BASEBALL Courier

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BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL by P. Shorten

On October 3rd Stretford Saints of Manchester met Kingston Aces of Hull in the first ever B.B.A. Championship Final; the game was played on Kingston Aces ground.

Dawson, Stretford's 2nd baseman, walked to the plate to open the batting. He swung and missed the first pitch, looked at the second which was below his knees, then popped-up to pitcher Seddon, to make the first out. O'Neil grounded a single to left field, and Windross, the Saints manager, advanced O'Neil to 2nd with a hot one through shortstop.

Collins the batter, runners on 1st and 2nd, one down, anywhere in the infield Aces go for the double-play 2 and 1. Collins fanned on the first pitch and hammered the second to shortstop - picked up snapped into 2nd's mitt and only good tactics by Windross stealing 2nd stopped the successful completion of a double-play. O'Neil scored on the hit, and Guio the No. 4 batter died at the plate.

I felt if we could keep the Saints down to three runs the Aces should win, but I certainly did not welcome this run in the first frame.

Hammond, Aces cf. and capt. led-off for us with a single but was picked off trying to steal 2nd. Read made 1st on an error by the pitcher, Brooks advanced him to second on a line drive, and Parker filled them up through another error by pitcher O'Neil. O'Neil now faced a situation, one down, bases

loaded, with two errors against himself, and a bunt probable. With ice cold, ruthless pitching he struck-out the next two batters in eight pitches - probably the best pitching of the game.

In the 3rd inning the top of the order came up for Stretford. Dawson singled to centre, O'Neil made second on a hit into deep left field, scoring Dawson. Three outs quickly followed.

In the bottom of the 4th, Smallwood and Sanderson scored for Kingston, tying the score at 2 - 2. In the top of the 5th, Parkes leading-off for Stretford was given out for stepping outside the box while hitting. A very good decision by chief umpire Frank Butler. Two more outs quickly followed.

Aces took the lead in the 5th on a run scored by Brooks, and the Yorkshire pitcher Seddon began to have a slight edge over international O'Neil. Stretford made a determined effort to draw level in the 8th, but tight fielding by Aces killed this threat. In their half of the 8th, Aces made the score 4 - 2. Stretford were unable to score in the top of the 9th.

With the British Championship and the honour of representing Britain in the 1966 European Cup depending on the result of the game, the players and the 1,000 spectators showed by their attitude from the first pitch that they were fully aware of the importance of every play in this game. It was an excellent final - a real credit to baseball. The presentation was grand, the players fought for everything, as they always should do, but showed respect and sportsmanship to each other throughout.

Pitcher W. O'Neil for Stretford struck-out 12 and issued not a single walk. Gus Seddon for Aces had 8 strike-outs and walked one. The fielding honours went to Aces left-fielder Don Smallwood who took five running catches, one of them with a hint of greatness about it. Finally, in all my twenty-two years of continuous baseball activity, this was the first time that I had the pleasure of watching the chief umpire inspect the bats of both teams before allowing the game to start. Frank Butler of Hull was that umpire.

CORRESPONDENCE

Sir,

The National League is very fond of blowing its own trumpet and perhaps it has reason to do so. This is, as always, a matter of opinion, but at least they blow it and they mean well, and,

try hard, very hard.

They talk of better standard of baseball, two leagues for the whole country, better presentation, more spectators; in fact, more of all that they think is good for the game.

Why then this limit to U.S. servicemen, in whatever shape or form that the National League has couched the rule? Who, in particular, is the N.L. getting at? As an independent observer it appears to me that such a rule takes the N.L. right into "backyard baseball". Surely no artificial restriction such as this rule can do other than retard the progress towards higher playing standards in the N.L. If a person plays a game better than you, then it is no use, if you want to improve yourself, taking your bat away and refusing to play with him.

National League! Think again.

Merseysider.

THE 1965 WORLD SERIES by A. Murray

The World Series opened with the first two games at Minnesota's Metropolitan Stadium. The starting pitchers for the 1st game were big Don Drysdale for the Dodgers, who had a 23 - 12 record on the season, against Jim "Mudcat" Grant, who led the American League in Won-Lost pct. with a 21 - 7 mark. Ron Fairly, Los Angeles clean-up hitter homered in the top of the second, but Twins 1st baseman Don Mincher tied it up in Minnesota's half of that inning by driving a homerun in his first ever World Series at-bat. This equalled a feat only 3 other players had accomplished. The Twins broke the game open in the 3rd with a 6 run barrage, on another homer, 2 doubles, 3 singles and a walk, sending Drysdale to the showers. So the Minnesotans took the 1st game 8 to 2, disproving those who thought that the Dodgers would take the Series in 4 straight games. In the 2nd game, the Dodgers sent ace left-hander Sandy Koufax to the mound. Koufax is regarded as the best of present-day pitchers. He led the majors in wins; 26, Won-Lost pct.; .765 (26-8), complete games; 27, innings pitched; 336, and strike-outs 382. This last figure sets a new mark for modern baseball, eclipsing the previous record of 348 set by Bob Feller in 1946. Koufax also set up a new mark for career no-hitters during 1965, when he hurled his 4th,, a perfect game, against the Cubs,

The Twins however were unmoved by Koufax's reputation, and after a two base error, they pounded him for a double and 2 singles on 3 consecutive pitches for 2 runs. Sandy finished

the inning but was removed for a pinch hitter in the next frame, the top of the 7th.

So the Twins beat the great Koufax, 5-1 for their second straight Series win. After a day for travelling, the Series resumed for 3 games in Los Angeles' home park Chavez Ravine. Playing at home the Dodgers put on a real show of pitching and baserunning and ran the Twins out of the park. Claude Osteen who had a 5-0 record against the Twins when he was pitching in the American League started for the Dodgers against curve ball artist Camilo Pascual. Osteen shut-out the Twins on 5 hits, the Dodgers banging out 5 doubles and 5 singles for their first win. They stole a total of 3 bases out of 4 attempts, with Maury Wills, their shortstop captain getting his first steal of the Series. He is the most prolific base-stealer in modern baseball history, holding the record for steals in one season, 104, set up in 1963, this year having 94 thefts. The 4th game was a rematch of the 1st, with Don Drysdale against Jim Grant. This time Drysdale showed his true form as he led Los Angeles to a 7-2 win allowing only 5 hits while striking out 11. The 5th game saw Sandy Koufax against Jim Kaat, the man who had beaten him in the 2nd game. Like Drysdale, Koufax felt much better at home, where his season record was 14-3. He beat the Twins on a 4 hit shut-out, for the Dodgers Maury Wills went 4 for 5 including a pair of doubles, and Willie Davis stole 3 bases.

So the Series returned to Minnesota with the Dodgers leading 3 games to 2. The Twins had to win the next game to stay alive, and manager Sam Mele called on Jim Grant to pitch with only 2 days rest. He responded by holding Los Angeles to 5 hits as the Twins evened the Series up at 3 games apiece with a 5-1 victory. Minnesota were leading 2 to 0 going into their half of the 6th. The first batter was thrown out on a fine play by the 1st baseman to the pitcher covering. The No. 6 hitter, Bob Allison, walked on a 3 and 2 pitch, and stole 2nd as the next man struck out. That brought up the 8th man, light-hitting 2nd baseman Frank Quilici with 2 out and a runner on 2nd. Dodger manager Walter Alston then made an orthodox strategic move that unfortunately backfired. He ordered Quilici intentionally passed, setting up possible force plays at 1st, 2nd and 3rd, also bringing up the pitcher Jim Grant to bat. Although Grant is regarded as a pretty good hitting pitcher, he is still a pitcher and not so much a threat as Quilici to deliver a base-hit. Alston also thought that

Grant, who had completely handcuffed the Dodger hitters, might be removed for a pinch hitter. Mele however kept Grant in the game and he went up to the plate with his favourite bat. Jim jumped on the first pitch, a fast ball right down the middle, and sent it far into the left field bleachers, 392 feet from home plate for a 3 run homer. The game ended 5 to 1 in favour of the Twins, evening the Series at 3 each, the deciding game to be played the next day.

So the final game started with Sandy Koufax the surprise starting pitcher after only 2 days rest, manager Walter Alston knowing the Twins to be weaker on the southpaw pitching of Koufax than on the deliveries of right-hander Don Drysdale who had been scheduled to do the pitching. Drysdale however was in the bullpen throughout the game, ready to come on in relief of Koufax at a moment's notice. The Twins were given a slight edge going into the game but Koufax was the master all the way as he shutout the Twins for the second time allowing only 3 hits. The Dodgers won the game by a score of 2 - 0, collecting their runs in the 4th inning on a homer, a double and a single. The Twins had the tying run at the plate with 1 out in the bottom of the 9th, but Koufax bore down and struck out the next two batters to clinch the Series for Los Angeles. He was voted the Most Valuable Player of the Series, and collected the Award for that honour, a brand new 1966 sports car.

THE HULL SCENE by Don Smallwood

The most encouraging event in the 1965 season was the formation of Hull Cardinals, they finished in last place and did not gain any league points, but they brought a gust of fresh air into the local league with their desire to make good. Ron Naylor who undertook the task of organising the Cardinals has now been promised backing from a youth organisation, this, coupled with the securing of a ground of their own, and the acquiring of a wonderful band of supporters at Hessle on the western outskirts of Hull, made 1965 a happy year for the Cardinals in spite of their lack of success in the Hull League.

At the other end of the scale Kingston Aces are basking in their possession of the title Champions of Great Britain,, well basking may not be the correct word as every one in Aces' nest is working really hard on plans for their European Cup trip next season. A lot of people have very wrongly said

that Kingston Aces is only another name for National League team Hull Aces. Both of these teams are administered by the East Hull Aces Baseball Club, and the idea is to blend youth with experience in the Kingston team. Kingston Aces have used 25 players in nearly every possible combination, while Hull Aces have used only 15 players with scarcely any permutations. The credit for gaining the Hull League Championship rests with the young players of Aces, who have I believe made very rapid progress because of this policy of blending youth with experience, the older players are able to tutor the youngsters under actual game conditions.

Runners-up in the league, Priestman White Sox, have played good ball, and they fully deserved some reward, which they gained by their victory over Kingston in a cup-final, winning an exciting game 4-3 in extra innings. The score in the Yorkshire Cup, again an extra inning affair, was also 4-3; Kingston finishing on the short end of the score, this time to Hull Royals. Royals have had a disappointing season, and winning this trophy may bring back some of the old spirit to their members; Royals have always been a top team in Hull and an upsurge of enthusiasm on their part would give a welcome shot in the arm to local baseball. Blackburn Buccaneers are already working on plans for the 1966 season, this club enjoys every game, and has shown a great improvement in the skills of the game, gone are the days of heavy defeats, and next season they could spring some surprises.

One highlight of the season was the fine performance of the All-Star side, for the first time in years the players looked as though they enjoyed the All-Star games. I wish that I could report a great revival in the Hull League, but the truth is that little if any progress has been made. Our secretary, Mr. McAvan, does a good job in the time he can spare for the sport. Our Chairman, Mr. Burton, has had a severe illness from which he is now recovering. What the Hull League desperately needs is independent members who would make themselves responsible for following up the openings which undoubtedly exist in Hull. We know of the interest in schools and youth clubs, but none of the officers can spare time from their other league duties, to bring this interest to fruition in the form of new teams.

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

As reported in the last issue Holland won the 1965 European Championships, below are details of individual games. In this feature and in future issues the Dutch method of giving details re. pitching performances will be used, three figures will be given, namely strike-outs, bases on balls, and hits conceded, in the order in which they have just been mentioned.

Sunday, August 29.

Spain	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	=	5
West Germany	3	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	x	=	8

West Germany Gerich 17-7-10, Errors 0

Spain Sole 4 inns. +4 men 1-4-7 and Merono 4 inns. 4-2-4, E.6.

Italy	7	1	2	4	14	2	0	= 30
Sweden	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	= 1

Italy Glorioso 3 inns. 7-1-1, Consonni 2 inns. 3-0-1.
Buschini 2 inns. 4-0-1, E.1.

Sweden O.Leander 3 inns. +3 men 0-4-7, Strand 1 inn. +10 men 0-3-7, O. Leander 3 inns. 2-1-5, E.18.

Monday, August 30.

Sweden	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	= 0
Holland	0	6	4	0	5	4	x	= 19

Holland Beidschat 2 inns. 3-0-1, Ter Neuzen 2 inns. 4-0-0, Dom 1 inn. 2-0-0, Errors 2.

Sweden Strand 3-3-19, Errors 8.

Tuesday August 31.

West Germany	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	=	0
Italy	0	2	0	3	0	1	2	1	x	=	9

Italy Glorioso 12-1-5, Errors 1.

West Germany Gerich 13-10-10, Errors 2.

Wednesday September 1.

Holland	2	0	1	0	3	3	6	= 15
Spain	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	= 0

Spain Detrell 5⅓ inns. 3-6-10, Huertas ⅔ inns. +6 men 0-2-4, Aguayo 1 inn. 0-0-1, Errors 3.

Holland Paalman 5 inns. 4-1-1, Dom 1 inn. 3-1-0, Beidschat 1 inn. 2-1-0, Errors 2.

Friday September 3.

Spain	0	5	5	1	1	0	2	0	0	= 14
Sweden	2	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	= 6

Sweden Strand 3 inns. 3-5-7, O. Leander 6 inns. 1-2-5, Errors 5.

Spain Ramon 5 inns. 5-4-9, Merono 4 inns. 6-1-0, Errors 4.

Saturday, September 4.

West Germany	3	6	0	0	0	1	x	=	10
Sweden	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	=	0

West Germany C. Helmig 11-6-4, Errors 2.
Sweden Strand 3-1-9, Errors 8.

Holland	4	4	5	2	0	0	1	= 16
Italy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	= 0

Italy Glorioso 1⅓ inns. 1-2-5, Buschini 3⅔ inns. 1-2-10, Gatti 2 inns. 1-1-1, Errors 4.
Holland Beidschat 4-2-6, Errors 3.

Sunday, September 5.

West Germany	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	=	0
Holland	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	3	x	=	7

Holland Dom 6-2-3, Errors 1.
West Germany Gerich 10-7-7, Errors 3.

Italy	8	0	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	= 14
Spain	3	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	1	= 9

Spain Detrell 2 inns. 2-2-4, Huertas 6 inns. 4-8-5, Merono 1 inn. 0-1-0, Errors 6.
Italy Consonni 4⅓ inns. 3-4-4, Glorioso 4⅔ inns. 4-1-2, E.6.
Individual awards. Best pitcher, Herman Beidschat; Best Hitter, Alfredo Lauri; Best Catcher, Wim Crouwel; Best Firstbaseman, Boudewijn Maat; Most Complete Player, Hamilton Richardson; Best Manager, Glenn Costick.

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Stretford Saints, and Dunlop Baseball Clubs are both seeking fixtures in Ireland for next Whitsun.

The number of teams in Italy now stands at approximately 200, having increased from 100 in the past two years.

Mr. Arthur Berezowski, Chairman of the South African Baseball Board, pulled no punches in submitting the Chairman's report to the AGM of that body. Playing strength had fallen from 3,296 in 1958 to 2,018 in 1965, a 40% decline. Only in Natal, where playing strength had increased from 100 to 203 in this period, had there been any progress made. Mr. Berezowski blames lethargic administration in many centres for the falling off in interest, and hopes that the more responsible people will undertake a shaking-up process in local bodies.