

a great factor in drawing all areas together.

One of the greatest bugbears in forming the National League was the question of finance. Putting the N.L. into perspective, it is only a small beginning to what could be a great and exciting competition. The finance needed is for travelling. In the first season, each club will pay all its own expenses. My own club, Hull Aces, has been travelling extensively at its own expense for five seasons, and I'm sure that the member clubs of the N.L. will be able to manage. I only ask that every baseball enthusiast should allow us to play for one season before passing judgement. My answer to all those critics who claim that lack of finance will cause the failure of the N.L., is that the N.L. is rich in enthusiasm. After many years of activity in baseball administration, I have learned that enthusiasm is of greater value than money.

I object to John Varnam referring to the National League as "The Smallwood Plan". I have had the opportunity of being associated with the idea from the start, but the constitution and rules are derived from suggestions made by people in all areas of Britain, in Holland, and the U.S.A. So that the N.L. can hardly be described as my pipe-dream. The Varnam Plan of inter-area games appears to me to be the National League with the addition of brass bands and raffles.

Finally I would suggest the following points towards a furtherance of our game in Britain. First, a controlling body is necessary. This body should train and examine umpires, and act on all suggestions concerning the game. Secondly, presentation of the game must be tip-top. Nothing is more harmful than to see badly dressed ball clubs playing. Thirdly, umpires should enforce the rules rigorously. I will always remember and respect the Dutch umpire, who before allowing the game to start, told the players of both teams that there would be no smoking until after the game. Fourthly, all areas should organise boys' baseball leagues. If they did, they would feel the benefit in about five years time, when senior clubs would be obtaining young players, who had received a thorough grounding in the basic skills of the game. (Editor. Don Smallwood wishes to emphasize that the views put forward in his article represent his own opinions, he has not written as a spokesman of either the National League or of the Hull Aces.)



BASEBALL

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EUROPEAN CUP.

A European Cup competition has been introduced, the competition is restricted to the champion clubs of the member countries of the European Baseball Federation.

The first round of the 1963 European Cup has the following pairings (home team shown first). The German champions v. G.S. Europhon of Milan. The French champions v. Picadero Jockey Club of Barcelona. Haarlem E.H.S. (Netherlands) v. Bell Telephone Pioneers (Belgium).

At the meeting of the European Baseball Federation, held in Paris on March 16th.-17th, which voted to inaugurate the European Cup, it was also decided that Milan would be the host city for the 8th. European Baseball Championships. This tournament will be staged from 29th. August until 6th. September 1964. The Netherlands, Spain, Belgium, and Italy have already declared that they will compete.

SOUTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIPS.

A highly successful ten day tournament, sanctioned by the National Baseball Congress of the U.S.A., was held at Buenos Aires in January.

Ecuador won the championship, beating Brazil in the final, by 10 to nil. Brazil had earlier beaten Chile (5-2), Peru (8-3), and Argentina (10-9). More than 50,000 spectators attended the games.

HULL PRESS RELEASE from Don Smallwood.

The Hull League will commence its season on 5th. May, with a Reds v. Blues trial game. This trial game will be followed by the selection of the team to represent the Rest of the League against the 1962 champions, Hull Aces, on 25th. May.

As a result of the circular to football clubs during the winter, four teams have shown interest, and have been invited to take part in the Hull League One-day Tournament, to be played on 12th. May. This news plus the "Under 18" teams which Hull Royals and Hull Aces are fostering is the only bright news from the Hull area.

The strength of the league is the same as last season consisting of Blackburn Aircraft, Hull Braves, Hull Royals, and Hull Aces. Blackburn Aircraft are to visit Nottingham early in the season, and this year will have full recreation facilities at Brough. Mr. Ted Martin is secretary of Blackburns, who are in their second season of competition, and are making great progress.

Hull Braves, under J. Moody, are making plans to visit York during the season, and Joe is prepared for another season consolidating the Braves. The Hull League badly needs men like Joe Moody. There are in Hull many ex-players who could put something back into the game by helping-out in administration. Even though the strength of the league hasn't grown, there is more interest in baseball in this city than for many years. Hull Royals' Hon. Sec., B. Lamb, seems to have transformed the Royals into a forward-looking outfit. A new style set of uniforms is the first step in the right direction.

The two clubs representing Hull in the B.B.F. Challenge Cup, will also have a new-look this year, as Royals have drawn Aces in the Hull preliminary round. This means that only one of them can hope to proceed further. For the winners of the Blackburns v. Braves tie, it will be the first taste of competition in the B.B.F. Cup.

Hull Aces have a very full fixture list this season, with their National League games added to their Hull League and cup programme. However, having made a number of signings during the close season, Aces are hoping to have another successful season.

MERSEYSIDE NOTES by P. Hemmings.

As a result of our work among the clubs of the Liverpool Boys Association, we have actually recruited a youth team into our league. The club is Harold House and they have entered a team under the name of Chatham Cheetahs. We have two more youth teams in training, and hope during the season to interest sufficient to form a youth club league next year. A sum of money has been made available to equip three of these teams with uniforms, and we hope to add to this fund as time goes on.

We have seven teams in membership this season, quite an improvement on the four teams of the 1962 season. The teams are Liverpool Aces, Liverpool Tigers, N.A.L.G.O. Cubs, Stretford Saints, all hold-overs from last year, and the new teams, Mormon Yankees, Chatham Cheetahs, and Comets (this team being drawn from U.S.A.F. personnel at Burtonwood).

On Whit-Monday we have a game between a Merseyside All-Star team and Alconbury (U.S.A.F.) Spartans. On August Monday, Alconbury will play another exhibition game, it is hoped against another U.S.A.F. team. This latter game has been offered to the Liverpool Sportsmen's Association, to assist in their fund-raising.

The Merseyside National League has withdrawn from the British Baseball Federation, and has entered into direct affiliation to the National Baseball Congress of the U.S.A. Games which would have been played in the preliminary round of the B.B.F. Challenge Cup, will now be part of a competition for a Cup, presented by the National Baseball Congress through the N.B.C. Commissioner for baseball in England. The Commissioner is Mr. David Price, the chairman of our league, and until our withdrawal, the chairman of the B.B.F. It is intended to widen the scope of this cup competition in future seasons, to include all British teams or leagues which may be affiliated to the N.B.C. However we feel that it is too late to attempt this for the 1963 season, and it will, for this year, be confined to the Merseyside teams.

Given good weather we are looking forward to one of the finest seasons since the war.

PUBLISHING PLANS.

The next issue of Baseball Courier will appear in mid-June, copy must be received by 5th. June.

NATIONAL LEAGUE TOPICS by George Livsley.

The National league will play its initial season with the following clubs in membership, Nottingham Athletics, Hull Aces, Birmingham Austin British Legion, Bromsgrove, Coventry Blue Sox, and Stretford Saints. Enquiries for membership in 1964 have been received from clubs in London, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Leicester.

Representatives of the Southern Baseball Association attended our Meeting on April 7th. to discuss a game, which it is hoped will be played at the latter end of the season, between the N.L. All-Stars and the S.B.A. All-Stars.

Mr. McAvan, Hon. Secretary of the B.B.F. was also present at this meeting. It was voted that all N.L. clubs will join the B.B.F., and will compete in the local preliminary rounds of the B.B.F. National Challenge Cup.

The N.L. is affiliated to the National Baseball Congress of the U.S.A., and will compete according to N.B.C. rules. Mr. David Price, chairman of the Merseyside League, has agreed to act as the first National League Commissioner, he will handle any disputes which may arise.

The League will have a championship trophy. In addition, the team finishing in second place will be awarded a cup, presented to the League by the Bromsgrove club, the cup to be known as the Bromsgrove Cup. The batter hitting most home runs will be presented with a League Hitting Certificate.

All players wishing to join a club in the National League, and umpires who wish to handle National League games may write either to myself at 84 Humphrey Road, Manchester, or to Don Smallwood, the N.L. Hon. Secretary, at 88 Westerdale Grove, Hull.

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BASEBALL COURIER is published six times a year. The next issue will appear in mid-June. To ensure receiving a copy, please send a postal order for four shillings to cover the next six issues. P.Os. should be made payable to W.T. Morgan. Subscriptions and all other correspondence must be addressed to William T. Morgan, 11 Heath Street, Cardiff.

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The Merseyside National League has first quality Rawlings baseballs for sale at 15/- each. Add 2/- to all orders to cover postage. Orders accompanied by remittance should be sent to Mr. P. Hemmings, 62 Heathfield Road, Liverpool 15.

The Southern Baseball Association has two divisions in its league programme for 1963. The Senior Division consists of six teams, namely Barnet Athletics, Ford Sports, Kodak, Richmond Red Sox, Thames Board Mills, and U.S. Navy. Division One contains Crawley Beavers, Crawley Giants, Dulwich Blue Jays, Essex Tigers, Enfield Dodgers, Richmond Knights, and Southend Aces. In addition to these teams, we have three recently formed teams which will for this season play a programme of friendly fixtures, and cup games, in preparation for the sterner stuff of league competition in 1964. These three teams are Harlow Hustlers, Barking Tornadoes, and Brighton Jets.

We have three major cup competitions, the Southern Cup, open to all clubs, the Intermediate Cup, open to Division One, and Associate member clubs, and the Essex Cup, confined to clubs in that county.

A series of inter-county All-Star games has been arranged for this season, the counties represented being Essex, Surrey, and Middlesex. An attractive fixture is to be played on 26th May at Selhurst Park (Crystal Palace F.C. ground), this is U.S. Navy v. the South of England.

The executive of our association is most anxious to arrange All-Star games, and would welcome any suggestions and comments from other associations in England. The executive is extremely interested in the National League, but due to a heavy programme of fixtures we were unable to enter a team in the National League for this season.

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DODGERS MOVE AGAIN by D. Richards.

The S.B.A. Dodgers formed as the Barnet Dodgers in 1956, last year we played our home games on Hackney Marsh, hence we were known as Hackney Dodgers. This season we have transferred our home to Enfield, thus once more we undergo a change of name to Enfield Dodgers. We are looking forward to the season with great interest, as this will be the first time for many years that baseball has been played in the district.

There are a few new faces in the team such as Bernie Bloom, yet another of the Harringay Hornets ice hockey team to join our club. Pete Richards once again will be pitching for the Dodgers, who are hoping for a more successful season, than last year.

MIDLAND NEWS by Cliff Court.

The Birmingham League is not functioning this year, mainly because the clubs could not pull together, and also because three teams did not complete fixtures for last season.

As league secretary for the past two seasons, I can assure fellow fans that this is only a temporary setback - the league will be revived. Two teams have gone into higher class baseball, and two teams into lower, and I believe that realization of this fact will come later.

Bromsgrove, and Austin British Legion, are the two teams that have gone into higher class baseball by joining the new National League. My honest opinion is that if baseball is to prosper - this is the road to follow - as with new teams, and new faces, the spectators are in for an exciting season.

A few words about the Austin British Legion team of which I am player-manager. We have a young side, we have always been ready to try new players, (in the past we have lost the chance of league honours through this readiness to experiment). We do not expect to win the National League title this season, as we shall be starting with only a small squad of seasoned players, plus a number of untried players. All that I can forecast, is that while we shall not be the best team in the National League, any team and every team will have to fight for every win they get from us.

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The two prizes of £1, offered in the last issue of Baseball Courier, for obtaining subscriptions, were both won by Hull Aces. Hull Aces lead all clubs in number of subscribers obtained, their total at present stands at 20.

£1 will be paid to any other club which obtains 20 subscribers. An additional £1 will be paid to the first club to surpass the total number of subscriptions obtained by Hull Aces. Order forms will be supplied on request, but orders may be sent on club letter-heads or plain paper.

This offer expires on August 31st.

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The Netherlands play Belgium at Antwerp on 23rd. May, and a return contest will take place in the Netherlands on 4th. August. The Netherlands will travel to Italy in September. Two games are scheduled against Italy on the 7th. and 8th. of that month, one game is to be played at Rome.

PLAY BALL by Don Smallwood.

In the March issue of the "Courier", John Varnan took time out to write about the National League. He accused the National League of excluding "the largest baseballing area of England". This is just not true. The newly formed league has not and never will exclude anyone. Every step taken towards the formation of the league was circularised to every area and club in Britain. I don't believe that there is an official or player in Britain, who does not know of the National League. It is unfortunate that John's article was published, without the N.L. being able to reply in the same issue.

John Varnan also declared that the National League idea was too early. In reply, and I'm not joking, if it had been left much longer, it would have been too late!

Regarding publicity and coverage by the National daily press, I think that if we produce a good standard of baseball and attract spectators, then publicity will follow. The press looks for news, and if the National League causes an increase in the interest shown in baseball then the press will co-operate. The National League was formed less than four months ago, but already we have more critics than the Common Market proposals ever had. I think criticism is good; provided it is based on facts and is constructive, it can be of immense value to a new organisation such as the National League.

John must cease applauding the exclusion of American servicemen from the National League. Our rule is that a club may sign two Americans, but that they cannot be used as pitchers. How can anyone applaud the exclusion of Americans? Let's face it, they can show us baseball at its best, and can keep our standard of play very high. If we are to revive our sport, the youngsters must have an image to copy, and that image must be the best that we can project. Obviously there must be regulations controlling the use of American players, as so often in the past have clubs loaded their line-up with American players for important games, and created unrest among other clubs.

The National League represents an effort to maintain a high standard of baseball, and to bridge the gap until the day when Britain has a strong national controlling body. The National League can operate alongside of all present leagues, and could be