

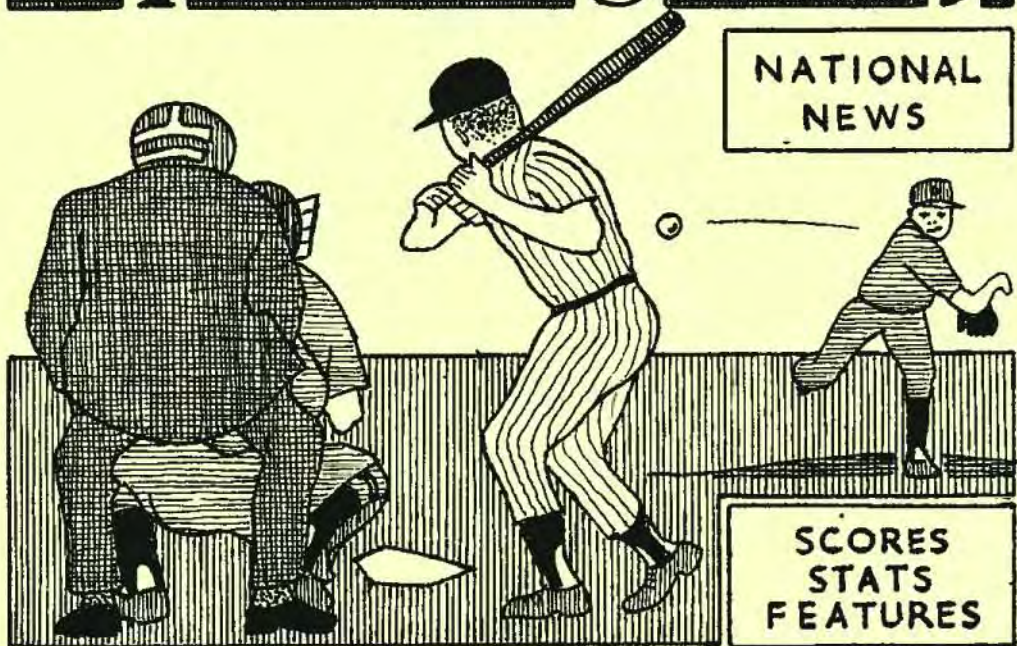
LINEDRIVE!

BASEBALL IN BRITAIN
1993 Vol. II No. 1

SCHEDULES

Opening Day

NATIONAL
NEWS



SCORES
STATS
FEATURES

WILL YOU
THROW OUT THE
FIRST BALL AGAIN
ON OPENING DAY,
M'LORD?



INDEED
I'D LIKE TO, BUT
MY ARM HAS NOT
YET RECOVERED
FROM LAST YEAR



CATERHAM ATHLETICS

SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION TWO EAST

TEAM ROSTER 1993

<u>Name</u>	<u>Usual Fielding Position</u>
Tony Bennett	Rightfield
Alf Clayton	Leftfield
Gary Cope	Second Base
John Copp	First Base/Outfield
Mark Dalton	Catcher/Pitcher
Shane Fletcher	Pitcher/First Base
Dave Flynn	Leftfield/Rightfield - Manager
Steve Flynn	Rightfield
Jason Grant	Rightfield
Sean Mac	Leftfield/Rightfield
Kevin Mac	Third Base/Pitcher
Robbo	Shortstop/Pitcher
Anthony Weakner	Centrefield/Third Base

LINEDRIVE ! VOL II ISSUE 1

A BRITISH BASEBALL FANZINE

APRIL AT LAST !

Welcome to a new season of baseball, and to Volume 2 number 1 of *Linedrive !*

Firstly, and briefly, an apology to readers for coming up with exactly the same format as last season. The current gloomy financial climate resulted in what I can only call less than enthusiastic responses to my endeavours to obtain commercial sponsorship for the magazine. Secondly, I have been offered the opportunity to compile a newsletter for National League Baseball.

I have accepted, not because I approve or disapprove of either baseball authority in this country, but because as a baseball fan, being in the position where teams are supposed to send you reports and statistics, I found the offer irresistible !

In consequence, *Linedrive !* remains a low key, and frankly amateur production, until I find out exactly what I've let myself in for ! If you do not receive *Linedrive !* regularly, but would like to do so, please contact me at the address or phone numbers shown at the back of the magazine, and if you have any UK baseball news, drop me a line, and I'll do my best to include it.

Well, how does season '93 look. The BBF have had a geographical shake up, with the Southern Conference having a Premier Division, and then East and West regional divisions One and Two, before reverting back to just one division for Division Three.

Caterham A's are in Division Two East, and with Croydon Pirates and Gillingham Dodgers now in Division One, Caterham must be a strong fancy for the Divisional title. However, their opening day visitors to The Fox are the Burgess Hill Red Hats, who not only finished 4th last season, just behind the A's, but also walloped A's 22-3 at The Fox last season.

Admittedly, A's have maintained a rigorous schedule of practice, including a December game in Maidstone in conditions that would have had Sir Ranulf Fiennes and Dr Michael Stroud reaching for the

Damart catalogue, but Hats will be keen to repeat last Augusts result to give their league campaign a confident start.

Elsewhere in the division, Hounslow Hawks have added a third string to their organisation, and so having enough playing staff for three teams to choose from, will no doubt present a stronger force than last season. Certainly their victory over an admittedly depleted Croydon Pirates at the Maidstone tournament indicates improved form, and A's only just shaded Hawks 4-2 in that tournament, so they could be in with a shout.

Guildford Mavericks finished their first season with a .500 playing record, and with a seasons experience under their belt, could be looking to be the divisions 'dark horses'. Providing they have not lost too many players in the close season, they could be looking to score a few important victories over the 'favourites'.

Chichester Titans started last season badly, then proved themselves almost unbeatable in mid-season, and then proceeded to fall apart. With erratic form like that, it's almost anyones guess as to how they'll do.

Waltham Abbey Cardinals will certainly win a few games, perhaps causing a few surprises, but unless greatly improved, will be looking at the lower half of the table.

Reading Raiders will be known as the Royals from this season, which has caused a little speculation at *Linedrive !* HQ. It was the Reading Royals who joined National League Baseball last season, changing their name to Reading Bulldogs. Sadly, Bulldogs dropped out of the NLB, after picking up just two victories all season. If the new Reading Royals and the old Reading Royals are in anyway connected, there could be some experienced and talented staff on the team. If this speculation is incorrect, then Royals season looks to be much the same as the Cards. Some good results, but probably not enough to contend.

Finally with Westcliffe Wildcats disbanded, and the Worthing Confederates having joined up with Arun Panthers, the new boys to the division are the Lashing Sluggers.

Lashing have some interesting playing staff for a new team, including Ross and Stuart Chell, from the Croydon Pirates, and also a number of players from the Tonbridge Bobcats. Something of an unknown quantity, their 13-6 defeat by Caterham A's in the Maidstone Tournament (Lashing's home diamond), would seem to indicate that they are not quite championship material.

However, that scoreline should be tempered with the knowledge that A's coach, Darrin Ward (London Warriors), was pitching.

Certainly it looks, on paper, to be quite a competitive division, hopefully with no one in the position of being winless like the Wildcats, and, in all probability, no-one in the position of the Pirates and Dodgers, of being virtually unbeatable.

A QUICK LOOK AT THE NLB

There is very little change in the National League this season, with Reading Bulldogs being replaced by Bury Saints and Waltham Forest to increase the Senior Division to eight teams.

What was known as the Buddies League, is now the National League Rookie Division, with Bury Saints, Basildon Mariners, Cambridge Monarchs, London Stormers and Tonbridge competing. Rookies Division champions will play the 8th place team in the Senior Division, and if succesful, will be granted a Senior Division place for season 1994.

In the Senior Division, London Warriors could well retain their title, but a tendency to go through short slumps could give the Enfield Spartans enough leeway to pull clear.

Cambridge Knights improved greatly offensively after the visit of the American coaches last season, and if those lessons have been remembered, they could well give Warriors and Spartans a headache.

Birmingham Devils have improved greatly over two seasons, but perhaps not enough to quite match the top three from last season. On top form, they can beat anyone in the division, but it is doubtful that they will play every game that hyped up.

Croydon Blue Jays are saddled with two handicaps. A number of players have either returned to the States, or gone elsewhere in Europe for baseball, or returned to higher education. So with a depleted squad, and a tendency to become distracted with umpiring decisions, they could find season '93 tough going. On their best behaviour, they have the ability to beat anybody, but they will need to stay calm at all times to do it.

Essex Eagles are probably looking to build more experience, and hope to collect more victories than last season. Top marks to last seasons Eagles for good humour and a sporting attitude, but sadly, they probably aren't championship material yet.

Lastly, the new boys, Bury Saints and Waltham Forest. Both somewhat unknown quantities, it is probable that the basement will be a three way race between them and Eagles, simply because it will take them time to adjust to National League, and the standard of 'ball played by the Warriors, Spartans and Knights.

BEST WISHES

Well, having stuck my neck out and speculated BBF 2 and the NLB, I'll probably be made to look a total fool by all the teams concerned, but as Yogi Berra said 'In baseball you don't know nothin'.

All that remains is to wish all participants and fans an enjoyable season 93. Send me news, send me stats, send me match reports, but above all, enjoy your baseball.

LINEDRIVE ! edited by PHIL ROSS, FLAT 2 'THANESCROFT', SELBORNE ROAD , CROYDON, CRO 5JQ. Tel 081 681 2222 ex 25829 or 081 688 2966. COVER DESIGNED AND DRAWN BY REX PHILLIPS.

CATERHAM ATHLETICS DIVISION TWO EAST SCHEDULE 1993

Sun 18th April	Maidstone Tournament - A's won all 3 games
Sun 25th April	HOME TO BURGESS HILL RED HATS
Sun 9th May	away to Chichester Titans
Sun 16th May	HOME TO GUILDFORD MAVERICKS
Sun 23rd May	BBF Knockout Cup 1st Round
Sun 30th May	HOME TO HOUNSLOW HAWKS
Sun 6th June	HOME TO WALTHAM ABBEY CARDINALS
Sun 13th June	away to Lashing Sluggers
Sun 20th June	HOME TO READING ROYALS
Sun 27th June	BBF Knockout Cup 2nd Round
Sun 4th July	away to Reading Royals
Sun 11th July	away to Burgess Hill Red Hats
Sun 18th July	HOME TO CHICHESTER TITANS or BBF Knockout Cup 3rd Round
Sat 24th July	Guildford Tournament
Sun 25th July	away to Guildford Mavericks
Sun 1st August	away to Hounslow Hawks
Sun 8th August	HOME TO WALTHAM ABBEY CARDINALS or BBF Knockout Cup Quarter Finals
Sun 15th August	HOME TO LASHING SLUGGERS

All nine inning games. All start 3:00 pm

Tournament details :- Maidstone - A's beat Croydon Pirates 10-3, Hounslow Hawks 4-2 & Lashing Sluggers 13-6 to win tournament. Guildford - Teams entered are Caterham A's, Chichester Titans, Guildford Mavericks & Lashing Sluggers

KNOTTY PROBLEMS

In the spring a ball fan's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of.... rules. What was that nagging doubt? What was that point that needed clarifying? Areas that seemed a bit grey last summer will seem even greyer after the winter break, and the season will be under way before actual game situations provide the stimulus for study. The rules, as pure reading matter, are not altogether congenial, and it must be said that some of the approved rulings seem to all but the most diligent students to confuse rather than clarify.

Baseball's Knotty Problems, edited by Larry Wigge, published by *The Sporting News*, and available from Sports Pages in London, is exactly what is needed this early in the season, for the editor lists virtually every unusual play that could occur, sets it in a game situation, and provides an explanation in plain English of the official ruling, together with a reference to the appropriate rule. In order to check the official wording one has only to turn to the back of the book, where the complete rules and approved rulings are very neatly and legibly printed.

Fun can be derived from covering the explanations and treating the situations as quiz questions, and the book is enlivened by a number of amusing drawings by Bill Wilson.

R. J. P.

Our tongue-in-cheek back page feature, "A New Understanding of Baseball," will be resumed shortly.