



29-30 AUG 2009, CROYDON



www.britishbaseball.org

PLAY BALL...!

Once again the culmination of six months of hard work on the playing fields across England brings us to this year's National Championships. We would like to welcome the players, coaches, officials and dedicated supporters to what will hopefully be two days of superb baseball played in a wonderful spirit.

You may have noticed that the championships this year have adopted a new name and will be known as the National Baseball Championships or NBC. This year's NBC at Croydon will see the Single-A and Double-A divisions following the previously used format of semi-finals on the Saturday, with the third and fourth place game and the Final on the Sunday.

The National Baseball League, however, will adopt a new six-game format similar to that used in MLB's World Baseball Classic. This format will ensure that all four teams from the country's top tier will return on the Sunday with a chance of becoming National Champions. We hope this format - with the increased number of games - will make the tournament more exciting for everyone involved.

Once again we would like to thank Croydon Baseball Club for hosting this year's main event. It is the fifth year that the championships have been held at

Croydon and we acknowledge and appreciate all of the hard work and dedication it takes to put on an event of this size. As in all previous final tournaments the ABUA-GB will be providing umpires to ensure fair play is achieved by all for the benefit of the sport.

The **Triple-A NBC** will be held in Harrogate the weekend of September 5-6. The **Youth NBC** will be held in London the following weekend of September 12-13. We would like to thank those clubs for supporting these events and helping to promote the wonderful game of baseball. Hopefully everyone participating in any of the NBCs will enjoy good weather, sportsmanship and weekends of excellent baseball.

Finally we would like to take this opportunity to wish the Great Britain National Team the best of luck in this year's **Baseball World Cup**. The first round begins on September 9. An ABUA-GB umpire has also been selected for the first time to attend this prestigious event.

We hope that everyone enjoys these weekends and that they culminate in the best teams winning on the day.

Let's play ball!

Darrin P Muller

BBF Presiding Officer

Who will emerge victorious as
2009 National Champions?



2009 NATIONAL BASEBALL LEAGUE FINALISTS

BRACKNELL BLAZERS (14-10)

Built over recent years with a mixture of young British talent, including Michael and Ryan Trask and Matt Maitland, and experienced veterans like former Great Britain player Josh Chetwynd, the Blazers made a vast improvement on last season and enter the NBC in good form with five straight wins.

Of this year's participants, Bracknell have the most appearances in the championship weekender (four) but are yet to win an honour in the NBL.



RICHMOND FLAMES (17-7)

The first-place Flames earned their first division title since joining the NBL in 2004, but are experienced in the postseason having won the national championship in 2006 and lost in the final last year. Manager Grant Delzoppo sites the depth of pitching staff as one of his side's strengths and it certainly will be a key factor at the NBC with at least three games to play to win the Championship. The rotation includes three pitchers who rank highly in the NBL pitching statistics: Cody Cain, named the league's Most Valuable Pitcher for 2009, Michael Osborn and Ryan Bird. These guys aren't shy with the bat either and Ryan Bird was named Most Valuable Batter in '09.

That multi-talented nature across the team has been another of Richmond's strengths in recent years although Delzoppo has minor concerns about his small squad being tested by the number of games this weekend. However, the Flames are fuelled by an eight-game winning streak – including a sweep of the defending champion Mets – and are tipped as favourites.



HERTS FALCONS (12-12)

Last year's AAA Champions made a smart debut in the NBL, winning three of their first four games including a comeback victory against the 2008 National Champion Mets. However, they faded at the end, losing six in a row.

Despite this, a .500 record over the season has proved the Falcons deserve to play at this level – a feat made yet more commendable given that only two years ago the Falcons were a Double-A team prior to back-to-back promotions. Manager Jason Greenberg will be looking for his side to rally for a final effort this weekend.



LONDON METS (17-7)

The defending champions lost a number of players from the all-conquering class of '08 which went 23-1 in the regular season. Despite this, the Mets' new-look squad led the league for much of this summer including a run of 13 wins in a row between May and August. But London comes into the NBC hoping it didn't peak too soon as it has lost three in a row including a final day sweep by Richmond which ousted it from first place.

One of the stories of the weekend looks to be the chance for some of London's Triple-A players to show their worth at the highest level as they've been promoted to replace a significant number of first-teamers who are unavailable.

If the Mets triumph this year they will join an elite few in British baseball's history that have won three national championships in a row.



London Mets
NBL Champions
2007 & 2008

SCHEDULE OF PLAY 29-30 AUGUST 2009, CROYDON

National Baseball League

Saturday, 29 August 2009

11:00 Diamond 1	Game 1	Bracknell Blazers @	London Mets	7 innings
13:30 Diamond 1	Game 2	Herts Falcons @	Richmond Flames	7 innings
16:00 Diamond 1	Game 3	Game 1 Winner @	Game 2 Winner	7 innings

Sunday, 30 August 2009

10:30 Diamond 1	Game 4	Game 1 Loser @	Game 2 Loser	7 innings
13:00 Diamond 1	Game 5	Game 3 Loser @	Game 4 Winner	7 innings
15:30 Diamond 1	Final	Game 5 Winner @	Game 3 Winner	9 innings

AA League

Saturday, 29 August 2009

10:00 Diamond 2	Game 1	Kent Mariners @	Alconbury Braves	7inn/2hr
14:30 Diamond 2	Game 2	M'hall Bulldogs @	Manchester A's	7inn/2hr

Sunday, 30 August 2009

12:15 Diamond 2	3 rd /4 th	Game 1 Loser @	Game 2 Loser	7inn/2hr
16:45 Diamond 2	Final	Game 1 Winner @	Game 2 Winner	7inn/3hr

A League

Saturday, 29 August 2009

12:15 Diamond 2	Game 1	Leicester Blue Sox @	Bracknell Blazers II	7inn/2hr
16:45 Diamond 2	Game 2	Humber Pilots @	Essex Archers	7inn/2hr

Sunday, 30 August 2009

10:00 Diamond 2	3 rd /4 th	Game 1 Loser @	Game 2 Loser	7inn/2hr
14:30 Diamond 2	Final	Game 1 Winner @	Game 2 Winner	7inn/2hr

NATIONAL CHAMPIONS OF BRITISH BASEBALL

1890 Preston North End	1959 Thames Board Mills	1984 Croydon Blue Jays
1892 Middlesborough	1960 Thames Board Mills	1985 Hull Mets
1893 Thespians (London)	1961 Liverpool Tigers	1986 Cobham Yankees
1894 Thespians (London)	1962 Liverpool Tigers	1987 Cobham Yankees
1895 Derby	1963 East Hull Aces	1988 Cobham Yankees
1896 Wallsend-On-Tyne	1964 Hull Aces	1989 Enfield Spartans
1897 Derby	1965 Hull Aces	1990 Enfield Spartans
1899 Derby	1966 Stretford Saints	1991 Enfield Spartans
1900 Nottingham Forest	1967 Liverpool Yankees	1992 Leeds City Royals
1906 Tottenham Hotspur	1968 Hull Aces	1993 Humberside Mets
1907 Clapton Orient	1969 Watford Sun-Rockets	1994 Humberside Mets
1908 Tottenham Hotspur	1970 Hull Royals	1995 Menwith Hill Pirates
1909 Clapton Orient	1971 Liverpool Tigers	1996 Menwith Hill Pirates
1910 Brentford	1972 Hull Aces	1997 London Warriors
1911 Leyton	1973 Burtonwood Yanks	1998 Menwith Hill Patriots
1934 Hatfield (Liverpool)	1974 Nottingham Lions	1999 Brighton Buccaneers
1935 New London	1975 Liverpool Tigers	2000 London Warriors
1936 White City (London)	1976 Liverpool Trojans	2001 Brighton Buccaneers
1937 Hull	1977 Golders Green Sox	2002 Brighton Buccaneers
1938 Rochdale Greys	1978 Liverpool Trojans	2003 Windsor Bears
1939 Halifax	1979 Golders Green Sox	2004 Croydon Pirates
1948 Liverpool Robins	1980 Liverpool Trojans	2005 Croydon Pirates
1949 Hornsey Red Sox	1981 London Warriors	2006 Richmond Flames
1950 Burtonwood Bees	1982 London Warriors	2007 London Mets
1951 Burtonwood Bees	1983 Cobham Yankees	2008 London Mets

Most National Titles:

- 4 – London Warriors (2000, 1997, 1982, 1981)
- 4 – Cobham Yankees (1988, 1987, 1986, 1983)
- 4 – Liverpool Tigers (1975, 1971, 1962, 1961)
- 4 – Hull Aces (1972, 1968, 1965, 1964)
- 3 – Brighton Buccaneers (2002, 2001, 1999)
- 3 – Menwith Hill Pirates/Patriots (1998, 1996, 1995)
- 3 – Enfield Spartans (1991, 1990, 1989)
- 3 – Liverpool Trojans (1980, 1978, 1976)
- 3 – Derby (1898, 1897, 1895)

**YOUTH
NATIONAL BASEBALL
CHAMPIONSHIPS**

12-13 September
Finsbury Park,
London

NBL SEASON LEADERS

Leaders in offense and pitching categories have been announced by the **Great Britain Baseball Scorer's Association** (GBBSA) at the conclusion of the 2009 National Baseball League regular season.

Other notable feats from the 2009 season include:

- ◆ Bracknell's Tom Bray setting a new record for highest on-base percentage in a single season since 1995 (.633 - adjusted to minimum plate appearances in the GBBSA's Season Records section).
- ◆ London's Carl Randall enjoying a streak of eight games with multi-hit performances.
- ◆ Richmond's Ryan Bird hitting home runs in three consecutive games.
- ◆ Herts' Lin Yuchih getting five base hits in a single game (June 28).
- ◆ Richmond's Robbie Unsell stealing four bases in a game on two separate occasions.
- ◆ The 8th NBL grand slam of the decade from Richmond's Brett Wakeley.
- ◆ A streak of 21 consecutive scoreless innings from Richmond pitcher Cody Cain to end the season.

MOST VALUABLE PLAYERS

The GBBSA has named **Ryan Bird** "Most Valuable Batter" and **Cody Cain** "Most Valuable Pitcher" in 2009. Both play for NBL pennant winners Richmond Flames.

The GBBSA also highlighted the following players in each fielding position, based on a number of factors including playing time, chances fielded, fielding average, and a subjective assessment of range:

POSITIONAL AWARDS		
Catcher	Grant Delzoppo	<i>Richmond</i>
First Base	Guy Lidbetter	<i>Richmond</i>
Second Base	Carl Randall	<i>London</i>
Third Base	Nic Goetz	<i>Herts</i>
Shortstop	Rob Anthony	<i>London</i>
Outfielder	Kyle Hickson	<i>London</i>
Outfielder	Dan Kerry	<i>Herts</i>
Outfielder	Tadashi Zushi	<i>Croydon</i>

Visit **GBBSA**
online to read about
Project Cobb
and the
British Baseball
Hall of Fame



OFFENSIVE LEADERS			
Batting average	0.500	Carl Randall	<i>London</i>
On-base percentage	0.644	Tom Bray	<i>Bracknell</i>
Slugging average	0.783	Ryan Bird	<i>Richmond</i>
Home runs	5	Ryan Bird	<i>Richmond</i>
Runs batted in	28	Ryan Trask	<i>Bracknell</i>
Hits	31	Ryan Bird	<i>Richmond</i>
Runs scored	33	Rob Anthony	<i>London</i>
Stolen bases	21	Robbie Unsell	<i>Richmond</i>

PITCHING LEADERS			
Wins	6	Michael Osborn	<i>Richmond</i>
	6	Darrin Ward	<i>Herts</i>
	6	Reid Wilson	<i>London</i>
Innings pitched	74.2	Darrin Ward	<i>Herts</i>
Strikeouts	57	Matt Maitland	<i>Bracknell</i>
	57	Michael Osborn	<i>Richmond</i>
ERA	1.67	Cody Cain	<i>Richmond</i>
WHIP	0.90	Cody Cain	<i>Richmond</i>
Strikeouts per 9 inns	12.8	Cody Cain	<i>Richmond</i>

Find much more statistical information (including historical comparisons) at the website of the Great Britain Baseball Scorer's Association:

<http://www.gbbsa.org.uk>

SCOUTING REPORT CODY CAIN

Cody Cain wins second BBF pitching title, 14 years after first

By Joe Gray, NBL Statistician

On 16 August, Cody Cain took the mound for Richmond in the final game of the 2009 NBL season with an ERA of just 2.05, but he was 5.2 innings short of pitching crown qualification. Reid Wilson of the London Mets – Richmond's opponents that day – had the best ERA among qualified pitchers with 2.16.

Cain retired the Mets' lead-off hitter but conceded back-to-back hits to place two runners in scoring position. If Cain had conceded two runs, he'd have needed extra innings to be able to bring his ERA back below 2.16. Spectators were perhaps wondering what had happened to the fierce determination that Cain had shown in Britain since his 1993 debut for the London Warriors in the Independent League. Cain finished that season with a 0.00 ERA from 35.2 innings. His second season's stats were similarly impressive, including a scorching 17.6 K/9 (strike-outs per nine innings).

Following a pop-up by the Mets' clean-up hitter into foul territory near the first baseman, any doubts about Cain's dominating presence disappeared when the pitcher sprinted off the mound and called off the fielder. This out was followed by a fly-ball to the left-fielder, meaning that Cain was still on for a pitching title that would be his second such BBF crown, 14 years after his first in 1995. After the Independent League folded in 1994, the Warriors had returned to BBF competition, and Cain was a bulldozer in the new surroundings, finishing the season with a league-leading 1.38 ERA and a 10–0 record.

Cain conceded a walk to start the second inning, but the Richmond hurler then retired nine straight hitters and moved within 1.2 innings of the eligibility mark. While he was silencing London effectively, though, his own side were scoring too quickly. Richmond led 9–0 with two outs in the top of the fifth and had a runner on first. A home run would leave the Mets needing to score two runs in the bottom of the inning to avoid the slaughter rule. A five-inning slaughter would be 0.2 innings too few for Cain to qualify, but the runs needed to keep the game alive would cause irreparable damage to his ERA.

Next to bat was Cody Cain. Following his return to British baseball in 2003, after moving overseas in the mid-1990s, he had arguably become more feared for his batting than his pitching. Only once had he pitched enough innings to qualify for the title, finishing third with a 3.07 ERA in 2004, but his bat had been an ever-present threat, exemplified by a streak in 2008 of nine straight at-bats with a hit.

Cain stood at the plate looking eager to crush the ball, but before he could release the bat he was jogging down to first on a hit by pitch (his fourth of the double-header), and the bases were soon loaded as Ryan Bird drilled a single to left field. The scoring threat was quashed, however, when the next batter hit a weak pop-up for the third out. A three-run sixth for Richmond was sandwiched by two more scoreless innings by the Mets, giving the Flames a 12–0 victory to end the regular season and moving Cain past the qualification mark by 0.1 innings. His final ERA was 1.67.

Looking ahead, there are at least two good reasons for Cain to return in 2010. Firstly, he has an active regular-season streak of 21 scoreless innings. Secondly, including his two seasons outside BBF-sanctioned competition, he is five regular-season strike-outs short of 500. Before that, though, there is a good chance that he will play a major part in the National Baseball Championship.



GB BASEBALL. UPDATE



By winning the silver medal in the 2007 European Championships in Barcelona, the Great Britain national baseball team achieved its highest-ever European ranking in the modern era and qualified for the IBAF Baseball World Cup (effectively a world championship event) for the first time. The competition will be played in various European countries in September and if the GB team can do well an invitation to compete in MLB's World Baseball Classic when it returns in 2013 is a distinct possibility.

Great Britain's first round opponents between September 9-12 are Japan, twice winners of the MLB World Baseball Classic, Nicaragua and hosts Croatia. If GB qualifies from the group (and even a third-place finish might be good enough for this) it will travel to either Holland or Italy to take part in one of the second round pools from September 13.

Qualification for the second round guarantees Britain at least seven more games and increased profile on

the world stage as well as potential mouth-watering meetings with famous baseball nations like Cuba, Venezuela and the USA.

Given this is Great Britain's first appearance in a major world competition since it won the inaugural World Championship in 1938, progress to the second round will count as an amazing accomplishment, especially given that it is the only one of the 22 competitors without funding to support it.

You can find out more and follow GB's exploits at greatbritainbaseball.com and Eurosport 2 will also be televising selected games from the Baseball World Cup.

Great Britain's youth programme has also been in action this summer. The Cadets continued their development at the Under-16 European Championship Qualifier in Belgium in July and the Juniors have been preparing for next year's Under-18 European Championship Qualifier.

Read what our GB National Teams are achieving these days... against all odds.

GB NEWS FLASHES:

SLOWPITCH

GB Slowpitch has won six straight European Slowpitch Championships and GB club teams have won the first two European Slowpitch Cups.

MEN'S FASTPITCH

The GB Men's Fastpitch Team competed in its second straight World Championships in Canada last month, and finished eighth, one place better than in 2004.

WOMEN'S FASTPITCH

By coming second in Valencia, the GB Women's Fastpitch Team achieved its highest-ever European ranking and qualified for ISF World Championships for the first time.

BASEBALL

The GB Baseball Team has qualified for the IBAF Baseball World Cup for the first time. They will face-off with Japan on September 10 - 12 in Zagreb, Croatia.



TITLE CONTENDERS - NBL / AAA / AA / A

National Baseball League

Richmond Flames (17-7)
London Mets (17-7)
Bracknell Blazers (14-10)
Herts Falcons (12-12)

AAA League

AAA Finals held in Harrogate, 5-6 September

Essex Arrows (25-0)
Southampton Mustangs (21-5)
Harrogate Tigers (20-1)
Liverpool Trojans (17-5)

AA League

Manchester A's (18-6)
Alconbury Braves (15-5)
Mildenhall Bulldogs (14-6)
Kent Mariners (14-6)

A League

Essex Archers (16-4)
Bracknell Blazers II (12-0)
Humber Pilots (10-14)
Leicester Blue Sox (4-16)

NATIONAL BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

August 29-30 Roundshaw Playing Fields, Croydon



BSUK ON DECK

BaseballSoftballUK is the development agency of the **British Baseball Federation** and the **British Softball Federation**.

On 1 April 2009, BSUK launched a new four-year strategic plan, focusing on improving satisfaction in the sports and growing the number of adults playing regularly by a total of 7,000 by 2013. The plan will see a step-change in the provision of services from BSUK, which will be focused on building strong clubs, leagues, coaches and facilities.

Baseball and softball should see the following changes by March 2013:

- ◆ Over 2,000 new adult players in teams and clubs across the country.
- ◆ Permanent tournament and league facilities in more than four locations.
- ◆ Support to make leagues, clubs and tournaments better and stronger.
- ◆ Regular coach education courses and clinics delivered by our summer and permanent coaching staffs.
- ◆ More young players in competitive baseball.
- ◆ Improved support and funding for clubs and leagues from Local Authorities and sports partnership agencies.

All the above are funded by Sport England from Lottery and Exchequer Funding, although some services (such as player and team clinics and courses) are charged to the participants.

For more information about our development plans or to find your nearest development officer or coach, please visit the BSUK website.

BASEBALL SOFTBALL UK

Ariel House, 74a Charlotte Street
London W1T 4QJ

www.baseballsoftballuk.com
www.britishbaseball.org

