

BASEBALL Mercury.

Issue 8

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December 1974

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Mercury.

No. 8. DECEMBER 1974.

INTERCONTINENTAL CUP 1975.

The first Intercontinental Cup Tournament held in Italy in 1973 was attended by officials of the Canadian Amateur Baseball Federation, and of the amateur baseball federations of the provinces of Quebec and New Brunswick. These officials were so impressed by the tournament that immediately it ended the C.A.B.F. applied to hold the second tournament in Canada. This request was granted, and the C.A.B.F. requested the Quebec Amateur Baseball Federation and the New Brunswick Amateur Baseball Federation to organise the tournament. The cities chosen were Montreal, Quebec, and Moncton, New Brunswick.

Baseball has experienced a rapid growth in these two provinces since the advent of major league baseball in Montreal in 1969. In Quebec in 1969 there were 3,000 amateur clubs with about 45,000 players.. In four years the number of players had increased to 66,000; and in 1975 it is expected that 75,000 players will be registered in Quebec. Similar progress has been made in New Brunswick, and baseball generally in Canada has benefited from the coming of the Montreal Expos.

The countries which will compete in the 1975 tournament are those which finished in the first six places in the first tournament, namely Japan, Puerto Rico, U.S.A., Nicaragua, Canada, and Italy. These will be joined by two newcomers, Cuba, and South Korea.

To handle all matters concerning the tournament The Intercontinental Cup Corporation has been formed. This body negotiated with federal and provincial governments, and has approached Canadian businesses to organise financial support for the occasion. President of the Corporation is Wallace McCain, President of McCain Foods, who actively supports baseball, ice hockey and golf associations.

Arrangements have been completed with the city of Moncton for the use of Kiswanis Park Stadium, and the city has agreed to spend 134,000 dollars to improve the stadium for this event. The Montreal Expos have also agreed to place Jarry Park at the disposal of the Corporation. Both the city of Moncton, and the Montreal Expos are providing their stadium free. Games will be played from 14th. to 21st. August at Moncton; and from 22nd. to 31st. August at Montreal.

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BRITISH SOFTBALL FEDERATION by J. Caskey.

Back in 1968, R.A.F. Sergeant Phil Burton launched the organisation known as the British Softball Federation. He was stationed in the Plymouth area and under his guidance a modest beginning was made. A few teams were playing by the end of the year, but Phil's activities were halted as he was posted abroad for two years. His departure saw the end of B.S.F. softball in Plymouth.

For the next four years the guidance of the B.S.F. was taken over by Mike Freer of Leicester. Growth was very limited during this period, the only counties taking up the sport being Oxfordshire, Leicester, and Bedfordshire. Leicestershire won the first B.S.F. Fast Fitch Championship in 1970.

In 1972 Hampshire came into the scene. The social club of the IBM Laboratories at Hursley Park, near Winchester had formed a team in mid 1971 without knowing of the B.S.F.'s existence. In 1972 IBMers were prominent among those playing for Hampshire as Hursley Park was, and still is, the centre of softball in Hampshire. The main reason for growth was the financial support given by the IBM Social Club. The club supplied all the necessary equipment to get the game started; all this equipment had to be imported from the U.S.A. as it was

unobtainable in the U.K. Hampshire got most of its competition from the nearby American base at Greenham Common. This was a stroke of luck for Hampshire, as Greenham Common were the Slow Pitch Champions in 1971 and 1972. Then in August 1972 Hampshire travelled to Leicester where they won the B.S.F. Fast Pitch Championship.

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1973 saw the first league formed. It was a small league as only Hampshire (who won the title), Oxfordshire, and Leicestershire competed. The Fast Pitch Championships were staged at Hursley Park in June on the newly constructed diamond. The diamond had been built with the financial backing of the IEM Club, labour being contributed by the Hampshire players. Hampshire again took the honours. 1973 was an active year with a B.S.F. All-Star squad travelling to Paris, and for the first time in three attempts winning the challenge cup put up by the American Legion in Paris. During August the Guernsey Softball Association paid Hampshire a visit with the visitors taking 2 out of 3 games. This was undoubtedly the finest series of games played by two British teams.

The autumn of 1973 saw a change in the Executive Committee. Robin Armall, Chairman, John Caskey, Secretary, and Dave Laurence, Treasurer (all from Hampshire) took over the task of promoting the game throughout the country. The first action the new Committee took was to ask Mr. Henry Cooper, M.B.E. the retired British Heavyweight Boxing Champion to be its Honorary President. This he accepted.

In 1974 Hursley Tigers won the British Open Slow Pitch Championships, other teams taking part were Southampton Jets, Greenham Pirates, and Welford Wildcats. Hampshire visited Guernsey. - July 19/20/21 where they were beaten by 2 games to 1 by the Guernsey First Division All-Star team on the Saturday. Hampshire beat the Guernsey Second Division All-Stars 5 - 4 on the Friday, and then won 21 - 9 versus the Under 21 team.

Honkbal Club Kinheim, Holland visited Hampshire August 9/10/11. Hampshire won 3 games to 1, winning 6-4, 6-1, 10-5, and losing 19-14. This marked the first visit by a Continental team to the U.K. to play a B.S.F. team.

The B.S.F. has four county members, Hampshire Softball Association, Oxfordshire Softball Club, Leicester and Leicestershire Softball Club, and Guernsey Softball Association (the latter body has twelve teams competing in two divisions and dates back to the mid-1930's). Non-county teams are Eypisco (London), Hursley Tigers, Eastleigh Eagles, and Southampton Jets.

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HUMBERSIDE REPORT by Don Smallwood.

Baseball fans in Hull had the chance to watch two foreign teams playing in the city during the past season. Borgerhoutse Squirrels gave both Royals and Aces the opportunity to assess their strength against European standards.

Hull Royals beat the Squirrels 9-6 after trailing for most of the game, but took the lead as a result of a series of errors by the visitors. Keith Marshall and Mike Parker shared the pitching for Royals. The standard of baseball never reached great heights, and errors were frequent.

Hull Aces beat Borgerhoutse 10-9 in an extra innings game, again the standard of fielding was very poor. Only the home team's exciting finish gave fans anything to enthuse over.

The other visitors from abroad were the Italian club Grossetto, who aroused great interest during their short stay. Managed by American coach, Nick Testa, they were unbeaten in all of the games arranged; the only team to give them a real test was Humberside which was beaten 4-0 in the Anglo-Italian Trophy game.

Grossetto started their programme by beating Hull Royals 9-0. On the following evening they toppled Aces 10-2; and followed-up these two victories by crushing Mustangs 22-3. Came the Saturday and the Merseyside Baseball League All-Stars were beaten by the Italians 16-2. In the Anglo-Italian Trophy Tournament, Grossetto beat Humberside 4-0, and Bromsgrove 8-0. Humberside beat Bromsgrove to take runners-up position.

Grossetto won many friends both on and off the field, they really gave a lesson in how the game should be played. Those who saw the throwing of Elarde and Brandolini, plus the pitching power of this Italian team will remember it for a long time. The visit could have done local baseball a power of good, but greater benefit would have been derived if the visit had taken place before the football season had started. It was a shot in the arm for the sport, and Humberside League Secretary, Doreen Megson, must be satisfied at the way the visit turned out, even the weather co-operated to give a perfect setting for this baseball bonanza. More such visits

would give baseball a real chance of progressing. One of the highlights of the Anglo-Italian Tournament was the gymnastic display given by girls of the Constable Junior High School.

The Italians' visit rather overshadowed the wonderful performance of the Hull Junior Baseball Association team. They travelled to Harrogate to play the second game of a three match series with the strong American boys team at Menwith Hill. This series was for "The Don Smallwood Trophy". The Hull boys having won the first game at Hull, then clinched the trophy by overwhelming the Americans 17-2. Man of the match was pitcher John Egan who collected a total of 17 strike-outs, surely an English record for junior baseball.

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BELGIUM.

1974 saw Luchtbal Greys win the Belgian Championship for the fourteenth time. Rizla Eagles were transformed to Bus Fruit; and a new club Maestro joined the competition. The year also witnessed the launching of a women's softball competition by the Belgian Baseball Federation, with four of the established clubs taking softball teams under their wings.

FIRST DIVISION A.

Luchtbal	12	4	.750
Bell	9	7	.563
Brasschaat	9	7	.563
Spartans	7	9	.438
Bus Fruit	3	13	.188

FIRST DIVISION B.

Berchem	13	4	.765
Borgerhout	12	5	.706
General Motors	11	5	.688
Maestro	5	11	.313
Antwerp	0	16	.000

SOFTBALL

General Motors	5	1	.833
Deurne Spartans	4	2	.667
Luchtbal Greys	2	4	.333
Bus Fruit	1	5	.167

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B.A.G.B. by Robert Garrod.

We had a season of surprises. From the start the form book was torn apart with Crawley winning four straight while Sutton floundered with three successive defeats, including one at the hands of an inspired Jets team. T.B.M. had lost many good players and were struggling. Bluejays and Aces were playing well but without the sparkle of Crawley Giants.

For Crawley the season was to end in disappointment, their problems started on June 30th., when they lost an extra innings thriller 11-10 at home to Sutton. This was the first of a number of games the Giants were to lose by one run to leave them with no trophies for their efforts. Meanwhile, Bluejays and Sutton improved to mount a title challenge. Aces again lacked the consistency needed to gain honours. Jets revival was short lived and T.B.M. sadly sank to the bottom of the league.

Giants found the mounting pressure too much and lost a vital game at Southend on August 18th., allowing Bluejays to take over the lead. Bluejays stopped Sutton 4-1 the following week, so the crunch came on September 1st. Giants had to beat Bluejays to gain a tie for the title and force a play-off. However, they lost a tight game 2-1 to Bluejays.

League standings 1974.

	Won	Lost	Pts.
Bluejays	8	2	16
Crawley Giants	6	4	12
*Sutton Braves	6	4	12
*Southend Aces	5	5	10
Brighton Jets	3	7	6
T.B.M. Raiders	2	8	4

* Subject to judgement on a protest over Southend v. Sutton game, September 1st.

Individual honours. Pitching Don Macdonald, Bluejays, 2.45 ERA. Fielding Peter Crook, Sutton, .985. Batting Peter Jackson, Southend .500. Home Runs Martin Jewer, Crawley, 5.

B.A.G.B. teams fared badly in the Kosta Trophy Tournament on the Spring Bank Holiday. A strong Merseyside team winning by beating Bromsgrove in the final. The "Baseball Mercury" Tournament on September 8th was won by Southend who first

Several clubs in the South unable to play a complete league programme played challenge matches against B.A.G.B. clubs. These non-league clubs included American School, (London); the Cuban Embassy, Corby Red Sox, and the rookie team Golders Green Sox.

The B.A.G.B. Cup Final was played on September 22nd., Sutton gaining a 10-4 revenge over Bluejays.

In 1975, the B.A.G.B., will run an Invitation Cup competition for non-league clubs. Currently there are prospects of new teams for Notting Hill, Blackheath, and the Japanese Embassy.

The next issue of Baseball Mercury will appear in March. The subscription for four issues is 30p. Subscriptions and any items which readers wish to submit for publication should be sent to :- William Morgan, 89, Sterndale Road, London, W.14.

C.E.B.A. by Roger C. Panaye.

EUROPEAN CUP 1974 for national club champions.

1st. round :
 Nettuno v. Madrid 14-0
 Mannheim v. Bagarmossens 23-4
 Amaro Montenegro v. Spartans 30-0
 Paris University v. Nicols 0-11

Semi-finals :
 Nettuno v. Mannheim 7-1
 Nicols v. Amaro Montenegro 4-3

Finals played in Nettuno (Rome) 20-22 September
 Nettuno v. Nicols 2-3 (14 inn.)
 Nicols v. Nettuno 5-4
 Nettuno v. Nicols 6-0

Nicols the Champions.

Umpires for final series :
 Wim Coppens, Rafael Dominguez,
 Augusto Pila.

MEDITERRANEAN CUP

Barcelona (Spain) 20-22 September

Results : 1. AS Bernazzoli Parma
 2. Paris University
 3. Moritz Picardero
 4. Hercules Las Corts

LATIN CUP 1974

Huesca-(Spain) 25-28 July
 Spain v. France 19-0
 Italy v. France 11-2
 Spain v. Italy 4-13

Result : Italy 1.000
 Spain .500
 France .000

1st. European Junior Championships (under 19) Apeldoorn (Holland) 15-18 August

Italy v. France 22-1
 Holland v. Spain 17-3
 Spain v. Italy 0-13
 France v. Holland 0-20
 Spain v. France 21-3
 Holland v. Italy 3-0

1. Holland (Champions)
2. Italy
3. Spain
4. France

This was the fifth Mediterranean Cup competition, and Bernazzoli's second triumph. Picardero (Barcelona) have won the cup three times.

MISCELLANY.

The Cuba-Japan Series saw Cuba sweep the series 7 games to nil.

Jan Hartog "Ambassador" of Dutch baseball died at Washington, D.C. on October 10th., while on a visit during which he intended to see the World Series.

The Women's World Softball Championships held at Stratford, Connecticut, resulted in the following positions. Champions, U.S.A. ; 2. Japan ; 3. Australia ; 4. Philippines ; 5. The Netherlands ; 6. Taiwan ; 7. Canada ; 8. Italy ; 9. New Zealand ; 10. South Africa ; 11. Bermuda ; 12. Mexico ; 13. Puerto Rico ; 14. Virgin Islands ; 15. Venezuela.

Belgium visited Holland on 28-29 September where they played Holland - B twice. Holland - B won 5-2 at Hoogeveen, and 8-0 at Apeldoorn.

Sparta (Rotterdam) won the Dutch Championship for the ninth time; this was their fourth straight championship.

Returning to softball, Australia, one of the top countries in the women's side of the game, was introduced to the game by U.S. Servicemen in 1942. Starting with 4 teams in that year, the game has grown to a point where 150,000 women and girls play the game