

* * * NUMBER 8 - 7 August 1987 * * *

GRAND SLAM

The Magazine of THE BRITISH BASEBALL FEDERATION SOUTH

INSIDE:

Fair and Foul

The National League in the 30s



30s

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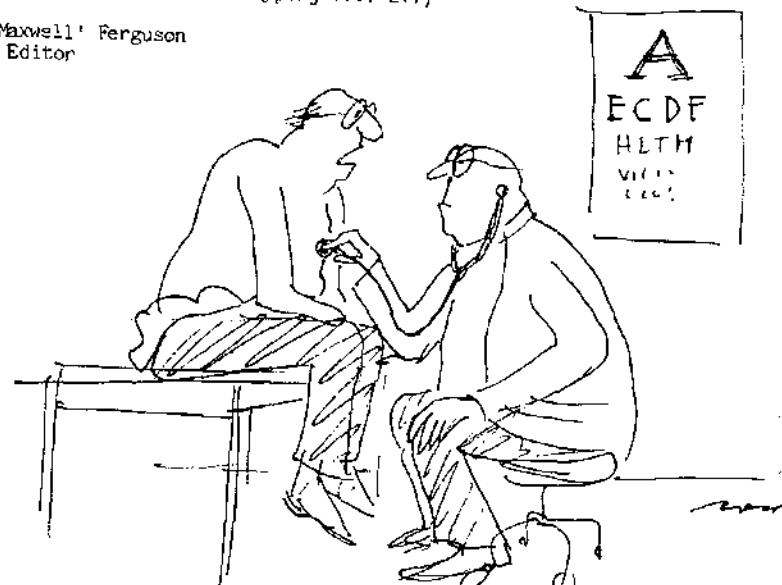
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Just scribble a few lines he said put lots of dots in and underline some words here and there he said while he was becoming Kentucky Fried Mackean time of the season again - things are getting decided congratulations to Enfield, Sutton and Cobham who have gained the three national playoff spots .. table ... the second division is boiling up to a terrific climax this week Hemel teams in the third division have suffered contrasting fortunes - the Red Sox winning the League with a 12-0 record, the Rebels a little behind at 0-12 ... comets by just one game thanks to Paul Raybould and Nigel Summers and all those many others who helped out with the American school visits last week so much to do and so little time to do it

GRAND SLAM

I'm sure you will agree that Muir has done a terrific job producing Grand Slam every fortnight during the season. It was only when he landed me with this issue that I realised the phenomenal amount of work involved. However, we've been a little disappointed at your response. Do you enjoy Grand Slam? Is it an essential part of your fortnight? What would you like to see in it? Should we continue next year? Please let Muir know if you have any views. And if we do continue next year, we will certainly need more help. There are basically three separate jobs involved - editor/production, distribution, and business manager (advertising, sales etc).. If you think you could fit any of these roles for '88 phone Muir now. It would be great experience for someone wanting to get into the newspaper business and with a bit of luck we can develop Grand Slam into a serious commercial product. Think about it. (PS Thanks to Ellen for the typing Ell)

Don 'Maxwell' Ferguson
Guest Editor



"Forget about me, Doc. What's wrong with the Mets?"

FRIENDSHIP TOUR REACHES BURGESS HILL

It was quite an occasion on Friday night when the Red Hats Baseball Club hosted the visiting New York State High School teams, Au Sable Valley Patriots and the Peru Indians, at their Friars Oak ground.

The bad weather abated in time for the ground to be prepared to first class condition and allow the Americans to put on a superb display.

A coaching clinic was held in the afternoon for the benefit of all players. It featured a four station format of pitching, infielding, baserunning and batting. Amongst those taking advantage of this specialised coaching were players from the Arun Panthers, Brighton Jets, Crawley Giants, Worthing Warriors and hosts, the Red Hats. Once all the players had visited each station they could return to one of their choice which allowed everyone to get individual help pertaining to their particular position. Several players had questions to ask, ranging from technical infield rules to preventing regular injuries. The Americans were keen and happy to help.

After a short break came the main event, a full scale match between the two schools. Interested spectators were told that most of the Tads picked up their first baseball before the age of four, and although none were over the age of eighteen now, it was clear how much practice had been put in during those years. The speed and knowledge of both teams was quite spectacular. Time and again, the spectators both new to the game and those who play regularly in this country, found themselves struggling to keep sight of the ball as it flashed around the field. The Indians executed one superb double play which was nearly a triple! (that would have been a first on the Red Hats ground). The highspot of the game was a towering home run hit by the Indians' starting pitcher. With the bases loaded, Don Abernathy hit the biggest homer ever struck on the Friars Oak ground. The "Grand Slam" scored four runs as the ball disappeared over the fence and bounced high off the road. That blow was very nearly the last nail in the Patriots' coffin and when bad light stopped play after six innings the result was Indians 9, Patriots 2.

The players and spectators then retired to the bar. Before sitting down to eat, each of the High Schools was presented with a miniature baseball bat by Cllr Coldman on behalf of the Red Hats. Cllr Coldman, vice chairman of the Mid-Sussex District Council said he had very much enjoyed his introduction to baseball of which he had previously known "nothing", but had learned a little that day.

The Patriots, Indians and their entourage return to the USA on Wednesday after their four week "British Friendship Tour". Indeed, they made many friends in Sussex judging by the address-swapping that went on before they boarded their coach.

Nigel Summers

SCOTTISH AMICABLE NATIONAL BASEBALL LEAGUE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Lancashire Red Sox	6	2	.750	-
Humberside County Bears	4	4	.500	2
London Warriors	4	4	.500	2
Southern Tigers	4	4	.500	2
Mersey Mariners	3	5	.375	3
Nottingham Knights	3	5	.375	3

(Standings to 1 August 1987)

STANDINGS

FIRST DIVISION

	W	L	Pct	GB			
* Enfield	11	1	.916	-	26 July		
* Sutton	8	3	.727	2	Cobham	14	Barnes 2
* Cobham	9	4	.692	2	Croydon	11	Crawley 4
Croydon	6	6	.500	5	Enfield	16	Golders Green 0 (Cup)
Crawley	5	6	.455	5			
Barnes	4	8	.333	7	2 August		
Golders Green	3	8	.272	7	Cobham	10	Croydon BJs 1
Gillingham	1	11	.083	10	Crawley	20	Barnes 16
					Gillingham	1	Enfield 6
					Sutton	12	Golders Green 5

SECOND DIVISION

	W	L	Pct	GB			
Waltham Arrows	10	1	.909	-	26 July		
Oxshott	9	2	.818	1	Croydon BP	7	Waltham Arrows 23
Hounslow Hrs	7	4	.636	3	Hounslow Hrs	16	Southampton 15
Southampton	5	5	.500	4	Tonbridge	26	Hounslow Hrcns 8
Tonbridge	3	6	.333	6			
Croydon BP	2	8	.200	7	2 August		
Hounslow Hrcns	0	10	.000	9	Croydon BP	P	Tonbridge P
					Southampton	9	Oxshott 17
					Waltham Arrows	15	Hounslow Hrs 3

THIRD DIVISION NORTH

	W	L	Pct	GB			
* Hemel Red Sox	12	0	1.000	-	26 July		
Basildon	9	2	.818	1	Basildon	26	Hemel Rebels 6
City Slick	7	4	.636	4	City Slick	36	Totteridge 17
Totteridge	5	6	.454	6	Hemel Red Sox	34	Totteridge 6
Waltham Saxons	4	6	.400	7	Waltham Saxons	41	Waltham FRR 37
Waltham FRR	2	9	.182	9			
Hemel Rebels	0	12	.000	12	2 August		
					Basildon	10	Hemel Red Sox 12
					City Slick	21	Waltham Saxs 19
					Totteridge	13	Waltham FRR 5

THIRD DIVISION SOUTH

	W	L	Pct	GB			
Reading	11	1	.917	-	26 July		
Crawley Comets	10	2	.833	1	Burgess Hill	6	Arun 16
Ashford	7	4	.636	3	Crawley	13	Ashford 4
Arun	5	5	.500	5	Croydon BJsII	13	Brighton 9
Brighton	5	7	.417	6			
Croydon BJsII	3	7	.300	7	2 August		
Bournemouth	2	10	.167	9	Ashford	18	Burgess Hill 17
Burgess Hill	1	8	.111	8	Bournemouth	18	Croydon BJsII 22
					Brighton	2	Reading 11
					Crawley	22	Arun 10

* Clinched Playoff Berth

+ Clinched Division Title

RESULTS

(RESULTS THROUGH 2 AUGUST)

- GAME REPORTS -

CROYDON BLUEJAYS 11 CRAWLEY GIANTS 4

ROSEHILL PARK 26 JULY

The Croydon Bluejays held out their hopes to make the playoffs with a solid win over Crawley at Rosehill on Sunday. The game was tight for the first few innings with Nigel Parker of Crawley and Kevin Sylvester of Croydon holding the batters at bay. Then, in the bottom of the fourth, the Bluejays cracked the game wide open with John Steven's line drive grand slam home run driving in the Laing brothers and Dean Ward across the plate. If this was not enough excitement, Keith Wilesmith followed with a home run to make back-to-back round trippers and making the score 8-1. Sylvester then held the Giants back until the 8th inning when after two out Neil Vanstone collected his second hit of the game to be followed by a walk to Dave Smith, then a single between first and second by R Soan. This loaded the bases and a foul tip put catcher John Stevens out as his index finger (throwing hand) showed signs of a break (happy to report, it's OK) and his vocal impression of a sumo wrestler brought the 100 strong fans to attention. Sylvester, obviously disturbed by the break in action, proceeded to walk three batters in a row to bring across three runs. Alan Ropke then grounded out to Phil Laing at second with a close play at first. The Bluejays added to their score with single runs in the 5th, 7th and 8th to seal victory and bring their record to 6-5, one game behind the Cobham Yankees who were in third. Aside from Stevens and Wilesmith starring, the Laing brothers, Phil and Norman, collected three hits apiece. McLeod hit a double and single, and the Ward brothers hit two apiece.

	R	H	E
GIANTS	000	100	030
BLUEJAYS	001	710	11X

11 18 3 Kevin Sylvester

HEMEL RED SOX 34 TOTTERIDGE TRAILBLAZERS 6

JARMAN FIELDS 26 JULY

A 12 run third inning highlighted by Dewayne Allen's slammer and Chris Cullen's three run poke, blew the game wide open for the first place, Red Sox against the Trailblazers. But a total of five homers were hit to keep the spectators entertained. Sox catcher Phil Davis, who threw two runners out at third, smacked his fourth of the year and veteran Gren Bonfield hit his first which took him three innings to catch his breath. Totteridge clean-up batter Ian Martin led off the fourth inning with a solo drive to the right-centre power alley. M Dundon and M Geeves threw for the Blazers while Ken Carpenter and Kevin Slater kept their bats quiet for Hemel.

	R	H
TRAILBLAZERS	0 0 2 3 0 0 1	6 5
RED SOX	0 10 12 11 1 0 x	34 24

WALTHAM ABBEY SAXONS 36 WALTHAM FOREST ROAD-RUNNERS 32

Thamesmead

On a fair afternoon at Townmead the game got off to a tentative start with both teams vying for an early advantage. In the first inning, the Road-Runners raced to a confident five run lead, due largely to some slack fielding by the Saxons and by the end of the second were in fine flow. The pace really came alive when both teams had notable outfield catches made and the Saxons had fought back bravely to lead 13-12 at the bottom of the third. Road-Runner, Martin Oakman, made a quite brilliant home run when he placed a perfect ball into deep right field to bring home two team mates. It all looked plain sailing for the R-Rs until the fifth, when the Saxons' short-stop had two consecutive catches to keep the pressure right on. Having held a 26-24 lead going into the 7th inning, the R-Rs seemed to be showing some weaknesses. At the end the Saxons ran out winners by four runs but they had had to fight all the way.

BASEBALL



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LA and Bluejays/Braves team.

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BASEBALL IS A FUNNY GAME

We at Grand Slam are pretty sure a lot of our readers have been involved in some funny incidents during a game either this year or in previous seasons. We really would like to hear them so why not put pen to paper (you don't have to use joined-up writing!) and send your stories in for inclusion in the mag. To start things off, here's a couple from Phil Chesterton of the Waltham Abbey Arrows referring to games they played in their 1985 third division championship year.

Baseball is a funny game in many ways, although when the Arrows are locked in mortal combat with Southampton or another of our long-time adversaries, it seems deadly serious. Afterwards, though, it's always a good time to swap stories over a pint - like the time we were playing at the now defunct Taunton Brewers

We were winning about 42-1 in the seventh and even the most dedicated players start to fool around under these circumstances. The Arrows were batting and had Paul Raybold on second and Dave Dillon on third. The next batter (Richard Powell) took his stance and then cracked a roller through the in-field. Immediately, both runners took off - backwards! Dave safely making second, Paul arriving at first, face to face with a totally bewildered Richard!

However, if he was bewildered, that's nothing compared to the confusion in the Taunton defense. Having now collected the ball around deep short, the question was where to throw? If I remember rightly, the throw went to third (the only base with nobody on - first was positively crowded!) and the third baseman (probably wondering "Why me?") missed it completely. Dillon, lucky not to be forced out, now raced to third and on the overthrow carried on for home. The third-sacker finally caught up with the ball and decided to chuck it to second which was still open as Paul and Richard were amusing themselves at first with a cigarette and a quick game of Trivial Pursuit (Paul won - smart ass!). Unfortunately, the throw was no better than the preceding one and the ball ended up somewhere in centre field. So, quickly picking up all of the plastic pieces of cake and folding up the board, Paul ran back to second and on to third where he collapsed with an uncontrollable fit of conceit (we found out later that the exertion caused his ego to burst - nasty!).

Poor old Taunton. Of course, if they (and the umpire) had known, the Beavers could have just stood still as running the bases backwards is illegal ("making a travesty of the game" which it most certainly was). We didn't know the rule either at the time but as the final result was 52-4, those two outs wouldn't have made a lot of difference.

Later that year, we travelled to Regents Park to play those wonderful Sidewinders. We had the bases loaded and Richard Powell was at bat again. This time he fled to centre-field and the 'Winders' fielder decided to catch it with his face. From the infield, as the ball dribbled down his chest to the ground, it looked like a simple muffed fly and the runners were quickly off, chortling at their good fortune.

But nobody laughs at somebody getting hurt and initially it looked really serious. The fielder was wearing glasses and there was blood coming from near his eyes. Fortunately, our manager, Louis Courtney, who's an ambulance driver, was quickly on the spot with his first aid and bandaged the wounded City Slicker's eyes. We waited ages for the emergency services to arrive. The police were first on the scene.

There we were, both teams and the fuzz, standing around the luckless Sidewinder who was looking a bit like a WWI casualty with blood from his shattered proboscis neatly offsetting his white, red and black uniform. Unaware of the cops' presence because of the bandages, he uttered these immortal words "I'll be alright somebody roll me a joint!"

(I would like to point out that the opinion expressedEd)



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The fact that Scottish Amicable sponsored American baseball on Channel 4 raised a few eyebrows.

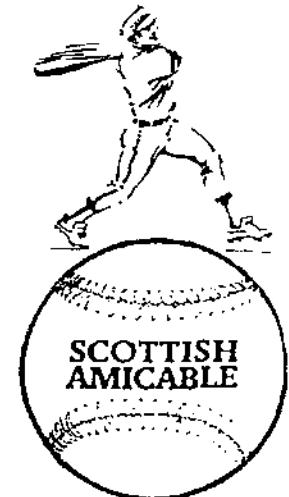
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- GAME REPORTS -

WALTHAM ABBEY ARROWS 23 CROYDON BOROUGH PIRATES 7

WANDLE PARK 26 JULY

Waltham Abbey's march to the 1st Division continues with this victory against an under-strength Pirates side. Arrows batters faced the Buc's regular starter Dave Ward for the seventh time in three years and this time, to some extent, finally got to grips with his slow-ball 'pop up' tosses. The Arrows top hitters were Mark Ridgwell going 3 for 3 including a triple in the third with the bases jammed; Dave Shaer (3 for 4) and Kevin Pickston (4 for 7). Paul Raybold also grabbed a triple in-between striking out twice. Waltham Abbey used their veteran partnership of Raybold and Jay Hindle who both struggled somewhat, hurling out of the Croydon 'pit'. Croydon's 'big 5th' came thanks to a 'willow-tree' single from Glenda Lawson. The Arrows again used 14 players, giving their five rookies vital experience. Note that Raybold's muffed catch on an easy pop-up just foul of 1st base that caused such amusement, has not been scored as an error!

	R	H	E
ARROWS	7 0 8	3 1 2	0 1 1
PIRATES	1 1 0	0 5 0	0 0 0

An Arrows Correspondent
(Paul Raybold, actually - Ed)

ARUN PANTHERS 16 BURGESS HILL RED HATS 6

BURGESS HILL 26 JULY

After a five week lay-off due to ground problems and rain, the Panthers went out to play one of their best defensive games of the season against a spirited Red Hats side. Many players on both sides had an outstanding game, in particular, Steve Bartholemew who pitched four innings for the Red Hats before moving behind the plate. As catcher, his rifle throws to base picked off two attempts to steal and helped keep the Panthers runs down. Marc Bourn went the distance for Arun, fanning 14 and his infield stopped almost everything that was hit. The Black Cats batting included four hits from Jimmy Gardner, another four from Wesley Mahan who also collected three RBIs, and Greg Welch had a great day with a ground-rule double and a mammoth home run ball that went out of the park and was never seen again.

Footnote: The Panthers are proud to announce that due to local interest, a junior team will be starting shortly. Phone Keith Preskett (Chichester 779919 - office hours) for further information.

	R
PANTHERS	1 2 2
RED HATS	0 1 1

BASILDON MARINERS 26 HEMEL REBELS 5

GLoucester Park 26 JULY

The game started with the Mariners taking an early lead thanks to some good pitching from starter Julian Richards who allowed two runs in the first five innings. The strong batting of the Mariners brought in 22 runs in the same time. The Rebels started a fight back in the sixth when they scored four runs. Top batter for the Rebels was third baseman Neal Ward who almost got a homer but was unable to keep his footing over the last five yards and was put out at home. The Mariners matched the four in their half and a final shut out in the seventh saw the Mariners run out winners. Third baseman Kevin Simmons was man of the match, finishing the day four for five, scoring five runs and in the field had one put out and four assists throwing out all three in the sixth.

	R	H	E
REBELS	1 0 1 0 0 4 0 6 6		
MARINERS	6 4 10 0 2 4 x 26 16 2		



Crawley Final; Evans (Braves); "He dropped the ball!"
Laing (Croydon); "No I didn't!". Ward(Croydon); "You're out!"

CONTACTS

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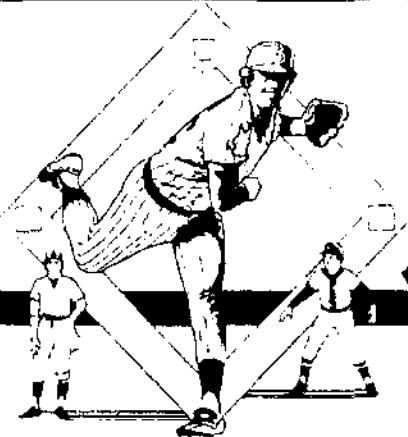
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FAIR IS FOUL AND FOUL IS FAIR by Geoff Mann

Last time I left you considering this game situation:

"Score 2-1. Inning: Bottom of the ninth. The tying run is on second base, the winning run at the plate, two men are out and the count is 3-2. The batter hits the ball deep towards the home run fence, but just in foul territory. A fielder attempts to catch the ball in foul territory, but only succeeds in tipping the ball over the fence in fair territory. Is it;

- (a) A home run which wins the ballgame?
- (b) A ground rule double which ties the ballgame? or
- (c) A foul ball?"

The rulebook (Rule 2) tells us that, "A FAIR BALL is a batted ball that settles on fair ground between home and first base, or between home and third base, or that is on or over fair territory when bounding to the outfield past first or third base, or that touches first, second or third base, or that, while on or over fair territory, touches the person of an umpire or player, or that, while over fair territory, passes out of the playing field in flight.

A fair fly ball shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time he touches the ball."

"A FOUL BALL is a batted ball that settles on foul territory between home and first base, or between home and third base, or that bounds past first or third base on or over foul territory, or that first falls on foul territory beyond first or third base, or that, while on or over foul territory, touches the person of an umpire or player, or any object foreign to the natural ground."

A foul fly shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, and not as to whether the fielder is on foul or fair territory at the time he touches the ball."

Therefore as our player from the example has first touched the ball whilst the ball is over FOUL territory only two things can occur; either the ball can be caught for an out or the ball will be a FOUL ball. If the ball had been first touched whilst it was over FAIR territory the ball is FAIR and if pushed over the home run fence a home run will result. If the ball had been first touched whilst over FAIR territory and pushed over the fence in FOUL territory then a ground rule double would ensue.

However as the ball has been first touched whilst it was over FOUL territory and pushed over the fence in fair territory the ball is a plain FOUL BALL. The position of the ball in relation to FAIR/FOUL ground is all important when deciding if a ball is FAIR or FOUL and not the position of the fielder at the time the ball has been touched.

In our next look at the Rules of baseball I will be looking at the tricky question of the 'dropped third strike.' Talking of dropped third strikes think about the following game situation for next time.

Runners on first and second base; two men out the count is three balls and two strikes. The next pitch is not swung at and rolls to the backstop. The catcher runs back to the backstop and picks up the ball whilst the runners on first and second advance and the batter slowly starts walking to first base. The catcher runs back to the plate with the ball.

At this stage the Umpire realises that the pitch had been a strike and calls "Strike 3." The catcher throws the ball to the first baseman who tags the bag just ahead of the batter/runner. The batter politely informs the Umpire that if the Umpire had called the strike as soon as the ball had passed the plate he would have easily made it to first base, and that by not calling the strike until the catcher had returned the Umpire had trapped the batter into being out. What do you do as Umpire?

THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME THIS HAS HAPPENED!

The Scottish Amicable National League is by no means the first league of its kind. British baseball historian and editor of The Baseball Mercury, WILLIAM MORGAN, tells the story of the London Major League of the thirties.

During the 1930's a total of five leagues, usually described as professional, but by North American standards semi-professional, were organised. Most of the teams were short-lived; the peak year for numbers of teams was 1936, when some 29 teams operated, but by 1939 numbers had dwindled to 7. The London Major League which operated in seasons 1936 & 1937 was probably the most ambitious of these ventures. Its clubs played in greyhound racing stadiums in London, and some of the clubs were backed financially by greyhound racing concerns. The backbone of players in this league were Canadian ice-hockey players. The Greyhound Racing Association, which backed at least two of the ballclubs, also operated two ice-hockey teams at Harringay arena.

At the start of the 1936 season there were seven clubs in the LML, White City, Harringay, West Ham, Hackney Royals, Romford Wasps, Streatham & Mitcham Giants and Catford Saints. The Saints was a Mormon team, and its players described themselves as amateurs; as New London, they had beaten another Mormon team, the Rochdale Greys, to win the National Baseball Association Challenge Cup in 1935. Players in the LML were paid £2/10/- to £3 per game, whereas in the Northern Leagues 30/- was common.

West Ham had good publicity and talented players. The club was backed by the wealthy Canadian L.D.Wood, and it played in the West Ham F.C. colours of claret and blue - a number of the clubs chose the colours of neighbouring soccer or rugby teams. Streatham & Mitcham received some heavy early defeats and quickly withdrew. White City appear to have led for most of the season and finished with triple honours - LML Champions, NBA Challenge Cup Winners and LML Cup Winners. The League competition was based on each team playing each other four times, while the Cup seems to have been a knockout decided on the aggregate scores from home and away legs. As for attendances, some reports mention crowds of 4,000 to 5,000, while a game at West Ham versus White City is reported to have drawn more than 13,000 fans. It seems likely that several of the clubs lost money as many did not continue in 1937.

Six teams began in 1937, based in three stadia, West Ham, Romford, and Nunhead FC. This meant that four of the greyhound stadia had given the thumbs-down to baseball. Nunhead hosted the Catford Saints and Nunhead (who withdrew about halfway through the season), West Ham shared its ground with a new club, Pirates, and Romford Wasps shared with Corinthians. Romford Wasps, who finished last in 1936, won the title in 1937 and lost in the final of the NBA Challenge Cup to Hull. Where attendances were mentioned in 1937 they were much lower than in 1936, and the League was disbanded sometime after the end of the 1937 season.

William Morgan.

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