

BASEBALL Mercury.

Issue 44

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BRITISH BASEBALL FEDERATION

The above is the new title of the body which from the Spring of 1978 had been known as the British Amateur Baseball & Softball Federation.

At the A.G.M. held in November 1986 it was decided that the word Amateur would be dropped, and that Softball which had created many problems for the federation would be split-off. It was hoped that the Softball portion of the federation, would come to an understanding with the Great Britain Softball Association, and with groups not affiliated to either the BABSF or the G.B.S.A., to form a new softball body which would deal on a fair basis with all groups regardless of past quarrels.

The Channel 4 T.V. coverage of the 1986 World Series has created much greater interest in the sport. Teams have been formed in Leeds, Sheffield, Cambridge, Norwich and Milton Keynes; additionally an increase of twelve teams has taken place in the South of England Baseball Association.

Great Britain Softball Association 1986. by Peter Ash.

Men's League. Thirteen teams divided into three divisions.

'A' American Church, Enfield Lacrosse, International University (Bushey) and Regents Park.

'B' Hypyisco, Jeepers Wethacks, Jews Row Runners and Regents Park Raiders.

'AA' Ealing Royals, L.P.G., Psychos, Spatchcocks and U.S. Navy Chiefs.

Teams in Divisions 'A' & 'B' played each other in division home and away, plus a game with the teams in the other division (total ten games). Teams in Div. 'AA' wanted to play double-headers (total sixteen games).

The regular season would be followed by a play-off series in which the three divisional winners would be joined by the winner of a 'wild card series' contested by the four clubs with the best overall record of the runners-up.

Divisional winners were:- Regents Park, Hypyisco and U.S.N. Chiefs.

The 'wild card series' was contested by Regents Park Raiders (the winners), American Church, Ealing Royals and Spatchcocks.

An interesting feature of this pattern of competition is that until the penultimate week of the season nine teams were in with a chance of reaching the play-offs.

The final series of the play-offs saw Regents Park Raiders take the Championship by beating Hypyisco twice.

People who insist on a 'soccer style' structure might care to note that interest was kept running until the last but one week of the season, and that a team came through the 'wild card series' to win the Championship.

Women's League. Was a single division of nine teams with the regular schedule. Winners and runners-up meeting for the title which was won by Hackney Raiders by two games to nil over Artful Dodgers.

Mixed League. Division I. Six teams in two sections, with the section winners meeting in a single game for the championship. Won by Air Canada 14 - 13 over Concorde I.

Division II. Ten teams in two sections of five, again with a single match play-off for the championship. Winners Camden Softball Club 21 - 6 over PSD Dodgers.

IPA League. Eleven teams with the title being taken by Killer Bees (for the second year running).

West End (Show Biz.) League. Championship Shield won by the cast of CATS. Robert Neal Marshall Cup Final won by the cast of CHESS.

City & Banks League. This competition, with nineteen teams, was not completed due to a temporary ban on softball in Hyde Park.

The next issue of Baseball Mercury should appear in July. Subscription for four issues is £1. Subscriptions and any items for publication should be sent to the editor.

SPAIN

Spain's national team visited Italy in the spring of 1986, and played six games versus leading Italian clubs. The first two games against Grosseto and Parma were lost. Games 3 to 6, versus Milan, Turin, Modena and Novara were won.

Baseball. National Senior League 1986. Won by C.B. Viladecans.

2. Hercules von Eiser. 3. C.B. Cobra. 4. Real Zaragoza.

His Majesty's Cup. Won by Irabia, 2 games to 1 over Viladecans.

Division II Senior. The final stage of this competition was played on a new field at El Valle de Trapaga in Vizcaya. Eight teams took part, split into two pools. In the final game - Ralpe de Sondica beat Iturrigorri.

Regional Championship - Cadets. Winners, Catalonia. 2. Navarre.

Regional Championship Infantil. Winners, Catalonia.

Softball. Junior. 1. Viladecans. 2. San Andres. 3. Snoupy Grin's

Softball. Senior. Six teams from various regions of Spain gathered

at Burlada in Navarre. Winners Sant Boi (Barcelona). 2. Manila-Brid-

ma (Madrid). 3. Real Zaragoza. 4. San Andres. 5. Arga. 6. Pamplona.

Spain took third place in the European Junior Baseball Championship which was staged at Antwerp in July 1986.

JAPAN

The Japan Series 1986 was contested by Seibu Lions and Hiroshima Toyo Carp. An unusual feature of the '86 Series was that eight games were needed to decide the winner. This resulted from the fact that professional baseball games in Japan are subject to a time limit. The first game ended in a 2 - 2 tie after a 14 inning, 4 hours 32 minutes game. Att. 26,037.

Game 2. Won by Hiroshima 2 - 1. Attendance 26,652

Game 3. Won by Hiroshima 7 - 4. Attendance 31,769.

Game 4. Won by Hiroshima 3 - 1. Attendance 32,136

Game 5. Won by Seibu 2 - 1. Attendance 32,395

Game 6. Won by Seibu 3 - 1. Attendance 26,107

Game 7. Won by Seibu 3 - 1. Attendance 26,101.

Game 8. Won by Seibu 3 - 2. Attendance 16,828.

Seibu thus became Japanese Professional Champions, the club had also won in 1982 and 1985.

A U.S. MLB All-Star team visited Japan after the Major League season to play The Super Fuji Film Series versus the Japan Professional All-Star team. 7 games were played, the U.S.A. won six. Japan won the fifth game 6 - 4. The first six games drew a total of 203,000 spectators.

B.K.B.S.F. SENIOR FINAL. SUTTON

Both the Cobham Yankees and the Hull Mets were old hands at appearing in the final. Both having won the championship in the past. But the Yankees picked up the honours this time as they gall-oped to an easy 12 - 0 win over the Mets.

The Yankees were led by the two hit pitching of Mike Hammer who struck out eleven whilst allowing no walks.

This game was preceded by the Junior Final, won by Hull Wildcats over Nottingham Kestrels 5 - 4.

Brian Holland

WELSH BASEBALL UNION

Because of the teacher's industrial action over the past few years, inter-schools baseball had almost ground to a standstill. In 1986, the W.B.U. took action to introduce an alternative means of encouraging junior baseball.

The result was the emergence of 28 teams in a Youth League, split into two sections; under 13 and under 15. All games were played on a friendly basis.

A 16 team Scouts League also came into being, this played on Tuesday evenings to avoid clashing with the Men's and Ladies' League. The Scouts played a series of friendly games, plus a Cup competition. The W.B.U. lent the Scouts three sets of playing equipment on permanent basis; and supplied a cup for the competition plus two sets of medals for the finalists.

This youth development owed much to Ken Gough in Newport, while in Cardiff the main workers were Roger Goode and Gordon Killin.

In August The New York Times published a fairly long and favourable item, written by an American visitor to Cardiff, George Vecsey. The item was headed "Playing Baseball in Wales".

UNITED STATES BASEBALL FEDERATION 1986.

The USA Junior team finished in third place in the World Junior Championships at Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

The U.S. Olympic Festival at Houston, Texas, saw the baseball competition won by the South, which beat the West 9 - 0 in the Gold Medal Final. Games were played at Rice University's Cameron Field.

The USA Senior National Team undertook a 62 day summer tour, finishing with a 32 - 12 record. At their training site, Millington, Tenn., 15 games were played and won versus College and Amateur teams.

The team went on to play in the 15th. Annual USA-JAPAN Collegiate Championships, the USA won the first four games of the five game series.

Then the team went up to Kindersley, Saskatchewan for the 1st. Annual Pacific College Cup, 8th. to 15th. July. Participants were host country, Canada, USA, Japan and South Korea. Japan won the gold medal, USA won the bronze.

The squad then journeyed to The Netherlands, where it finished with a bronze medal in the 29th. World Championships.

Then it was back to the USA, where in various southeastern cities, the 1st. Annual CUBA- USA Series was played. Cuba won all four contests. The success of this series has led officials of both the USBF and the Cuban Amateur Baseball Association to make tentative arrangements to continue the programme on an annual home and away schedule.

The USA team was in its first year of a three year sponsorship by Chrysler-Plymouth.

THE NETHERLANDS

We have heard of the sudden death of Guus van der Heijden, president of the Confederation Europeenne de Baseball Amateur, also president of the Royal Netherlands Baseball & Softball Association; Guus was 58 years old.

Netherlands baseball champions 1986 was Cleo Tijgers of Amsterdam. After a preliminary round of 30 games Cleo Tijgers ranked second, behind Neptunus (Rotterdam), although examination of the games played between the six clubs making the play-off pool showed that Cleo ranked top. In a six club play-off, each club played a further 15 games, at the end of which Cleo led with 25 points; Neptunus was second with 21 points.

Men's Softball. An eight team tournament was staged on 20/21 September at Bloemendaal to decide the national championship. Hilversum won the title; the 1985 champion, Kokolishi, ended in second place.

Women's Softball. The Premier Division ended in a tie between Bloemendaal and Terraavogels; each club obtained 66 points from 42 games. In a three game play-off series, Bloemendaal won by 2 games to 1.

Winners of First Class A, Onze Gezellen with 62 points from 35 games. Winners of First Class B, EDO, 56 points from 35 games.

The 1986 World Amateur Baseball Championships showed a loss of about 350,000 guilders. Some of the causes were (a) the fall in the value of the U.S. dollar, a number of sponsors had pledged amounts in U.S. dollars, and the fall in value greatly reduced the income in terms of guilders; (b) hotel accommodation also cost much more than the original budget, due to a large religious convention which took place at the same time as these championships.

The loss was divided equally between The Royal Netherlands Baseball & Softball Association and the Haarlem Sports Association.

EUROPEAN BASEBALL CUP 1986.

The 23rd. European Cup Tournament was staged in Bologna from 17th. to 22nd. June; World Vision Parma won the European Cup for the seventh time.

Final Standings. 1. WORLD VISION PARMA (Italy); 2. Biemme Bologna (Italy); 3. Opel Nicols (Netherlands); 4. Antwerp Eagles (Belgium); 5. Viladecans (Spain); 6. Sunayberg (Sweden).

LETTER FROM CANADA. Bob Garrod, active for many years in baseball in the southeast, has returned to the land of his birth. He was kind enough to write a three page report on the 5th. Annual World Junior Friendship Baseball Tournament which took place at the Mic Mac Stadium, Windsor, Ontario.

Seven countries competed; an eighth, Venezuela, withdrew less than two days before the start of the tournament, the able organisers had to re-schedule game times. Opening day saw the fancied hosts, Canada, demolish Mexico 15-2, while Taiwan and Cuba quietly won their first games.

all Results. Cuba v. Taiwan 6-4; Canada 17-2; Panama 4-2; Mexico 10-0; Australia 13-5.

Taiwan v. Canada 4-3; USA 11-6; Panama 8-2; Mexico 7-3; Australia 8-5.

Canada v. USA 4-3; Panama 5-3; Mexico 15-2; Australia 13-2.

USA v. Cuba 1-0; Panama 12-3; Australia 7-0.

Panama v. Mexico 7-5; Australia 9-8 (10 inns.)

Mexico v. USA 4-3 (14 inns.); Australia 10-0.