including a first division, regionalised into two sections, and a second division split into mid-week and weekend sections.

The British Women's softball team was arrived at after a series of try-outs. The players were drawn from the South, the Midlands, and Merseyside. Having been selected they had to attend a number of practice sessions. The team consisted of eight British nationals, and others from Canada, U.S.A., Australia, New Zealand, Colombia, Malta, and Ireland.

The team went to The Netherlands over the Spring Bank Holiday, members had to cover their own travel and hotel costs. They had to economise as much as possible, and had to stay in a sailing school. This was far from ideal, as there was no sound insulation, and the place was so noisy that players found it almost impossible to sleep. Four games were played, two versus Hilversum, one of which was lost by only two runs, and one each versus Zuidvogels and H.C.A.W. The party was very impressed by the hospitality of the Dutch clubs. The speed of the pitching in these games amazed the British team, none of them had faced pitching of such speed and accuracy. In hitting and fielding the British team did quite well. The Dutch officials were impressed by the way the British players fought to the last out.

The British Women's team may play Belgium in London on 31st. July; and they have been invited to take part in a tournament at Utrecht on 17/18 August.

C.E.B.A. 1984

<u>Country</u>	<u>No. of Players</u>	<u>National Champions</u>
Italy	36,943	Fortitudo Beca Carni (Bologna)
Netherlands	11,527	Haarlem Nicols
Spain	5,210	Viladecans
France	4,525	Paris Universite Club
West Germany	1,550	Mannheim Tornados II
Belgium	1,290	Royal Antwerp Eagles
Sweden	549	Sundyberg
Yugoslavia	469	Zajcki (Ljubljana)
Great Britain	414	British Cup Winners - Hull Mets
Malta	439	
Czechoslovakia	352	T.J.Kovo Praha
Tunisia	310	A.S.M. Bizerte
Poland	296	H.S. Silesia Rybnik I
Switzerland	180	Ceresio
San Marino	164	Polis. Sanm. Titano (Dogana)
Finland	160	Puumat
Denmark	71	
Austria	60	

NORTHERN BASEBALL ASSOCIATION.

Thanks to spadework by Bill Smurthwaite a small league has emerged on Tyneside; league secretary is Neil Carmichael who is employed by the North Tyneside Recreational & Amenities Department, George Street, North Shields NE30 1EL. Four teams are competing at present - Whitley Bay Blackadders, North Shields Chargers, Hexham Hellcats and Wearside Hornets (Houghton-le-Spring).

The game at amateur level was played in the area in the 1890's, indeed Wallsend-on-Tyne won the National Baseball Association Cup in 1896. Some of the other clubs which played in the Northumberland and North Durham Baseball Association of that time were City of Newcastle, Elswick Works, Walker-on-Tyne, Clara Vale.