

INTERVIEW::: Ross Kendrick, in Birmingham, October 25th

immaculately groomed, immaculately decorated house, chewing gum, (jacket and tie), nose a half step to his left (playing hockey broke it, didn't get it set because shortly after he got it broke again from the other side and he thought it straightened things out.) teeth spread a bit, graying but not gray hair, fit. 62 years old.

And eager to talk about the ~~gl~~ glory days. A wealth of detail: names, dates, scores of close games, people places.

In mid thirties the Pro leagues started.

John Moores, with three brothers, bought a near defunct mail order house, Littlewoods ~~and~~ (reputedly for £100) and breathed life into it as well as making it a pools outfit --born Rochdale

John Moores had a friend in US and (supposedly) bet him that he could put baseball on in England.

So Moores, a man called Rigby (Bradford Wireworks) and L.D. Wood (a refrigeration magnate) started it, together, dividing the country: Moores ran bb in Lancashire, Rigby in Yorkshire, and Wood in London Area

first year was in 1936. The principle was to import a nucleus of Canadian and Americans ~~to~~ "to teach and introduce" the game. The first year the London branch did better than the others.

Ross Kendrick (born, by subtraction, in 1909) in Canada and played in mid thirties for Smith Falls Ontario in the ~~the~~ Canadian American League. Squabble about status, but finally it was declared a semi-pro team (they were getting paid for playing - this was 1935, 1936) and he decided to stay with it and take the money because there wasn't any other work in Canada or the US.
- also played for International Nickel co in Nickelbury League in Sudbury Ontario. technically member of the mining co, but paid to play baseball

At any rate in spring of '37 ~~the~~ a son of the man who was running Smith Falls, acted as middle man to bring 4 players across. They got weekly wage plus return passage. He went on April 23rd and was to be paid £5 per week (though the average was 3, those pounds were worth \$4.86 - and it was 1937)

Kendrick went to York City for the first year. Played and taught. By '37 things were going well in the north. The nucleus of players were north american but there were a lot of british too.

He stayed the winter and taught baseball in schools in cities - York, Leeds and Halifax.

- 1937 there were 14, 15 teams in north (and Hull wiped up everything

RK - 2

Though only started well in North in 36, in Hull, in 1937 the dockers really caught on, and they drew big crowds - even big enough to turn people away (RK members 2000 away from Craven pk)

By the summer of 1938 "thing ~~were~~ not so good for us" n ams they had been playing american rules but the people running the game started mucking about, wanting to change the rules etc. so some guy in Leeds, seeing there were some cities where the game was drawing well, started the International League and signed most ~~of~~ the good can-ams. Lasted a couple of months, and the National league took them back.

June '38 RK to Oldham.

1938
27/2
While with Oldham, He was picked to play a team from America: brought over by Les Mann of the Red Sox and described as pick of the amateurs of 34 states. Shall we say "amateurs". included a 20 year old Dean Graff (who went next year to catch for the Chicago Cubs and ...

RK, said the headlines, "beats the US at its own game." great tense game. Pitched Saturday, Thursday, then relief Fri and Sat.

Good strong arm, was terrifically fit in those days. When came to relieve the last Sat Les Mann came to him and said: you sure you want to do this, you got a good strong arm, be shame to hurt it, or some such words. They got a run off him that last Saturday, the only run they got the whole series off him.

It's hard to say just how good that team was, but they were pretty good.

R members a day in 1937, pitching for York against Hull when he and Lefty Wilson (a plucky southpaw from Carolina leagues) got 45 strikeouts between them) 2-0 game (I) forget who won.

He could throw hard in those days. but he had a breaking ball that broke fast, about 8 feet out, out and down. Recalls with pride batters from states, eg triple A player with Les Mann, saying how glad they were that they'd never had to play against him again.

1939 played for Bradford. a poor team, though he has a set of clippings reading "Kendrick stars against old team" when B'fd beat Oldham.

High point of Bradford year::: when Don and Herb Mills played ~~for~~ a couple of games for them (Pop Mills was getting on even then) and Harry was too big to find a uniform for --there was allowance in the Nat'l league for the fielding of amateurs (not unlike, I suppose, amateur jockeys here, or the way am golfers can play in some tourneys with pros

--There was an all amateur team - in Rochdale, where there was (is?) a permanent Mormon mission, the center of the mormon missionary work in Britain. They fielded a team reguarly in the Nat'l league.

- "they beat us in 1938 in the all england cup, 1-0. we had an english firstbaseman and if we'd had a canadian or american on first we would have won, I'm sure. But this guy (gave name~~x~~ and says he'll still tell you ~~a~~ about it, he knows what to do now...) didn't know how to stand on first and he let ~~a~~ runner hit him and knock the Ball away and that let a runner score from second.--

The pre-war baseball was good. better than the class D of the Canadian American league, and the all england team would have taken a lot of beating

An american batter is a waist to letters hitter. and he knows, if he's good, how to follow a ball ~~na~~ that's breaking-he'll watch the ball onto the bat.

An english batter is a low ball hitter, thats because of the cricket stroke he learns in school

Similarly, if a man was from western canada, we knew he wasn't as likely to be as good because he woouldn't have played against very good quality teams (now your western canadian can play hockey...)

'39, an anateur tourney in cuba that got put off because of imminent war, and ultimately the british team didn't go (orig 21 teams) "the colored boy can really play ball" - when he sets his mind to it, and especially in the hot weather, because he's loose. (!) --Cuba won it--

During war played against service teams. Egin Birm, the whittinton(?) barracks (2 barracks, 1 black 1 white) with a CO who was fanatic baseball fan and who kept good ball players there (his classification officer was an ex ~~xxxx~~ major leaguer...) learned about the ~~xxx~~ routine from a guy called Roberge who was a utility infielder with the ~~Kx~~ then Boston Braves. Why don't you do any training? If we play ball, we're ok, but if we don't, we're shipped~~x~~ out by the following friday. (a col Kellam, 10th replacement depot. the col was later courtmartialled for brutality, or something) remembers a 3 game series against this team. he lost 7-2 the fisrt game and that's the closest they ~~ame~~ to bezting them. (1944)

after was played with Swinton in the Manchester league (46,47 then in ~~x~~ 48 decided to setup his own team, ~~xxx~~ in Bham, the Beavers 1 or two Ams, 2 or 3 Cans, Bham league. (49 some players left to form thêir own team. *Don Raffles in winter etc.* Beavers ran for 10 years or so, but too many of the young players were ~~xxxxx~~ coing from the pub in no fit condition to play.

then he missed a year, and then came to Bromsgrove (they have a permanent mound and backstop. It's the Garrington works team, t'would seem

~~xxxxxx~~ Desmond Hackett, Daily Express

700 amateur teams in Britain by 1939

Dean Graff, Cub catcher

season about 1st of May to early September

--suggest a British, or European minor league... (but ignore question of weather)

No European baseball then, to best of his knowledge

--two years ago, missed leading the league in batting average (to Fitz) by a few fractions. can still put the bat on the ball as well as he could, but what used to go out of the park now ~~only~~ only goes out of the infield. Also pitched a game last year, 9 innings with not aches and pains, but you can't get away with that very often. Still plays (another year or two - where have we heard that before Hoyt?) He's 62 now. Makes Hoyt Wilhelm look like a kid

followed world series every year - till this - on radio. talked about the best players he ever "heard" (ever see a major league game???) Cobb, and lefty Grove were the best he never heard.

till 2 or three years ago the now London league was all apart of the "National league", but, according to RK, London has to have ~~him~~ in s their way, and when a man from Liverpool was elected pres, they pulled out. sorry, elected, commissioner of baseball.

Derby county been called The Baseball ground for 50 or 60 years.

Alan Asquith - good fastball, but curve is slow. Nice ball player.
- they have a good catcher, King, at Liverpool, quick, and has a good arm

PA-1

November 8, 1971 conversation with Peter Ash (his home)

lot of links between soccer and baseball, especially in their early days here.

EG. Derby, a lot of sthe soccer players played BB in the summer, he made a check of the side that won the cup in _____ and 6 of the 9 were soccer players and two were soccer internationals

_____ even in the 1950's they drew ~~in~~ 1600 at Craven Park.

_____ 1909 Spalding Guide to English Baseball. the ~~SECRET~~ secretary (or what?) complained of the number of players playing in Bowler hats.

_____ 1906: in london area Brit BB League, Tottenham, Arsenal, Fulham, Brentford

_____ Pop Lewis of Chipping Norton notes haing watched a game at Stamford Bridge (Chelsea) in 1913
record 1917 of game at Stam Br "in honorof our american visitors"
Oxford U had team in 1930's
etc:

_____ NET CONTENTION that baseball has been played continuously, without break, in England since 1889

30's, John Moores and NBA

London, 1933 the NBA formed

35, NewLondon (the Mormons) beat Rochedale

36 London counties challenge cup, "Open" baseball (pro am)

36 because all London (challenge cup?)

White city beat Catford Saints

361-- "London Major Baseball League"

East London League (amateurs) founded 1935, been going ever since

37 Metropolitan baseball league formed

west London league, also prewar

--3 am leagues

no hum

Peter Ash:

as kid? liked to build and fly model planes (lived in or nr Barnet). One day one really took off (to Tottridge?) about 5 miles and landed in a corn field (wheat?). While retrieving it, became aware of a lot of noise, found people playing a peculiar game with maybe 1000 people watching. went back 2 weeks later, gradually got invited to play by someone who recognized that he had come around frequently etc.

1949 started playing, been playing ever since, 51, 52 started running a club (I gather, around 53 went into service, air force?)

Trouble with English baseball, people have always tried to run it from the top, come in, organized the existing teams, with little concern for the security of the existence of those teams, clubs have had very little in the way of firm foundations, eg, out of 18 teams

extent in 1949 when (I) started, only two have survived, Bechenham Blue Jays, and 1 work's team

One of differences here, which had made problems: there is no such thing as team sponsorship. There are works teams, industrial teams, but no industrial sponsors of otherwise unaffiliated teams, specifically, of teams whose members are not employees

Continuity since prewar:

London Am senior league, 1937-38

Natl BB assn, reformed as the Baseball Association (prob using "natl")

2(?) leagues in london(as above) , Birm, Mott, Hull, Manch,

Merseyside lg(1poo?)

1952 (rel boom time-nb mags) WLon league 18 teams, ELon lg 14

then Manch and Mott disappeared, The BB Assn Ltd wound up, 1955
indiv teams scrambled

1958 British Baseball Federation Formed, "soon hit snags"

1963 National Baseball league formed which became members of
the British Baseball Association (formed 1965)

((in south there were about 18 teams, from a total of 32 ten years before))

National Baseball League "a laudable idea" - Don Smallwood's but where
the idea part of it came in, I dont know

PA-4

Hull league (1949-13 senior, 5 junior, 3 ladies teams to 1963, about 4 teams.) Smallwood's idea, a Nat'l league in which the best teams in the country play each other (presumably the notion is that outside blood would stimulate not only player interest, but spectator interest. Fair enough.

But London's position was diff from Hulls, 18 teams instead of 4, the question is, is it worth a 400 mile round trip to play in Hull?

Well, list Nat'l league went to Midland and Northern teams only. then grew to include virtually all southern teams as well because of an inefficient secretary (!) When that happened, the Nat'l BB Assn (Smallwood^{sec}) withdrew from the British Baseball Assn (ash sec) then southern clubs all withdrew from the Nat'l baseball league

last time southern clubs competed in Nat'l league was ~~1944~~ 1969, Thames Board Mills won the league, Watford won the cup.

at present then, two leagues (National baseball league and the baseball association of Great Britain (apart from local league and misc teams) each has league chase, and a cup system

Ash: DS would rather have 10,000 watch 18 play a game

I would rather have 18 watch 10,000 play.

Sigh.

To get players they advertise, handbill, local papers (dailies too expensive)

Don Smallwood - Wednesday night July 14, 1971. //Don Smallwood
88 Westerdale Grove
Southcoates Lane
Hull::: Tel 72181

About the Hull Aces and English Baseball

History: played baseball in England since played soccer - which is roughly about mid 1800's (same America)

Golden days of English baseball were before WWII: Mores (Moore's?) who are Pools people put £15,000 in mid thirties (and then was good pounds and a lot of money for those days) into establishing a professional baseball league (maybe 8 teams) in the North for summer betting on pools. (football season shorter then - now use Australian football)

It flourished: large crowds etc. eg. Craven Park drew 15,000 people - ~~man~~ fighting to get in - for a Cup final between Hull and?

misc: scandals about padded expense accts.

Professional game killed by the war, though with all publicity, money there was a lot of the game in schools, lots of amateur levels etc.

(NB: Derby County Football Club 1st der - grounds called - The Baseball Ground)
In 46, 47 people started to get the game back. Kids brought up through the Golden Days knew the ~~xx~~ game etc. ((Smallwood: In school I found the equipment in a storage room - a glove, ball, bat - found he could catch the ball better than most other kids, been baseball fanatic ever since. He's 39. "My whole life centers around baseball." If you didn't know different, you'd think he was sane, from appearances...)) And there was some rebuilding on amateur level. No financing, no nowt.

In golden days, every factory had a team, every school played it. Hull has always been a hotbed of baseball.

As it stands now, virtually unknown in schools, but working on that nowadays.

recent times: Smallwood, the coach, and the first baseman ~~xxx~~ are the only three older holdouts from the 40's, and they have for the most part made Aces what they are ...

In 63? 66? wrote to all the known baseball clubs in England to organize a national league. Now exists! Major League. 6 teams (this season, which travel to play each other)

There are three levels of play: Local League (Hull League, Merseyside League, Midlands League, others?); National Cup (an elimination tournament with regional winners - to cut travelling, who then play off against each other in a final cup tourney; and the Major league, which is the six travelling ~~xx~~ teams and the winner is the team with the best record (British Champion Hull Aces...)

For much younger lads, there is a Babe Ruth League (in Hull anyway, though probably not technically affiliated any more) - 4 teams on paper.

big breakthrough in Hull was the aces ground. Adjacent to the xxx project is something now called the Oldham and Kneeshaw grounds several acres, developed by Hull Local Govt (Council). There was one particular seggy: Cyclists wanted a fancy track there. cost 22,000, ~~they~~ weren't willing to pay any (every city has a big track) Aces went to the council and ~~saxxx~~ said, here, we have plans from the New York Mets (man called Cooper?) for a proper field. It'll cost 2,000 pounds, We'll pay half. (apparently unheard of) Council heard it, said yes yes yes. It's the best ground in England. And it is proper. It is encircled by a cinder track (running) banked - but the only thing it doesn't have is outfield fences (in right field there is an artificial hill, very steep which makes the level outfield a bit short, but provides great ~~px~~ bleachers - you just drive up to the top of it (all games are free, but for bigger ones, when they put out chairs, they take a collection, people give nickle of a dime) -- electric scoreboard, little loudspeaker.

That was 5 years ago,. Now thinking of building another one - they made mistakes, unspecified, with this one.

Do play Leconheath Babe Ruth league (last year) etc. One problem is that a lot of the less organized teams rely on leavings from american teams. lot of air force teams, so on.

One thing about Hull, almost no americans, and none playing, or ever played.

How do the ~~xxx~~ learn when they never saw an american coach before 2 years ago (2 here fore 3 weeks now) from Claremont college - good question.

Umpires? Hard, because ... well, there are a few, and they ain't too good

Quality? I would guess @ will ask americans though - pretty good high school.

differences in way they do things: Biggest is throwing - Arm throw, girl throw. No widening up of shoulders, body. Apparently this is ~~a~~ the way they throw in cricket - which is most surprising to me itself. - there is a mound, but it's like a flat top, not gravity aid used by pitchers

Another hangover from cricket: Players have a lot of trouble learning the strike zone - much less able to hit outside pitches, much more inclined to swing at pitches way inside. Reason is again cricket: in cricket you are defending ~~your~~ the area behind your body, more or less. The inside pitch, and low, near dirt level is the best - or a best cricket "pitch" And that's what a kid learned to hit at. Outside - what we call outside - is a safe ball, and you don't get much practice.

As for the strike zone - thinks like swinging and missing are disasters in cricket. You only get one out - or two at most in a game over several days. And, you can do the equivalent of fouling off pitches for ever when taking one strike, or swinging and missing once, can put you out (if the pitch hits the wicket behind the batter) -- the cricket instincts are entirely different - and it's the primary hitting throwing training you get in schools

before it got real organized they played any baseball team they could find. Wrote to them, offerered home and home, or anything (then organized league) Although aces have played versus: Dutch (they've found they're good at it, get govt subsidy, held tourney few weeks ago, 4 days drew 70,000 people) American team from Claremont College went over, won?, Will won best player prized??) Dutch, Belgians twice, South Africans, Xambians (may go there, they have money) ~~Czechs~~ Czechs? (came here, unfortunely at time of Russian invasion, arrive with 1 pound each - put them up, capital fellows, stayed a weeks, may go back) Italians (invited to go to European tourney - ~~pay~~ pay for being there, but have to make their own fare to Italy from Hull, just won't be able to make it.) and so on.

Travelling a social affair. For instance, on coach to away games wives, girl friends, children always come. It's a big day scene. And coming back it works like this: from 6 to 9 (the first baseman, conservative type knows that) they travel towards home, but wherever they are at 9, they stop at ~~the~~ at a pub and drink and sing songs for an hour and a half, before setting ontheri way again.

It's all amateur, and adult. The developing of ~~young~~ young players (and they can come in as young as 16) is done withink the club itslef. There are no separte teams. The way it works is that the Baseball Clubs each field teams in theee different groupings - therefore have digferent scale fixtures, and they use th e local leagues - hre therehull league, for ~~playing~~ playing the kids. Usually.

Being amateur finaincing is a problems: Been solved, at times, in various ways. Now the Aces - the most prosperous and, to be sure, the most aggressive off the fireld - solve it by running a club house. There they run, primarily, bingo games every night, ther profits of which go to run the ~~baseball~~ basevall team. The players take turns running the bingo. 3 each night - except on wednesdays ~~when~~ which is the practice night - which practice also ~~ends~~ ends promptly at 9 for adjournment to the Dolphin. The Aces are the only Hull team tohave a clubhouse as such. The Royals raise money by running Bingo in a school. Priestmans' is a plant team. I donlt know how they finance.

Equipment is a perrennial problems: All of it is foreign, either American or recently Japanese (better, cheaper) or Dutch. W th them all they ~~have~~ have to pay Purchase Tax and Customs duty - which seems outrageous, considering that there are no comparable British Products to be protected (rumors of a british bat maker in the south, are they really made of British Ash exported to EEUU?) Bats 2.50, balls 1.75, cleats 5-67 lbs, glove min 5½ for poor one, Each player pays for his own cleats and gove.

1936: ::: London has 1st professional league - ed from Los Globe
Aug 16 (NYT IV 8:6)

"Poor old England! Her peace is continually threatened with that monster known as "Americanization". Not long ago it was the accents of her citizenry. Both Oxford man and cockney were markedly affected by the talk of the artists in Hollywood. And now ... After gaining considerably foothold in the Provinces the game has reached London in the form of a league of six clubs known collectively as "The London Major League."

The opening drew 14,000 at 1st three games , and another game drew 10,000 by itself.

-----feature article, illus (NYT) Aug 23 VII plo

Times Mag - by Chair Price:

Baseball Bats Crack in Cricket-land. In a typical London setting the American game is played by Britons and cheered by Britons

nb: BBA compulsory sport at Royal Air Force Schools, camps and airdrome

Lond prof league (1st year) 7 teams play every sat and sun
(ref made to the "scratch games of the past)--those born well before the crooning era may remember.....

National baseball association, backed from Liverpools . for the past 3 years been building up a string of professional and amateur leagues in the north. Some players French canadian (French-canadian?), the rest english. Drawing crowds of 2-5000 (av. Crowds are english too.
--they play American rules (in London, Lpool, manch & North)

(there is a game, old english game "more or less related to rounders, two-old-cat or the old town game, played all over wales and a bit in L pool

WELSH BASEBALL: short flatted bat, smaller ball, shorter plate
teamitcher, underhand "jerk" bowling, not four lines, 2 innings, whole
team bats each, woodenpoles for bases, 1 run each base touched
last same time as Amer game, but scores like 104-97

1939 Daily Express July Aug. July 3, Mutton's 10,000th run
along side "3 Kodak players hit home runs"
West London pioneers, 2nd division baseball side etc won
by the "useful" score of 21-17 (beat a 1st div side)

Also published the US baseball results (but not league standings,
which is pretty useless)

There is something grim about ~~xxxxxx~~ combing the papers of 1939,
passing the front pages, filled with hope and despair, with Hitler
and ~~xxxxxxxx~~ Mussolini, ~~xxxxxxxx~~ looking for stories about baseball,
combing the pages for sports news when names like Hitler and Mussolini
keep getting in the way.

1938 Aug 15, 1938 Kendrick's big win against the US 2-0

Aug 19, Henry Armstrong beat [?]Louis Ambers. "one more world
title was snatched from the white race"

sigh.

1936-2

London leaguet his year, Amer rules. --- players uniforms "more violently colored than is absolutely necessary; purple uniforms with orange socks, for example"

(shades of ABA, KC royals?)

season may 1 to aug 31, using dog tracks and motorcycle speedways
(no betting)

though owned by John Moores, 1 of the biggest bookmakers in Liverpool (off track not legal then was it?)

(1933)
Until 3 years ago/Moores ~~is~~ was head of the English Baseball Association which runs the game (English rules) in Wales and Liverpool. When John Moores went on a round the world cruise and reached NY where he "fell among baseball men" who wanted to know why he was "using the name (of baseball) but not the ... game."

"Mr Moores was impressed." he returned to Lpool, and tried to get the Eng BB assn to switch; they refuse; moores left it to form the National Association (or was it Natl BB assn?) to play under american rules.

the theory was to build a stock of English talent.

"Now" - '36 - there are 2,000 registered players with the NBA. many learend BB in Canada, some in US but there are not americans and except for a few Canadians, they're all British. (HONO)

Also the NBA has been pushing "corner lot" baseball to develop talent.

----\$In general there is a missionary atmosphere about the whole operation. Scorecard, eg, is primarily rules, how related to cricket and the mysteries of BB eg how to "squeeze" a man home, how to rattle a pitcher who looks like blowing up etc. "::::and no box score, just lineup and score by innings:
Similarly a constant chatter on a loud speaker, primarily explanations

The Times: Oct 31, 1935

"Babe" Ruth, the American baseball player, stated last night that he was seriously considering an offer made to him to devote his future to helping the establishment of baseball in Britain and other countries. -- REuter.

April 30, 38. record of the record "transfer fee" paid by the Cubs to St. Louis for Dizzy Dean. \$ £37,000 plus 2 pitchers and a fielder. (\$4.86 = £1) approx

it put the transfer ree record for and Eng footballer "in the shade"