

GRAND SLAM

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH BASEBALL FEDERATION – SOUTH



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Welcome to GRAND SLAM – the Official Newsletter of the British Baseball Federation South.

Our involvement as sponsors has shown us the tremendous enthusiasm throughout the country for baseball, and we are convinced that the game will soon be Britain's second summer sport. We will certainly be giving the game our fullest support.

Best wishes to you all for a safe and successful season in 1987.

BOB COE
Managing Director

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Welcome to the first edition of Grand Slam. Straight away I would like to thank Gridiron Sports for coming in and sponsoring the magazine. I am looking forward to working with them during the season, and I am sure that it will be a good relationship.

Grand Slam will be produced every fortnight throughout the season, with the final issue appearing on October 9th, by which time all competitions should be over. The main function of the magazine is to keep you informed of what is going on in British baseball, and to improve communications between the BBFS and the clubs. To make this a two way process, it is vital that you contribute to Grand Slam - news, views, letters, articles, opinions, cartoons, vicious attacks, etc. anything that you think might be of interest to people in baseball. Contributions should be typed, if possible, and reasonably concise. I reserve the right to edit ruthlessly. Feel free also to make suggestions about what you think should be in the magazine. This is the first time I have ever produced a magazine, and I am bound to get it wrong at first. It would be good to have a letters page, and also a noticeboard section, where people could pass on useful information, such as where to get obscure items of equipment, or how to persuade your council to put up a backstop, or whatever.

All copy should be with me by midday Monday of the week of publication; you can call me with an item if necessary. Club Secretaries; if you want extra copies to sell at games, fairs, etc, tell me at least two weeks in advance so that I can get them printed up. Don't forget to phone in your results by midnight on Sunday - I leave the ansaphone on so you can call late if necessary. Please come to an agreement at the end of the game as to the exact score, so I don't get two different versions.

Have a good season, stay healthy, and - hey, hey, - please contribute to Grand Slam :

Muir MacKean.

CONTACTS

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5 Clivedon Close,
Woodside Park. hm.445 9369
London N12. wk.3828618

or: Geoff Mann (Umpires)
12 Elgin Mansions,
Elgin Ave. hm.286 2542
London W9 1LG. wk.703 6311
(ex 2273).



Cash boost for baseball

Baseball in Britain was given its biggest boost since the war yesterday when the Scottish Amicable Insurance Company announced a £300,000 sponsorship over the next three years for the formation of a national league. Six teams will play in the Scottish Amicable League which begins next month.

Although largely considered an American sport, baseball is played in over 60 countries and will be an exhibition sport at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul. In Britain, baseball dates back to 1891, when Preston North End won the first British title. The semi-professional national league in the 1930s collapsed during the War.

Diamond benefit

SIX baseball teams are to play in a national league in Britain following a £300,000 sponsorship agreement with an insurance company, it was announced yesterday. The six teams are: Lancashire Red Sox, Merseyside Trojans, Humber-side Bears, Nottingham Knights, London Warriors, Southern Tigers. They will play in the Scottish Amicable League from May to August.

Venues have yet to be chosen but the League administrator Brad Thompson said they would be football grounds or other major stadiums. He expects crowds at the three matches each Saturday to start at 2,000 and rise to 5,000 by the end of the season.

BASEBALL

Scottish Amicable's investment over three years includes grass roots involvement with the 100-plus teams flourishing in the wake of Channel 4's coverage of the World Series. Thompson said: "It is possible the League could expand to 10 teams."

With the sport exhibiting at the Seoul Olympics next year and achieving competitive status in 1992, the British League will also be a testing ground for would-be medalists. Negotiations are in progress to bring two Major League teams from America to Wembley next year.

BASEBALL English league makes its pitch

Just as the cricketing spring chorus is tuning up, a small rival began to cheer yesterday when British baseball announced its plans for a new national league.

There will only be six teams and not too much of the hoopla which is supposed to accompany American sporting events. This is deliberate: "We hope to get the game to grow in a controlled fashion," said Dop Smallwood, the president of the British Baseball Federation.

Baseball people feel that gridiron and basketball both tried to be too precocious. But Smallwood says he has had applications from over 100 clubs since the televised coverage of the last World Series and there is much optimism that the British game can become a minority sport, rather than a tiny minority sport.

The competing clubs will be the Lancashire Red Sox, Merseyside Trojans, Humber-side Bears, Nottingham Knights, London Warriors and a new London conglomerate, Southern Tigers. There is, alas, no place for the charmingly named Golders Green Sox.

Scottish Amicable, the sport's improbable sponsor, have agreed to put in £300,000 over three years, while American manufacturers have sent over a hundredweight of equipment to get the league going.

Matthew Engel

On April 8th the Scottish Amicable Life Assurance society launched its sponsorship of British baseball with a lavish reception at the Savoy Hotel. With Andy Peebles as MC, the speakers included Don Smallwood, who welcomed Scottish Amicable to baseball, and Brad Thompson who introduced the National League. Of the £100,000 per year for three years of Scottish Amicable money, approximately one third will go straight into British baseball; one half of this sum to the BBF for administration, coaching, running the National team, etc, and one half to the National League. The rest will pay for overheads and TV broadcasts.

The second try-out for the YOUTH COLTS ALL STARS will take place at Rose Hill Park, Sutton, on Sat. May 16th at 11am (third try-out; Rose Hill Park, Sat. May 30th, 11am). The All Stars, who had 18 players at the first try-out on April 26th, are coached by Eelco Wiersma of Crawley Giants, with help from Oscar Marcello of Enfield and Hugh Neffendorf of Sutton. Players from 14 to 16 are eligible (if in doubt, check with Jack Akers, address Page 3). The All Stars will be competing in the Colt County Championships, a four team knock-out competition. First Round; Nottingham, June 6th; Final, Hull, June 20th. The BBFS will be paying the cost of hiring a bus for the competition.

Three teams have folded: Basildon Raiders, (Div. 2, lack of players, hope to be back next year); Colchester Cougars, (Div. 3N, defection of pitcher, hope to be back next year); and the Tulse Hill JB's, (Div. 3S, problems getting ground from council, hope to be back next year). There will be no promotions to fill gaps. Teams available for make-up games include Sutton 2, (Rick D'Alesandro, h.01 643 4335, w. 01 673 0906); Southampton 2, (Trevor Curtis, h. 0703 615502, w. 0962 844433 x 6578); Worthing Warriors (unaffiliated, Simon Kirby, 36 Phrosso Rd, Worthing, Sussex, BN11 5SL, 91 40280).

STANDINGS

FIRST DIVISION

| | W | L | Pct. | GB |
|------------|---|---|-------|----|
| Cobham | 2 | 0 | 1.000 | - |
| Croydon | 2 | 0 | 1.000 | - |
| Crawley | 1 | 1 | .500 | 1 |
| Enfield | 1 | 1 | .500 | 1 |
| Golders Gn | 1 | 1 | .500 | 1 |
| Sutton | 1 | 1 | .500 | 1 |
| Barnes | 0 | 2 | .000 | 2 |
| Gillingham | 0 | 2 | .000 | 2 |

SECOND DIVISION

| | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|-------|---|
| Hounslow Hlrs | 2 | 0 | 1.000 | - |
| Southampton | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | - |
| Waltham Arrows | 1 | 0 | 1.000 | - |
| Croydon BP | 1 | 1 | .500 | 1 |
| Oxshott | 1 | 1 | .500 | 1 |
| Hounslow Hens | 0 | 2 | .000 | 2 |
| Tonbridge | 0 | 2 | .000 | 2 |

THIRD DIVISION (NORTH)

| | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|-------|----|
| Basildon | 2 | 0 | 1.000 | - |
| Hemel RS | 2 | 2 | 1.000 | - |
| Waltham FRR | 1 | 1 | .500 | 1 |
| City Slick | 0 | 1 | .000 | 1½ |
| Hemel Rebels | 0 | 1 | .000 | 1½ |
| Totteridge | 0 | 1 | .000 | 1½ |
| Waltham AS | 0 | 1 | .000 | 1½ |

THIRD DIVISION (SOUTH)

| | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|-------|----|
| Ashford | 2 | 0 | 1.000 | - |
| Crawley | 2 | 2 | 1.000 | - |
| Reading | 2 | 2 | 1.000 | - |
| Arun | 1 | 1 | .500 | 1 |
| Croydon BJ 2 | 1 | 1 | .500 | 1 |
| Brighton | 1 | 2 | .333 | 1½ |
| Burgess Hill | 0 | 2 | .000 | 2 |
| Bournemouth | 0 | 3 | .000 | 2½ |

RESULTS

3 May

| | | | |
|------------|----|------------|----|
| Croydon | 23 | Barnes | 12 |
| Crawley | 3 | Cobham | 5 |
| Golders Gn | 11 | Enfield | 16 |
| Sutton | 29 | Gillingham | 7 |

10 May

| | | | |
|---------|----|------------|----|
| Barnes | 5 | Golders Gn | 8 |
| Cobham | 13 | Sutton | 12 |
| Crawley | 16 | Gillingham | 4 |
| Croydon | 9 | Enfield | 7 |

3 May

| | | | |
|---------------|----|---------------|----|
| Oxshott | 5 | Croydon BP | 9 |
| Hounslow Hlrs | 37 | Hounslow Hens | 3 |
| Tonbridge | 16 | Southampton | 28 |

10 May

| | | | |
|---------------|----|----------------|----|
| Croydon BP | 11 | Hounslow Hlrs | 20 |
| Hounslow Hens | 2 | Oxshott | 40 |
| Tonbridge | 3 | Waltham Arrows | 16 |

3 May

| | | | |
|--------------|----|------------|----|
| City Slick | 9 | Hemel RS | 24 |
| Hemel Rebels | 16 | Waltham RR | 29 |
| Waltham AS | 1 | Basildon | 12 |

10 May

| | | | |
|----------|----|------------|---|
| Basildon | 33 | Totteridge | 5 |
| Hemel RS | 22 | Waltham RR | 1 |

26 April

| | | | |
|--------------|----|-------------|----|
| Brighton | 13 | Ashford | 20 |
| Crawley | 25 | Bournemouth | 20 |
| Croydon BJ 2 | 18 | Reading | 19 |

3 May

| | | | |
|-------------|----|--------------|----|
| Bournemouth | 12 | Ashford | 20 |
| Brighton | 21 | Arun | 3 |
| Reading | 22 | Burgess Hill | 14 |

10 May

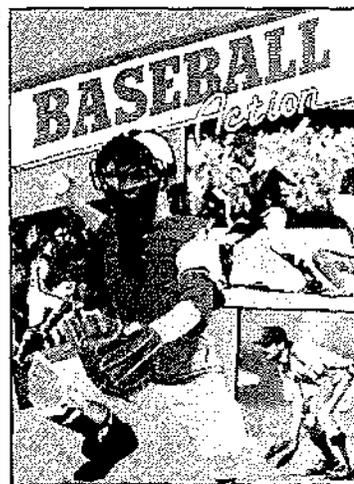
| | | | |
|--------------|----|--------------|----|
| Arun | 19 | Bournemouth | 8 |
| Croydon BJ 2 | 21 | Burgess Hill | 19 |
| Brighton | 12 | Crawley | 28 |



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FINAL STANDINGS - 1986

| TEAM | W | L | Pct | GB |
|-------------------------|----|----|------|------|
| 1st Division | | | | |
| Colham Yankees | 12 | 3 | .800 | - |
| Sutton Draves | 11 | 4 | .733 | 1 |
| Crawley Giants | 10 | 5 | .667 | 2 |
| Croydon Bluejays | 9 | 6 | .600 | 3 |
| Enfield Spartans | 6 | 8 | .429 | 5.5 |
| Barnes Stormers | 5 | 9 | .357 | 6.5 |
| Golders Green Sox | 3 | 11 | .214 | 8.5 |
| Basilton Raiders | 2 | 12 | .143 | 9.5 |
| 2nd Division | | | | |
| Gittingham Dodgers | 12 | 2 | .857 | - |
| Waltham Abbey Arrows | 11 | 3 | .786 | 1 |
| Hounslow Condors | 11 | 3 | .786 | 1 |
| Hounslow Merlins | 7 | 7 | .500 | 5 |
| Oxshott Orioles | 5 | 9 | .357 | 7 |
| Southampton Shooters | 4 | 10 | .286 | 8 |
| Croydon Borough Pirates | 4 | 11 | .267 | 8.5 |
| Brighton Jets | 3 | 12 | .200 | 9.5 |
| 3rd Division | | | | |
| Tonbridge Bobcats | 11 | 2 | .846 | - |
| Crawley Comets | 10 | 3 | .769 | 1 |
| Nurgess Hill Rod Hats | 7 | 5 | .583 | 3.5 |
| Reading Vikings | 7 | 5 | .583 | 3.5 |
| City Slack Sidewinders | 5 | 7 | .417 | 5.5 |
| Colchester Cougars | 3 | 9 | .250 | 7.5 |
| West London Bullets | 0 | 12 | .000 | 10.5 |

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BBF NEWS

At the meeting of the BBF Council on April 26th in Nottingham (at which Don Ferguson was the South's sole representative), the following was decided;

1. FORMAT FOR NATIONAL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP QUARTERFINALS & SEMIFINALS.

Quarterfinals:

Match 1 - North West v Midlands

Match 2 - Scotland v North East

Match 3 - South 1 v Hull

Match 4 - South 2 v South 3

Semifinals:

Winners 4 home to Winners 1

Winners 2 home to Winners 3

At the BBFS Executive meeting on April 27th it was decided that South 1 would be the winners of Division 1, South 2 the Division 1 runners-up, and South 3 the third place team in Division 1. A motion that the Second Division champions should play off with the third place team in Division 1 for the South 3 slot was voted out. This draw means that South 1, should they beat Hull, will be travelling to either Scotland or the North East.

2. FEMALE PLAYERS.

The council ruled that female players are ineligible to play in BBF National competitions, and cannot be registered with BBF. Since women are eligible to play in the BBFS, and all players playing in the BBFS have to be registered with the BBF, there is a conflict here that must be resolved quickly. A BBFS team that reached the National Championship Playoffs using female players would find that their female players were suddenly ineligible.

3. INTERNATIONAL CLUB BASEBALL.

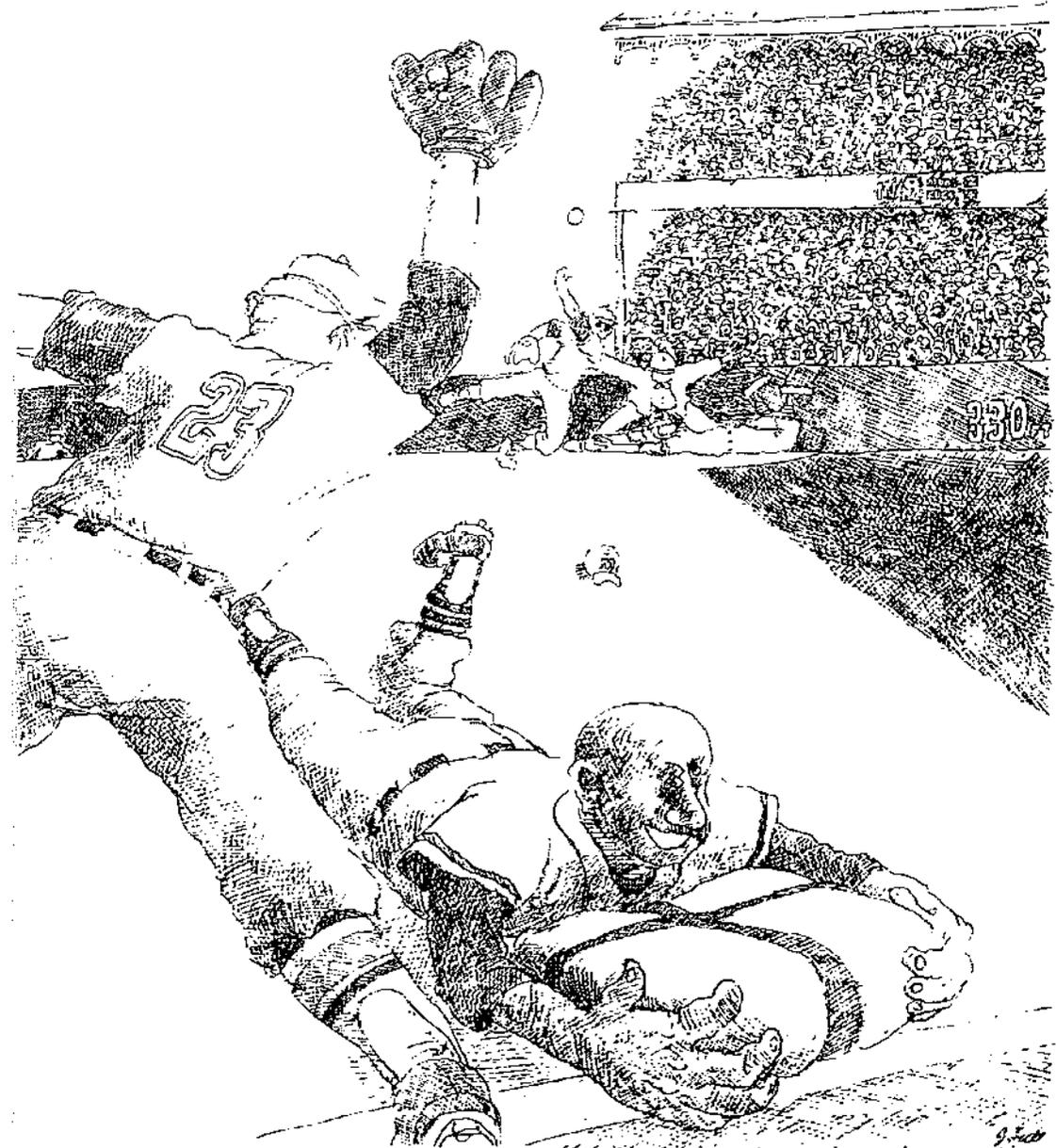
In the case of British teams playing abroad, or of foreign teams playing in Britain, both teams concerned must clear their plans with their National Federations. British teams playing abroad must contact the local embassy. This is to comply with Sports Council regulations. Disciplinary action could result if teams ignore these rules.

BBFS

NATIONAL LEAGUE PARTICIPATION: Clubs will have received a letter from Brad Thompson concerning the National League. The BBFS fully supports the National League, and all BBFS players are free to play for National League teams. Before doing so, they should obtain the agreement of their team manager. Since the National League will play on Saturdays there should be no clashes with BBFS fixtures.

SCORESHEETS: Could all First Division clubs please send a photocopy of their game scoresheets to Brian Holland, 121 Mead Lane, Chertsey, Surrey, (09328 66710).

Two youth teams looking for games are the Hoddesden Sharks, (Bob Locke, 0992 44202); and the Hemel Red Sox Colts, (Chris Cullen, h. 0442 48471, w. 0707 323434).



There was Jimmy safe at second and Flynn a-hugging third.

UMPIRES: A WAY FORWARD ?

(This piece has been condensed from a discussion paper presented by Geoff Mann to the BBFS Executive on April 27th.)

At present two neutral umpires, Dick Coombes and Peter Jory, are available most Sundays. Geoff Mann is available on the first two Sundays in the month and Bank Holidays. A handful of others may be able to do some games.

However one looks at this, the position is hopeless; on May 17th there are sixteen games scheduled, and only two neutral umpires likely to be available. Baseball requires a minimum of two officials per game; where there is only one official it is likely that that official will determine the outcome of the game rather than the efforts of the two teams.

With most teams playing on Sundays with a 2pm or 3pm gametime, a minimum of forty umpires would be needed to schedule two umpires per game in a league of 33 teams. This figure will take a number of years to reach. Game days and playing times need to be more flexible.

For the foreseeable future, team umpires will be a necessity. The league must work to eliminate team umpires as quickly as possible, and replace them with strong neutral officials, without which you cannot have a truly competitive league.

Given that team umpires are going to be with us for some time, we must work to help them. The attendance at the recent rules seminar was very poor, even though it is evident that many team umpires have only a fairly basic knowledge of rules and interpretations. There is no written guide for umpires in this country. A guide must be produced, with rule interpretations relevant to BBFS games.

Efforts must be made to recruit neutral officials, train them, and put them into crews to work games regularly together. If we are to recruit umpires, particularly new ones, then there must be an organization they can join within which their umpiring skills can be fostered. An umpiring organization would help prevent people who may want to umpire, but have little experience of the game, from drifting away.

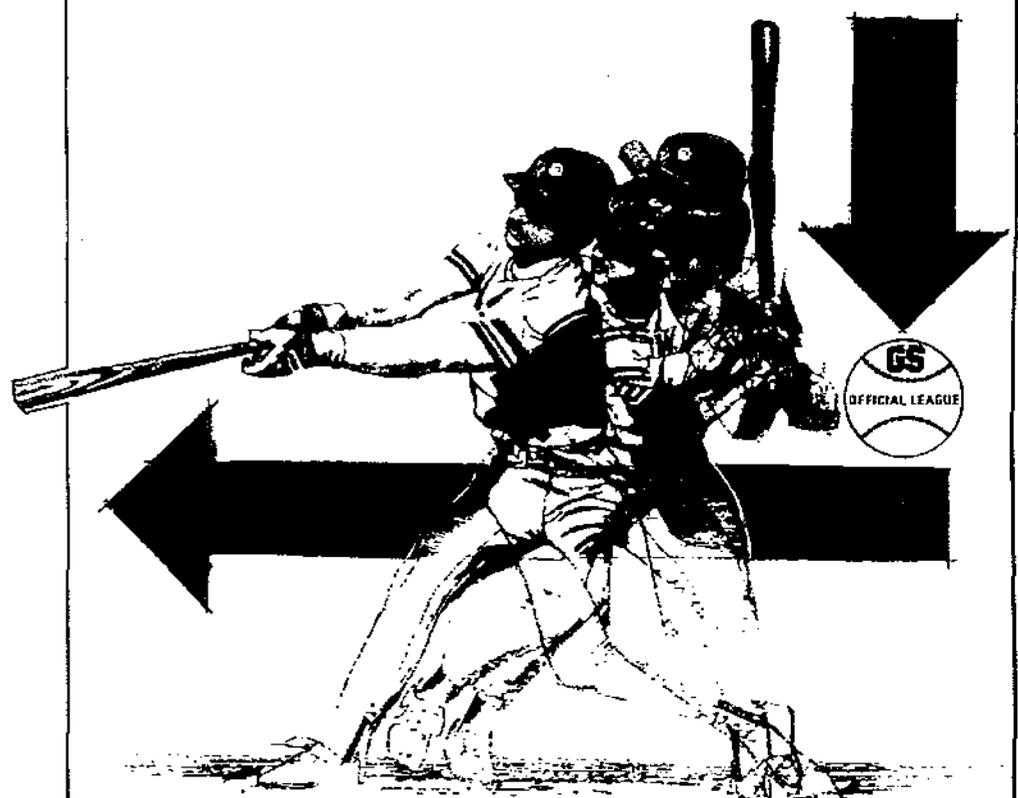
I therefore propose the following;

- (a) The post of Umpire-in-Chief should be abolished; instead, an Umpire's Association should be formed, the President of which would be elected by the umpires and be an ex-officio member of the BBFS executive.
- (b) The Association would publish a guide to the rules, umpiring mechanics, and signals, as one of its first duties. The association would train all umpires.
- (c) The Association would be responsible for scheduling neutral umpires, invoicing teams, and would act as a clearing house for fees.
- (d) The Association would look for sponsorship. Part of any money raised would go towards increasing umpire's fees.

Geoff Mann's address and phone number can be found on page three. Please contact him if you would like to umpire, or know of anybody who would.

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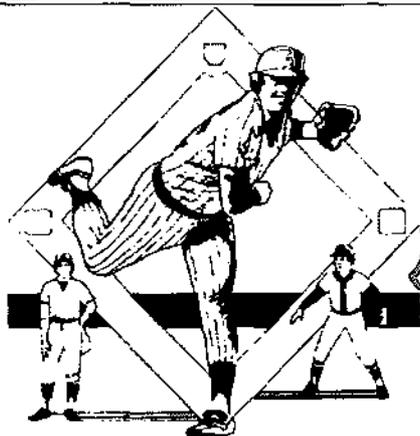
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