

BASEBALL *Mercury.*

Issue 6

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BASEBALL

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No. 6. MAY 1974.

NEW WORLD AMATEUR BASEBALL FEDERATION WAS NECESSARY by R. Panaye.

In the year 1970 three European countries - Belgium, Holland, and Italy - were listed as members of the F.I.B.A.

The main reason for affiliation had been the idea to unite all the national federations into one international body - F.I.B.A. - in order to have baseball recognised as an Olympic sport.

Holland and Italy took part in the F.I.B.A. Championships - Colombia, November, 1970, but the result was a catastrophe for Holland who finished last which resulted in severe troubles in the Dutch Federation. The Italian team at least had the satisfaction of having beaten Holland (European Champions) in this tournament.

In 1971 only Italy took part in the World Championships in Cuba and showed good progress.

Since the idea of Olympic Baseball could not be realised before all federations were united, the F.E.B. (Federation Europeenne de Baseball) decided in March 1972 to change its name into C.E.B.A. (Confederation Europeenne de Baseball Amateur) recognising F.I.B.A. as the world authority. At the same time all the European federations expressed their desire to become members of F.I.B.A. and this was realised in a very short time.

During the 1972 Munich Olympic Games a meeting was arranged with the new President of the International Olympic Committee, Lord Killarin, who expressed his sympathy and urged us to have a well organised International Federation. When in November 1972 the World Championships were organised in Nicaragua, we thought that the time had come to make F.I.B.A. a real World Federation, but we were wrong.

Nicaragua succeeded for the first time in the history of F.I.B.A. in attracting 16 participating countries, including federations from America, Asia and Europe, and these Championships were a great success. However, at the F.I.B.A. Congress, held during the Championships, it became clear that the European countries were not welcome. Proposals for reorganisation of F.I.B.A. introduced by C.E.B.A. were not even discussed. After three days of talking, from morning till night, most of the time by Latin American speakers, we only had one opportunity to vote on a subject when it was decided that Nicaragua could organise the 1973 World Championships instead of Cuba.

The only other decision arrived at during this Congress was that an Extraordinary Congress was to be arranged in order to change the statutes. This Extraordinary Congress was called in May 1973 in Curacao (Netherlands Antilles). To commence, the Congress started two hours late because some federations had a meeting with the Board of F.I.B.A. before the Congress in order to discuss what should be done. The Sports Minister of the Netherlands Antilles, who had been invited to open this international Congress, left after one and a half hours waiting for the Board.

It soon became evident that the Board was employing the same tactics as in Nicaragua, and it seems incredible to learn that after three days of discussion not even the first item on the agenda was finished! Some federations pleaded to have at least the elections, but the Board said, "No".

The Congress was complete chaos. Some of the delegates went swimming- it is hot in Curacao - for one hour, and when they came back the meeting was still discussing the same problem.

As a result Nicaragua was suspended for a year because it had been too late in paying F.I.B.A. the percentage of the 1972 World Championship revenues. Nothing was said about the earthquake that destroyed Managua (Nicaragua) immediately after the 1972 World Championships had been held there.

West Germany, the Philippines, China and Nicaragua were told that they could not participate in the meeting without a specific reason. This decision was taken just before the Congress started, and after the delegates had travelled around the world to be there!

It was evident that this kind of treatment could not be accepted by the majority of the federations.

In June 1973, C.E.B.A. accepted a motion to warn F.I.B.A. they were ready to withdraw because of the chaotic situation. The letter from C.E.B.A. to F.I.B.A. conveying this warning was not even answered.

When the first Intercontinental Cup Tournament was held in Italy in September 1973, a meeting was called to discuss the F.I.B.A. situation. The meeting proceeded eventually to the founding of a new World Federation. The Intercontinental Cup was a tremendous success with Japan finishing 1st., Puerto Rico 2nd., U.S.A. 3rd., Nicaragua 4th., Canada 5th., Italy 6th., China(Taiwan) 7th., Argentina 8th. On September 8th., 1973 a new World Federation was founded in Bologna (Italy) called Federacion Mundial de Beisbol Aficionados - F.E.M.B.A. - World Amateur Baseball Federation - W.A.B.A.F.

During the World Championships(FEMBA) in Nicaragua - November/December 1973, the first Congress of the newborn World Federation was held. Statutes and projects for the future were accepted and it is now a fact that the most important federations from Asia (Japan, South Korea and China), Australia, Europe, and North and South America are members of FEMBA, leaving the Caribbean federations - Netherlands Antilles, Venezuela, Panama, the ruptured federations from Puerto Rico and Mexico, together with Cuba, isolated. Holland is still in doubt what to do because of its connections with the Netherlands Antilles, whose President Juan Isa, is President of F.I.B.A.

The FEMBA-WABAF 1974 World Championships will be organised in Miami (U.S.A.), and Canada will host the 1975 Intercontinental Cup in Quebec. For the 1976 World Championships, Italy and Japan are candidates, and in 1977 Japan will organise the Intercontinental Cup in the event that Italy is selected to host the 1976 World Championships. If Japan hosts the 1976 World Championships then South Africa will host the 1977 Intercontinental Cup.

At the time of the FEMBA World Championships in Nicaragua there were 23 affiliated countries, and 11 countries competed in the tournament.

The gates of FEMBA-WABAF are wide open for those federations still in doubt.

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SUTTON BRAVES 1973 by Robert Garrod.

1973 proved a mixed bag for Sutton Braves who fared well enough in the League but failed in the Cup. There were some good individual performances by Braves players. Among the hitters, John Anderson smashed .566 on the EBA system (this accounts for bases on balls and sacrifices as credits to the batter's performance, and they are also added to his times at bat). Veteran Ron Williams, like a good wine improving each year, walloped .508! Four other players banged more than .400. They were 1st. baseman Peter Crook, .453: catcher Ed McKelvey, .444: play-anywhere Norvie Marshall, .435: and outfielder Al Wright, .426. Hefty batting like this unfortunately makes Braves defensive limitations obvious, and the unearned runs column is best overlooked.

Al Wright led in bases on balls with 15, followed by Williams 13, and Marshall 10. Ed McKelvey stole 10 bases, John Anderson and Robert Garrod took 9 each. That man Anderson hit the most home runs with hit-or-bust Art Bloomfield and John Booth each just a home run behind.

Fielding was led by outfielder Anderson with a perfect 1.000. 1st. baseman Peter Crook followed him with .971. Top pitcher was John Booth whose League ERA of 4.36 was sadly elevated to 6.04 with Cup games included.

Braves sole Cup win was at the expense of Southend Aces who finally went down 8 - 5 in a thrilling, see-saw game. Thames Board Mills ground once more was a graveyard for the Braves who were overwhelmed 26 - 0. Braves did have the satisfaction, though, of giving T.B.M. their toughest League assignment, losing 6 - 4 and stranding 8 men on the bases. Braves biggest score of the season was on their visit to League wooden-spoonists Brighton Jets who succumbed 19- 5.

For 1974, Braves are determined to do two things for sure. Firstly, to plug the gaps in defence, and secondly to leave fewer men stranded on bases. Braves left 15 men on the bags with nowhere to go in one game last year!

Jim Carey, popular Braves manager, has now returned to his home in Oklahoma, and the good wishes of all in baseball in the South of England went with him, as did an

engraved beer mug! Braves are now on the look-out for a manager.

Braves extend their good wishes to all in baseball in the U.K. for 1974. For readers outside of the South of England I add final League and Cup tables of the Baseball Association of Great Britain for 1973.

League

	<u>Won</u>	<u>Lost</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>GB</u>
Thames B.M. Raiders	10	0	1.000	-
Sutton Braves	6	4	.600	4
Southend Aces	5	5	.500	5
Croydon Bluejays	4	6	.400	6
Crawley Giants	3	7	.300	7
Brighton Jets	2	8	.200	8

Cup

Croydon Bluejays	3	1	.750	-
Thames B.M. Raiders	3	1	.750	-
Southend Aces	3	2	.600	$\frac{1}{2}$
Crawley Giants	2	2	.500	1
Brighton Jets	1	3	.250	2
Sutton Braves	1	4	.200	$2\frac{1}{2}$

Void games: August 5, Crawley v Croydon

September 9, Brighton v Thames Board Mills.

Prospects for 1974: The Cuban Embassy who have a more than useful 'ball team will be invited by the B.A.G.B. to join the league for the 1974 season. Last season, the Cubans played several games against B.A.G.B. clubs and a measure of their standard can be gained by the uncomfortable time they gave runaway League Champions Thames Board Mills in two games against the Raiders.

From the remnants of the defunct Richmond Knights baseball club, an effort is being made to re-introduce the game to the Richmond area. Anyone interested in playing, coaching, administration or just watching, please contact Robert W. Garrod, Tel. Brookwood 3699.

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EUROPEAN PROFESSIONAL LEAGUE.

Norman Sutherland, a Scot, now resident in Fort Lauderdale, Florida is spokesman for a group now preparing to launch a professional league in Europe. It is hoped that this league will commence operating in 1975. Cities considered as possibilities for franchises are Brussels, Amsterdam, London, Antwerp, Stuttgart, Rome, Milan, Barcelona, Madrid, and Paris. According to Norman Sutherland financial backing is forthcoming for Milan, Madrid, Paris, and Barcelona. Initially the capital to launch the league is being raised in North America.

Some of the leading soccer clubs in Europe are being contacted in an attempt to get them interested in operating franchises as such clubs have stadiums and of course the administrative set-up which would greatly assist the new venture to get off the ground.

It is suggested that to begin with games will be played at the week-end a team visiting an opponent and playing a three game series on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Players would be expected in the early years to have jobs in addition to playing baseball. Clubs would have squads of 18 to 20 players 3 of whom would be natives of the city or country concerned, the remainder would be drawn from North America, the Caribbean, and South America. It is not the intention of the organisers that this league shall become a farm league for the American major-leagues.

The season will commence at the end of April and continue to the end of July. It is intended that 51% of the capital of each franchise will be held by residents of the city having the franchise. Each club will have a fulltime coach, general manager, public relations officer, and secretary. Each club will be expected to spend 20,000 dollars a year on publicity.

It was decided not to aim for a launching in 1974, because of the problem of publicising the venture in a year when European sportsmen will have their attention fixed on the World Cup soccer competition in West Germany.

WORLD BASEBALL ASSOCIATION FORMED.

The World Baseball Association was announced as having been launched on April 3rd. It is planned as a 32 team, four division intercontinental league which intends to challenge the established American and National leagues by going after their stars.

As described at a news conference, the new association would begin play next January with divisions in North America, Mid America, South America, including the Caribbean, and Asia.

The organisers said that in the last six months they had contacted representatives in 42 cities, have had serious negotiations with backers in 38 and have already granted six franchises.

The cities granted franchises, which the W.B.A. said cost 150,000 dollars each are Columbus, Ohio; Jersey City; Birmingham, Ala.; Memphis; Mexico City and Tampa-St. Petersburg.

The W.B.A. said a player-manager draft is planned in mid-June in an American city, according to Sean Morton Downey Jr., president and one of the organisers of the association.

Cities under consideration and their divisions are:

North America - Columbus, Jersey City, Washington, Charlotte, N.C., Seattle, Portland, Denver, Providence, Hartford, Buffalo, Indianapolis.

Mid America - Birmingham, Memphis, Albuquerque, Phoenix, New Orleans, San Antonio, Louisville, Orlando, San Juan, P.R.

South America - Caracas and Maracaibo, Venezuela; Panama City, Dominican Republic, El Paso, Juarez, Havana, Guatemala.

Asia - North Tokyo, East Tokyo, Osaka, Yokohama, Nagasaki, Okinawa, Taiwan, Manila, Honolulu.

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KOSTA MEMORIAL TROPHY.

The tournament for this trophy will take place on the Spring Bank Holiday, Monday, 27th. May. In addition to Southern clubs representative teams from Merseyside and Humberside are expected.

The tournament is an annual event staged for many years by the Thames Board Mills Baseball Club at its fine ground at Purfleet, Essex. The field on which the competition is played is a spacious one, permitting two games to be played simultaneously on two diamonds laid out on diagonally opposite corners. The field is used alternately for baseball and cricket, and as it has to be kept up to the standard required for cricket, the result is a beautifully smooth and level surface.

T.B.M. the oldest existing English baseball club, founded in 1936, have had as many as 11 teams competing in a single tournament. The games are abbreviated affairs of 3, 5, or 7 innings; play commences in the morning and it has been known for the moon to rise before the conclusion of the last game. A great day of sport is enjoyed by all taking part, and the credit for all this must be given largely to Jim McQuade, Chairman of the T.B.M. club. Jim has been associated with T.B.M. first as a player, and later as an officer since 1936.

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MISCELLANY

Hank Aaron surpassed Babe Ruth's home run mark when he hit his 715th. in the fourth inning of the Braves' home opener with Los Angeles on Monday, April 8th.

F.I.B.A. is staging its World Championships in Panama this year.

The International Softball Federation is holding its third World Championships for Women at Stratford, Connecticut, this August. The first Women's World Softball Champions were Australia in 1965, the U.S.A. finishing 2nd., and Japan 3rd. The 2nd. World Championships were played in 1970 and were won by Japan, with U.S.A. 2nd. and the Philippines 3rd.

Fifteen countries are expected to compete, these are Japan, Holland, New Zealand, Italy, Canada, Taiwan, Puerto Rico, South Africa, Australia, Bermuda, Mexico, Venezuela, the Philippines, Belize and U.S.A.

The fourth Men's World Softball Championships are being held in February 1976 in Lower Hutt, New Zealand. The first World Championship in 1966 was won by U.S.A., with Mexico 2nd., and New Zealand 3rd. The 2nd. World Title(1966) was gained by U.S.A., Canada finishing 2nd., and Mexico 3rd. The 3rd World Tournament(1972) was won by Canada, with U.S.A. 2nd., and New Zealand 3rd.

New Zealand with two 3rd place finishes in three tournaments are hoping to please the home crowds and give the game a big boost by pulling off a victory this time.

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Baseball Mercury No.7 should appear in August.