

Welcome to the initial edition of "Ball Four", the official newsletter of our new baseball league, the "CBML" (Continental Baseball Mail League). Hopefully, it will become as successful as our hockey league, now in its tenth season. Any "birth" has its labor pains---let's hope ours are few and far between. If everyone involved will be dedicated and conscientious about following our few simple guidelines, we should have a good league. Keep in mind that a mail league is only as good as its weakest member.

The first thing I had to decide was what name to give to our newsletter. With apologies to Jim Bouton, I just couldn't resist naming it after his book, truly one of the most hilarious sports books I have ever read. It also represents what I hope our league will become----alot of good times and some "horsing around", too. In that spirit, I am issuing my first decree as Commissioner, which is to designate our official swear word-----which is "SHITFUCK". Those of you who read Bouton's book should remember that when a Pilot's pitcher gave up a homerun or some other Pilot's player messed up (which was often), the reply of manager Joe Schultz was always "shitfuck." So now you'll know what to say when your CBML players goof up and you lose a game you thought you were going to win.

Now, to get down to the business of starting a league. Enclosed you will find the constitution. Stan Berger and I put this together through 4 revisions, using our experiences with another mail baseball league we were in. I'm sure all of you will probably find something that you won't like, but keep in mind that Stan and I had to come up with something that we thought would be both fair and workable, plus be something that no one could try to take advantage of, if we ever get a "Gerard Coyne" clone in our league. If you have any questions about interpreting the constitution, I'll be happy to try to answer them for you.

Also enclosed you will find the league directory, with all members' names, addresses, phone numbers, and team preference. **LET ME KNOW IMMEDIATELY IF YOU SEE ANY ERRORS ON THIS SHEET.** In placing the teams in divisions, Stan and I placed the greatest emphasis on **geography** as opposed to how strong a particular division's teams would be. The strengths of the teams will vary from year to year, anyway. Thus, in the American League, first Ho, John, and I were placed in a division, then the Duffer and his two friends were placed in the other division. To round out the A.L., the two Missouri teams were then placed one in each division of the A.L. so they can at least be in the same league with each other. In the N.L., Stan and his sons Scott and Kurt were placed in a division, and the three Canadian teams were placed in another. Then the Cubs and Yankees (Chris U. and Ray A.) were added to these divisions to fill them out. This geographic closeness will allow for as much head-to-head play as possible. Our season will last from April thru September (the non-hockey playing months). You'll play 80 games (40 home, 40 road). This gives you 6 months to play 40 home games, a very light burden; since most games only take 30 minutes to play, you're talking about 4 hours a month (or an hour a week) to get your games played. The actual schedule itself has not been drawn up yet.

Now, for some dates and deadlines you must meet to get us off to good start. First, attached to this newsletter are the final 1987 stats of your team. As rule 14 of the constitution states, you are only to "protect" 30 players before the draft. Therefore, by **JANUARY 15** you **MUST** have in my hands a list of which 30 players you are protecting. You can protect any player who was on your team's major league roster or still in your team's organization at the **CLOSE** of last season. Someone who was traded away from your team before the close of the season, but is listed on your team's stats, is no longer your property. (Example, Johnny Ray is listed in both the Pittsburgh and California stats but he would be only property of California since that is where he was at the **END** of the season.) If I do not have your protected list on January 15, I will not hesitate to go ahead and make it out for you and you'll be "stuck" with whatever I come up with for your team. **NO EXCEPTIONS.** If that sounds too harsh, just call me "Kenesaw Knoll" "Klink" (or "KKK" for short).

Once I get all the protected lists, I will immediately type them up and get them out to you so you can prepare for the draft, which brings us to our next concern. The tentative date set for the draft is the last Saturday in February, which is February 27. Stan will be in charge of running the draft. All players from the unclaimed major league teams, plus all unprotected players from our 16 preference teams are eligible to be drafted. Some of you have expressed a desire to attend the draft in person by flying in. Please let Stan know your preference for a site. Since there's always a danger of bad weather, it must be a site that is fairly easy for Stan to reach----so let him know your preference between these three sites----Philadelphia, Allentown, Pa., or Harrisburg, Pa. Harrisburg would be better for those of us Ohioans who might get brave enough to try to drive to the draft. **WHETHER YOU PLAN TO ATTEND IN PERSON OR NOT, YOU MUST SEND STAN A DRAFT LIST SO IF THE WEATHER TURNS BAD AND YOU**

WIND UP NOT BEING ABLE TO BE THERE, STAN WILL HAVE YOUR DRAFT LIST TO PICK FROM. Have your list in Stan's hands no later than **FEBRUARY 20**, (one week before the draft date). Since there are so many players available from all the unclaimed teams, this first season's draft will be 15 rounds long. Subsequent years we tentatively plan to cut it to 12 rounds. This year's draft order will be in reverse order of the winning percentages of the 16 preference teams. Thus, the order will be : (TEAM and '87 winning pct.)

1. Indians .377	9. Twins .525
2. Padres .401	10. Yankees .549
3. Orioles .414	11. Giants .556
4. Cubs .472	12. Expos .562
5. Phillies .494	13. Mets .568
6. Athletics .500	14. Cardinals .586
7. Royals .512	15. Blue Jays .593
8. Reds .519	16. Tigers .605

I am changing the trading period as listed in the constitution due to special circumstances of just getting started. I will allow NO TRADING ("Kenesaw" again!!!!) until all rosters have been frozen down to 30 players on January 15. That way everyone will start equal. The **FIRST TRADING PERIOD** will thus be from **JANUARY 15** on until the draft. You may trade this year's draft picks only, if you're planning on making any deals involving picks. **WHO WILL MAKE THE FIRST DEAL IN LEAGUE HISTORY???????**

Well, that's all That I can think off right now to get us off the ground. I'm SURE I've forgotten something important. If so, let me know what it was.

Hang on to this newsletter so you'll have it to remind yourself of the things you must do by what dates. There may not be any other reminders beforehand.

I've timed this newsletter to coincide with the major league winter meetings, so get out your "hot stove" and figure out your 30 man protected list!!!!!!

Good luck to all, and I hope ten years from now we're still goin' strong!!!! If you have any questions/comments don't hesitate to let Stan or I know.

Happy Holidays!!

"KKK"

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

1. Questions/comments about Constitution to Stan or myself
2. Any errors on the mailig list/directory to me.
3. **PROTECTED LIST TO ME BY JANUARY 15-----NO EXCEPTIONS!!!!**
4. **DRAFT LIST TO STAN BY FEBRUARY 20 ----NO EXCEPTIONS!!!!**
5. Let Stan know your choice of the 3 draft sites-----If you don't let him know your feelings, then don't complain about the final choice!!!!!!
6. First trading period----JANUARY 15- DRAFT DAY (INCLUSIVE)
7. Anything important I've forgotten-----let me know right away.
8. Send your dues(#15) to me

Would you share this with Dan, please ??

Thanks,
Dan X.