

BASEBALL Mercury.

Issue 40

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Baseball in north-west England	1
1985 National Finals	1
1985 European Championship	2
English/Welsh baseball	2
Pony baseball	3
East Midlands baseball	4
International softball	4
World Port Tournament	4

BASEBALL

Mercury.

EDITOR - - - - -
WILLIAM MORGAN,
6(B), STEVENAGE ROAD,
LONDON, S.W.6.

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NORTH WEST AMERICAN BASEBALL - SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

Despite the terrible weather conditions this season, we can look back with a great deal of satisfaction.

The sudden withdrawal of four of our leading umpires at the start of the season, required us to switch some of our fixtures, but nevertheless, we overcame this obstacle.

The season saw a shift of power, the Trojans nine year reign as league champions came to an end in 1985. Burtonwood Braves, fulfilling the promise shown in 1984, won every one of our competitions, behind the pitching of Rickel Parker and Steve Atchley. Burtonwood lost only two games all season, one versus an All Star team, and the other in the semi-final of the National Club Championship, when they were beaten by Hull Mets, who went on to win the title.

We saw a new team formed in Southport - the Sefton Mets. Mets, with the inclusion of a couple of experienced players, became a force to be reckoned with - a marvellous start for a new team - and they reached the final of the Lancashire Cup. Mets' enthusiasm and endeavour is an example to the rest of our league. I foresee a very successful future for them.

The Litherland Tornados, sponsored by the Journal of Commerce, formed from last season's Freebirds and some Venezuelans, also gave a good account of themselves, registering wins over the Trojans and Tigers.

The Crawford Tigers, not the Tigers of old, had a middling season. Under the guidance of Ken Dulson and Gordon Rimmer, Tigers are rebuilding. Also rebuilding are Trojans, the runners-up in the league. Last in the league were Skelmersdale Giants, who had a very poor season, winning only one game.

We hope to expand the league in 1986, the Youth team Tolona White Sox have declared their intention of going senior next year. Here are our league standings.

	Won	Lost	%
BURTONWOOD BRAVES	13	0	1.000
Liverpool Trojans	8	5	.615
Crawford Tigers	7	7	.500
Litherland Tornados	6	6	.500
Sefton Mets	6	9	.400
Skelmersdale Giants	1	14	.066

Lancashire Cup Winners - Burtonwood Braves. Artco Trophy - Burtonwood Braves. Robertson Trophy - Burtonwood Braves. Rickel Parker (Braves) won The Player of the Year Award, and the Pitching Award. Frank Beech Award - S. Atchley (Braves). Merit Award - Norman G. Wells (Trojans). Rookie Award - Ian Oulton (Mets). Home Run Award - Ian Oulton (Mets). Most Improved Player - Martin Godsall (Tornados).

Norman Wells.

The next issue of Baseball Mercury will appear in March. Subscription for four issues is £1, and should be made payable to William Morgan.

1985 HONOURS.

BABSF

National Baseball Championship, at Burtonwood U.S. Army Base. Hull Mets 10 - London Warriors 8.
British Cup, at GKN-Garringtons' Sports Ground, Bromsgrove, Worcs. Hull Mets 14 - Liverpool Trojans 4
Pony League Championship, at Burtonwood U.S. Army Base.
Southglade Kestrels (Nottingham) 12 - Litherland Freebirds 0.
National Softball Championship., at Crawfords' Sports Ground, Liverpool. Skelmersdale Jets 10 - Southport Squaws 9.

XIXth. EUROPEAN BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIP.

Played in The Netherlands in July. For the first time in the Netherlands the championships were spread between three cities, Haarlem, Rotterdam, and Eindhoven. These three cities, plus Utrecht, will be venues for games in the 1986 world Amateur Baseball Championship. The President of the Federazione Italiana Baseball-Softball, Aldo Notari, had instructed the Coach of the Italian National Team, Silvano Ambrosioni, not to select any Italian-American players. This was a reversal of the policy fostered for some thirteen years by his predecessor as president, Bruno Beneck.

Six countries took part, Belgium, Italy, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, and The Netherlands. A preliminary round robin was played, with the two top teams proceeding to play a four game series against each other. The other four teams then played another round robin.

The first round robin ended in the following order, 1. The Netherlands W.5: 2. Italy W.4: 3. Belgium W.3: 4. Sweden W.2: 5. Spain W.1: 6. San Marino W.0.

In the series between The Netherlands and Italy, The Netherlands won all four games, thus winning The European Title; with Italy securing second place. In the second round robin, Belgium won 3, Sweden 2, and Spain 1. San Marino losing all three of its games.

The Final Classification was, 1st. The Netherlands (9-0). 2nd. Italy (4-5). 3rd. Belgium (6-2). 4th. Sweden (4-4). 5th. Spain (2-6). 6th. San Marino (0-8).

Individual Awards. Batting - Baranco (Netherlands) .593; HR King - Bianchi (Italy) 4; MVP - Joost (Netherlands); Pitcher - Hijzelendoorn (Netherlands):

ENGLISH BASEBALL ASSOCIATION

Secretary - Robert DeSilva. The information about 1985 was supplied by Mr. DeSilva. The historical material has been researched from newspapers by myself.

The E.B.A. began its 1985 season with eight senior teams,

All Saints, Anfield Old Boys, Anfield Old Boys 2nd., Breckside, Electricity Supply, St. Margaret's, Speke Old Boys, and Willow Bank. Honours winners. League Championship - Anfield O.B.: E.B.A. Cup - Willow Bank: Lewis Cup - Anfield O.B.: Len Simpson Memorial Cup - Breckside. Anfield O.B. 2nd. dropped out before the season ended. The Youth League having become defunct it was decided to resurrect it. Posters were displayed in areas of Liverpool where English baseball has a following; and sufficient numbers of lads came forward to permit of six teams being formed. Each of the senior teams with the exception of All Saints has adopted a youth team which will play under the name of its parent club.

The 60th. International Match was played in Liverpool, Wales beat England. The Annual Player of the Match Award, decided by John Norman, B.B.C.-T.V. Wales producer, went to Alan Harrison (Wales and Alexandra O.B.)



The oldest of the existing clubs is St. Margaret's, formed in 1922; the youngest is Willow Bank, founded 1984.

Schools baseball in Liverpool began in 1909. In that season 11 teams competed in two leagues. League I was won by Northcote Road Council School. League II ended in a tie between Granby Street Council School and St. Saviour's, Everton. In a playoff game, Granby Street beat St. Saviour's, and then went on to beat Northcote Road for the Liverpool Championship.

There was also schools baseball in Warrington for quite a number of years.

In 1931, the E.B.A. had a women's section, this contained six teams; Guard of Honour, Cowley, Evans, Bootle Olympic, Clarence, and Crystal. The title, E.B.A., dates from the spring of 1892, when The National Rounders Association (no connection with the present body bearing that name), decided that in consequence of major rule changes made just prior to the 1890 season, the name rounders had become somewhat misleading; and therefore changed its title to The English Baseball Association. It also decided that its game was to be known as "English baseball". The latter description was used for only a few weeks in Liverpool, and was not revived until John Moores launched the American game in Liverpool in 1933. This, by the way was, not the first introduction of the American code into Liverpool; the earlier efforts had all been short-lived.

The term "English baseball" was used in Gloucester for some years, but appears never to have been used in South Wales.

The evolution of the game can be traced back to the Duke of Edinburgh Rounders & Quoits Club, this club publicised a game that it played in Newsham Park, Liverpool in 1875. As a result of press attention several other clubs appeared. For a number of years fairly rapid development took place both in rules and club numbers. In 1875/76 teams had nine players, and a runner had to make a circuit of the bases to score a run. Each team had three innings. The three innings rule survived until it was scrapped in 1892.

In 1877 teams went to ten players. The present number of eleven players a team dates from about 1880, as does the system of scoring a run for each base reached before the runner comes to a halt.

In 1881 The Rounders Association was formed, Mr. Howe was the secretary. In 1885 the title was changed to the National Rounders Association, Mr. W.H. Hively was secretary, and Mr. Howe was treasurer. The present two innings a team rule was introduced in 1892.

It is ironic that the major rule changes made in 1890, and the change of title in 1892, came about in the belief that such changes would help to popularise the game. The National Rounders Association had at least 99 teams playing in Liverpool in 1889, whereas English baseball has never had more than 38 teams. This figure relates to 1932, when a rival body The English Baseball Union was formed, and the E.B.A. and E.B.U. mustered 38 teams between them. In that year there were also about 80 School teams in Liverpool.

PONY LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP.

The Midland champions, Southglade Kestrels, should have played a semi-final versus the Pony League champions from the South, but no Southern team affiliated to the B.A.B.S.F. In the case of the North West champions, Litherland Freebirds, they should have played a semi-final in the North West versus the Humberside champions. The latter did not travel to Liverpool to play, so Freebirds had a walkover to the final.

The Final was played at Burtonwood U.S. Army Base.

Stephen Sewell was the starting pitcher for Kestrels, and was relieved by Mark Callahan. Kestrels gained a no run, no hit, no error, 12 - 0 shut-out.

To gain such a result the whole of the Kestrels squad had to play a tremendous game. Matthew Gaunt, catcher, had an extremely good game. Others on the squad were Wayne Lydon(lb), Jason Ball at 2nd., Mike Callahan(3b), The two pitchers alternated at shortstop. In the outfield were Jason Sharp, Andrew Woodings and Steve Edwards. Substitute outfielders were Nicky and Denya Weaver. Benny Benson(National Youth Officer) presented the trophy to Andrew Williams, the Kestrels' manager.

EAST MIDLANDS. by Sheila Williams.

At the beginning of 1985, we looked all set for a six team senior league but, in the event, only three managed to complete the full season, with Boston Gladiators being a non-starter and Newark Giants and Birmingham Royals falling by the wayside. Final placings.

	W.	L.	%
SOUTHGLADE HORNETS	4	0	1.000
Southglade Pirates	2	2	.500
Arnold Astros	0	4	.000

Southglade Hornets also won the Nottingham Cup, taking them through to the BBSF National semi-final, which they lost to London Warriors after managing to keep the game pretty close for six innings. Southglade Baseball Club entered the British Cup competition and lost to Liverpool Trojans in the semi-final 10 - 9.

East Midland Pony League final placings.	W.	L.	%
SOUTHGLADE KESTRELS	4	0	1.000
Southglade Eagles	2	2	.500
Birmingham Bears	0	4	.000

Again, at the outset of 1985 our Juniors looked like having a six team league, three of which did not materialise. With such a disappointing season, from the point of view of teams folding, it was very heartening to learn that Arnold Astros were forming a junior team to be known as Arnold Braves. The Braves played Southglade Eagles in a friendly towards the end of the season and they show great promise.

Southglade Kestrels did not lose a game all season - as well as winning our domestic championship, they won the Lol Whelan Trophy, the Jimmy Goins Trophy, and the National Pony League Championship.

SOFTBALL INTERNATIONAL

The World Youth Championships were played in Fargo, North Dakota in July. The boys' section was won by New Zealand. The girls' by China. Placings in the girls' section were 1. CHINA; 2. Japan; 3. U.S.A.; 4. Taiwan; 5. Australia; 6. The Netherlands; 7. Mexico; 8. Canada. World Games II was staged in London in 1985. The Womens' softball tournament was contested by Belgium, Japan, Taiwan, The Netherlands, and the U.S.A. Placings- Gold U.S.A.; Silver Taiwan; Bronze The Netherlands.

The World's Womens' Softball Championships are being played at Auckland, New Zealand in January 1986. The Auckland Softball Association has received a 110,000 dollars sponsorship from Lion Breweries. The funds have been used to improve Norona Park, the venue for the tournament, and the ground has been renamed Lion Red Ball Park.

ROTTERDAM BASEBALL WORLD PORT TOURNAMENT.

This tournament was played immediately prior to the European Championships. Participants were Havana, Cuba; Kobe, Japan; Dallas; The Netherlands; and Alpha Curacao. Standings - 1. HAVANA; 2. Kobe; 3. Dallas; 4. The Netherlands; 5. Alpha Curacao.