

BENCH STRENGTH, by Jim Tootle, Ohio Village Muffins

To create the look and feel of a nineteenth-century base ball game, vintage clubs wear uniforms and use equipment authentic to the period. They also should put thought and care into maintaining a bench area that adds to the overall experience. Players, umpires, scorers, and interpreters should adhere to the principle that spectators, when looking out upon the field, should see nothing in the bench area that is inconsistent with what would have been seen by a spectator watching a match in 1860 or whatever year is being portrayed on the field.

It may be helpful to think in terms of a rope (real or imaginary) beginning in the vicinity of first base and running in a semi-circle behind the benches and the catcher's position to the vicinity of third base. Everything inside the line created by the rope should be of the period being portrayed on the field. All modern items and people in modern dress should be kept outside the line. To set the tone for the game, the bench area at a vintage match should be free of items such as plastic water bottles, coolers, vinyl equipment bags, electronic devices, and Styrofoam cups. Players and other participants in the match should make sure that all personal items such as cell phones, sunglasses, car keys, modern jackets, modern shoes, and similar items are either left in the carriage, with a spectator, or stowed completely out of sight in a haversack or other period container such as a leather satchel or wicker basket.

Vintage base ball uniforms or other period clothing should be required for anyone sitting or standing in the bench area. Players need to arrive in full uniform and should never change in or out of their uniforms at the bench in view of the spectators. Youngsters and others who wish to sit on the bench should be in period clothing. They should not be on the bench during pre-game warm-ups or the actual game wearing shorts, T-shirts, Nike shoes, backwards ball caps, and other modern clothing (nor should they be on the playing field when spectators are present). Young people in period dress add to the occasion and are welcome and encouraged.

Many clubs have enhanced the look of the bench with period bat boxes, leather ball bags, and team banners. It is important to have drinking water available, especially on hot summer days, but this creates some challenges to maintaining the 19th-century appearance of the bench area. Many clubs provide water in period containers such as pottery crocks and tin cups. Large plastic jugs, disposable cups, and individual plastic bottles can create a lot of 21st-century litter. One solution is to place modern containers in a tent or behind shrubbery or a fence where water can be consumed out of the view of the spectators. Another strategy is to use a burlap bag to cover a large plastic water jug, making it less conspicuous. If disposable cups are unavoidable, a barrel or bucket should be placed nearby to collect the trash. A little creativity can go a long way in camouflaging the water supply and keeping an unsightly pile of cups and bottles from accumulating around the bench.

Vintage base ball is a very photogenic sport and cameras can be clicking at any moment. Spectators often bring their cameras to matches, and it is not uncommon for professional photographers from local newspapers and electronic media to be in attendance. Amateur and professional photographers alike should be able to point their cameras at the bench area and not have any items in the view finder that are of obvious modern manufacture. Photos of the field action and the bench should not include anyone who is not in period dress. The pre- or post-game group photo is a highlight for many spectators. As a courtesy to visitors taking photos, only people in complete base ball uniforms and other period clothing should be on the field when the nines line up for introductions or to exchange the traditional "three cheers." Children and adults in non-period clothing should wait until spectators have had an opportunity to take photos before coming on the field to take a turn at bat after the game.

To check the authentic look of your club's bench, take a few candid photos during a match. Coolers, cell phones, and running shoes will stand out, as will anyone sitting on the bench in shorts or a college jersey. The appearance of the bench area is one of the hallmarks of an outstanding vintage base ball club. VBBA member programs should make a commitment to ensuring that the bench area is a source of pride that makes a positive contribution to the vintage match experience.

THE MANSFIELD INDEPENDENTS—THEIR FIRST SEASON

The Mansfield Independents completed their first full season on September 19th against the team they credit for starting them out, the Cincinnati Red Stockings. The team was organized to help Mansfield, Ohio celebrate their bicentennial year in the summer of 2008. According to some sources, the first professional baseball game was played in Mansfield Ohio between the Independents and the Cincinnati Red Stockings. Local organizers wanted to re-create that game as part of the bicentennial celebration. Originally, the team was formed mostly by members of the 179th Airlift Wing of the Ohio Air National Guard. The game was played less than one half of a mile away from the alleged spot where the first game occurred.

In April, the Mansfield Independents started the 2009 season, their first full year, by playing at The Ohio Village in Columbus against the Muffins and the Canal Fulton Mules. In May, the Independents hosted their first game at their new home field, which sits pristinely in front of the Ohio State Reformatory.

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The Ohio State Reformatory is a historical landmark in which movies such as “Shawshank Redemption”, “Tango and Cash”, and scenes from “Air Force One” were filmed. The beautiful prison offers tours, weddings and ghost haunts to help in its ongoing restoration. It was a beautiful day and a sizeable crowd was in attendance to see the Independents and the Cleveland Blues play.

As the season began to unfold a unique challenge presented itself to the Mansfield Independents. Since the team was composed of mostly military members, at times it was hard to field a complete team. Military members were continuously deployed throughout the season creating a challenge to field nine. The Independents were grateful to members of other teams who were willing to play with them.

The first season was a learning process. For example, many mistakes were made through our lack of knowledge of some of the rules. One of them was “no free returns to the base on a foul ball”. We also learned that hitting the ball hard and far does not necessarily equal hits. We learned that we needed to accumulate some props. For example, benches for players to sit on, a scorer’s table, our team logo on a flag, a tally bell and other related items. The Mansfield Independents also realized they needed to raise money to fund the team as the season progressed and this was not an easy task. Business challenges continue to be addressed.

Nineteen games were scheduled for the first season. The Independents travelled to Upper

Sandusky, Cleveland, Dayton, Springfield and played in the Ohio Cup on Labor Day Weekend. In addition we hosted three games at our home field and hope to have more next season. With each game we played we continued to learn more about the history of vintage base ball, how the game is played and a little bit about ourselves. Next season we will continue to enjoy the game and learn more about the history of vintage base ball.

Submitted by Tom Ford and his associates on the Mansfield Independents.

Note from editor: This article was written to summarize a first year team experience. There will be more in future newsletters to help new clubs understand what to expect their first year. DB

Member Profiles wanted for future issues of the VBBA Newsletter. Nominate someone you want to know more about.

This issue of the VBBA Newsletter features a profile of another board member of the VBBA, Ed “pigtail” Elmore of the Atlantic Base Ball Club. Look for this VBBA member profile in these pages.

**BASE BALL CLUB NINES
OF AMERICA**

No. 5

The Athletic club of Philadelphia

John Dickson McBride still remains (to them) their unrivaled pitcher. His style is that of the laborious order, that is, he works continuously to win a game. He is one of the swiftest, most dodging and skillful pitchers that ever filled that position. He has been pitcher and, without fear of contradiction, generalissimo and "mainstay" of the Athletic club since 1864, for he is the only man that ever could have brought that club from its obscure rank to that of the heaviest hitting and best fielding clubs in the whole fraternity. Dick wants a man to face him, who, like the fames Achilles, is invulnerable, (since the ball is not apt to touch the heel), for he must be wonderfully toughened to stand Dick's constant volley. From the beginning to the end of the game, no matter how long that may be, he keeps that same swift "unhittable" pace, becoming swifter, if anything, at the end. Dick, by his constant, untiring disposition, but more so by his unflinching firmness in declining all offers to leave his old club, has acquired the name of being "par excellent" *the* pitcher of the country. His claim to this title will be disputed by both Pratt and Fisher, since both have fields to support them, fully equal to that possessed by the Athletic club. Dick is regular in his delivery, watches his opponents closely, never gives them a ball where they want

it, but so near that both empire and batsman are deceived. I have seen strike after strike called on a batsmen when the ball was at least a foot near or from the base, yet being of the right height, completely deceived the umpire—but not such men as Pete O'Brien, Flanly, or Johnnie Grun. He is a plucky fielder in his position, facing the hottest liner, and throws to bases beautifully. He was their short stop when Pratt pitched, and was one of the best in his day; indeed there is not a position which Dick cannot fill finely. As a batsman he was once terrific, and the safest one could imagine. During the early part of last season, Dick was sick, and since then I do not think he either pitches or bats up to his former standard. The way the Mutuals batted him their last game was a caution; and caused the not complimentary remark, "the bee has lost his sting." The latest advice from Philadelphia reports that Dick has fallen off in his delivery, and nothing but the splendid field prevented defeat for them in their game with the Olympics.

Edward Cuthbert has been selected to fill the position of catcher. Very likely he will do with credit, since he performed the same duty for Fisher. Ed. Is a plucky, safe, and earnest worker; a good fielder in the position, picking up grounders nicely; facing tips and high fouls; stands well up the base and throws well to the bases. But for all these he is far inferior to Radcliffe, who stood without rival behind swift pitching last sea-

son. Indeed they cannot repair his loss, for he was the only man they ever possessed who could do justice to McBride. The fraternity may rest assured, if it is possible for Ed to fill Radcliffe's position he will exert all his powers to do so. I saw him quite often in the position last year, but noticed a decided change for the worst when he exchanged with Radcliffe. As a first baseman, Ed is first-class, that being one of his home positions, being sure and quick in fielding, and unfailing in holding the hottest balls. As an in-fielder he is fine in any position; but in the out-field he cannot be surpassed, and in his regular position, viz, left field, has only two rivals, Jack Chapman and John Hatfield. He is one of the most graceful catchers, a sure guager, and a muff is a rarity with him. As a batsman he is as good as any in the club or the whole fraternity, while as a base runner few can approach him.

Weston Fisler will be retained at first base. Now West is like Bob Ferguson, one of *the* ball players of the country. He never attempts a position without doing it splendidly, and there are few positions he has not filled. As first base he is sure in fielding, prompt in picking up a ball, and throwing to base, unfailing in holding all species of hot liners, whether thrown or batted; A good thrower and quick to take advantage of all chances.....

Editor's note: Journalists of the last half of the nineteenth century provided details accounts of games as well as occasional profiles of a team, where they recapped each player of the team. This profile above is just the beginning of the report on the Athletics.

A Brief History of the Actives Written By Murray "Cubby" Coulter, Captain 1993-2002

In the early 1990s, the City of Sylvania on the northern border of the State of Ohio was twinned with Woodstock, Ontario as its sister city and a Committee was designated by each municipality to coordinate activities which might occur to promote goodwill between the two communities. A member of the Sylvania Committee played on the recently formed Vintage Base Ball club in that City called the Great Black Swamp Frogs, engaged in playing the game according to its rules and traditions of 1860, and asked that a Woodstock team be formed to engage in competition with our U.S. neighbours.

I was asked in the Spring of 1993 to assume organization of the local team and thereby took on the onerous task of "Captain". Sheila Johnson at the Woodstock Museum suggested that our team be named the Woodstock Actives in honour of the 1879 club of that name which featured Tip O'Neill, the local hero who went on to star in the American Association and National League in the late 1880s. She also took on the task, assisted by the Sister City budget, of designing and having made 15 uniforms in the style of the photograph she had of the 1879 Actives - in the colours of red and white and dreadfully heavy in hot, summer weather.

Perhaps we thought the inaugural game of July 1, 1993 would be the only one of its kind and, for that reason, recruited players more for their status as recognizable community figures than their playing talents. I attended at the local radio station, K102, on an interview with Brad Janssen to promote a game I had never seen played and knew about only from a perusal of the printed rules forwarded from Sylvania along with a video tape of one of their games.

The game was played at the soccer field at the Woodstock District Complex in perfect weather and, due to curiosity of the citizenry and combining of Canada Day festivities at the same location, drew well over 500 curious fans. The Actives, featuring such legendary Vintage players as Mayor Margaret Munnoch running the base paths, were trounced by our American teachers but enjoyed a great backyard party at the home of Bob White Sr.

The tradition of playing home and home games each year with the Frogs began that fall as we journeyed to Sylvania for

an October 9 match at tiny Memorial Field in bitterly cold conditions in which we were again beaten badly, having to use children of adult players to fill out the roster when our experienced politician-type players failed to make the trip. The now established ritual of playing in Canada each July 1st and in The United States each July 4th began, at least temporarily, in 1994 as we lost at the Complex, but having trailed only 2-1 to the 9th, and at the much larger Pacesetter Park in Sylvania, which was followed by a huge dinner and party at the Museum property there. We were not included in the Frogs July 4 plans for 1995 but, instead, travelled to Sylvania April 29 for their opening game, a humiliating 24-2 loss for us, and hosted the Frogs July 1st at the Southside Sportsfield in Woodstock, the new venue of the Canada Day celebrations for the City.

The July 1 - July 4 tradition became entrenched in 1996, beginning with a cricket game between the Actives and Frogs hosted by the Woodstock Cricket Club and the match at Southside followed by the first of many after-game parties at the home and backyard swimming pool of David Beatty. The return match at Pacesetter featured a get together at the home of Boyd Montgomery, just outside Sylvania, for the first time. Our first match with another opponent occurred on Sunday, August 18 of that year as we journeyed to Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan to play the Lah De Dahs on their picturesque village green bounded by a huge slope behind third base and a railway track in short right field. We lost the match 15-7 and adjourned to the Eagle Tavern in the Village to discuss new strategy. The venue of the games in Canada was switched to its present location at Victoria Park in 1997 with a new team philosophy dedicated to recruiting new players who could actually run and hit. The game at Pacesetter was followed, the next day, by a re-match with the Lah De Dahs, literally on the route home, and a close 18-15 loss (probably our best played game to that date) and more strategy at the Eagle Tavern. After 10 consecutive losses to the Frogs, the Actives triumphed 14-10 at Victoria Park on July 1, 1998 followed by a convincing 15-5 win at Pacesetter on July 4 which entitled us to retain the Sylvania Cup for the next year. Unfortunately, the streak

ended in Greenfield Village the next day when we gave up an early lead and lost 30-15 in what proved to be our last match with the Lah De Dahs, as their future schedules could not accommodate our availability.

Our short-lived success with the Frogs came to an end the following year with a rain-soaked loss in Victoria Park and a 23-8 defeat on our return to Memorial Park in sweltering temperatures reaching 35 degrees Celsius - or 100 degrees to our opponents. We rebounded, however, by returning on July 25 that year to participate in the Sylvania tournament with a win over Middleton and a victory over Columbus Capitols which marked our coming of age among Vintage Base Ball competitors.

The Actives prevailed with double triumphs over the Frogs in 2000, by 21-14 in Victoria Park and 13-6 at Memorial Field before the first of our parties at Oleander Park in Sylvania. That year we also participated in the first of the Vintage Sports Days in London, Ontario with games played in uneven farm fields behind Fanshawe Village and losses to Ohio, Forest City and the Mutuals of New York on July 22 and July 23. The matches of 2001 were both close and low-scoring as the Actives prevailed 7-6 in Woodstock but lost 6-5 at Memorial in Sylvania on the July 4 return. The results left us with a 5-13 record with the Actives over 9 seasons of home and home competition but a 5-3 edge over our friendly rivals since 1998.

We again played in the London Vintage Sports Days games of July 21 and July 22 with a win in Victoria Park over Forest City, a loss at the St. Marys hall of fame field to Kent, and a 16-0 win on the Sunday at Harris Park in London against the London Tecumsehs which marked the first competition for the "Silver Ball", emblematic of Canadian Base Ball supremacy, in over 100 years.

We look forward to building on our Vintage skills in the future with a growth in fan support and interest in the historical game in Canada.

Reporting from three recent base ball matches

Stones Trace Festival Classic

Cromwell, Indiana 9-10-09

On a summer's day more like October than September on the broad lawn of the West Noble Academy near the Stone's Trace Tavern the old rivalry between the Winona Lake and Huntington Base Ball Clubs was played out before a large group of appreciative cranks. As volley fire from local gathering militia groups sounded in the distance and the clip-clop of dozens of Amish buggies sounded the passing parade of farmers, the lads from Huntington once again came out on top this season in a nicely played game of the American sport.

By an 11-3 count the local boys downed their northern comrades in a swift and fairly clean played match. As with all their matches the banter between the team was friendly and appreciative. The skills and good balls struck were complimented by both teams as were some of the fine catches and tosses on the defensive end.

The Huntington boys never did explode but steady striking kept adding runs during the match as the boys scored in six of the eight innings. At the same time sure handed play and smart choices for getting the 'easy out' meant that the Blue Laws were always on their heels. Limpy Kaufman is having a splendid year hurling as the Toppers seem to play excellent defense when he is in the 'box'. Fish Carpenter made sure the outfielders played steady and dependably never letting the few Blue Laws runners have any extra bases. Both Dodger Rowe and Beans Myers kept the middle of the infield secure and their catches and throws were right into the tarred hands of Blisters Henly at first sack.

In an unusual at bat Dodger Rowe was challenged by the Winona Lake fielders who are all familiar with the strikers of Huntington. They were lying in wait for the sharp strike down the third base line when Dodger came to bat in the third inning. He had struck a daisy cutter right at the bag his first time up and even his teammates expected the same thing. Dodger stunned everyone with a soft floater several feet over the second bagger of the Blue Laws. Drifter Whitelsell made a notable play as striker by beating out a slow roller between the home base and the pitcher's plate. The fact he was running uphill gave the wives of the Hill Toppers some concern. But he was eventually able to breathe

and carry on with the match. Sawdust Hippensteel provided some excitement when he stopped running about fifteen feet from second on a bound out by Bird Dog Morrison. The excited yells of his teammates let Sawdust realize he needed to run the full ninety feet in order to be safe. Sawdust did eventually score.

A solid day provided the local team with another victory that gives them a 16-7-1 record for the year. The Hill Toppers play next Saturday in a benefit game in Grant County at Jonesboro and then the next day travel to take on the Portage Iron Diamonds.

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Submitted by Gib Young,
Champion Hill Topper Base Ball Club

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Gatling Gun Base Ball Shootout

Northville, Michigan

Our club, Eclipse Base Ball Club of Northville, always wanted to host some kind of an event that involved multiple clubs but our field is small enough that it would not accommodate simultaneous matches and we didn't want to utilize two different locations nor find a larger field that was out of the downtown area.

I came up with the idea of having four clubs play in one single match where each club played in the field and at bat an equal number of times in a nine-inning match. This means that while two clubs are competing for their half inning, the other two are on the sidelines. I actually saw this as a way that clubs could rub elbows while awaiting their next stint at striking or fielding.

From a survey taken the first year (2008) the main negative was that the match took too long. So we cut it down to 6 innings this year. There was some sentiment that perhaps this was too short and we should revert back to a nine-inning match.

We also held individual matches for base running and throwing prior to the match. This turned out to be rather congenial and it seemed that all the ballists supported each other

and cheered their opponents on. I think this helped to carry over and foster a good attitude during the match.

The resulting score was:

Northville Eclipse 9
Walker Wheels 3
Wyandotte Stars 2
Port Huron Welkins 0

'Crazy Legs' of the Wheels took the 'Fleet A Foot' cup rounding the bases in about 15.5 seconds!

'Dirt' of the Wyandotte Stars took the 'Farthest Fling' cup by heaving the ball 295 feet!

After the match we all enjoyed a banquet dinner supplied by the Northville Eclipse.

Al "Toes" Smitley
Eclipse Base Ball Club of Northville
smitley@northvillelibrary.org

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Sir Anthony Cup at Old Bethpage

On 10/4/09, the Mutual Club of New York added to the Sir Anthony Cup to their trophy case with a 14-13 win over the Glen Head Zig Zags (NY). This annual 1884 American Association Championship has occurred since 2006 and is the "overhand" final for the in-house league at Old Bethpage Village Restoration on Long Island.

The Mutuals held an 11-5 lead in the 7th, however the Zig Zags were able to chip away and plate 4 in the top of the 9th to tie the score at 13. In the bottom of the ninth, third baseman Al "Rocky" Belbol lead off with a double to left center. He was retired at home attempting to score on a single to right field by pitcher Eric "Express" Miklich, who alertly moved to second on the play. With catcher Greg "Bunny" Johnson at the plate, Miklich stole third and two pitches later scored on a sacrifice fly to deep right field.

Glen Head Zig Zags founder and Captain, Dan "The Man" Moskowitz, who ended his 15th season at Old Bethpage, announced his retirement at the conclusion of the match.

Submitted by Eric Miklich

PLAYING YOUR POSITION – advice from days of yore.

From The Base-Ball Guide for 1869 (The Revised Rules of the Game, with an Explanatory Appendix to Each Rule, Together with Instructions for Young Players and Hints to Professionals)

Edited by Henry Chadwick

Published by Robert M. De Witt, Publisher, New York, page 40-41. The text is as follows:

THE SECOND BASEMAN
Should possess the same qualities as a fielder which are requisite for a first baseman, and he should in addition be a quick and accurate thrower. He should play to the right of the base some five or six paces, and should be ready to cover the point designated “right short,” and should be ready to field the ball if forced from the bat anywhere from second base to about half way between first and second bases. He should be ready to cover first base, if the first basemen is obliged to leave the base. When the ball is batted toward him, if it be coming swiftly along the ground, he should be on the alert to stop it, but should not dispose himself that if, because of any imperfection or irregularity in the ground, the ball should be forced in some unnatural direction, he cannot readily adapt himself to meet it on its new course. If the ball be batted toward him, but comes rather slowly, he should run in to meet it and not wait for it to reach him. When he has secured the ball he should immediately throw it to first base, but in doing so he should take care to

assure that the throw will be effective, and should allow the runner to make it to base than risk the probability of allowing him to make two or three more in consequence of a poor or wild throw, or a failure on the part of the first baseman to hold the ball. When the ball is hit “fair” and a player of the opposite side is on first base, the second baseman should endeavor to secure the ball, touch his base, and throw the ball immediately to the first baseman. The player running the bases would be obliged to leave the first base, and the ball being held at second base *before* he could reach there, would put him out. If the second base were occupied at the time the ball was struck, the base player should touch the man on the base, then the base itself, and then throw the ball to first base; by this means three hands would be put out. The second baseman should receive the ball when it is being returned by the outfielders, after it has been batted beyond the bases. This point of play should never be neglected, as in nine times out of ten, where the ambitious outfielder will make a long throw to the in-field, the ball will not be met, and will bound beyond the lines, thereby giving the players running the bases the opportunity to make extra bases, which if the ball had been passed in to the second baseman, they could not, and would not have tried to, make at the time. When a player on the opposite side has made his first base, the second baseman should “cover,” that is, get within touching distance of his

base, and should be ready to catch the ball if thrown by the catcher, and immediately touch the player running the bases, whether the latter run directly or drop to the base. It will be seen from the foregoing that the second baseman must be a lively general player, but not more so, however, than

THE THIRD BASEMAN...

Mr. Chadwick goes on at this point in the Base Ball Guide for 1869 to discuss the attributes of a third baseman, which will appear in the next issue of the newsletter. His opinion of the second baseman shows the importance of the player stationed at second. Many times today, whether it be vintage ball, softball, little league or pickup games, second base is the place where the least skilled player is positioned, along with right field. As a player of limited skills, I have found myself at second or in right, but always happy to be on the field. After reading Mr. Chadwick's comments, I feel that I must apply more effort when I am placed at the second base and use his good advice

If any readers has comments or stories about how their team, current or in the past, has used second basemen, please send me a note.

My email address is below.

Dave Brooks

LETTERS:

Note from the editor: Readers, your comments and concerns will make this a better newsletter. Please send me yours.

D. Brooks dbigdogbrooks@brecnet.com

AN INVITATION FROM Marcus "Razorback" Dickson

WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Department of Psychology
5057 Woodward Ave.
Detroit, Michigan 48202
Tel. (313) 577-2800
Fax (313) 577-7636

July 29, 2009

Team Captains, Directors, and Fellow Ballists,

I've had the pleasure to meet many of you over the years, either through meetings of the Vintage Base Ball Association, or through games between my own home club, the Greenfield Village Lah-de-dahs, and your own clubs.

In my life away from the base ball diamond, I am a professor of organizational psychology at Wayne State University in Detroit. My graduate students and I tend to study things like leadership and organizational culture, and we've become interested in vintage base ball teams, for a number of reasons. We've put together a survey asking about a lot of different things about players and how they feel about their teams, as well as questions about sportsmanship and how teams react when players or other teams seem to get "out of line". **The Vintage Base Ball Association is also interested in these issues, and they have endorsed our survey.**

We'd very much appreciate it if you'd distribute information about this survey to your team. We'll be happy to provide a summary of our research to you when it is complete. Additionally, **every vintage team that has at least nine people complete the survey will be eligible to participate in a lottery to receive vintage equipment.** Lefty at Phoenix Bats, Bulldog at Bulldog Bats, and other vendors have all donated equipment (bats and balls) as prizes for the lottery.

The survey is available online at:

<http://www.surveylab.psych.wayne.edu/cgi-bin/rws3.pl?FORM=MO-OnlineSurvey> or if you would like to receive paper copies of the survey for your team members, email me at marcus.dickson@wayne.edu, and I'll get them sent out to you, along with a postage-paid return envelope.

We're also interested in how vintage base ball teams compare to modern baseball teams, and so I would appreciate it if you, as team captain or director, could provide me with contact information for a team or league that plays baseball in your area so that I can invite them to participate in a similar survey. If you provide me with that information, you'll receive an additional entry into the lottery for base ball equipment.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions – I appreciate your assistance in this project, and will list all of the participating teams in the final report and publications.

For love of the game,

Marcus "Razorback" Dickson
Greenfield Village Lah-de-dahs
Wayne State University

RULES FORUM

(Editor's note: The paragraph below was in the last issue:

Some clubs play by the rules of 1860. Others use the rules of 1888 to play. My club uses 1869 rules. As a frequent visitor to the home grounds of other clubs, I am subjected to many rules, and some of them confuse me. How did the rule changes evolve? Is there a good history of why the rules changed? Where can an interested person go to learn the reasons? If you have any suggestions about how to clear the air about a rule, please share. Dave Brooks

Ed Elmore of the Atlantic Base Ball Club wrote:

"Jim Dragonetti and I have spent thousands of hours doing research on the rules, reading through all the rules from 1845 to 1900 (a number of times), and all the notes and side comments and whatnot that go with the rules. We have followed the rules through their development, so I guess we know most of the reasoning behind the changes along the way. The answer to "why" for many of those questions would just be, "to keep the balance between the pitcher and batter", much like they have done in modern times, with changing the height of the mound, or changing the size of the strike zone, etc."

Glenn Uminowicz writes:

"The National Association of Base Ball Players constitution was not a bible. Especially in small towns, rules were likely adapted to suit the field and the overall ability of players, even if they did not conform to the latest chapter and verse adopted by the NABBP."

Bob Tholkes writes to suggest reading the recent book by Mr. Peter Morris will clarify some of the reasons for changes too.

COOPERSTOWN VINTAGE WEEKEND

Since the Hall of Fame has lost the annual Hall of Fame Game, they are looking to offer their visitors and the local businesses alternative events, supplementing this loss of income. Last weekend was the first of what hopefully will be an annual event specifically dedicated to 19th century base ball. Ballists from the northeast converged with high hopes and the weekend was successful due to their enthusiasm. Bats, balls and equipment were on display for everyone to experience. Those who attended, both players and visitors were treated to very informative, interactive presentations.

The schedule was as follows –

Saturday – 9/26

10 a.m. – The Evolution of Base Ball Rules in 19th Century – Eric Miklich

11 a.m. – The Evolution of the Tools of Base Ball in 19th Century -Brian Sheehy

1 p.m. – Vintage Base Ball Discussion– Numerous people

2 p.m. – The Evolution of Base Ball Rules in 19th Century -Eric Miklich

3 p.m. – The Evolution of the Tools of Base Ball in 19th Century- Brian Sheehy

4:30 p.m. – 1864 match; Hartford Senators vs Picked Nine – Fennimore Grounds:Picked Nine – 16-8

It is important to note that the presenters listed were the main speakers; however other 19th century players assisted or were a part of the discussions.

Sunday – 9/27

12:30 p.m. – 1864 match; 13 players – Fennimore Grounds. Teams of four rotated, Miklich did the majority of pitching.

The highlight of the weekend was Brad Shaw, Neshanock of Flemington BBC and his "interesting"

rendition of 'Casey at the Bat.' Upon his approval Eric Miklich; current VBBA Historian, Old Bethpage Village and Mutual Club of New York, will release a three minute movie commemorating Brad's trials and tribulations.

Chris Moran and Jeff Kornhaas of the Hartford Senators were responsible for selecting the 19th century players who attended and agreeing on the presenters for the weekend. Listed below are the participants:

Jeff "Bull" Durham – Durham BBC

Brian Sheehy – Essex BBC

"Monkey" Sheehy – Essex BBC

Brad "Brooklyn" Shaw- Flemington Neshanock BBC

Chris "Grit" Moran – Hartford Senators

Jeff "Pine Tar" Kornhaas - Hartford Senators

Mike "Broadway" Hickey – Hartford Senators

Steve "Big Train" Burke – Hartford Senators

Dave "Fleetwood" Chambers – Hartford Senators

Brian "Flatfoot" Logan – Hartford Senators

Brian "Junior" Logan, Junior – Hartford Senators

Dave "P'Nut" Carlman- Hartford Senators

Jim Fritz – Hartford Senators

Brendan "Pony" – Hartford Senators

Mike "Bulldog" Paes - Newtown Sandy Hook BBC

Eric "Express" Miklich – Mutual Club of New York

Brian Travers – Providence Grays

Scott Olson – Providence Grays

Joao "J.O." Goncalves – Simsbury Taverners

Bill Gallagher – Simsbury Taverners

Dan "Gunner" Genovese – Westfield Wheelmen BBC

This information submitted by Eric Miklich, VBBA historian.

Elkton Wins 3rd Straight State Title

Havre de Grace, MD--- On a near perfect day for vintage base ball, the Eclipse Base Ball Club of Elkton took home its third straight state championship on Sunday, August 30, 2009 at Susquehana State Park in Havre de Grace. The state champs were not up to their usual superior play the whole day but managed to squeak out two wins to win the title.

In the first match, the Eclipse scored 4 runs in the bottom of the 8th inning to break open a tight game against the Havre de Grace Dauntless when the score was just 5-4 Elkton. The final score was Elkton 9 Havre de Grace 6. Great pitching by Tom Duffy (Chesapeake City) and timely hitting by Tim Bower (Rising Sun) gave the Eclipse the pass to the state championship against its rival the Talbot Fair Plays from Easton, MD. Talbot had a relatively easy time in handling Chesapeake & Potomac 14-10. Talbot was up 11-4 late in the match before the Chessie's had a late game rally.

In the championship, Talbot struck first with a 1-0 lead in the top of the first. The defending champs came back with 5 in their half and looked like they were going to roll. It was not to be though as Talbot came storming back to take the lead. After 4 frames, the Fair Plays held a 10-9 lead in what looked like what was going to be a slugfest. Both clubs settled down though after the Fair Plays went up 11-9. In the 7th inning, the Eclipse scored 3 runs to go up 12-11. In the 8th, the Eclipse scored 3 more after timely hits including a single by Bruce Leith (Elkton) knocked in the Eclipse's final run as Jon Kilpatrick scored to make it 14-11. In the 9th, Talbot made it a match by scoring one run, but then Duffy settled down and after a great catch by Lee Donelson for the 3rd hand,

the Elkton club celebrated its 3rd straight state title.

The Eclipse finished the Maryland State Championship Series with a perfect 10-0 record and 2 wins in the tournament. Last week, the Eclipse clinched the Mid Atlantic Vintage Base Ball League's first championship as they improved to 15-0 in the League. Elkton improved to 22-1 overall for the year. Its next match is in Fredericksburg, Virginia on September 13 versus the Williamsburg Pastimes. The Eclipse can be seen two more times in Cecil County on October 4 in Rising Sun against the Diamond State BBC of Delaware and on October 11 at home at Elk Landing versus the Brooklyn Atlantics which should be one of the finest vintage base ball games witnessed in the region. For more information, go to www.elktonbbc.com

BASE BALL IN IOWA

Cedar Rapids vs. Rustics—the following is the score of a match game of base ball between Cedar Rapids and the Rustic clubs of Western College, Iowa, played at Western on June 3d.—*from the National Chronicle, June, 1870*

	CEDAR RAPIDS			RUSTIC						
	O	R		O	R					
Neill p	3	1	Colby c.....	1	12					
Stevenc 2b....	4	3	Riggs 3b.....	4	10					
Stewart 1b....	4	1	W Drury s s....	1	13					
Hawley 3b....	4	1	Overhalser 1b..	4	10					
Menehead c...	3	3	Shbey lf.....	2	9					
Lahey s s.....	2	4	Rolland cf.....	5	9					
Ward lf.....	1	3	Hastings 2b....	3	10					
Neldig cf.....	4	2	Wadner rf.....	5	9					
Greene rf.....	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	M Drury p.....	<u>2</u>	<u>10</u>					
	27	21		27	92					
Innings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Cedar Rapid	0	0	1	6	2	6	0	0	6-	21
Rustic	28	6	24	5	7	3	2	13	4-	92

THE OHIO CUP

Every year for 18 years the Ohio Village Muffins have been hosting the Ohio Cup. This year, on the Saturday and Sunday before Labor Day, 27 teams came from seven states to enjoy two days of beautiful weather and great base ball. The event had games every hour on the hour on four fields from 9 o'clock in the morning and concluding with matches at 3 or 4 o'clock. More than half the teams come from Ohio. This year the other states represented were New York, Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, Indiana, and Pennsylvania. In recent years teams have come from Colorado, Wisconsin, Minnesota and other far flung places.

Occasionally a single player comes and takes the roll of fill-in. Many teams are short handed and need an extra hand. This year, a fellow came from North Carolina to play at the Cup. There were probably others as well, but with more than 250 ballists, it is hard to make the acquaintance of them all.

If your team is looking for a non-competitive weekend of vintage base-ball, make your way to Columbus next year.

Teams at the Ohio Cup:

Rock Srpings Ground Squirrels; Deep River Grinders; Huntington Champion Hill Toppers; Indianapolis Blues; Douglas Dutchers; Rochester Grangers' St. Louis Perfectos; St. Louis Unions; Genesee Country Village Museum; Altoona Mountain Stars; Pittsburgh Franklins; Somerset Frosty Suns of Thunder; Akron Black Stockings; Canal Fulton Mules; Carey Cayugas; Champion City Reapers; Cincinnati Buckeyes; Cincinnati Red Stockings; Cleveland Blues; Clodbuster BBC; Forest City BBC; Hoover Sweepers; Mansfield Independents; Ohio Village Muffins; Sylvania Black Swamp Frogs; Wyandott Ghostriders

VBBA Member Profile— Ed “PIGTAIL“ Elmore

Ed "Pigtail" Elmore is one of the founders of this Atlantic team. Along with Jim "Trotter" Dragonetti and Al "Old Dutch" Dieckmann in 1997, Ed sought to re-create the original 19th century Brooklyn Atlantics as an independent team to travel near and far to play other vintage teams. The Atlantics play by the rules of 1864 to honor the original Atlantics first undefeated championship season, although the team has the versatility to play the rules of any era. The team currently plays home matches on the grounds of the Smithtown Historical Society on Long Island.

Ed has been playing vintage base ball since 1992, when he was an original member of the Freeport Athletics, the first organized vintage team in New York. He was given the nickname "Pigtail" in honor of William "Pigtail Billy" Riley, a ballist from the 1870's. "Pigtail" has served as field captain since the team's inception in 1997. He can play wherever needed, and often serves in the role of umpire. Ed has extensively researched 19th century base ball rules, and has co-written a book with Jim on the interpretation of the 19th century rules. Ed has been a Trustee of the VBBA Executive Board, a member of the VBBA Rules Committee, and a member of SABR. He has given a presentation on 19th Century Base Ball Rules for the New England and Atlantic States Vintage Base Ball Conference at the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, has led various local presentations on vintage base ball, and has led workshops on The Role Of The Umpire at VBBA Conventions.

Pigtail currently leads the team in number of relatives who have played for Atlantic with 6 - current Atlantic TC, and The Cannon, Black Ice, Special K, Smooth, and MC. Soft-ball phenom Quick Money K also hopes to play for Atlantic some day soon.

Pigtail's fondest Vintage base ball memory came on July 27, 2002. Al 'Old Dutch' Dieckmann always dreamed of being able to play a game against a Cincinnati Red Stockings vintage team, in honor of one of the "finest games ever played" in 1870. He was even quoted in newspaper articles about the possibility. When he heard that such a team was being formed, he became truly excited, informing them that they had to schedule a game. Unfortunately, he succumbed to cancer before he could see that game. Jim and Ed made sure that game was scheduled, and on July 27 the Atlantics traveled to Cincinnati for that game, offering a memorial to 'Old Dutch' before the game. Standing on the field that day, realizing that we had made one of 'Old Dutch's' dreams come true, is his fondest memory in vintage base ball. Pigtail has been playing vintage base ball for 18 years now. The first 12 to 15 years it seemed like the age balance always tipped toward the older ballplayers. The last several years he has seen an amazing number of younger players involved, and that is a welcome sign. It means that the vintage game will continue past the time when he and others will have to give up playing. Hopefully, they will also take an interest in the national VBBA, and continue to move the vintage game forward, embracing our mission of presenting the history of our national pastime to the public.

THE BASE BALL NEWS

Howard H. Goshen,
Editor and Publisher
Mifflintown, PA,
Thursday, September 13, 1877

The base ball profession will at the end of this season lose the best known and most highly respected of its active members in the person of Mr. A. G. Spalding, Secretary, Manager and Captain of the Chicago for two years. His retirement from active service is the result of a determination formed at the end of last season, and growing out of the increased needs of his business, which has grown from a small beginning to a size which imperatively demands his attention as well as that of his brother. Mr. Spalding's record of five years in Boston and two in Chicago has never been equaled, and probably never will be, and it is not exceeding the truth to say that no ball player ever had so wide an acquaintance and so deep a respect among all grades and classes of players as has Mr. Spalding.

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JOIN THE VBBA

**Individuals - join for
just \$10 per year!**

**Clubs - Full membership
for only \$50 per
year; Associates for
\$35 per year.**

**See web site for details:
www.vbba.org**

**Note to new clubs:
Your membership
in the VBBA is im-
portant. Join now!**

Letters to the Editor

The question "What shoes do you wear?" was posed to the readers.

Richard Anderson of the Cincinnati Buckeyes wrote:

"Regarding shoes, this was a problem for me in the beginning as I went shopping to find 'black only, non-metal spiked' shoes. I quickly found out that you had better have comfortable shoes for our Opening day parade or you will be paying the price for days to come. So I settled on rubber spiked, black Nike's that I 'blackened' with shoe polish. It seems to be working, but not very authentic."

Another writer, who wished to remain anonymous, suggests that we "not allow modern baseball shoes (developed to get an advantage over an opponent). Please note that non-uniformed images of most nines shows them in an oxford style."

Usage of the term "Crank" was questioned by the editor in the last newsletter and several readers sent information and opinion.

Jayne Johnson of the Bay City club wrote:

"Cranks was a term used in the 19th Century, but perhaps not in the 1860s. We have newspaper accounts using the word crank to describe a base ball fanatic. It is a brief note in our local paper, and that is in Bay City, MI, that talks about a crank at a ball game who took a foul off the noggin. He previously described himself as a crank of the highest order, but will think better of where he sits at future matches. It's kind of funny so we put it in our "vintage" newspaper that we

pass out at each game. That account dates to 1889 however, but the fact that it was used in a local article in the Midwest, and the term crank was not defined by the writer in the article would suggest that it was a rather commonplace term that need not have been expounded on."

Jay Demagall of the Cleveland Blues offers confirmation of the term's usage in the 1880's with three quotes from "Base Ball on the Western Reserve" by Jim Egan, Jr. from pages 125, 145 and 177. The quotes reference periodicals like "Sporting Life" and "Cleveland Plain Dealer."

And Richard Anderson of Cincinnati wrote "I have been playing 4 years now and I too have heard the many variations of the crank terminology. One of the problems is that as a new player who was totally ignorant of vintage baseball that I may unknowingly and inadvertently proliferate the misuse of the term. It seems to me that if we are trying to be purists, we should not use any term that was not germane to that era regardless of how it sounds." Based on the information that Mr. Johnson and Mr. Demagall have provided, I now believe that the word "crank" or "krank" should be used. So now Mr. Anderson and many others can use the term and feel it has some historical accuracy, thanks to the Bay City newspaper of 1889 and other publications.

Thanks to the readers for their comments. Please send more. Readers may also submit articles for the newsletter of inter-

NEW CLUBS

Vintage base ball has grown because men and women go through the effort of forming clubs and putting teams onto fields across North America. Thanks to all of you who have done this is the past. This coming year more new teams are forming. Please support the new teams in your area.

TEAMS FORMING IN 2010

The VBBA membership committee reports that many people have inquired about starting teams for 2010. Some are in areas with other vintage teams and some are from areas new to vintage base ball.

The Norwood Highlanders have been planning and are ready to schedule matches. They will have easy access to many teams in southwest Ohio.

A team is in the works for Philadelphia and will draw on the history of the game in the City of Brotherly Love, which has a rich heritage from the earliest days of base ball. Both the Olympics and the Athletics were very important in the beginnings of the game.

A vintage base ball enthusiast in Raleigh, North Carolina is ready to start a team and play the Boll Weevils and the other new North Carolina team.

Another fellow (state unknown at this point) wants to start four teams in his area, since there are no VBBA teams nearby.

And another in Alabama wants to start a club with multiple teams.

Because of a photograph of soldiers playing in Savannah in 1862, a team may be formed in Georgia.

Please let me know of other clubs starting this coming year and how they are doing.
Dave Brooks

CLUB PROFILE

The next issue of the newsletter could contain a profile of your club. Send your club information, history, and experiences to Dave Brooks and spread the word about your club. Is your club named for a team from the past? Are your players young, old or a mix? Where do you play your home matches? What rule set do you play? Why did your club choose that rule set?

The Base Ball Player's Chronicle

The newsletter of the Vintage Base Ball Association

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Report from a first year team—the Mansfield Independents

A report on the Athletic club of Philadelphia from 1869

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Game Summaries from 3 Matches in Indiana, Mich. & New York

Advice on playing Second Base from Henry Chadwick

Request to participate in a survey about baseball

Rules Forum

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New clubs forming

Letters to the editor

Dave Brooks

3000 Oxford Middletown Road

Hamilton, OH 45013-9692