

# BASEBALL

# Mercury.

Issue 18

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May 1978

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### INTERCONTINENTAL CUP.

The third competition for this trophy was staged from the 10th. to the 25th. of November last, at Managua, Nicaragua.

World Champion, Cuba, once again withdrew from the third tournament at the last minute, repeating the events of the second tournament. However, the organisers still managed to have nine of the strongest countries represented. These were Canada, Colombia, Japan, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, South Korea, Taiwan, U.S.A., and Venezuela. A first round was played to eliminate three of the competitors. Venezuela (9th.), and Taiwan (8th.) were the first to be eliminated; Canada and Puerto Rico had tied for sixth place in the first round and had to play a decider to determine which would proceed to the next round. Canada lost, thus finishing in seventh place.

The final group consisted of Colombia, Japan, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, South Korea, and U.S.A. During the contests for the first round, the hitherto undefeated U.S.A. was beaten 6 - 2 by Nicaragua, the latter country, however, was surprisingly overcome by Venezuela the weakest of the teams, by a score of 3 - 2.

At the end of the second round, three countries had each lost only one game. These were Japan, South Korea, and U.S.A. Japan met South Korea once again, South Korea triumphed 3 - 2. South Korea went on to beat U.S.A. 5 - 4, thus ending as winners of the Intercontinental Cup. The other placings were U.S.A.(2nd.), Nicaragua (3rd.), Japan(4th.), Colombia(5th.), Puerto Rico(6th.).

The South Korean, Jae-Bak Kim, was the leading hitter, having a batting average of .426; his team-mate Dong-Kyun Yoon finished with a batting average of .421.

AINBA held a congress in Argentina on 3rd./4th. December. The congress decided that the fourth tournament for the Intercontinental Cup would probably be held in Cuba in 1979. Originally the event had been awarded to Japan, but Japan had later been granted the World Championship Tournament for 1980. The World Championship Tournament for 1982 is to be staged in South Korea.

This congress of AINBA devoted a great part of its time to the question of South Africa's membership. Eighteen hours of debate on the question led to a decision that South Africa is to retain its membership, but is also to be barred from international competition.

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### HUMBERSIDE 1977. by Barry Marshall.

HULL ACES. Although they have the smallest squad of players of the Humberside teams, there is plenty of experience amongst the squad, and they were the most successful team on Humberside, reaching the B.A.B.F. Championship Final. They lost to Golders Green Sox in a close Final.

The consistently first-class pitching of Pete Darnell, and the able backing of Trevor Johnson and Dave Pinder makes them a difficult team to beat.

HULL ROYALS. By their own standards, 1977 was very disappointing for Hull Royals, but as they are running two teams in 1978, things are beginning to look considerably brighter, and it is only a matter of time before they become a team to be feared. With Humberside team manager Ron Marshall at the helm, combined with the experience of Bill Cornforth, the future looks bright.

HULL GIANTS. In their first season Giants won the Humberside League title, surprising many people by their standard of play, as the majority of the players were 16 and 17 years of age. The find of the season being Mark Storey, who still only 17 years old must rank as one of the best catchers in England; it is only a matter of time before he obtains international recognition. With new acquisition Keith Marshall as manager, and with other promising youngsters such as Billy Talbot, John Egan, and Mark Thrower, improving all the time, they could be the team to beat in 2 to 3 years time. JUNIOR BASEBALL. Although we did not make the progress in Schools Baseball we had hoped for, Junior Baseball on Humberside continues to flourish. In 1977, Danes surprised everyone, when in their first season they tied with Hull Pirates for the Junior League Championship. With two new teams(Rebels and Eagles) joining the League in 1978, the high standard of Junior Baseball on Humberside should be maintained.

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#### WORLD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP.

The World Championship for Juniors was staged by Argentina last December, from the 4th. to the 14th. of the month. Seven countries battled for this title in a vast baseball stadium, fully up to major league standards, that has been constructed some miles outside Buenos Aires. Countries competing were Argentina, Cuba, Honduras, Italy, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela.

Teams from Honduras, Panama, Mexico, and Argentina trailed their opponents by more than ten runs in several games, thus the contests were mainly restricted to seven innings. The favourite Cuba was beaten in the final 2 - 1 by Venezuela, which won the championship, Cuba finished second, Italy, Honduras, and Panama finished in third place( Italy was ranked above the other two because of a better average), Mexico was sixth, and Argentina seventh.

Italy was coached by Silvano Ambrosioni( who also manages the Italian senior team), assisted by Beppe Guilizzoni and Carlos Guzman. Prior to the tournament Italy had played five warming-up games in South America, beating Brazil three times, and Argentina twice.

Argentina, that with magnificent organisation staged this world championship, had never in its long baseball history participated in a world baseball championship at any level, senior or junior. Yet baseball has been played in Argentina since 1888, when Americans founded the Buenos Aires Baseball Club, this appears to have been connected with the Y.M.C.A. For many years the game was confined to Americans, exhibitions were played but progress was slow in converting Argentinians to the game. In 1909 a game was played versus Sao Paulo(Brazil).

In 1918 employees of the Frigorifico La Blanca formed a team, two years later, Japanese residents formed a team entitled "Nippon". Greater interest developed, and in 1925 the Argentine Baseball Association was formed. During these years many games were played versus teams of seamen from visiting U.S. vessels. In 1932, the Argentine Baseball League was formed, this developed into the Argentine Baseball and Softball League in 1937. The latter body being replaced by the Argentine Baseball and Softball Federation in 1954.

In 1964, Argentina became a member of the then world organisation, FIBA, and took part in the move which resulted in the rival FEMBA being set up. When these two major factions set up AINBA, Argentina joined AINBA. In 1973, Argentina competed in the first ever Intercontinental Cup Tournament but was beaten in every game.

Argentina organised the first Pan-American Games in 1951, in the baseball section Cuba finished first and Argentina last. Since 1957, Argentina has competed regularly in the South American Baseball Championships but has always occupied a lowly position in the final results.

\* \* \* \* \* B.A.B.S.F.

The British Amateur Baseball Federation held its Annual General Meeting on January 29th. During the course of the meeting it was decided to alter the title to the British Amateur Baseball and Softball Federation. The alteration only took place after a discussion which showed that opinion among those present was divided on the wisdom of the move. However there were some practical reasons for the change of title, primarily the position which has developed in a number of European countries. In the Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, baseball and softball are under

the control of the same national federation. The secretary of the B.A.B.F. was receiving letters from European clubs, and national federations regarding softball, as they were obviously of the opinion that the situation in their countries prevailed in the U.K. Now in the U.K., a body known as the British Softball Federation was formed some years ago, I actually attended one of its meetings. The secretary of the B.A.B.F. was unable to contact any officers of the British Softball Federation concerning this correspondence from European sources on the subject of softball. Even the Central Council for Physical Recreation to which the British Softball Federation had been affiliated has lost touch with the organisation. Of the four existing area baseball organisations, three, those of Merseyside, Nottingham, and Humberside, had during the last few years included softball in their titles, and to some extent had catered for softball, especially women's softball.

The conclusive argument in favour of the change of title came as a result of the European Softball Federation writing to the B.A.B.F. secretary, informing him that the Italian Baseball and Softball Federation had paid an affiliation fee on our behalf, and welcoming the B.A.B.F. into membership of the European Softball Federation.

A sad feature of the A.G.M. was the retirement from the office of chair-man by Clive Megson, partly in consequence of a couple of unpleasant incidents at baseball games in 1977. Clive had been active in the game since 1936, having started playing as a schoolboy in Hull, at a time when baseball looked set to become a major summer sport in the U.K. He had played, coached, managed, umpired, and acted as an administrator at various levels; I consider his withdrawal from the game to be a great loss. At the meeting, Mrs. V. Jarvis the Hon. Treasurer, also withdrew from the office, and from baseball. Mrs. Jarvis had done sterling work for the B.A.B.F., and for clubs in Hull for many years before her appearance on the national scene. A letter was received from Wilfred "Red" Holmes, a letter caused to some extent by the events connected with Clive Megson's withdrawal, which informed us that Wilf Holmes had decided to retire from baseball activity. Again a sorry loss to the game. Wilf had been connected with the game in Humberside since 1936, having been recruited to play professional baseball in England through the medium of an advertisement he had read in a newspaper in his native Saskatchewan. After a short period playing professional ball in the Yorkshire League and the Lancashire-Yorkshire Major League, Wilf had gone to sea on trawlers working out of Hull. Wilf also had played almost every role possible in British baseball, and had the distinction of having umpired at the 1971 European Championships.

The new chairman of the B.A.B.S.F. is Mike Harrold, who has been active for quite a number of years, both as player and administrator.

The B.A.B.S.F. broke new ground by staging a conference at Nottingham on Sunday, March 5th. It had been intended to hold a two day conference, but although at the A.G.M. the vote had been in favour of a two day conference, when it came to setting-up the conference it was obvious that there was insufficient support for the two day venture. At the conference set periods were allowed for discussing specific problems. These were as follows :- Umpires, Coaching, Softball, Junior Baseball, 1978 Fixtures.

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The next issue of Baseball Mercury should appear in August. The subscription for three issues is 30p. Subscriptions and items for publication should be sent to :- William Morgan, 89 Sterndale Road, Hammersmith, London, W.14.

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#### MISCELLANY.

BELGIUM. The 1st. Division of the Belgian Competition started on 23rd. April and continues until 13th. August. This division consists of 12 clubs, each has to play 22 games.

Arthur Weyenberg, whose club Luchbal won the Belgian title in 1977, finished in top place as pitcher. He had an ERA of 1.27 for 85.1 innings. Weyenberg also finished at the top of the batting averages with .520. This was the second highest average ever recorded in Belgium; the highest mark of .552 being set in 1958 by Antoine Brouwers of Luchbal. Second in hitting was Henri Hendrickx of Olympia, and third was Jef Waroux(Berchem Stars).

Women's Softball is growing steadily in Belgium, 10 teams in 1976, 12 in 1977, and 15 teams this season. Bell Telephone has formed a women's softball team this season, thus every Belgian baseball club now has a women's softball club associated with it.

Men's softball will start in Belgium this season, initially it will cater for veteran baseball players, and will not consist of a league competition, but of tournaments, which will be mainly played on mid-week evenings. SOVIET UNION. The Soviet Union and the U.S.A. are to stage an exchange of sports this year. The Soviet Union is to demonstrate bandy (a form of hockey on ice, played with a ball on an area as big as a soccer field, hence very different to ice-hockey) in the U.S.A. In return the U.S.A. is demonstrating softball in the Soviet Union.

NETHERLANDS. About £250,000 has been earmarked for improving the Pim Mulier Baseball Stadium at Haarlem, about  $\frac{2}{3}$  coming from the National Sport Totalisator, and  $\frac{1}{3}$  from the Municipality of Haarlem. The outfield fences are to be moved back, increasing the size of the outfield; this will also entail moving back the light towers, which will also be increased in height. The height of the backstop is to be raised and the scoreboard repositioned.

The baseball section of the Rotterdam Students' Sports Council has organised the first genuine International Students' Baseball Tournament, to take place on the 6th. to 8th. September of this year. The venue, the Feyenoord field in Rotterdam, it is hoped that twelve teams will compete including entrants from France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Sweden is to be represented by the Stockholm Students' Sports Club, which has formed a baseball team drawn from branbollspelers, branboll is a game akin to the more primitive version of rounders, formerly played in the British Isles.

ITALY. For the first time a European country will be host to the World Amateur Baseball Championships, Italy has arranged for the games to be played in three cities, Bologna, Parma, and Rimini from 26th. August to 10th. September. Twelve of the strongest amateur baseball countries are expected to compete, six countries have definitely arranged to attend, Belgium, Canada, Cuba, Italy, Netherlands, and U.S.A. Japan is almost certain to compete, and possibly Australia, and South Korea.

The first round of the European Cup will take place at Rimini and Parma on the 16th. to 18th. June. Pool A at Rimini will consist of Derbigum Rimini, Cataluna(Spain), and Bagarmossens(Sweden). Pool B at Parma will consist of Germal Parma, PUC(France), and Mannheim Tornados(W. Germany). The first two from each pool will play in the final round on the 15th. to 17th. September. The venue for the final round will be decided following completion of the first round.

CANADA. Each year the two Canadian major league clubs, the Montreal Expos and the Toronto Blue Jays, are to play a game versus each other in order to raise funds to benefit amateur baseball in Canada. The first of these games is to be played on the 11th. of this month at Montreal. The Quebec Baseball Federation and the Ontario Baseball Association will each receive 35% of the proceeds, while 30% of the proceeds will go to the Canadian Federation of Amateur Baseball.

SWEDEN. Leksands B.C. are visiting Valley High School, Santa Ana, California this summer.

Sweden will compete in the Northern Cup this season. The event will take place at Antwerp from the 18th. to 20th. August, the other contestants are Belgium, and Netherlands B(Cup holders).

The European Championship for juniors will have Sweden as a contestant, other countries competing are Netherlands, Italy, and Belgium. The tournament will be played from the 13th. to 17th. August in the Netherlands. Eight regions and clubs applied to act as hosts for this competition. The club Metempo Twins of Oosterhout was selected for this purpose.

JAPAN. Sadaharu Oh, homerun king has signed a contract which brings him about £170,000 a season, making him the highest paid ever Japanese ball player.

U.S.A. A committee has been formed at Los Angeles, under the auspices of the United States Baseball Federation; the object of the committee is to work for the recognition of the sport by the International Olympic Committee, with the aim of including baseball in the 1984 Olympic Games at Los Angeles. Chairman of the Los Angeles Committee is Rod Dedeaux. Almost certainly baseball will be at the least a demonstration sport at the Los Angeles Olympic Games, as it has been at a number of earlier Olympics. Earlier Olympic Games at which baseball was a demonstration sport were Berlin 1936, Melbourne 1956, and Tokyo 1964.

Rod Dedeaux, baseball coach at the University of Southern California, has been in contact with, and has been promised support by many persons in the major leagues.