

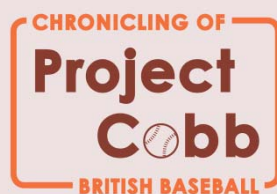
BASEBALL Mercury.

Issue 9

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

April 1975

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BASEBALL Mercury.

No.9. APRIL 1975.

1974 ON MERSEYSIDE by Norman Wells.

We started 1974 with great hopes - nine teams, possibly ten, everything looked good, until we got the first bad news, that Stretford Saints, a team of twenty years or more, had disbanded, apparently for good. This was the last remaining team in the Manchester area, and their folding was a bitter pill to swallow.

However we started the league with eight clubs due to Bromsgrove and Nottingham Lions entering our set up. We also were graced with two new sides. Birkdale Bootleggers a young side managed by enthusiast John Bennett - and Birkdale Royals. Royals were a good team comprising a few experienced players and some quick learning beginners under the able coaching of E. James Snr., and the management of E. James Jnr.

We eventually completed the season despite bad weather and too many conceded games. The conceded games were partly due to travel difficulties and the great increases in travel expenses.

Our League Champions were Liverpool Trojans with 24 points, followed by 2nd. Nottingham Lions - 20pts., 3rd. Birkdale Royals - 18pts., 3rd. NALGO Tigers - 18pts., 5th. Burtonwood U.S. Army - 14pts., 6th. Otis Dynamos - 10pts., 7th. Bromsgrove Dodgers - 6pts., 8th. Birkdale Bootleggers - 2pts.
Lancashire Cup Winners - Birkdale Royals.
Artco Trophy Winners - Liverpool Trojans.

The Robertson One Day Tournament was held over, and will be the first event of the 1975 season; we had to hold it over as it was postponed twice due to bad weather.

Player of the Year - Don Hems (Burtonwood). Pitching Award - Arthur Bolton (Trojans). Home Run Award - Don Hems (Burtonwood). Most Improved Player Award - Phil van Hoff (Royals). Rookie Award - C. White (Bootleggers). Merit Award - E. James Sr. (Royals).

The Merseyside Select team - named Liverpool Giants - was quite successful, winning the Kosta Trophy Tournament at Thames Board Mills, and the Orford Trophy at Bromsgrove.

We suffered a set back with our strongest possible outfit at the hands of the Italian touring team at Hull being beaten 15 to 1. We were outclassed in every department. The game drove home to us, the vast difference between the standard of our game and that played in Italy.

So much for last season, looking to the coming one - well, Burtonwood seems a doubtful starter, but we do have yet another side developing in Southport. Financially we are sound and keenness still abounds in the executive.

I will finish with some remarks about three clubs - one, Birkdale Royals had a great first season, ably managed and well disciplined. Two, the Bootleggers, all new to the game, but definitely a team of the future. Lastly a word of tribute to Nottingham Lions, who have been a well organised and ordered team, complying to the letter T., with the rules and regulations, they made the job of League Secretary much easier.

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The next issue of Baseball Mercury should appear in August. Subscription for four issues is 30p. P.O.'s. and all correspondence should be sent to William Morgan, 89 Sterndale Road, Hammersmith, London, W.14.

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Many thanks to Hillerich & Bradsby Co., Louisville, Ky., for their generous gift of a pair of special commemorative bats made to celebrate the 1974 World Series. These bats are black, one carries facsimile signatures of the players and officials of the World Champions Oakland Athletics, the other is similarly adorned with signatures of the National League Champions, Los Angeles Dodgers.

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C.E.B.A. by Roger C. Panaye.

The Dutch Federation has decided to join F.E.M.B.A.

The European Championships will be played this year from the 25th. July to 3rd. August at Barcelona (Spain).

Five countries are already qualified to participate in this tournament, Belgium, which had qualified, decided not to send a team. Consequently, to fill the space vacated by Belgium, C.E.B.A. decided that England and West Germany, both of whom had previously been eliminated, should play a game to decide which country should fill the vacancy.

The tournament will be played in two pools. Pool A: Holland, France, and either West Germany or England. Pool B: Spain, Italy, and Sweden. From 25th. July the elimination games will be played. 28th. July will be a rest day. 29th July to 3rd. August 5 games will be played between the first classified of each pool - 5 games between the second classified, and 3 games between the last classified of each pool.

During the Championships C.E.B.A. intends to organise a clinic for European umpires.

The Executive Committee plans more intensive contacts with Poland, Yugoslavia, Malta, and Switzerland.

This year a new rule has been made for the European Cup competition. The cup will be played in two stages, preliminary and final. The preliminary stage will be played on a week-end in the month of June in one city, in two pools (A and B) one game to be played in a round robin. The final will be on a week-end in September, with the first place teams from pools A and B meeting in a single game.

Mannheim (West Germany) will be the scene of the European Championships for Juniors under 19 years of age, and for Juniors between 13 and 15 years of age. These tournaments will take place in the last week of June and the first week of July 1975.

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FEMBA 2nd. WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS.

The U.S.A. was host to this tournament which was staged between 13th. and 23rd. November 1974 in Florida. The games were played in the spring training homes of several major league clubs, St. Petersburg (Cardinals and Mets), Tampa (Reds), Bradenton (Phillies), Sarasota (Twins), and Lakeland (Tigers). One tie game was played, a nine innings 6 - 6 game between U.S.A. and Nicaragua, called on account of darkness. At the end of the planned series of games these two countries finished in a tie for first place with 7 wins and 1 tie apiece. They then went into a best of three play-off. Nicaragua won the opening game of the play-off 3 - 1, but the U.S.A. won the title with two wins 4 - 3, and 9 - 2.

Standings.

	Won	Lost	Tied
U.S.A.	9	1	1
Nicaragua	8	2	1
Colombia	5	3	0
Dominican Republic	3	5	0
Canada	3	5	0
Puerto Rico	3	5	0
Italy	3	5	0
Taiwan	3	5	0
South Africa	1	7	0

Game results.

U.S.A. - Dominican Rep. 10 - 0; Taiwan - Puerto Rico 6 - 0; Canada - Italy 6 - 2; South Africa - Nicaragua 2 - 11; Dom. Rep. - S. Africa 11 - 1; Colombia - Italy 7 - 1; Nicaragua - P. Rico 5 - 0; U.S.A. - Taiwan 3 - 2; Italy - S. Africa 3 - 4 (10 inns.); Canada - Taiwan 7 - 6 (11 inns.); Dom. Rep. - Colombia 5 - 0; U.S.A. - Nicaragua 6 - 6 (called through darkness); Dom. Rep. - Italy 2 - 3; P. Rico - Canada 6 - 5; Colombia - S. Africa 10 - 0 (8 inns.); Taiwan - Nicaragua 1 - 5; Italy - Taiwan 6 - 3; U.S.A. - S. Africa 11 - 1; Dom. Rep. - P. Rico 2 - 7; Colombia - Canada 14 - 5; Nicaragua - Italy 6 - 0; Taiwan - Colombia 2 - 5; Canada - Dom. Rep. 11 - 12; P. Rico - U.S.A. 0 - 9; P. Rico - Colombia 1 - 6; Dom. Rep. - Nicaragua 3 - 7; S. Africa - Canada 3 - 5; Italy - U.S.A. 0 - 8; Italy - P. Rico 8 - 3; U.S.A. - Colombia 7 - 1; S. Africa - Taiwan 0 - 10 (8 inns.); Nicaragua - Canada 5 - 4; P. Rico - S. Africa 14 - 1 (7 inns.) Taiwan - Dom. Rep. 4 - 2; Canada - U.S.A. 1 - 12; Colombia - Nicaragua 1 - 6.

This was the first World Amateur Championships to have all its umpires professionals. The next FIMBA World Championships will take place in Taiwan in 1976.

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BELGIUM.

West Germany is to play two games versus Belgium on 28th. and 29th. June at Antwerp.

2nd. baseman Marcel Marter (Bell) was selected by Belgian baseball writers as the best international of 1974.

Belgium's oldest club, Royal Antwerp B.C. (formed 1923) has amalgamated with Bus Fruit (formerly Rizla) Eagles. The new club has found a sponsor and will play as Scaldia Shipping.

30 senior teams will play in the baseball and softball competitions this season. The women's teams, 7 plus the Dutch club Zeeuwse Honk will play 14 games each, as against only 6 games each in 1974. In the premier baseball competition each club will play 20 games.

Three additional clubs have formed women's softball teams this year, Berchem, Brasschaat, and Borgerhout.

The executive of the Belgian Baseball & Softball Federation has decided that it will not send a team to compete in the European Championships at Barcelona. The two major factors leading to this decision were (a) when applying for a subsidy to the national body which distributes such funds the BBSF was informed that the sum which would be granted fell far below what the cost of the trip would be; (b) the national coach, Jos Robyn and his assistants Roger Switser and Rene Cockx, decided that the present international team is nothing like strong enough to put up a good performance in the tournament. Above all Belgium lacks pitching strength. Apparently, not one of the Belgian pitchers could pitch a nine-innings game in this class of competition.

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HUMBERSIDE.

Don Smallwood has kindly sent to me a document running to three foolscap pages headed "Proposed Scheme for the Furtherance of Baseball", which I will summarize. The idea is to try this pilot scheme in Hull, beginning with East Hull. If successful in Hull, then baseball will have some leverage when approaching the Sports Council for grant aid to put the scheme into practice in other cities.

The pilot scheme will have a main target of establishing baseball in schools, to enable this to be effective the task would have to start in January, and to give any indication of effect would have to run right through the summer months. To give maximum publicity to the scheme three exhibition games will take place within a specified time during the 1975 season. The U.S. Services based in this country will be asked for technical help, but overall supervision of the pilot scheme will be directed by present controlling bodies of the sport in this area. To enable sufficient numbers of schools players to be coached, a crash course on coaching will be aimed at present players to enable them to undertake teaching basics to any newcomers. Each avenue of attack will be led by a co-ordinator, assisted by a sub-committee. Overall Co-ordinator - Don Smallwood; Schools Baseball - Mrs. D. Megson; U.S. Services Help - Mrs. V. Jarvis; Exhibition Games - C. Megson; Coaching - L. Pettit; Publicity - Don Smallwood.

The outlined time table was :-

January - Launching of schools programme, helped by a publicised film show of the World Series, and distribution of leaflets, plus any publicity obtainable from local press/radio/TV.

May - Launching of the Coaching Association's regular weekly "Teach-In" directed at all age groups, and supported by a further film show.

June-July-August - One exhibition game a month, given good publicity in the schools, and aiming at the best possible standard of baseball.

September - A closing "Baseball Forum" to discuss the progress made and ensure a "Follow-up" programme is planned.

Following are some financial forecasts for each target area.

Schools Baseball. Work would start in the East Hull area, from there moving into North Hull and West Hull, it is also envisaged that the plan will operate in South Humberside if any response comes from across the river. A pool of eight coaches is planned, each of whom would be equipped with a basic stock of equipment. Costs ; 4 dozen indoor baseballs £72; 4 dozen baseballs £72; 24 bats £48; 48 gloves £380; Total £572.

Exhibition Games. Would be arranged with a minimum of expenditure, but a sum of £20 would be allocated to publicising each game. Total £60.

Coaching. The whole scheme rests on having a sufficient number of coaches.

Expenditure would be in two parts. First, equipment required to stage a weekly

coaching class for all ages; second, travel costs arising from sending coaches into other parts of the area. For equipment, quantities as for the schools programme would be adequate. Equipment £572; Travel £150. Total £722.

U.S. Services Help. Transport of Films, hire of halls, and expenses for visit by an American coach £30.

Publicity. Volunteers willing to give time will be the greatest need. Most of the expense would be incurred in producing a brochure explaining the scheme, and introducing the sport to people who know nothing about it. 2,000 brochures are planned. Printing and postage costs would be £100.

Total expenditure for the scheme would be £1,484; I am informed that the Sports Council has granted £1,100 of this total already, and that the balance is expected to be granted later this year.

All readers will agree that this is a most promising development, particularly bearing in mind the poverty stricken state of the game for many years past.

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B.A.B.F.

In the weeks leading up to the second Annual General Meeting of the British Amateur Baseball Federation, Mr. Myron Ferentz, an American who has formed a company to supply baseball equipment, took the initiative in calling a meeting aimed at getting the warring factions in British baseball to sit around a table and attempt to sink their differences, the meeting in question was also attended by John Caskey, Secretary of the British Softball Federation.

As a result of this preliminary work by Myron Ferentz, the second A.G.M. of the B.A.B.F. was attended by representatives of the Southeast, Midlands, Merseyside, and Humberside areas; the first time since 1969 that all areas had attended a meeting at the same time. Among clubs represented were Liverpool NAIGO Tigers, Birkdale Bootleggers, Bromsgrove Dodgers, Hull Aces, Hull Royals, Hull Mustangs, Sutton Braves, Nottingham Lions, Southglade Hornets, Spinney Saints, and Clifton Cougars. The meeting was held at the Carlton Forum, Nottingham on Sunday, 9th. March.

The most promising development since last year's meeting was the emergence of three new teams in Nottingham, Hornets, Saints, and Cougars; Hornets, and Cougars consisting of 13 to 16 year old players, Saints of 15 to 19 year olds. As Nottingham has had only one team since about 1967, this is a great step forward.

The officers of the B.A.B.F. were re-elected, they are as follows:-
Chairman - Clive Megson. Vice-Chairman - Mike Harrold. Secretary - Don Smallwood. Treasurer - Mrs. V. Jarvis. A special vote of thanks was given to Mrs. Jarvis for the tremendous fund-raising undertaken by her last year. Taking over with about £7 in hand, sufficient money was raised to spend about £500 on sending a British team to Sweden, and still leave a balance of about £90 in hand.

As a result of Belgium's decision not to send a team to the European Championships at Barcelona, the B.A.B.F. had been invited to meet West Germany in a game to decide which country would replace Belgium. Originally, C.E.B.A. had suggested that this game could be played in Antwerp. However, West Germany had written stating that they wished to play in London, and wished the B.A.B.F. to cover hotel and meal expenses for a party of 15. There was considerable discussion re. the advisability of playing for a place at Barcelona. Don Smallwood suggested that to stage the game versus West Germany might cost about £250, and if successful, the British team might then face a bill of possibly £1,500 to £2,000 to travel to Barcelona. The Sports Council might pay up to 65% of the cost of the latter venture, but everything was very uncertain. Opinions were voiced for and against going ahead with the venture. When the motion to play the game against West Germany was put to the vote, it was carried without any dissent.

Robert Garrod as the Secretary of the Southeast was requested to undertake all arrangements to play the game somewhere in the London area on the week-end of 10th/11th. May. Al Wright, Manager of Sutton Braves was elected Manager of the British team, and immediately set in motion plans to have work-outs with contenders for places on the British team. Al, an American, hailing from Omaha, Nebraska, was disappointed to learn that he was not eligible to play in the European Championships, but is throwing himself with tremendous enthusiasm into recruiting and coaching a team that will first beat West Germany, and then hopefully, will travel to Barcelona and give a good account of itself in the Championship Tournament.