

# BASEBALL Mercury.

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**USSR** Baseball, softball and the old Russian game of Laпта are to be promoted in the USSR. There are already several student baseball teams in Georgia and the Ukraine.

The first exhibition game in Moscow was played on 7th. October between a Moscow University team and a team of Nicaraguan and Dominican Republic students from the Patrice Lumumba Friendship University. The Patrice Lumumba team won 3 - 0. There are plans to start up a national championship in 1988 and with that in mind coaches from Cuba and Nicaragua are to go to the Soviet Union to promote work with trainees.

The 2nd. Goodwill Games are planned to be staged in Seattle in 1990; among the sports to be included is baseball. The USSR intends to have a national team formed to take part in this event.

**BABSF** Federation activities have centred around three important events in 1986. Firstly, the participation of the Great Britain Senior team in the "B" Pool European Championships in Paris during July. The G.B. team came third.

Secondly, the extension of the number of clubs taking part in the play-offs for our National Club Championship from four to eight. The competition ended with a final at Sutton United F.C. ground sponsored by Gridiron Sports. Cobham Yankees beating Hull Mets 12-0 in an excellently staged event.

Thirdly, the introduction of the National League; an entry of six teams was expected, but only three teams found themselves in a position to compete. These were Southport Scarisbrook Stars, Nottingham Radio Trent Knights and Humberside County Bears. Humberside Bears captured the "Astrol Sports" trophy.

The teams competing certainly attracted media attention and all three have secured sponsorship for next season. What is now needed is more teams to take the plunge.

Other federation aims for 1986 have continued to mature very slowly - coaching schemes, umpire training, formation of a National Scorers Association, expansion of our junior programme.

The softball situation has not yet been resolved, and I firmly believe that the decision of the International Softball Federation not to recognise the BABSF has not helped softball to progress.

I have put forward ideas aimed to bring all British softball people under one banner. The Great Britain Softball Association is a body born within one region, and softball people in other areas will always remember that fact. Don Smallwood - President

The next issue of Baseball Mercury should appear in March. Subscription for four issues is £1. Subscriptions should be made payable to William Morgan. Subscriptions and items for publication should be sent to the editor.

## NORTH WEST AMERICAN BASEBALL - SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

Last year the Burtonwood Braves destroyed the nine year Trojan domination of the North West League, and this year they proved that they were "No flash in the pan", as they have once again emerged as our league champions.

But only after a monumental struggle, culminating in a play-off. At the end of our regular season Burtonwood, Menwith Colonials and Jawbone Tornados all had 9 and 3 records. These teams were followed by Trojans in fourth place; fifth Skelmersdale Giants; sixth Liverpool Tigers, and seventh Southport Mets.

The Play Off was a Round Robin between the three leaders, which was won by Burtonwood Braves, who became our representative in the quarter-finals of the National Championship. On the day after the play-off victory Braves went to Hull, where they beat Hull Warriors 7 - 2. On 31st. August they met the eventual winners of the Championship Cobham Yankees to whom they lost 12 - 0.

Mention must be made of the valiant fight made by the Tornados, who with the assistance of newcomer, Steve Nero, a pro. basketball player improved greatly. Steve is the best pitcher to arrive on our scene for some time. Unfortunately, he was never available for the decisive games, thus weakening Tornados challenge.

The new National League was something of a disappointment. We started well, being able to procure a £500 sponsorship from the Scarisbrook Hotel in Southport. However, our gentlemen's agreement for the use of the Southport F.C. ground at Haigh Avenue was broken one week before our first scheduled game. We managed to secure the use of the Southport R.U.F.C. ground at Waterloo Road.

Despite the limited time, we were still able to draw a crowd in excess of 300. Also disappointing was the lack of interest by our foremost players; and this coupled with the withdrawal of the London based team, took a lot of media interest away from the league.

Nevertheless, we must persevere with some form of National League.

Norman Wells.

## HULL

The Senior League was won by Hull Mets with 14 wins and no defeats. Mets also won the 'Red' Holmes tournament, and reached the final of the National Championship in which they were beaten 12 - 0 by Cobham Yankees. En route to the final Mets accounted for Black Adders 41 - 1, and Crawley Giants 8 - 4.

The young warriors team looked very good this season and could prove to be a real contender in 1987. Another young team Albemarle Youth Centre Pumas nearly collected their first win, running Mariners to a close 6 - 7 score. The Hull League consisted of eight teams, six from Hull, one from Barnsley, and Southglade Hornets of Nottingham.

Softball has had only one team in our division this season, and this team has had to play games either away from Hull or against much younger junior teams.

Dennis Newton.

## FRANCE

The final of the French Championship was played on 27/28 September at La Cipale, Paris. PUC beat Baseball Club de France 18 - 8 and 14 - 3.

The Pucistes managed this win in spite of being deprived of the use of the French No.1 pitcher, Gilles Thomas who had been suspended.

Div.1, final placings. First PUC, 2 BCF, 3 Brevannes. 4 Bergerac,

5. Savigny, 6. St. Priest.

Other 1986 winners were - Women's Softball; Dynamics Nice (2nd. PUC). Baseball Juniors: PUC (2nd. BGF). Baseball Cadets: St. Priest (2nd. Savigny).

CHANNEL 4 T.V. THE TIMES of 31/10/86 carried an item headed 'Home hit for Series' which stated that the series was a surprising hit, according to early ratings released the day before.

The first two programmes were watched by 750,000 and 600,000 people respectively, before the audience shot up to 1,500,000 for the third show. Derek Brandon, the executive producer of Cheerleader Productions was quoted as saying that 1,500,000 was a staggering figure, when horse racing on Channel 4 attracts an average of 700,000 viewers.

For a personal comment - The only programme I saw was the third one, and my principal interest was to observe the presentation method. I must say that compared to a BBC-TV show 'Highlights of the World Series' seen by me some three years ago, Channel 4's presentation was light years in advance.

As for newspaper interest - I have read more about baseball in the British press over the past five weeks, than the total cover possibly for the past twenty years. Papers which I have seen extensive cover in have been The Times, The Sunday Times, The Guardian, The Observer, Today, The Daily Telegraph, The Independent, and The Evening Standard.

Almost certainly there must be an upsurge of interest throughout the United Kingdom with new clubs emerging on a scattered basis in many places. Travelling will be a problem but as American Football has demonstrated, if new players are keen enough they will overcome the travel problems.

#### EUROPEAN 'B' CHAMPIONSHIPS, PARIS. by Brian Holland.

The Great Britain team fared "not to bad" during these Championships.

Their first game was a hard fought affair against Finland. Up to the seventh inning they had built up a comfortable lead of six runs over the Finns. Finland came back at the Brits in the eighth with five runs, including a three run homer from Keskilato.

Great Britain pulled away again in the ninth with the help of a two run homer by Julian Dodswell. Finland came back again in their half of the ninth, but could not score enough to overcome the Brits, final score Great Britain 9 - Finland 8.

The second game found Great Britain facing the championship favourites, France. This is where a few nerves might have crept into the British defence, as France took an early lead helped by costly fielding errors by the British.

The lead was too much for Great Britain, who only scored three runs against France's thirteen. A small consolation for the British was a home run from Vince Warner.

Switzerland were the next opponents for Great Britain. Here again errors abounded, with an amazing 23 errors during the game. But in the end Great Britain outlasted the Swiss fumbles to win 14 - 10. British home runs came from Gary Bedingfield and Dan Godfrey.

The German pitcher, Helmig, proved too overpowering for the G.B. batters in the Brits final game of the tournament. Helmig held the British to just one scratch infield single as he struck out twelve.

Helmig also added to the Brits' misery with his bat when he hit a home run in the first inning to lead the Germans to a 10 - 0 win.

Other results - France 30 - Switzerland 8; W. Germany 21 - Switzerland 1; W. Germany 13 - Finland 3;

France 11 - Finland 7; Finland 12 - Switzerland 2;  
 W. Germany 6 - France 5  
 Standings - First W. Germany 4/0; 2nd. France 3/1; Third G.B. 2/2;  
 Fourth Finland 1/3; Fifth Switzerland 0/4.  
 Batting Champion Sakari Keskitalo(Finland) .438; Homerun King  
 Robert Bailey(W. Germany) 5; Best pitcher Martin Helmig(W. Germany)  
 ERA 1.26

#### WELSH LADIES' BASEBALL LEAGUE by Howard Evans.

Formed in 1923 as Cardiff & District Ladies' Baseball League; the  
 1923 Championship was won by Grange Wesleyans.  
 1986 Winners.

League	Cup
Premier Div. Caerau	Premier Div. Canton Athletic
First Div. Rapid Engineering	First Div. Ely Legion
Second Div. Trelai	Second Div. Trelai
Third Div. Penarth Seaside	Third Div. Old Illydians

Elliot Seager Cup - Premier & First Divs. Canton Athletic.  
 Margaret Evans Cup - 2nd. & 3rd. Divs. Penarth Seaside.  
 Player of the Year- Wendy Taleb(Canton Athletic).  
 Handicap Cup - St. Josephs 'A'. Len Ashurst Trophy - Cardiff

#### ENGLISH BASEBALL ASSOCIATION by Robert de Silva.

League Championship - St. Margarets: Lewis Cup - Anfield Old Boys.  
 Len Simpson Cup - Anfield Old Boys: E.B.A. Cup - Willowbank  
 Junior League - Breckside: Junior Cup - Breckside.  
 Player of the Year - Steven Henney.  
 Howard Evans(Secretary of the Welsh Ladies' Baseball League) and  
 Peter Pearson(Treasurer of the E.B.A.) have been trying to foster  
 ladies' baseball in Liverpool. About 40 players began training, this  
 has dropped to 25. Next summer the Willowbank and Breckside clubs  
 will travel to Cardiff to play Llanrumney Y.C. and Rumney R.F.C.,  
 and it is planned that two ladies' teams from Liverpool will travel  
 with them to play games in Cardiff.

**SOFTBALL** CHALLENGE CUP II WOMEN'S INVITATION  
 -AL CHAMPIONSHIP, held in late July  
 at VANCOUVER, B.C. was won by Hi-Ho Brakettes(U.S.A.) Teams taking  
 part came from U.S.A., Canada, China, Taiwan, New Zealand, Japan  
 and Australia.

The XI Central American Caribbean Softball Championships for Men  
 held in Puerto Rico - Cuba took the Gold Medal, Panama - Silver  
 and Dominican Republic - Bronze. Puerto Rico finished fourth.

EUROPEAN WOMEN'S SOFTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP - staged at the Royal Ant  
 werp Eagles Field, Final Standings - 1. ITALY: 2. The Netherlands:  
 3. Belgium: 4. Denmark: 5. West Germany.

A double round robin was played in which The Netherlands beat Italy  
 twice 1 - 0 and 9 - 2. In the final however Italy sprang a great sur-  
 prise beating The Netherlands 1 - 0 and 2 - 1. Both of the Italian  
 final wins were pitched by Monica Corvino who was selected as best  
 pitcher of the tournament. MVP was Paola Marfoggia(Italy), while the  
 batting champion was Lizzy Pieters(Belgium). 533

EUROPEAN WOMEN'S SOFTBALL CUP- staged at Oosterhout, The Netherlands  
 18/21 September. Final Standings - 1. TERRASVOGELS(Netherlands);  
 2. HCAW(Netherlands); 3. Lazio Roma(Italy); 4. Luchtbal(Belgium);  
 5. Chemie Praha(Czechoslovakia); 6. Leksand(Sweden); 7. Horsholm  
 Clowns(Denmark); 8. Capelles(Guernsey); 9. Espoo(Finland);  
 10. PUC(France). MVP - Els Koks.

BBSF WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP. Final contested by Skelmersdale Jets  
 and Southport Squaws, Skelmersdale Jets won 7 - 6.