

# BASEBALL Mercury.

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## EAST MIDLANDS.

Junior baseball is, unfortunately, struggling to stay alive in the East Midlands. We are now down to two teams, Nottingham Braves and Nottingham Pirates, who played their first game on Friday, 10th June, Pirates beating the Braves 10 - 4. If our future lies with the youngsters then we desperately need more people putting some effort into a youth programme, otherwise, within a few years, I fear our Senior League will also begin to contract.

Our East Midlands Senior League is playing in two divisions of five teams each. Hornets head division 1, not having conceded a league game, followed by Peterborough Bulls, Nottingham Pirates, Nottingham Imperials and Arnold Astros. Leading division 2 are Sutton Royals, followed by Birmingham Braves, Birmingham Dodgers, Boston Red Sox and Ashby Royals.

The Jean Benson East Midlands Cup has gone through the various rounds, Hornets and Pirates making the final, due to be played on 9th July.

Pirates played exceptionally well against Hornets in the second round of the BBF National K.O. Cup, beating them 15 - 5 and inflicting a surprise early exit on their local rivals.

Nottingham Knights are not going too well in the Scottish Amicable National League but they have won one out of their first three games, which at least betters last year's abysmal record.  
Sheila Williams.

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## HUMBERSIDE.

During the whitsuntide holidays the Hull Mets Juniors went on a mini-tour to ANTWERP, Belgium. The Mets side consisted of three 16 year olds, and fifteen others, ages ranging from twelve to fourteen. The first game was versus Mortsel Stars, Mets winning 9 - 8. The second game was against Bergerhout Squirrels, whose players ranged from 18 to 20 years old. Against all the odds, Mets Juniors won once again, score 4 - 2. This was one of the best performances I have ever seen from a junior side, as the game was played on a full size diamond, and regulation baseball rules, which of course British juniors are not used to.

To single out anyone in this victory would be unfair as every player emerged with credit. The Junior Mets proved just as big a nit off the field as on it, making friends with the Belgian Players after the matches and in general being a credit to British Baseball.

In the Hull League it looks once again as if Hull Mets will be Champions. Though not as strong as in previous seasons, the younger players have really played well throughout the season, and though I do not think they are ready to win anything nationally, the club's youth policy seems to be paying dividends. In a couple of years

the Mets will be ready to take anybody on.

In the BBF K.O. Cup one of the best results was Hull warriors victory over Liverpool Tigers. The player who did the damage against the Tigers was 18 year old pitcher Darren Butler, a lad who is showing a lot of potential in the Hull League.

In the National League the Humberside Bears have a new manager, Alan Asquith. Alan has been out of the game for several years; if he can get the Bears playing with anything like the skill and determination that he displayed when he was Britain's No. 1 pitcher, then national League watch out!

Keith Marshall

## NORTH WEST LEAGUE

Norman Wells.

We approached the 1989 season with a dilemma - how to construct a schedule for ten teams in the short season we have?

The first time for many a year that we have had more than eight teams. We elected to go for a six team First Division, and a four team Second Division. The Second Division teams would play each other four times, with two Cup competitions involving all teams, we felt that we had adequately coped. So far, so good.

But within two weeks it all fell apart. First the Trojans second team was forced to disband (maybe temporarily) due to intensive studies for exams (these were youngsters still at school). This reduced the second division to three teams. Then, worse still, the Giants, having moved to Kirkby, and thus re-named Kirkby Giants, folded after just two games. Their remaining players were able to find alternative baseball with the Mersey Mariners of the National League, now the First Division was reduced to five teams.

Too late to re-shuffle, we have to go along with an awkward set-up. With hindsight, we had not looked too carefully at signs which were there to be seen. We could have handled an eight team league quite easily, and so ensured all teams plenty of baseball.

Anyway, the Leagues are being very closely fought out, with Skelmersdale Tigers still undefeated in the First Division, with Trojans and Braves having each lost one game. The Second Division is led by Preston Bobcats.

Steve Nero, last year's National League MVP, finally signed for a North West Division team, the Trojans, but transferred before throwing a ball. He is now with Burtonwood Braves, and with such an acquisition, the Braves must surely be on their way to retaining the title that they won last year.

Nero proved his worth when he outclassed the Humberside Bears on 10th. June, he struck-out 23 batters, and hit a two run homer.

Umpires still remain a major problem. On the other hand, off-season scorers clinics have ensured that all but two teams have competent scorers, and we now boast two International Scorers, and a further scorer will qualify in 1990. For those teams which failed to attend clinics, we have floating scorers who are prepared to travel, and score for such clubs. We also have a well founded Area Scorers Association.

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

## C.E.B.A. 1988.

COUNTRY	PLAYERS	CHAMPION CLUB
Italy	14,445	Ronson Lenoir Rimini
Netherlands	13,075	Haarlem Opel Nicols
France	10,121	Paris Universite Club
west Germany	2,050	Mannheim Tornados
Belgium	1,991	Royal Antwerp Nashua Eagles
Gt. Britain	1,155	Cobham Yankees
Spain	1,059	Viladecans (Barcelona)
Sweden	739	Leksand
Switzerland	497	Flyers Therwil
Tunisia	483	
Yugoslavia	469	Gunclje Ljubljana
Czechoslovakia	460	T.J. Sokol Prague KRC
U.S.S.R.	460	
Malta	438	
Poland	347	
Finland	250	Devils Helsinki
San Marino	164	
Denmark	140	
Austria	113	Vienna Homerunners
Total 49,435. This is plus 2,285 on the 1987 figure		

EUROPEAN CUP "A" POOL. Played at Viladecans, Spain 13/18 June. I only have incomplete results.

The Cup was won by Rimini who beat Haarlem Nicols 3 - 1 in the deciding game. Thus Haarlem Nicols came second. This was Rimini's third success in European Cup Competition.

Other results which I have are :- Haarlem Nicols beat Parma (Italy), the Cup holders 10 - 3. Haarlem Nicols - Rimini 2 - 5.

Leksand (Sweden) - Antwerp 3 - 4. Parma - Viladecans 17 - 3  
Haarlem Nicols - Antwerp 20 - 6.

EUROPEAN CUP "B" POOL. Played at ANC READING ROYALS ground, King's Meadow, Reading 14/17 June.

Eight contestants, split into two pools. In each pool a round robin was played to decide places one to four; the teams then played against the similarly placed teams in the other pool to decide the final positions.

Group A consisted of Flyers Therwil (Switz.), Enfield Spartans (G.B.), Vienna Homerunners (Austria), TJ Sokol (Czech.)

Group B. Mannheim Tornados (W. Germany), Paris Universite Club (France), Helsinki Devils (Finland), Gunclje Ljubljana (Yugoslavia)

Results - Flyers - Homerunners 13 - 7. Gunclje - PUC 20 - 20.

Tornados - Devils 20 - 10. Sokol - Spartans 9 - 5.

Sokol - Homerunners 16 - 4. Gunclje - Devils 8 - 4.

Spartans - Flyers 16 - 3. PUC - Tornados 13 - 5.

Flyers - Sokol 7 - 9. Devils - PUC 0 - 29. Tornados - Gunclje 12 - 1. Homerunners - Spartans 9 - 13.

Group Places.	A	B
	TJ Sokol	PUC
	Spartans	Tornados
	Flyers	Gunclje
	Homerunners	Devils

First Place Play-off. PUC beat Sokol 9 - 8. Third Place, Tornados beat Spartans 18 - 9. Fifth Place. Gunclje beat Flyers 17 - 2. Seventh Place. Devils beat Homerunners 15 - 4.

Final Places. 1. PUC; 2. TJ sokol; 3. Tornauos; 4. Spartans; 5. Gunclje; 6. Flyers; 7. Devils; 8. Homerunners. Three Individual trophies were awarded. Leading pitcher went to a Gunclje player. Top Hitter to the PUC thirdbaseman, MVP to the PUC catcher.

Most of the organisation work was done by Jack Garuela, assisted by Paul Raybould. Jack originally came from the Basque area of Spain, where he began his baseball career. In his youth he played baseball for Spain. Technical Commissioner was Åke Halvarson (Sweden), a second commissioner should have come from Spain but cabled to state that he could not come. A senior member of the PUC party was appointed to fill the vacancy. The whole tournament was a credit to the organisers, particularly when Reading Royals have only existed for about three years.

PUC looked far and away the best organised club present. Enfield Spartans faced a great problem, which some of the other weaker clubs shared with them. A pitching staff which was inadequate to play four games in four days. Enfield had two pitchers, Oscar Marcellino and Ian Lanario, each of them pitched in three games, and each seemed weary when facing their third pitching stint.

#### MISCELLANY

Great Britain will probably play a Major League Oldtimers team at Old Trafford Cricket Ground, Manchester on 24th. September. The game is tied-in with Manchester's attempt to secure the 1996 Summer Olympics, and the fact that baseball will be an Olympic sport from 1992.

The French Baseball & Softball Federation is currently receiving government funding of about 2,650,000Fr. (approx £260,000). The Great Britain team is to play a U.S.A.F. team at Lakenheath on 9th. July, following this game a 20 player squad will be named for the European Championships "A" Pool, to be played in Paris during September.

Among persons present at Reading were men concerned with organising baseball at Bristol and Torbay. I heard that there are groups at Exeter and Plymouth, and there seems a strong chance that a six or eight team league will be operating in the Southwest, if not in 1990 then certainly by 1991.

#### THE NETHERLANDS

Premier Division. standings as at 21st. June

Club	Pl.	Pts	Club	Pl.	Pts.
1. Neptunus	24	37	6. HCAW	23	20
2. Pirates	24	34	6. Giants	23	20
3. Haarlem Nicols	23	28	8. Sparta	24	18
4. ADO	24	24	8. Spartaan	24	18
5. Kinheim	24	23	10. PSV	23	12

Jim Stoeckel, the American who is acting as head coach of the Netherlands team until 1991, has selected eighteen players for the World Port Tournament to be played at Rotterdam, 14/25 July; and the European Championships at Paris.

Players selected are Kohl, Koster, De Vries, Fluonia, De Bruin, Eenhorn, kruyt (All Neptunus), Lommerde, Nanne, Lemmink; Van Dalen (All Kinheim), Stovelaar, Ansjeliema, Boon, Faneyte, Van Renselaar (All Pirates), Volkerijk and Wilson (both ADO).