

BASEBALL Mercury.

Issue 2

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March 1973

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BASEBALL

Mercury.

No. 2. MARCH 1973.

1972 ON MERSEYSIDE by Norman Wells.

Immediately before the season opened, we suffered no small disappointment to hear that NALGO Twins had disbanded, that Bromsgrove had withdrawn from our league, and that a team from Southport, recruited by veteran Hector Banallo (fresh back from Australia) was unable to get off the ground due to lack of equipment.

When all looked pretty black, we had welcome news from the U.S. Army base at Burtonwood who entered a team at the eleventh hour, and again very late a team was entered from Cross International Knowsley, due to the endeavours of two old players Messrs. McCarthy and MacDonald.

Despite the late start due to weather and grounds being unfit we eventually completed our schedule.

The Burtonwood side proved to be, as expected, a good all round consistent team and finished the season without a defeat, taking all the events they entered for.

The final analysis was as follows.

Merseyside League. 1. Burtonwood. 2. NALGO Tigers. 3. Liverpool Trojans.

4. Otis Dynamos. 5. Cross International Giants.

Lancashire Cup. Burtonwood. Artco Trophy. Burtonwood.

Robinson One Day Tournament. Burtonwood.

The Thursday League Nickolaus Shield for beginners was won by a Trojan side.

Above this the Lancashire side, chosen from Merseyside, won the annual game with Yorkshire 7 - 0, and also won the Orford Trophy for the second year running defeating Worcestershire and Nottinghamshire 2 - 0 and 5 - 0 respectively, completing the season without conceding a single run.

The season's outstanding players were two boys from Burtonwood. Don Hems collecting our Home Run Award and our Pitching Award. The Tankard we present to our most improved young player, this year went to Victor King of NALGO Tigers.

Apart from the league, we had the Trojan win over Hull Aces 11 - 0, to take the "Two Rivers" Trophy. Burtonwood and Trojans also played several friendly games against Stretford and Birmingham Kynoch. NALGO Tigers as usual competed in the Major League of the N.B.L.

So much for the season gone, and for the future, Burtonwood base is being run down and are uncertain for 1973. The Southport team still optimistic, and a very sincere hope that we may encourage Stretford Saints and Bromsgrove to re-enter our division. Finally the news on the supply of equipment is not now so acute, most teams seem fairly well supplied.

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BRITISH BASEBALL LEAGUE by A. Birkett.

Thames Board Mills won the League Championship, Croydon Bluejays and Sutton Braves finishing 2nd. and 3rd. The British Baseball Cup was won by the Bluejays, beating Thames Board Mills 6 - 5 after ten innings in a very exciting game, with the lead changing throughout the game - and what is more important, both teams really enjoyed the game which was played hard but with a good and friendly atmosphere. Even a disputed umpire's decision was accepted in a friendly way.

In my opinion the outstanding event of the season was Brighton Jets (one

of our lower and not so affluent young sides) travelling up to Cambridge to play the University side and winning. Then the University side going down to Brighton and gaining revenge by beating the Jets. In view of the difficulties that these two clubs face in fielding a team each week, and the travel problems, such keenness makes worth while all the work involved in being fixtures secretary.

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WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS.

The XXth. World Amateur Baseball Championships were played in Nicaragua from 15th. November to 3rd. December 1972. The main site of the Tournament was Somoza Stadium in Managua, and there were auxiliary sites at Masaya, Leon, Granada, and Chinandega. All the ball parks in the four auxiliary towns were remodelled and had lights installed.

The final standings of the series.

Cuba W.14 - L.1 .933 : United States W.13 - L.2 .867 : Nicaragua W.13 - L.2 .867 :
Japan W.11 - L.4 .733 : Panama W.10 - L.5 .667 : Puerto Rico W.9 - L.6 .600 :
Dominican Republic W.9 - L.6 .600 : Taiwan W.8 - L.6 .571 : Canada W.8 - L.7 .533 :
Guatemala W.5 - L.10 .333 : Honduras W.4 - L.9 .308 : Brazil W.4 - L.11 .267 :
Costa Rica W.4 - L.11 .267 : El Salvador W.3 - L.11 .214 : Italy W.3 - L.12
.200 : West Germany W.0 - L.15 .000:

This was Cuba's twelfth World Championship in fifteen appearances. The only team to defeat Cuba was Nicaragua, beating the champions on the last day of the tournament at Somoza Stadium before 41,000 spectators. The United States was awarded second place as a result of beating Nicaragua.

Leading Players.

Batting Average. Masaru Oba, Japan. .415 : Hits. Wilfredo Sanchez, Cuba. 29 :
Doubles. Felix Isasi, Cuba. 8 : Triples. Armando Capiro, Cuba. Wilfredo Sanchez,
Cuba. and Manuel Estrada, U.S.A. each with 3. Home Runs. Rene Mena, Guatemala. 4 :
Slugging. Armando Capiro, Cuba. .656 : RBI Armando Capiro, Cuba. 21 : Runs
Scored. Wilfredo Sanchez, Cuba. 22 : Stolen Bases. Masaru Oba, Japan. 14 : Bases
on Balls. Keiji Nakahori, Brazil. 13 : Sacrifice Hits. Dennis Lindstrand,
Canada. 4 :

Thanks to the kindness of Sr. Carlos J. Garcia, President of the Federation Nicaraguense de Beisbol Aficionado, who supplied the information I can present a potted account of the history of the World Amateur Baseball Tournaments.

Strangely enough, FIBA considers the first ever championships to be the series arranged in 1938 between England and the U.S.A. Five games were played in England, England winning the series by 4 games to 1. I comment, strangely enough, as although the U.S. players were collegians, who by their standards were bona-fide amateurs, the English team were drawn either wholly or largely from the ranks of those Canadian players then active in the ranks of the National Baseball Association. Most of those players would by British standards of the day be considered professional, by North American standards semi-pro.

Be that as it may, England is considered the first winner in the long series of World Amateur Champions. Mr. John Moores donated a perpetual trophy for the winners of such championships.

The second tournament was held in Cuba in August 1939, contestants were Cuba, Nicaragua and the U.S.A. Cuba being winners and being presented with the John Moores Trophy.

On the 11th. August 1939, the day before the II World Tournament began, the first meeting of FIBA was held in Havana, Cuba. Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Cuba, France, England, Hawaii, Holland, Japan, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, Tunisia, and the United States were considered during that meeting as Founding and Active Members of FIBA. At that time another 18 countries were known in which baseball was played.

Countries which have hosted World Tournaments are Cuba, 7 times; Columbia, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, 3 times each; and Mexico, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, and England once each.

Number of times countries have competed, 17 Nicaragua, 15 Cuba, and Panama; 14 Mexico, and Dominican Republic; 13 Puerto Rico, and Venezuela; 12 Columbia; 11 El Salvador, and Guatemala; 8 U.S.A.; 7 Costa Rica, and Netherlands Antilles; 4 Honduras; 3 Canada, and Italy; Once England, Hawaii, Holland, West Germany, Japan, Taiwan, Brazil.

Championships won. Cuba 12 ; Venezuela 3 : Columbia 2 : Dominican Republic 1: Puerto Rico 1 : and England 1.

Today FIBA has 30 affiliated associations.

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BELGIUM.

Final positions of the Belgian First Division in 1972.

	Pl.	Won.	Lost.	Pct.
Luchtbal Greys	18	18	0	1.000
Bell Pioneers	18	14	4	.778
Berchem Stars	18	13	5	.722
Brasschaatse	18	12	6	.667
Deurne Spartans	18	10	8	.556
Rizla Eagles	18	9	9	.500
General Motors	18	7	11	.389
Borgerhout Squirrels	18	4	14	.222
Merksem Tigers	18	3	15	.167
Antwerp Cats	18	0	18	.000

This was the twelfth time that Luchtbal had won the Belgian championship. For many seasons Luchtbal have enjoyed the services of Jos Robyn, probably the finest player produced by Belgium. 1972 saw Robyn make his farewell appearance as a player. Now 35 years old, he has completed 25 years as a player, and has decided to retire. During his career he won a great number of awards, details follow. 1954 Best Pitcher. 1955 Best Pitcher, and Homerun King. 1956 Best Pitcher. 1960 Batting Champion, and Homerun King. 1961 Best Pitcher. 1962 Best Pitcher, and Homerun King. 1963 Best Pitcher. 1964 Most Valuable Player, and Homerun King. 1966 Best Pitcher. 1968 Most Valuable Player. 1969 Batting Champion, Most Valuable Player, Homerun King, Triple Crown. 1972 Batting Champion. Robyn, with 52 appearances for Belgium, holds the record for his national team.

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STRETTFORD SAINTS

As a result of sending the first number of Baseball Mercury to a number of newspapers, contact was established between the Sports Editor of the Stretford & Urnston Journal, and officials of the Saints; with a resulting half-page feature in the journal, on the club. Below is information selected from this feature.

Stretford Saints were formed in the period following World War II, baseball having been played in the Manchester area for some years before the War, with a large number of Amateur clubs and several professional or semi-professional clubs having demonstrated the game. In Manchester and Salford itself, such clubs as Salford Reds, Belle Vue Tigers, and Manchester Blue Sox had competed in the North of England League during the 1930's.

The Saints began playing in Longford Park, and later moved to a corner of the corporation playing fields at Turn Moss. A lack of facilities meant that they have had to move to Kearsal Rugby Union Football Club in Sale, but they hope to return to Stretford as soon as possible.

After the War there were about six teams in the Manchester area and exhibition games at Belle Vue were attracting crowds of 10,000 to 15,000. Teams were strengthened by U.S. Service stars playing as guests. Saints were Manchester champions many times until the Manchester League folded in 1958, and they then joined the Merseyside League.

In 1963 the National Baseball League was formed, this included teams from Hull, Nottingham, Coventry, Birmingham, Bromsgrove and, of course, Stretford Saints. The Saints soon turned the baseball world upside down as they won three successive National League titles, 1963, '64, '65. They have also won National League titles in 1971 and 1972.

The three straight National League titles was a real achievement for a team which say they are the "poor relations" of baseball in Britain. They played on a small pitch in the corner of an amateur football field, while teams such as Hull Aces lined up at the town's rugby football stadium with all the changing and social facilities any team could ask for. Peter Dawson, one of the Saint's players at that time states "We would travel to other National League grounds and see the facilities they had and then were ashamed to bring clubs to our ground".

Star of the Saints team is Canadian Stan Windross who has played for England. A native of Galt, near Toronto, he arrived in England in 1963 after playing for his junior county team in Canada. He began playing for the Saints as a pitcher in 1964. Stan who plays any sport calls himself "a sports freak".

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The next issue of Baseball Mercury will appear in July. Persons wishing to ensure that they receive copies are requested to send 25p. to cover four issues. In the case of club officers wishing to obtain additional copies for members, please add 15p. for each additional copy required. Copies ordered by club officers will be posted in bulk. Remittances should be sent to Wm. T. Morgan, 89 Sterndale Road, Hammersmith, W.14 OHX.

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MISCELLANY.

The 1972 European Cup competition was won by the Italian club Glen Grant Nettuno, who beat the 1971 Cup winners Ausonia Milan by 2 games to 1. The three games were played at Campo Kennedy Stadium, Milan. Scores were, Game 1. Glen Grant 3 - Ausonia 0. Game 2. Ausonia 11 - Glen Grant 5. Game 3. Glen Grant 7 - Ausonia 2.

The British Softball Federation is to stage two major competitions in 1973. The Intercounties Challenge Trophy competition, the final of which is set for Saturday, 23rd. June at Hursley, Hants; and the British Softball League. The latter competition will be for the Dixon's Softball Trophy, which will be awarded to the team which shall have won the greatest number of games played against all other member teams of the British Softball Federation.

The Netherlands Champion club for 1972 was Sparta of Rotterdam. Sparta defeated Raak Nicols, Haarlem in the Holland Series.

Publications received include "Babe Ruth Baseball Bullpen" packed with news of the two Babe Ruth World Series. The 13 - 15 year old group won by Hawaii. 16 - 18 years old champions, Seattle, Wash.

Readers of the first issue of Baseball Mercury will have seen an item headed English Amateur Baseball Federation. At the initial meeting of the proposed organisation which took place in London during October it was decided that the new organisation will be known as the British Amateur Baseball Federation.

A recent issue of Baseball Digest contained an interesting article entitled "A new way of rating batting leaders". It deals with the problem that many baseball records are cumulative, keeping track of life-time totals in various categories, and that because of changes in the game such totals can be misleading in ranking players effectiveness when comparing players of different eras.

The author proposes that an effective yardstick would be arrived at by taking ten major offensive categories and totalling the number of times that a player leads his league in any of these categories. The categories chosen are hits, doubles, triples, runs, RBI, BB, batting average, slugging average, stolen bases, and homeruns.

Using this method, Ruth (50) and Cobb (49) are way ahead of all other players. A second group consists of Hornsby (40), Musial (40), Ted Williams (39), Honus Wagner (38). The leading active players under this system include Hank Aaron (22), Willie Mays (21), Carl Yastrzemski (16), Tony Oliva (14), and Harmon Killebrew (13).

Joe DiMaggio has 10 titles which probably explains why Ted Williams was so burned-up by DiMaggio being acclaimed as the greatest living ballplayer during the celebration of the centenary of professional baseball in 1969.

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