

BASEBALL Mercury.

Issue 28

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BASEBALL Mercury.

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BRITISH BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS by Don Smallwood.

Hull Aces Junior Team won the Youth Championship of Great Britain on Sunday, 13th. September at Kirkby Stadium, Merseyside.

In a very entertaining game that drew much applause from the spectators Aces beat Ashford(Middlesex) Eagles 16 - 3. Star of this victory was Neil Read who pitched a fine game, collecting 9 strike-outs. He also had the remarkable batting record five times at bat, five safe hits, and scored five runs, including two homeruns. The crowning moment for Neil's day came when he was presented with the Jim Goings Pitching Award.

While Neil Read had the game that all players dream about, he was also very well supported by this keen young Aces team. Carl Gibbons, Wayne Parker, and Darren Turtle stood out in the game, all three should be seen in representative baseball for many seasons to come.

Now for a very different story. In the Senior Championship played at the same venue, Hull Aces tried unsuccessfully for the third consecutive year to win the British title.

In fairness to Hull Aces I must state that they were without the services of their star pitcher Peter Darnell. The improvised fences around the grass centre of this athletic track were very close to home plate and the hard hitting Americans who play as London Warriors had a field day. This was combined with a magnificent pitching performance from Mike Ocon, who had been coaching in the Dutch League all season.

Aces lost 23 - 3. Warriors opened with a barrage of hits, including 2 homeruns, and the longer the game went on the more secure their victory seemed. In the last of the seventh innings with the score 23 - 0 in favour of London Warriors, Aces got the consolation of scoring 3 runs, thus robbing London of the shut-out victory.

London Warriors hit 5 homeruns of which Mike Ocon got 3. The very limited distances to the fences also gave Warriors a number of ground-rule extra base hits.

A question raised by this victory of an all American team concerns the European Cup competition. For the second time in three years, Golders Green Sox in 1979, was the earlier case, a club loaded with non-British players has won our national club championship.

The European Baseball Federation's rules are that to compete in the European Cup - which in fact is the European club championship, a club can not use more than two players who are not passport holders of the country in which that club plays. Now if the European Federation has such a rule, would it not be logical for member countries to have such a rule governing their own club championships?

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WORLD SOFTBALL REVIEW.

Japan wins both Youth World Titles.

The first ever World Youth Championships were held in Edmonton, Canada, from 5th. to 12th. July. Five boy's team played a double round robin; while ten girl's teams played a single round robin. In each case the top four teams competed in the play-offs.

Play-off Standings

	<u>Boys</u>
1. JAPAN	2 - 0
2. U.S.A.	1 - 2
3. Mexico	1 - 1
4. Canada	0 - 1

Round-Robin

	<u>Boys</u>
1. U.S.A.	8 - 0
2. Japan	5 - 3
3. Mexico	4 - 4
4. Canada	2 - 6
5. Argentina	1 - 7

Play-offs Boys
Semi-Finals.
 Mexico 3 - Canada 2
 Japan 4 - U.S.A. 1
Finals.
 U.S.A. 7 - Mexico 0.
Grand Finals.
 Japan 2 - U.S.A. 0
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Play-offs Girls
Semi-Finals.
 Japan 4 - Canada 2 (13 inns.)
 U.S.A. 1 - China 0.
Finals.
 Japan 8 - China 4 (8 inns.)
Grand Finals.
 Japan 1 - U.S.A. 0

Play-off Standings Girls
 1. JAPAN 3 - 0
 2. U.S.A. 1 - 1
 3. China 0 - 2
 4. Canada 0 - 1

Round-Robin Girls.
 1. U.S.A. 8 - 1
 2. China 8 - 1
 3. Japan 6 - 3
 4. Canada 6 - 3
 5. Taiwan 5 - 4
 6. Australia 5 - 4
 7. Netherlands 4 - 5
 8. Bermuda 2 - 7
 9. Mexico 1 - 8
 10. Venezuela 0 - 9

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WORLD GAMES ONE.

A number of non-Olympic sports including softball and baseball were included in this sporting festival staged in July at Santa Clara, California. The U.S.A. gained the gold medals for softball in both the Men's and the Women's Divisions.

| | | <u>Round-Robin Final Standings</u> | | | |
|--------------|----|------------------------------------|---------------|----|----|
| Women's Div. | W. | L. | Men's Div. | W. | L. |
| U.S.A. | 6 | 0 | U.S.A. No. 1. | 5 | 1 |
| Canada | 3 | 3 | U.S.A. No. 2 | 4 | 2 |
| Bahamas | 2 | 4 | Canada | 3 | 3 |
| Taiwan | 1 | 5 | Bahamas | 0 | 6 |

Women's Championship
 U.S.A. 3 - Canada 0

Men's Championship
 U.S.A. No.2 3 - U.S.A. No.1 0.

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INDIA.

Softball continues to grow in popularity in India, particularly with the youngsters who competed in the third Junior National Championships at Ahmedabad. Sixteen states are affiliated with the Softball Association of India and 13 were represented in the boys' division and 8 in the girls' division. Delhi State won the boys' division and Karnataka won the girls' division. Andhra Pradesh was runner-up in each division.

NEW EUROPEAN VICE-PRESIDENT.

This post formerly held by Mr. Bruno Beneck, President of the Italian Baseball-Softball Federation is now held by Theo. Vleeshouwer, Secretary of the Netherlands Baseball and Softball Association.

NEW MEMBERS.

The I.S.F. Congress confirmed the following countries as new members, China, India, Botswana, Peru, and Israel.

The Vth. Women's World Fast Pitch Championship will be held June 1/12, 1982 at Taipei, Taiwan.

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AFRICA.

Representatives from Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana met in Salisbury on 11th. August to discuss the formation of an African Zone Championship. The competition will be organised for October 1982 and played in Zimbabwe.

PHILIPPINES.

The Philippine Softball Association announced that the South East Asia Games softball competition will be held in Manila, December 6/15, 1981.

10th. I.S.F. CONGRESS.

This was held in Honolulu, May 29th./30th. W.W. Kethan was re-elected as president. A total of 21 countries were represented, these were Argentina, Australia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Mexico, Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles, New Zealand, Panama, China, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Taiwan, U.S.A., Venezuela, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

BRITISH - AMERICAN SERIES.

After a ban on baseball for U.S.A.F. manpower which lasted for about 10 years, the U.S.A.F. Command in the United Kingdom permitted the game to be played in 1981. Their bases played in a U.K. Conference.

Arising out of this revival they contacted the B.A.B.S.F. and suggested a series of three games between the Great Britain team and three different U.S.A.F. base teams, the winner of the series to be awarded a trophy.

The first game of the series was played at Dane Park, Hull. Great Britain beat U.S.A.F. Mildenhall 6 - 4. This game played on a Sunday, had been preceded on the Saturday by a game between Humberside All-Stars versus United States Army, Burtonwood, also played at Dane Park. Humberside All-Stars won 18 - 7.

The second game of the series was played at Nottingham. G.B. v. Upper Heyford. Great Britain lost 15 - 3. The third game was played versus U.S.A.F. Bentwaters at the Bentwaters base in Suffolk. Bentwaters won 6 - 1.

The series gave a lift to baseball, and gained a lot of extra publicity. On the whole it was successful, but Ron Marshall, Great Britain team manager had his share of problems. In the second game, he had only one recognised pitcher to call upon, young Martin Adamson. This put a tremendous strain on Martin.

In the third game, two members of a Southern club were selected, but declined the invitation as their club had a chance of winning the South of England League championship, and they had a vital league game on that day.

Next season it is hoped to expand the series to five games, and the series may be sponsored.

BASEBALL-WORLD GAMES I

The U.S.A. won the gold medal, South Korea(silver), and Australia (bronze). Scores were U.S.A. 9 - Panama 1; Korea 10 - Australia 0; U.S.A. 11 - Australia 7; Korea 7 - Panama 6; Australia 6 - Panama 5; U.S.A. 4 - Korea 2.

An informant who was an official at these games stated that the attendances were around 300 to 400 a game, except for U.S.A. v. South Korea. At that game around 1,000 people attended, most of them being Koreans.

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AINBA CONGRESS.

At the congress of the world baseball association(AINBA), held at Edmonton, Canada on 4th./5th. August, Dr. Robert Smith(U.S.A.) was elected as president. He replaced Carlos Garcia(Nicaragua) who had been elected to the office at Tokyo last August. Carlos Garcia at the time was under arrest in his own country, and was later sentenced to many years in prison; he was therefore incapable of performing the duties of president.

Manuel Gonzales Guerra(Cuba), the first president of AINBA, was confirmed as being Honorary Life President - with voting powers in the Executive.

Bruno Beneck(Italy) was elected 1st. Vice-President of AINBA. Fellow delegates informed me that we had transacted a tremendous amount of business in two days compared to earlier congresses at which they had been present.

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EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP.

The European Senior Championship was held at Haarlem, Netherlands, 11th./19th. July. Much to my surprise, and probably to many others, the host country regained the title which had been lost to Italy in 1975.

Italy could probably have sent a stronger team to Haarlem, but as a matter of long term policy seems to have decided to cut back on the number of Italian-Americans selected.

The opening game commenced with Prince Claus, Consort to the Queen of the Netherlands, throwing the first pitch. An exciting game followed in which Sweden came close to creating a sensational upset. The Netherlands rather luckily scraping home to a 6 - 5 victory. This result strengthened my opinion that the tournament would be a walk-over for Italy.

On the Sunday a crowd of about 6,000 saw Italy beat The Netherlands 5 - 4. These two countries did not meet again until Thursday night. Italy got away to a great start. The Netherlands managed to claw its way back from 6 - 0 down to 6 - 6. Then torrential rain fell, causing the game to be abandoned. On Friday night the Netherlands beat Italy 8 - 3, and on Saturday afternoon Italy once again lost to the host country 11 - 7.

Following this game I was introduced to Jim Mansilla, an American who was the 3rd. base coach for Italy, he and other Italian-Americans were convinced that the Netherlands had been extremely lucky to win the Saturday afternoon game. The Italian team was determined to win the Sunday afternoon game, and thus to force a decider to be played on Sunday night.

The host association made the Sweden-Belgium game, and the Netherlands -Italy game, both played on Sunday afternoon, a combined admission charge of 7½ guilders, instead of having two separate admissions of 5 guilders. They probably made rather more money by so doing. Sweden-Belgium was set for 12 noon; and Netherlands-Italy for 2.30.

There were spectators at the stadium at 9.30 a.m. on Sunday. When I arrived at 12 noon, the stadium was already full. The big game did not start until 4p.m. as the first game went to 11 innings before Sweden beat Belgium 2 - 1. This enabled Sweden to finish in third place - its highest ever placing.

The crowd kept piling in, and there were possibly 10,000 present for the Netherlands - Italy game. It was a fairly tense game but the Netherlands gradually built up an 8 - 0 lead - final score was 8 - 1. Including the abandoned game, about 34,000 spectators saw the games between Europe's Big Two.

There was tremendous emotion and support from the Dutch public throughout the series for the home country - largely I suspect because they were convinced that Italy would be Number One in Europe for the foreseeable future - and they were overjoyed when a fighting young Dutch team began to prove that Italy was not invincible.

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INTERCONTINENTAL CUP.

Teams representing eight countries played in this tournament at Edmonton(Canada) - August 6th./16th. They were Canada, Australia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, South Korea, Japan, Panama, and United States.

Cuba had not lost a game in an official tournament since 1976; and had won every official tournament in which it had played in the past 12 years. Most of the games were played at Renfrew Park, on which the City of Edmonton had spent 500,000 dollars in order to bring it up to the standard needed.

First surprise of the tournament was on Sunday night - 9th. August when Canada beat Cuba 2 - 1 behind the 3 hit pitching of Perry Lychak - a local boy. Servio Borges - Cuban coach - declared that not since Cuba faced Burt Hooten in 1971, had they faced such great pitching, Burt Hooten is now a major league star.

The following night, Cuba ran foul of the Dominican Republic which has a tradition of upsetting their powerful neighbours. D.R. had hot bats that night, and with 13 hits overcame Cuba 8 - 4.

To digress from results briefly - there was a pronounced lack of atmosphere at this tournament in comparison to the Netherlands v. Italy games which I had attended a short while before. I exclude those games involving South Korea - there is a colony of Koreans in Edmonton, and for every game in which South Korea played they turned out from grandmothers to babes in arms - waving flags, using clappers, drums, and horns, and generally adding to the colour of the occasion.

The four semi-finalists were Cuba, U.S.A., Dominican Republic, and South Korea. Cuba beat South Korea in one semi-final, and U.S.A. beat Dominican Republic. In the bronze final - Dominican Republic beat South Korea 4 - 3 in a titanic 15 inning struggle. Which put all the timings out. In the final, U.S.A. beat Cuba 6 - 5 in 10 innings. Cuba played the last half inning under protest - their protest went to the AINBA Technical Commission which voted 3 - 2 against Cuba. Because of this protest, plus the disruption of the timings, the whole tournament ended on a very sour note. Cuba departed without taking part in the closing ceremonies - they had to dash off to catch a plane - the crowd demonstrated their displeasure at the hasty departure of Cuba.

My own opinion is that if any country other than the U.S.A. had been involved, Cuba would have certainly protested - but not with such bitterness. South Korea and Cuba were the only countries which took T.V. transmissions - and the Cuban coach seemed to be playing to the T.V. cameras when making his protest. The organisers certainly did not deserve to suffer such an end to their tournament.

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