

BASEBALL Mercury.

Issue 50

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March 1989

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No. 50. MARCH 1989.

HUMBERSIDE

At the A.G.M. of B.B.P. Humberside a question was raised as to why teams are being formed in most parts of the country, and yet the Humberside League has not increased in numbers for some years. A special open meeting was arranged for the following week and at that meeting the following ideas for the expansion of the sport were adopted.

1. That each senior team is being invited to adopt a school.
2. Ex-players are to be asked to help in coaching and umpiring, especially where experience is urgently required.
3. Tee-ball is to be organised again this summer in an attempt to catch the youngsters at an earlier age. These sessions will be held at local sports centres.
4. A special drive to attract present players to become coaches is to be launched.
5. Established clubs are to hold "Open Days" to which everyone will be invited to "Come and try".

In the Senior League Hull Mets still appear to be the team to beat. Due to retirements though, it will be a new look Mets this season. Se warriors, Royals and Mariners look to have more chance of capturing the title than they have had for several seasons.

The 1989 Junior League looks so open that I cannot forecast the probable winners.

Keith Maranall.

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C.E.B.A.

The annual Congress was held in Paris on 28th. January. 18 countries are now affiliated, and Czechoslovakia which has been participating in C.E.B.A. competitions since 1984 will become a full member this year bringing the total to 19. Among the officers elected was Mr. Ramaz Goglicze (U.S.S.R.) as 3rd. Vice-President.

The European Championships SENIORS A 1989 will be held in Paris - from 1 to 10 September; Great Britain will be one of the 8 participants. For the event a brand new baseball stadium is being built in Paris.

The European Championships Juniors 1989 is set for 18 to 23 July at Leeuwarden (The Netherlands)

The European Cup A Pool will be played at Vilaescans (Spain), 15 to 18 June.

The European Cup B Pool 1989 will be played at Reading, (G.B.) from 15 to 17 June. Participants will be Paris University Club, Mannheim Tornados (W. Germany),

Enfield Spartans (Great Britain), Flyers Therwil (Switzerland), F.J. Sekel KRC Prague (Czechoslovakia), Vienna Homerunners (Austria), Devils Helsinki (Finland), Ljubljana (Yugoslavia).
 Enfield Spartans were invited by the B.B.F. to organise this tournament but declined the invitation; whereupon ANC Reading Royals undertook the task.

The next issue of Baseball Mercury should appear in July. The subscription for four issues is £1. Subscriptions and items for publication should be sent to William Morgan.

NORTH WEST

Softball. Firstly, I have to notify you that I no longer have anything to do with the Softball Federation. I resigned my positions on the national and north west Committees. However, I think your readers will be interested to learn that Skelmersdale Jets won the British Title and are now accepted in all softball, as the British Ladies Fast Pitch Champions. In 1988 they were defeated only once, by a touring side from Zimbabwe. They also won the North West Region title, and the three women's fast pitch cups, the Lancashire Cup, the Gordon Rimmer Trophy and the Park Hotel Trophy.

Now on the baseball front.

Annual Awards 1988.

League Champions. Burtonwood Braves.

Robertson Trophy. Liverpool Trojans

Lancashire Cup. Burtonwood Braves.

Rookie Team Award. Stretford A's.

Player of the Year. John Leath (Braves).

Fitting Award. Bob Alger (Braves)

Frank Beach, ERA Award. Brian Bretherton (Trojans)

Home Run Award. John Leath (Braves).

Mike Gee Batting Award. John Morrissey (Tigers).

Golden Shoe Award. Bob Orme (Braves).

Bert Maude, Most Improved Player Award. Colin Wade (Trojans)

Rookie Award. J. Jeffers (Tigers).

Norman Wells Award, Players' Player. Ged Hassey (Tigers).

The long awaited onrush of new teams has never developed here in the North West. We have expanded the league by one only, for the coming season. This will be a second team from the Skelmersdale Tigers Club.

We now have the difficult task of splitting our league into two divisions, with having just nine teams. We consider an eight team division is a maximum for our short season.

Great developments have been promised from the Preston area; at present though it looks as if we may have a team emerging consisting of Preston North End soccer players.

We have some adverse reaction to the news of the new registration fees set by the BBF.

All the teams from last year are reporting some changes. A new draft is expected at Burtonwood U.S. Army base, so the Braves will lose many of their old players.

Tigers are busy finding out who plays for which of their teams. Trojans have signed Bob Alger, who pitched for Burtonwood Braves in 1986.

The Skelmersdale Giants are having a reshuffle. The main driving force behind the formation and running of the Stretford A's, Colin Jackson, has returned to his native Glasgow. After a lapse of two years, we are to re-activate our Youth League; we are hoping to have at least four teams.

Norman Wells.

BRITISH BASEBALL FEDERATION

The B.B.F. held an Extraordinary General Meeting at Birmingham on 15th. January. Here with are a few points selected from the minutes of that meeting.

Senior Team Affiliation to be £100; this fee covers an unlimited number of player registrations, but not the insurance fee. Junior teams - £12 affiliation fee.

British Knock-out Cup Championship Competition 1989; two foreign players can be included in the team squad. If using a foreign player as a 'pitcher' this must be stated in writing. The organisation's title was changed to the 'British (I.B.A.) Baseball Federation'. The President explained the situation and the objection of the Welsh Baseball Union to the use of baseball in the B.B.F. title, as the W.B.U. controls a sport very different from the B.B.F. There had been a proposal to alter the title to the 'British (American) Baseball Federation', but this was rejected in favour of the title already mentioned.

Mr. Ross Alexander of Sports Bureau International, a sports sponsorship and public relations company employed by the Scottish Amicable Assurance Company to handle baseball.

Mr. Alexander explained that due to their experience of the growth of American Football due to Channel Four coverage, they had selected baseball as a sport which had the growth potential and dynamics to justify investing a sizeable sum in sponsorship.

Much of the sponsorship budget has been devoted to expanding TV coverage; but S.B.I. had no control over the TV scheduling and the late night time slot had been a disaster as far as viewing figures were concerned.

C4 had misjudged the situation, they seem to have little commitment to baseball in Britain, and in Mr. Alexander's opinion had not done baseball any favours.

There was discussion about a proposed visit by three teams from Canada in September 1989; these were a Toronto team - players aged under 21. A second Toronto team - players aged 18 and under.; and a team from Hamilton - players aged 16 and under.

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ENGLAND - U.S.A. TEST SERIES 1936.

Some time last year Don Smallwood forwarded me a letter that he had received from Cuba requesting details of this series; I repeat here some of the information I gave.

In this series England was represented by a team drawn from Canadians who were playing in what were described as 'Professional League' by the English press, but would be considered semi-pro. by North Americans. The U.S.A. team was drawn from players of high school and small colleges in the U.S.A. as the N.B.A. Considered this would be the first of an ongoing series it was decided that no Americans would be selected for the England team, Rochdale Greys a team of American Mormons were the club most affected by that ruling.

The press coverage was very patchy, a newspaper would cover a game, as a rule not very well, when a Test Match was played in its town, but ignore Test Match results from elsewhere. The game which received the best coverage was the opening match of the series, this was at the Liverpool Giants Baseball Park; the only genuine baseball park in England. Liverpool Giants were owned by Mr. John Moores, President of the N.B.A. and head of the Littlewoods concern.

Liverpool had two evening and one morning paper, and as the game was played on a Saturday the game had some coverage from Sunday newspapers published in Manchester.

13/8/38. Attendance about 6,000 - Result England 3 - U.S.A. 0
Ross Kendrick pitched for England and struck-out 16 batters. Remarkably, Ross drove to Oldham after this game and went out to pitch for Oldham Greyhounds later that day.

15/8/38. Game at Craven Park Stadium, Hull, about 5,000 present. England won 8 - 6. Jerry Strong who played for the Hull club struck-out 12 Americans.

16/8/38. Game played at Rochdale A.F.C. ground, Spotland. This was home for the Rochdale Greys, the weather was bad and as there were no Rochdale players in the England team, attendance was poor, about 1,000 spectators. The U.S.A. won 5 - 0.

17/8/38. Game 4, played at The Shay, Halifax Town A.F.C. ground. Halifax had a successful baseball club, and local idols were in the England squad. About 5,000 spectators saw England clinch the series, winning 4 - 0 behind the pitching of Ross Kendrick who got 12 strike-outs.

18/8/38. Game 5. Played at Headingley Rugby League ground. An abbreviated game, called at the end of the sixth inning, due to bad light. England won 5 - 5. Jerry Strong (Hull) and Ross Kendrick (Oldham) shared the pitching duties. A very elaborate trophy was given by Mr. Moores for competition in this series. The Trophy was used by the International Amateur Baseball Organisation for some time.

I became interested in the sport in 1938 but had never heard of this series until 1963, when on a visit to Merseyside, Peter Hemmings, the then secretary of the Merseyside Baseball League mentioned it to me. I researched the series; and some years later was surprised to learn that F.I.B.A. the amateur sport's governing body considered that England was the first World Amateur Champions.