

Rockford Peaches Resource Packet



Compiled by the Midway Village Museum Collections Department.

Midway Village Museum

Resource Packet on The Rockford Peaches.

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Aid for the Underdog: the Public Defender's Office Pushes On
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ENTREPRENEURS
HOW THEY DO IT

ROCKFORD

JULY 1989/TWO DOLLARS

MAGAZINE

Loving the Peaches



During World War II, P.K. Wrigley started an all-girls' baseball league as a hedge against the threatened demise of men's baseball. Among the best of the teams was the



Loving the Peaches

Once upon a magical time, this all-girl
baseball team captured the city's heart.

BY PEGGY DAHLBERG JENSEN

Color photography by Todd McLester



**DOROTHY "KAMMIE"
KAMENSHEK, FIRST BASEMAN
FOR THE LEGENDARY PEACHES,
FIELDS A HIGH FLY.**

A mild June evening, 1951. The Rockford Peaches lead-off batter, 28-year-old Dottie Ferguson Key, crouches with bat in hand at home plate. Her unique crabbed posture always presents a challenge for the pitcher. "Either get hit or get a hit," Coach William Baird Allington commanded as she left the dugout. His words ring in Key's ears.

Positioned with her left-arm raised, the five-foot, four-inch center-fielder hears the distant shouts of vendors: "Peanuts!" "Hot dogs!" "Programs!" She feels the surge of the crowd, the expectations of fans. They know what she knows: Key is not a great slugger, but she can work the pitcher. She'll probably advance to first base on balls or by being hit by a pitched ball.

Key chalks up one strike and two balls. Then the inevitable happens. The ball smacks her left thigh. She limps to first base, pigtail flopping against her peach-colored, flared-skirt uniform. She raises her hand to the roaring crowd.

Rockford adored its Peaches. One of four charter teams in the All American Girls Baseball League (AAGBL), the only girls professional baseball league in United States history, the Peaches attracted overflow crowds. During the first 10 seasons (1943-52), almost 895,000 paid to see America's prettiest baseball players at Beyer Stadium. The Rockford Peaches had won four championships (1945, 1948, 1949, 1950) and three second places—a feat surpassed by no other team in the league.

This night, the fans hope for victory. They remain loyal in spite of the Peaches early season fifth-place standing. They look to Key, famous for her base-stealing, to advance when Dorothy "Kammie" Kamenshek, 25, steps up to bat. The two exchange signals. If Kamenshek puts



her hand on the end of the bat, it's a hit and run. But if Key flips her pigtail, she's preparing to steal and Kamenshek will let the pitch pass.

Key waits with confidence. The fans chant, "Kammie, Kammie." They know her potential. Twice in her AAGBL career, she ranked first in batting averages, with .316 and .306, and in four seasons she led the league with the fewest strikeouts. An outstanding defensive player as well, she earned the respect of men such as the Cubs' Charlie Grimm. "She'd have no trouble making the majors...if she were a man," Grimm said. "She can hit, field and play with the best of them." Indeed, she made history as the first woman to receive an offer to play men's professional baseball. But she turned down the contract with the Florida International League.

Key flips her pigtail. A former North American speed skating champion, she pumps her short legs and then slides into second ahead of the catcher's throw. Safe! The crowd cheers. Key picks herself up, slaps her bare thigh to brush off the dirt and tugs her short skirt down to cover her black satin shorts. She ignores a trickle of blood trailing into the cuff of her black knee sock.

Key and the others often wonder about some decisions of the league's founder, P.K. Wrigley. He attempted to combine the allusion of femininity with fast-action baseball. In 1942, when he proposed forming the league, he anticipated crowds thrilling to athletic skills and feminine grace both on the field and off. The girls had to appear in public wearing skirts—no shorts, slacks or jeans. He even hired Helena Rubenstein to conduct charm classes in conjunction with spring training. She not only stressed good posture, attractive hairstyles and the proper use of makeup, but also the niceties of etiquette and meeting the public. Girls who had been models or beauty contestants sneered at the classes, but others, such as



THE 1950 CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM (TOP). SHOWN TOGETHER AGAIN DECADES LATER (ABOVE, FROM LEFT) ARE: PEACHES PLAYERS DOTTIE KEY, HELEN WADDELL WYATT, MARGARET JURGENSMEIER CARROLL AND IRENE RUHNKE SANVITIS

Kamenshek, appreciated the help. "Our family never ate out in a restaurant," she said. "And I didn't know what all those forks were for."

Safe at second, Key tests the pitcher by taking a lead. A curve ball over the plate suits Kammie and she hits a line drive into right field. Key sprints toward third and heads for home while Kammie reaches second on a stand-up double. The fans are on their feet. Perhaps the slump will end tonight.

In the stands, young Bob Sharp (now an employee at AMCORE Bank's Data Center) nudges his pal Fred Speer, destined to become one of Rockford's premier radio newsmen. "Wow. Can you believe girls playing like that?" Hooked on the Peaches, the two boys rode a bus from the northwest

side to every home game in the 1950s, willingly parting with 25 cents each for a ticket.

Shortstop Alice Pollitt hits a single. Kammie goes to third. Eleanor Callow gets an intentional walk. With the bases loaded, catcher Ruth Richard unloads a long drive to right center. Three runs score. Then one batter is out on a ground ball to first, another on a fly ball to the short stop. The pitcher walks the next batter, Helen "Sis" Waddell.

"That's watchin' 'em, Sis," yells Neil Wyatt from the bleachers. "Yeah," chortles a graveley voice behind him, "better walk her. She can't run." Wyatt, who would marry Waddell in October, faced the heckler. "Buddy, get off her back," "What's it to you?" the man asks. "She's my girl. Quit it or I'll knock you clear across the stands."

One of the youngest rookies in the league, West High School student Barbara Thompson, singles to score Richard. Her grandfather leads the cheering. Nearby, two young neighbor girls join him. They're making a scrapbook and now they'll have an article chronicling another Thompson r.b.i.

Before the final out, Audrey Daniels, the pitcher, drives a double into centerfield. The scoreboard lights up, recording six runs in inning one as Waddell and Thompson cross home plate. (The opposing team managed only one run in nine innings.)

At a time when war engulfed the world, when gas rationing curtailed travel, and when television had not yet entered every home, girls baseball opened an escape hatch. The regular season included up to 126 games (when 10 teams participated) and lasted from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Fans would attend as many as eight successive home games and then wait patiently for the team to return from a road trip. Meanwhile, they tuned in WROK for broadcasts of out-of-town games. Once a fan



DOTTIE FERGUSON KEY, STAR PEACHES PLAYER (ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT), WORKS IN A DONUT SHOP TODAY. MILDRED LUNDAHL, CHAPERONE (BELOW LEFT) AND PLAYER HELEN WADDELL WYATT RELIVE MEMORIES.



telephoned the station to complain about static. A station employee apologized and suggested listening to a White Sox game instead. "Traitor!" the irate fan retorted.

On another occasion, in a game broadcast from Fort Wayne, Indiana, the Peaches led 19-6 in the ninth inning. It seemed an appropriate time to give rookie pitchers some experience.



So Allington sent in 16-year-old Margaret "Jurgie" Jurgensmeier to relieve Fox. Listeners in Rockford turned off their radios and went to bed, confident of victory. "Several hours later," recalls Helen "Sis" Waddell Wyatt, "we were still playing that ninth inning. We couldn't get the third out. We used all our pitchers." Not until the morning papers arrived did the Rockford audience

learn that Fort Wayne had won, 20-19.

While playing in Rockford's PAL league, Jurgensmeier had learned to think baseball from her father-coach. A West High student when she tried out for the Peaches, she impressed the staff with her moves on the pitcher's mound. "They chose me," she says, "because I exhibited a 'baseball mind.'" But facing veteran professionals rather than teenagers made her nervous on the mound. "I walked so many..." she laments. The Fort Wayne defeat angered Allington, but later he encouraged Jurgensmeier, saying, "You'll gain control as you grow older."

Undeterred by setbacks, fan loyalty seldom wavered. The Peaches—playing tough like men and answering to nicknames such as "Squirt," "Scrounge" and "Ruhnke Dunk," yet appearing ladylike—captured the hearts of thousands here. Besides the four championships, Rockford's lipstick leaguers led with the highest batting averages in 1949, '50 and '51. When the AAGBL folded in 1954, an era ended for those who played and for those who watched.

But how did it begin? Wrigley, Chicago Cubs owner and chewing gum magnate, anticipating in 1942 that major league baseball might be suspended for the duration of World War II, proposed organizing professional girls teams. The suspension never materialized. Nevertheless, Wrigley invested \$200,000 (Rockford received \$18,000) to provide salaries, uniforms, spring training, publicity, programs, chartered buses, hotel accommodations and recruitment for professional girls ball. First, he sent 30 scouts to search for talented players in softball leagues throughout the United States and Canada. Of 300 candidates, 75 reached the finals held at Wrigley Field. Sixty received and signed contracts to play with the charter teams: the Rockford Peaches, the Kenosha Comets, the Racine Belles and the South Bend Blue Sox.

The scouts found Irene Ruhnke playing in the shadow of Wrigley Field with the Rockola Music Girls, a touring semi-pro team. She participated in the first tryouts, signed a contract to play with the Kenosha Comets and then joined the Peaches in a trade. The second-youngest in a family of 12 children, she had played ball since early childhood. "My father," she says, "organized family games and gave each winner a dollar." During her four-year professional career at second base, she excelled at bat. One year as a Peach, she had a league-leading .319 average (after 72 games), compiled with the help of 42 consecutive hits. Once she made a headline for another reason: "Irene Ruhnke, league-leading hitter, held hitless." She'd rather forget that, remembering instead the thrill of making a triple play in another game.

In 1943, at \$40-\$85 per week, the players earned more than they could draw in any other occupation. (Salaries would advance so that by 1952, stars signed contracts for \$600 per month. In the 1950s, everyone received \$9 per diem on the road. Waddell says, "We could buy breakfast for 50 cents, dinner for \$1 and

we'd come home with money in our pockets.")

Wrigley stressed that the girls played *baseball*, not softball. Initially, they pitched underhand, but by 1947 overhand became the standard. Ball sizes decreased six times, from 12 to 10 inches. Distances between bases and between the pitcher's mound and home plate increased with the years. In spite of the accent on femininity, the girls played according to men's rules and learned baseball discipline from coaches with professional experience.

Allington had played in minor leagues before assuming leadership of the Peaches, a position he held for seven and a half seasons. To make his team the most knowledgeable about rules, he gave written quizzes, followed by discussions, every morning when the team traveled. "Our rule book was our Bible," says Waddell. "If a Peach argued with an umpire, she knew what the heck she was arguing about."

Other rules governed the public lifestyles of these diamond darlings. Each team's chaperone served as disciplinarian, trainer, confidante and sometimes substitute parent, especially for teenagers. Breaking the rules meant heavy dues to pay. Smoking or drinking alcoholic beverages in public meant *immediate dismissal*. Waddell recalls a forbidden adventure undertaken with two other rookies, Marie "Boston" Mansfield and Marilyn "Jonesy" Jones. First, by driving to Kenosha to watch the rival Comets play, they broke the rule against rookies going out of town. Then, confesses Waddell, "We fraternized with Kenosha kids, rode around town in a car and went into a tavern—we did everything wrong. But," she grins, remembering the successful escapade, "we didn't get caught."

Such an event seems innocent compared with today's rash of drug abuse and gambling charges against professional ball players. The public bemoans character flaws in celebrities, but they applaud and admire achievement. Besides Key and Kamenshek, Rockford fans doted on players such as Olive Little who pitched the league's first perfect game and Carolyn Morris who pitched two no-hit, no-run games in one season. Ruth Richard caught two back-to-back, no-hit games in a playoff series. "Snookie" Harrell Doyle won recognition as the league's outstanding shortstop. To Helen "Nicky" Nicol Fox, ERA didn't mean equal rights amendment, but rather earned run average. She chalked up a career 1.89 era, as impressive as the five consecutive shutouts she pitched in 1949. Mansfield's pitching coupled with her Boston accent and natural beauty made her a standout on the field and off. Ace Rose Gacloch pitched the league's only 20-game winning season in 1951. And how could fans not worship Jackie "Scrounge" Kelley who played every position, including pitcher?

But Rockford loved all the Peaches and lived for ways to honor, to entertain and to care for them. The 1950 Rockford vehicle

stickers depicted a Peach at bat. Organizations and businesses such as the Rotary, Lions and Kiwanis clubs, the Fraternal Order of Eagles, and the Sundstrand Corporation honored Peach personnel at luncheons and dinners. Prominent citizens served as volunteers on the board of directors. Chaperones Marie Timm, Mildred Lundahl and Dottie Green, charged with securing approved housing, seldom had to search. Fans called them. Avid supporters, the homeowners treated the girls as daughters. Waddell struck a bargain with her landlady, Ferne Clint. "I hated to iron and she disliked dishwashing," Waddell says, "so she did my laundry and I did the dishes."

Like most fans, "we never missed a game," recalls Connie Pagles Baxter. Once a year the Stanley Pagles family invited the Peaches to their farm. The girls played horseshoes, rode the tractor and inspected the barn while Connie's mother prepared a country meal of chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy and sweet corn. Earlier she had decorated the tables with dolls in Peaches uniforms. That friendship resulted in Connie serving as bat girl for four seasons. Now she's a school bus driver and show director for the Ski Broncs.

Another bat girl, seventh-grader Doris Calacurcio, lived across the street from Beyer Stadium. She and other girls on park district teams watched the Peaches practice. Usually, after dismissing the players, Coach Allington would work with the youngsters for a few hours. "If you're serious about ball, you have to play—not only practice," he advised Doris, who was eager to be a Peach. Later, as a high school sophomore, she signed to play summer ball with the Chicago Comets, a league farm team. Today, Doris Calacurcio Johnson is a local antique dealer.

As if returning the city's love for them, some of the Peaches became permanent residents. Today, five former Peaches still live here 35 years after the league's demise. Ruhnke married Tony Sanvitis in 1946 and played one more year. Retired now from J.L. Clark, she bowls four times a week.

Dottie Ferguson Key, an only child, grew up in a small Manitoba, Canada, town. Early on, she played ice hockey with neighborhood boys and if not for World War II, would have competed in 1942's Olympic speed skating. Later, while playing on a girls softball team in Winnipeg, she caught the eye of AAGBL scouts.

Ferguson signed with the Peaches in 1945 and played through 1954. Originally a second baseman, her strong throwing arm and speedy legs made her an ideal candidate for centerfield. "I thought I was being demoted to centerfield," she says, "but I learned to love it." While still a Peach, Ferguson married her Canadian boyfriend, Donald Key, who had followed her to Rockford. Today, Peaches fans can relive memories over a cup of coffee at the Dixie Cream Donut Shop with Dottie Key, who works there part-time. (Her signaling



THE 1949
LEAGUE-CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM
(TOP) WAS COACHED BY BILL
ALLINGTON; 1947's TEAM BY
BILL EDWARDS.



Loving the Peaches

partner, Kamenshek, retired in 1952 after nine years as a Peach. She pursued a graduate degree in physical therapy from Marquette University and now resides in Anaheim, California.)

Helen Waddell grew up in Le Moyne, Pennsylvania, playing softball with five older brothers. A natural athlete, she excelled in high school games and tried out for the AAGBL in 1949. She signed a contract with the South Bend Blue Sox in 1950. Traded to Rockford before the season began, she played two seasons as a utility infielder, retiring after her marriage to Neil Wyatt. Having quit playing, she never attended as a spectator. "I couldn't stand to watch," she says, "after being a part of it." Now at AM-CORE Bank's Data Center, Waddell serves as a filing coordinator.

Barbara Thompson experienced the thrill of a lifetime signing with the Peaches. Unlike some rookies, dismissed after a few weeks, Thompson remained on the roster in 1951 and for part of the next year as the fourth outfielder. But when cut mid-season in 1952, she thought her world had collapsed. Chaperone Dottie Green eased the disappointment. Soon Thompson realized that the August cut created perfect timing

to enroll in nurses training, her previous career goal. Since then Peaches fans may have recognized her either as the nurse in the office of Donald Wrock, MD, or as a surgical nurse at Rockford Memorial Hospital.

Instead of signing a second contract—subject to homesickness, she hated living out of a suitcase and staying nights in a hotel room on the road—Jurgensmeier married Ronald Carroll of Rockford. She continued to play amateur ball and then coached Little League when her three sons played. Now she gives advice to East High School players at the request of coaches Mike and Dave Carroll, her sons.

Wrigley sold his franchise interest in 1944, but league ownership remained in a central office. In 1950, management and operations transferred to local owners. Soon the league experienced a decline. The war had ended. Gas rationing no longer existed. People could travel freely. They could watch major league games on television. And the league found it increasingly hard to recruit girls who could pitch overhand. Attendance slacked. Finances dwindled. One by one, teams dropped out until by 1954 only five remained.

That year in Rockford, the last-place Peaches drew only 100 fans per game. Adult ticket prices rose to an all-time high of 90 cents. In financial distress, the board of directors withdrew from the league. "We never received our last two weeks' pay," says

Key. "And I even drove my own car to the final games." Following the September 5, 1954, championship game between the Daisies and the Lassies, other team owners voted to suspend the 1955 season. The All-American Girls Professional Ball League ended its 12-year history. But the Peaches still live in the hearts of some of their fans. "If they started the team again," Sharp says, "I'd be the first in line for season tickets."

Not to be forgotten in the annals of baseball history, the *entire* All American Girls Ball League made it into the Cooperstown (New York) Baseball Hall of Fame in November 1988. The eight-by-eight-foot "Women in Baseball" exhibit includes the evolution of ball sizes, pictures of a few stars, including Kamenshek (and Peaches chaperone Dottie Green treating a bruised thigh), a complete roster of participants and three uniforms. Inside the neckline of Number 12, a label reads, "Rockford Peaches road uniform worn by Dottie Key."

Alone at the exhibit at the end of the dedication weekend, one of baseball's famous and beloved women felt tears welling in her eyes. In a reflective mood, Key talks of her experience. "Without it, I could never have traveled and seen as much as I did," she says. "I met all kinds of people. Baseball made my life. Now I've left part of me there for history." ■

—Peggy Dahlberg Jensen is a Contributing Editor to Rockford Magazine.

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Her form looks nearly faultless as Dorothy (Mickey) Maguire, catcher with the Muskegon, Michigan, Lassies,

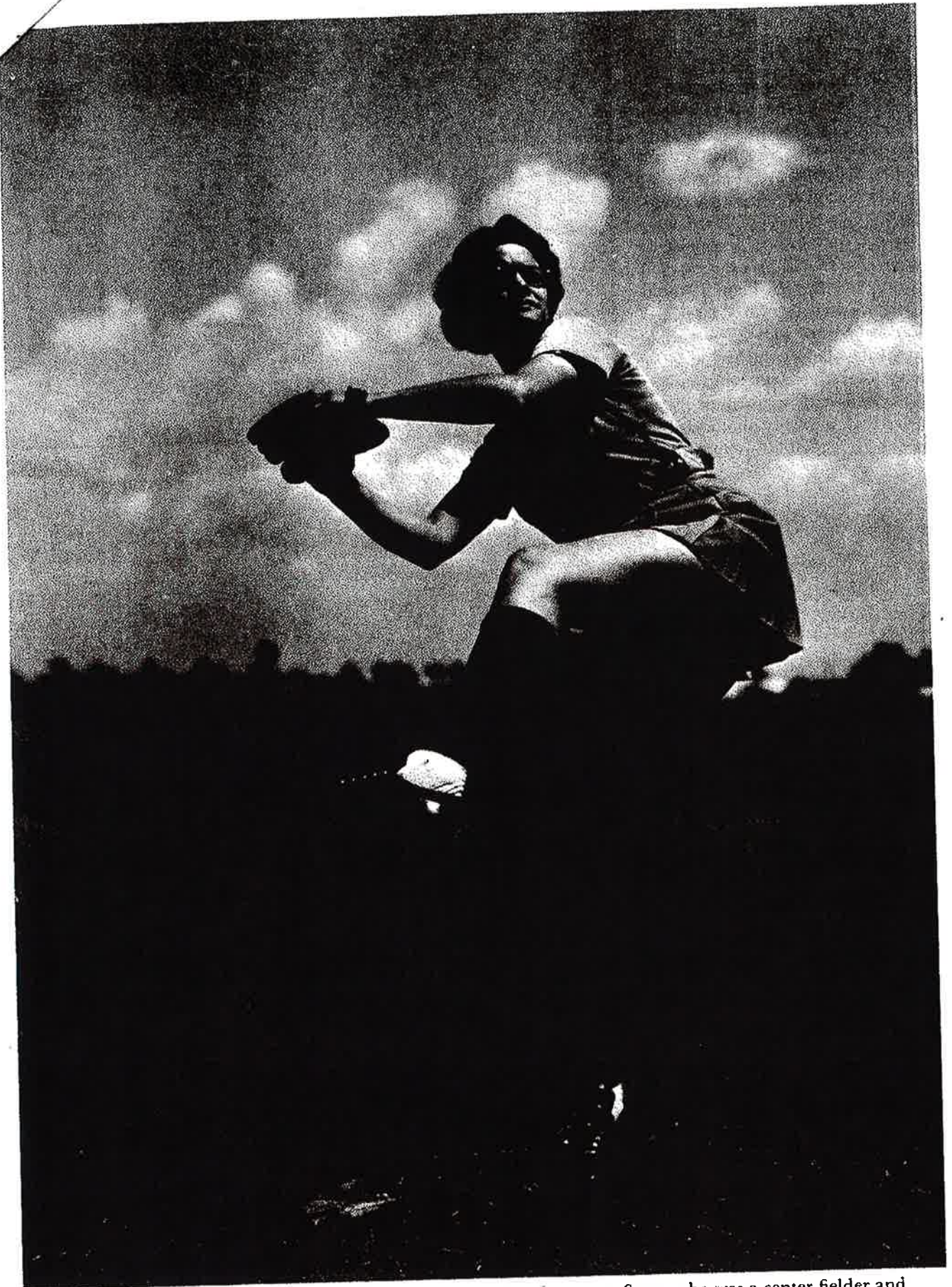
takes a healthy cut during a game in 1947. High hems, long socks were de rigueur in All-American League.

By Jack Fincher

The 'Belles of the Ball Game' were a hit with their fans

When the Girls of Summer played for pay, they proved women did not have to sacrifice their femininity to excel in a man's world

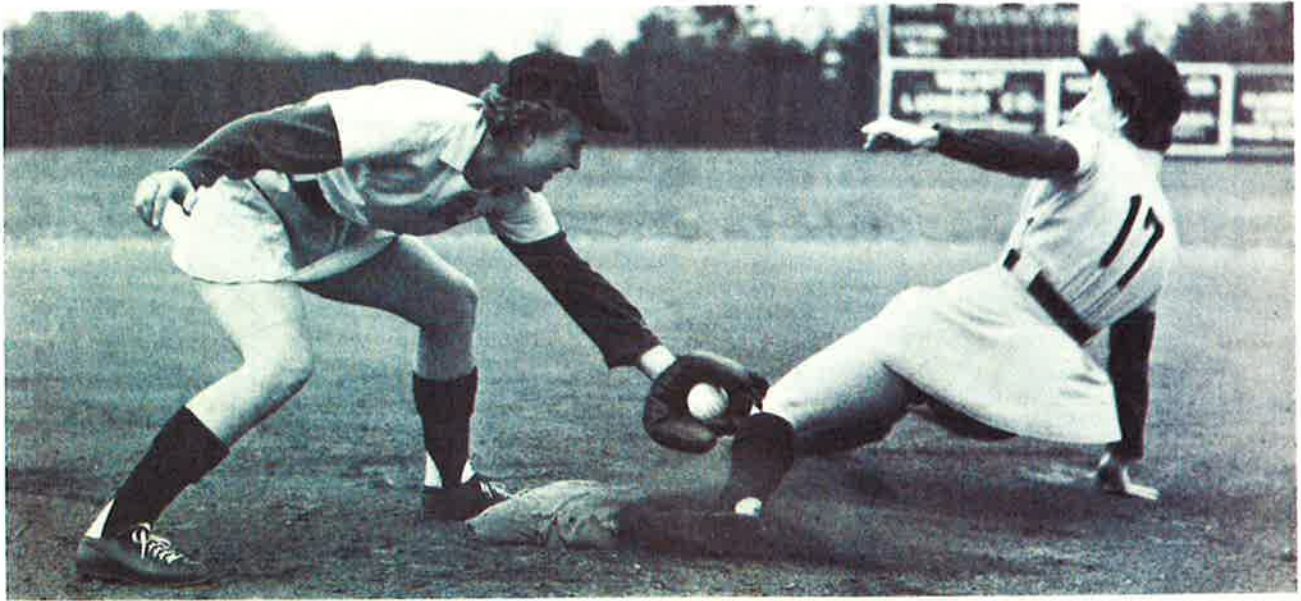
Visitors to the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, were mystified one weekend last fall to behold an ebullient throng of older women trooping around the place as if they owned it. Which, in a manner of speaking, they did. Once, those senior citizens were the glamorous Girls of Summer—stars of the only professional female baseball league this country ever had. Playing for teams with such unabashedly sexist names as the Chicks, the Peaches and the Lassies, they swung for the fences, barreled down the base paths and signed autographs for their adoring fans just like big-league ballplayers. But they weren't merely shadows of their male counterparts. They added dash and excitement to the national pastime and, in so doing, made it uniquely their own. Sportswriters dubbed them the "Queens of Swat" and the "Belles of the Ball Game." They called each other "Moe" and "Tiby," "Nickie" and "Pepper," "Jeep" and "Flash." They rode stuffy buses from city to city, played six games a week and doubleheaders on Sunday, and dreaded the day in September when the grueling season would come to an end. Now, aging in body but



Doris Sams, another of the pennant-winning Lassies, unlimbers her arm during spring training in 1948. The

previous year, Sams, who was a center fielder and pitcher, was voted the league's most valuable player.

The "Queens of Swat" have put on a few years since their playing days, but not many pounds. At top (from the left), Joanne Winter, Sophie Kurys, Carolyn Morris and Jane Stoll recapture a feeling for the game at a stadium in Arizona. Below, Sophie Kurys slides into second base during spring training. In bottom row (from the left), Joanne Winter, Carolyn Morris show their stuff in the days before the league went to overhand pitching, and Jane Stoll deftly snags a line drive for a publicity photograph.



ageless in spirit, they were in town to attend the unveiling of a new permanent exhibition in their honor.

Dedicated to "Women in Baseball," the intriguing collection of uniforms, photographs and trophies salutes the 545 athletes from the United States, Cuba and Canada who were part of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) from its inception in 1943 to its demise 12 years later. It is an impressive tribute, and one so richly deserved that most of the heretofore unsung heroines can't understand what took so long. As one of them pointedly noted in Cooperstown: "It doesn't say 'Men's Baseball Hall of Fame,' does it?"

No, it most assuredly does not. But then, the Girls of Summer didn't always play as if they were destined to be enshrined in *any* hall of fame, men's or women's. Take, for example, the chilly night in June 1943 when the Racine, Wisconsin, Belles took the home field against the South Bend, Indiana, Blue Sox.

The setting was Horlick Field, a windy old wooden stadium near Lake Michigan with a hand-posted scoreboard and dim floodlights. At that early stage of the league's development, the girls were playing modified softball, not hardball. The distance between the bases was a little longer, there were nine players on a side (instead of the usual ten), and a runner was allowed to take a lead off base and steal. The Racine and South Bend pitchers pinned the high-hemmed skirts of their one-piece uniforms, so as to take nothing away from their speed and control, but they still had trouble getting the ball over the plate and holding runners on base. The fielders had problems, too, and when the comedy of errors was over, the Blue Sox had drawn nine walks and two wild pitches, made seven miscues, stolen 17 bases and won 12 to 6. "A crowd of 683 cash customers turned out despite the cool weather," reported the *Racine Journal Times*, "but the temperature was nothing compared to the chill they received from the two hours and 35 minutes of how *not* to play."

That, as it turned out, was the exception to the rule. The league went on to include as many as ten teams and attract more than a million enthusiastic fans a season. The pitching shifted to overhand in 1948, the ball got smaller, the base paths got longer and the caliber of play got better and better. Max Carey, a Pittsburgh Pirates Hall of Famer who managed the Milwaukee Chicks and was the league president for six years, called a 14-inning contest between the Rockford, Illinois, Peaches and the Racine Belles the "greatest" game he had ever seen, male or female.

It was the final meeting of the 1946 championship

series. Pitcher Carolyn Morris of the Peaches had a no-hitter going for nine innings, but in the 12th inning Rockford manager Bill Allington took her out. Pitching for the Belles was Joanne Winter, who had survived one close call after another. "I was getting banged all over the place and watching my teammates make these tremendous plays behind me," recalls Winter, who now teaches golf in Scottsdale, Arizona. "They got 13 hits off me but never scored." The game was decided in the bottom half of the 14th inning when the Belles' scrappy second baseman, Sophie Kurys, slid across home plate with the winning run. "I got a base hit, stole second and was on my way to steal third when Betty Trezza [the Belles' shortstop] hit it into right field and I slid into home," says Kurys, a retired businesswoman also living in Scottsdale. "It was real close, but I was safe." Kurys stole 201 bases that year, a professional record no one in any league has even managed to approach.

It wasn't all fun and games

Ken Sells, the AAGPBL's first president, is a robust, 83-year-old retiree living in Paradise Valley, Arizona, not far from where several major-league baseball teams stage their spring training. He maintains that although female baseball players enjoyed themselves and made reasonably good money, they had a serious mission to accomplish. "They proved," he says, "that women didn't have to sacrifice their femininity to be standouts in what was then a man's world."

That's one of the things Philip K. Wrigley had in mind when he decided to start up a women's league in 1942. The chewing-gum magnate and owner of the Chicago Cubs baseball team was afraid the wartime draft might shut down the major leagues altogether; a number of minor-league teams had already been forced to suspend operations. If the big leagues did fold, Wrigley reasoned, it might be possible to transfer a professional women's league into those parks. But the major leagues got through the war years intact and consequently the AAGPBL remained in a number of smaller Midwestern towns and cities, where factory workers had money to spend but couldn't travel much because of gas rationing.

In the early 1940s, amateur softball leagues for women were thriving in thousands of communities all over the country. Wrigley decided to skim the best players off those teams, winnow the candidates down to a select few, and then use that reservoir of talent to set up his new play-for-pay league.

Wrigley contributed the major share of the start-up costs and also footed half the operating expenses of each team. (Local supporters in the four charter cities—Rockford, Illinois; Racine and Kenosha, Wisconsin;

In January, Jack Fincher wrote about the 1918-19 influenza epidemic. He has also reported in these pages on lightning, radio mechanics and tumbleweeds.

Remembering the Girls of Summer

and South Bend, Indiana—guaranteed the other half.) As a savvy baseball man and shrewd entrepreneur, he knew what he wanted and he understood how to go about getting it. He drew upon the Cubs organization for executive talent and scouts, and he persuaded his friend Branch Rickey, the respected general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers (and later the Pittsburgh Pirates) to serve as an adviser and trustee.

Wrigley also understood the importance of image. His league would have nothing to do with the kind of short-haired, mannishly dressed toughies then touring the country on several all-girl barnstorming teams. As one of Wrigley's associates put it, the new league's athletes would be expected to epitomize "the highest ideals of womanhood." The order went down to Ken Sells, the Cubs' assistant general manager and head of the AAGPBL; at the league tryouts in Chicago that spring, Mr. Wrigley expected to see nothing but healthy, wholesome, "all-American" girls.

In May 1943, more than a hundred of the best female softball players in North America registered at the Belmont Hotel in Chicago, and then assembled for tryouts and spring training at the Cubs' Wrigley Field. Most of them were underage, overawed, homesick and as green as the outfield grass. Jane (Jeep) Stoll, presently a resident of Phoenix, went to Chicago as a recent high school graduate from rural Pennsylvania. "I had never ridden on a train," she says. "I sat up all night in a Pullman car because I didn't understand how that seat was gonna be my bed."

Sophie Kurys was 17 when she showed up in Chicago, a taciturn Polish Ukrainian from Flint, Michigan. "It was raining when I got there. I told them I wanted to turn around and go right back home. They moved me in with some older girls, and probably told them to mother me a bit. The next day the sun was shining and I felt fine."

Girls. It was always "girls," never "women," and in their recollections it remains so today.

"Oh my, what nice eyes you have"

The players soon found that they were in for more than they had bargained for. After getting up at dawn and working out all day, they were required to attend charm school in the evening. The classes were conducted by representatives of the Helena Rubinstein cosmetics company, who taught the athletes how to put on makeup, get in and out of a car, and put on a coat with seemingly grace. The girls also learned how to enunciate correctly and how to charm a date (look right at him and say: "Oh my, what nice eyes you have"). To avoid getting dirt under their fingernails when sliding on the base paths, they were told to scratch a bar of soap before the game.



Merle Keagle of the Grand Rapids Chicks disputes umpire Al Chapman's call in Florida exhibition game.

Charm school fit right in with the league's so-called femininity concept. It produced a lot of good publicity but it was also a big pain in the neck—or knee, or calf. "It wasn't easy to walk around in high heels with a book on your head when you had a charley horse," remembers Lavone (Pepper) Paire Davis, who played shortstop and catcher for three teams and is now enjoying retirement in Van Nuys, California.

At the end of that first training camp, Wrigley's four managers selected the 60 best players and divided them up, as equally as possible, into four teams. Then it was time to "play ball." The players were paid between \$65 and \$125 a week. The 108-game "split" season lasted for three months, with the winner of the first half playing the winner of the second half in a championship series at the end.

The slugger who became a nun

That premiere season had barely gotten under way before a new generation and gender of baseball personalities began to shine. One of them was a statuesque redhead named Ann Harnett. She hit the ball well enough to finish as one of the league's best batters in 1943. Eventually the charismatic slugger became a nun and coached a boys' team at a Catholic school. One day, a former AAGPBL executive recalls, a nun dropped by and asked, "How're the boys upstairs?" She was referring, of course, to Wrigley and his associates.

For a decade, the AAGPBL teams—each consisting of 15 players, a manager, a chaperone and a driver—rattled around the heartland, trailblazing a path of equal opportunity where no women's professional sport had ever gone before. Everywhere they went, they won new fans—and kept them. "Maybe at first the men came out to see the legs," says Pepper Paire Davis. "But they stuck around when they realized they were seeing a darn good brand of baseball."

For managers, the league reached into the ranks of old-time ballplayers, many of whom came and went trailing faded dreams of glory. Bill Wambsgans of the Cleveland Indians, the only man ever to pull off an unassisted triple play in the World Series, always carried around a yellowed press clipping to prove it. Others, like the famous Red Sox slugger Jimmie Foxx, preserved their cherished memories in a bottle.

Chaperones protected the morals of the players at home as well as on the road. The girls were officially forbidden to drink, gamble, violate curfew, wear shorts or slacks in public, or go out on dates alone without permission and an interview of the prospective swain. A good thing, too. "My mother wouldn't let me play until I convinced her we'd be chaperoned," remembers Betty (Moe) Trezza of Brooklyn.

Quite a few of the girls were underage and the



Anna Mae O'Dowd of Chicago Colleens holds mirror, her teammate Beverly Hatzell Volkert fixes makeup.



Dorothy Schroeder, all-star shortstop who played 12 years in the league, scoops one up for photographer.

league kept a particularly close eye on them. Thelma (Tiby) Eisen, who was an outfielder with three different teams between 1944 and 1952, had an admirer when she was a rookie who followed her on a road trip. He checked into the same hotel one night and invited her up to his room before they went out to dinner. "I wasn't there three minutes before there was a knock at the door," Eisen says. "It was the house detective wanting to know what was going on."

Some chaperones knew their baseball; others did not. "We had one who was famous for yelling things like, 'Hit a home run, honey, and we win!'" Sophie Kurys recalls. "The only trouble was, we would be four runs behind in the bottom of the ninth with two out and the bases empty." Some chaperones had other priorities. Shirley Jameson of Albuquerque remembers going to bat in a tense situation only to be restrained by her chaperone. "Oh, my dear," the woman exclaimed. "You don't have your lipstick on!"

Off the field, chaperones sometimes had their work cut out for them. Maddy English, a third baseman for the Racine Belles who now lives in Everett, Massachusetts, once told a sportswriter who wouldn't stop pestering her: "If you don't leave me alone, I'm going



Rockford Peaches chaperone Dottie Green attends to a "strawberry" on leg of player Lois Florreich.

to jump in Lake Michigan." He didn't. She did, and had to be fished out. Other infatuations were less threatening. Sophie Kurys had a fan club of 11- and 12-year-old boys in Racine, one of whom invited her home for a porkchop dinner one afternoon before a game. Faye Dancer, an exuberant center fielder for the Fort Wayne Daisies who now resides in Santa Monica, California, got a letter from a G.I. in France after her picture appeared in *Life* magazine. "I am not proposing," he wrote, "but I have about \$1,000 and an old jalopy in New Jersey, I am footloose and fancy free, and I can settle anyplace."

Dolly got beamed behind the ear

On the field, there were times when the Girls of Summer could have used some protection from one another. Action was replete with daring plays along the base paths, brushbacks at the plate and painful "strawberries" from sliding hard in short skirts. One day Dolly Pearson Tesseine was playing shortstop for the Daisies when the opposing pitcher came barreling into second base and spiked her. "Next time you do that, I'm gonna jam the ball down your throat," Dolly said. When Dolly came up to bat, the pitcher knocked her down instead. Nobody got hurt that time, but when Dolly was batting in an exhibition game one day, she was hit right behind the ear by a pitch.

The players acted like women on and off the field. Pretty June Peppas of the Kalamazoo (formerly Muskegon) Lassies performed a little shimmy when batting that her fans called the "Peppas wiggle." But sometimes in the heat of a game the girls played just as recklessly as men. Once Alma (Ziggy) Ziegler of the Grand Rapids Chicks was playing second base when the batter hit a ground ball to the shortstop with a runner on first. The shortstop tossed the ball to Ziggy for a force-out at second and Ziggy threw to first for the double play. The runner, however, came into second base standing instead of sliding; the ball smacked into her and she was called out for interference. "I didn't throw at her," Ziggy recalls innocently. "She ran into the ball."

So intense was the play, sometimes even the umpires weren't safe out there. Pepper Paire Davis will never forget the time she knocked down Lou Rymkus, a hulking future all-pro football player who was moonlighting as an umpire. After sliding in at second, she whirled around to protest Rymkus' call and her fist inadvertently caught him square on the chin. The big guy ended up flat on his back. "I guess you know, Pepper," Rymkus murmured apologetically as he looked up at her, "that I gotta throw you out." Pepper knew.

In the scant free time they had to themselves, the players managed to raise a little hell every now and



Nelda Bird and Pepper Paire Davis belt out the league song in 1947: "We're all for one and one for all . . ."

then. Joanne Winter got together with a teammate one night and tried to pass off two ladies of the evening on their manager as the new rookies he was expecting. Pepper Paire Davis and Faye Dancer occasionally hoisted a few beers together in a local cemetery to escape the prying eyes of townspeople, who tended to regard the players as kid sisters. "We *were* just kids having fun," recalls Dottie Collins of Fort Wayne, Indiana. "Not until it was all over did we look back and realize we had been pioneers."

It is clear, too, that ultimately they played with great skill and polish. After watching shortstop Dorothy Schroeder of Sadorus, Illinois, work out one day, Cubs manager Charlie Grimm said, "If she was a boy, I'd give \$50,000 for her." Wally Pipp, one of the best glovemen in the business when he played first base for the New York Yankees in the early 1920s, called Dorothy Kamenshek of Anaheim, California, "the fanciest fielding first baseman I've ever seen—man or woman." Fort Lauderdale of the Florida International Baseball League once tried to buy her contract from the AAGPBL. Not long ago, after watching rare film footage of the league at its peak, a member of the Society for American Baseball Research enthused, "The way they were throwing the ball was unbelievable. It looked as though they were as good as men."

They weren't quite. They lacked the requisite power. No one in the league ever hit more than 16 home runs (though, granted, the fences in most ballparks were never moved in). But some old-timers remember seeing Triple-A players take practice cuts at the plate against the likes of Jean Faut Eastman (who posted 140 wins in eight years with the South Bend Blue Sox and had a combined earned run average of 1.23) and come up empty.

Casey's mother played center field

The league's second year, 1944, was the last for Wrigley and Sells, since it became obvious the war wasn't going to close down the majors after all. Wrigley sold his interest to Art Meyerhoff, his Chicago advertising man, and gradually ownership passed on to local boards in each town. Franchises at first flourished but then attendance sputtered fitfully until after the Korean War, when televised big-league baseball finally killed the AAGPBL forever. Whereupon the players, most still in their athletic prime, put down their bats and balls and gloves, and went on to raise families and often to coach their children. (It has been said of Helen Callaghan St. Aubin's son, Casey Candaele of the Houston Astros, that he "runs just like his mother." That's a compliment. His mother played center field for the Daisies.) They also started energetic careers in everything from pro golf, pro bowling and school-teaching, to anesthesiology and statistical analysis.

The game seemed forever behind them. To most people they met, in fact, it was as if such a thing as women's baseball could never exist. When the subject came up, as Pepper Paire Davis told *Sports Heritage* magazine in 1987, "They'd do a doubletake and say, 'You mean softball.' And I'd say again, 'No, I mean baseball.' And after I'd say it about the fourth or fifth time, they'd say, 'You mean . . . baseball? Like men's baseball? Like with a hardball?' And from the look in their eyes, I could see that they still didn't believe me. You can look 'em right in the eye and say 'baseball,' and they'll look you right back and say 'softball.'"

Not until 1982 did persistent letter writing and spur-of-the-moment phone calls result in the league's first official reunion in Chicago. A second followed four years later in Fort Wayne, where, after a chorus of "The Old Gray Mare," the Fort Wayne Daisies' veterans defeated the Michigan-Illinois-Wisconsin team 8-3 in four innings. About that same time, the more active members of the league launched a letter-writing campaign aimed at persuading the curators at Coopers-town to develop a special exhibit recognizing their contributions to baseball. The players association organized in 1987 and then came a third reunion last year in Scottsdale, complete with the kind of high jinks the

Girls of Summer were famous for—shorting sheets, shave-creaming cars, coating light bulbs with Limburger cheese, filling Oreo cookies with toothpaste and posting a teammate's phone extension on the motel bulletin board under "Room Service—All Hours."

Out of all the comradery emerged a serious sense of purpose about making the Baseball Hall of Fame, a dream that was realized last fall. Now some league supporters have their sights set on a commemorative postage stamp. But more than that, as life's bottom of the ninth approaches, many want somehow to pass their overflowing goodwill and shared remembrances on to another generation of women athletes—athletes like Julie Croteau, for example, a freshman who started at first base this past spring on the men's varsity baseball team at St. Mary's College, a liberal arts school in Maryland. This summer she's sharpening her skills as a member of a semiprofessional team. "If there was a women's league today," she says, "I'm sure I'd be in it. But it's hard for me to think of playing baseball with girls. I've been playing with men all my life."

Retired from her post-baseball job in electronics, Davis plays catch at a park near her California home.

The "Women in Baseball" exhibition at Coopers-town seems to suggest that immortality in sports need not be limited to the newspaper clippings of a Bill Wambsganss. Or even to the poignant newsletter wish list crafted one recent Christmas by Pepper Paire Davis. With the same verve she once employed protesting close calls at home plate, Davis wrote:

Give us the lust back,
In the loving and the living,
And the joy back
In the sharing and the giving!
Put the glow back in our face,
That shows we enjoyed the race.
The laughter back in our hearts,
The youth and the strength,
Till death do us part!

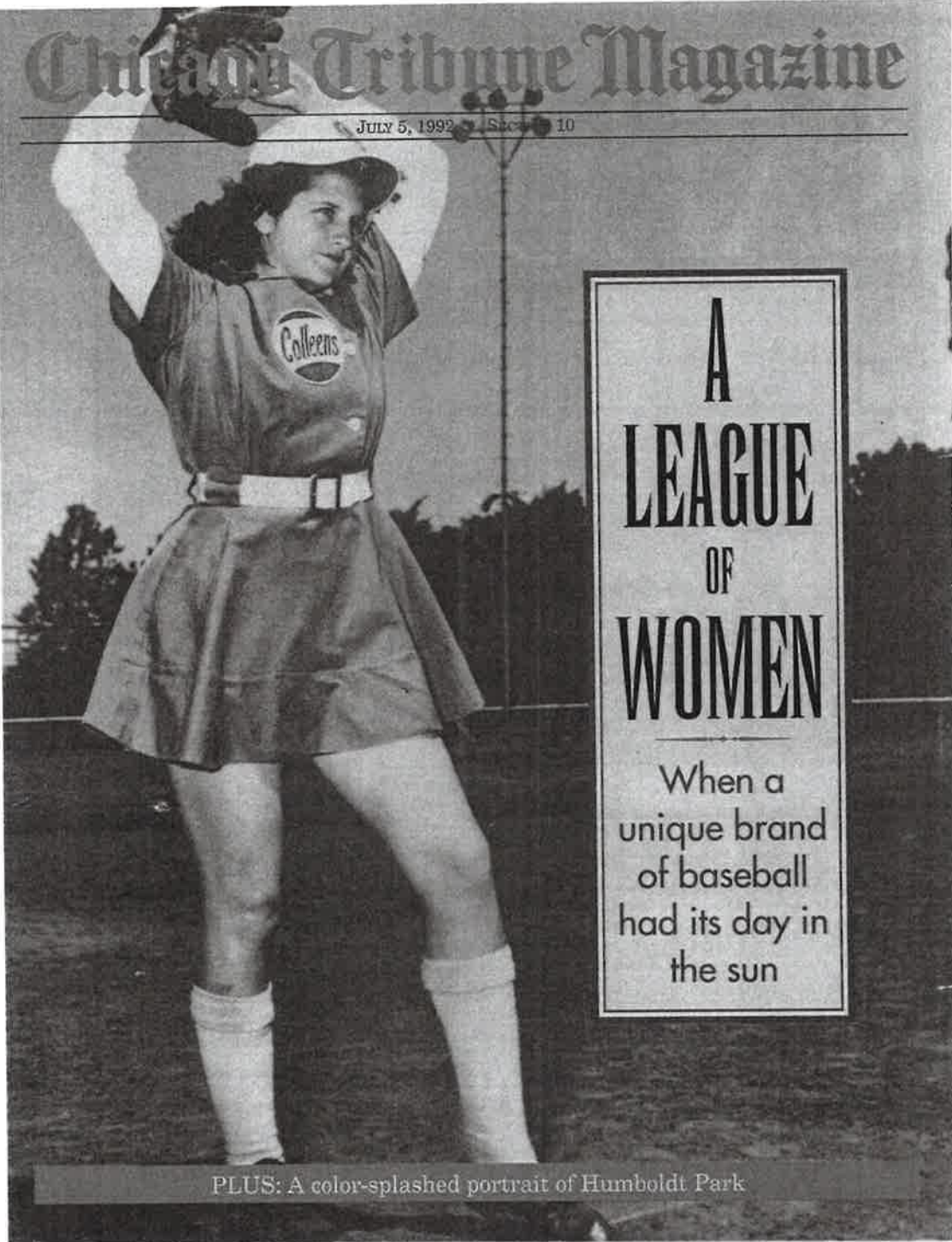
No one ever wins that kind of appeal in an argument with the ump, of course. But as every ballplayer knows, if you raise enough hell this time, the next decision just might go your way.

Her career batting average was only .225 but Davis' sense of humor endeared her to players and fans alike.



Chicago Tribune Magazine

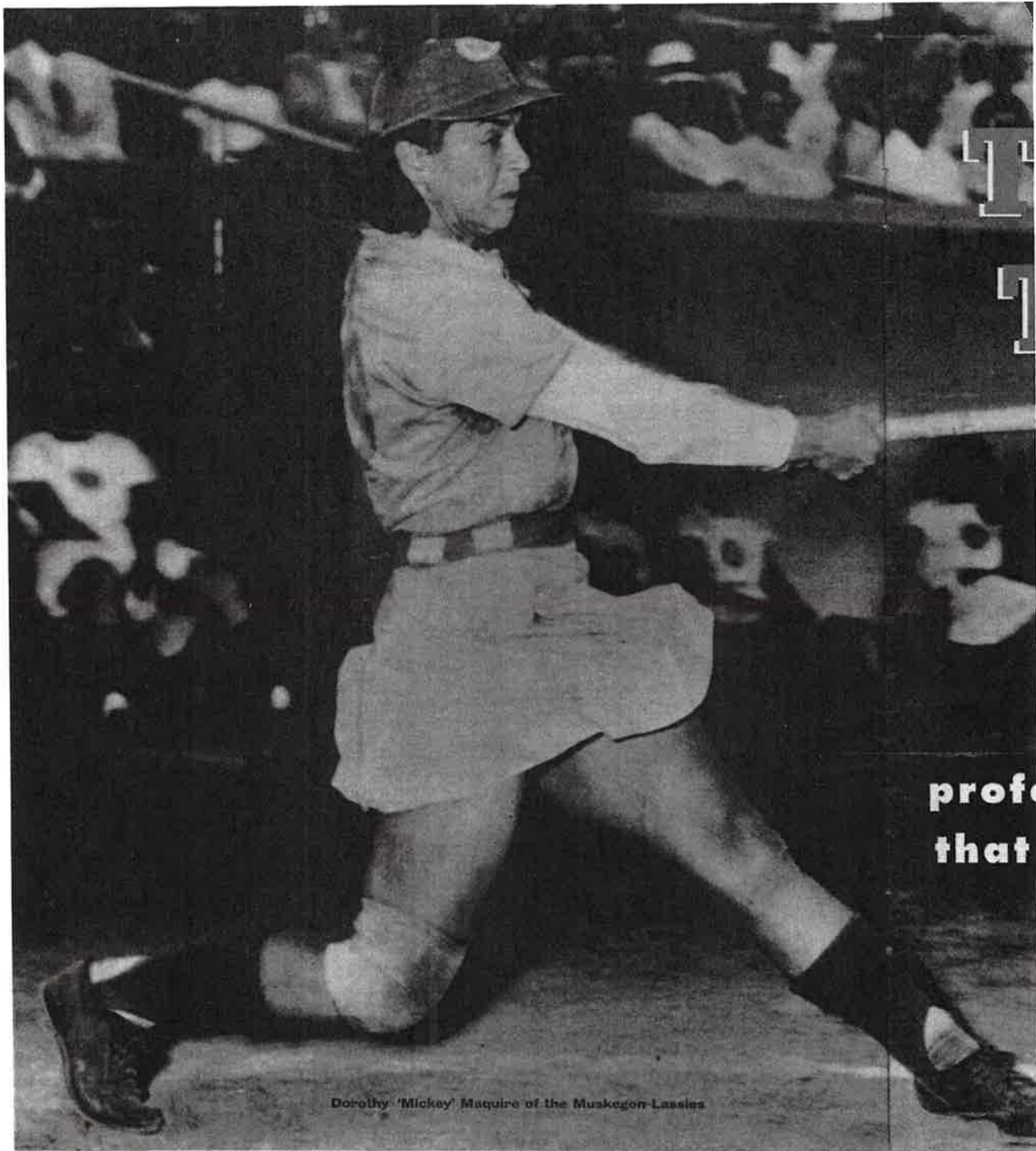
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A LEAGUE OF WOMEN

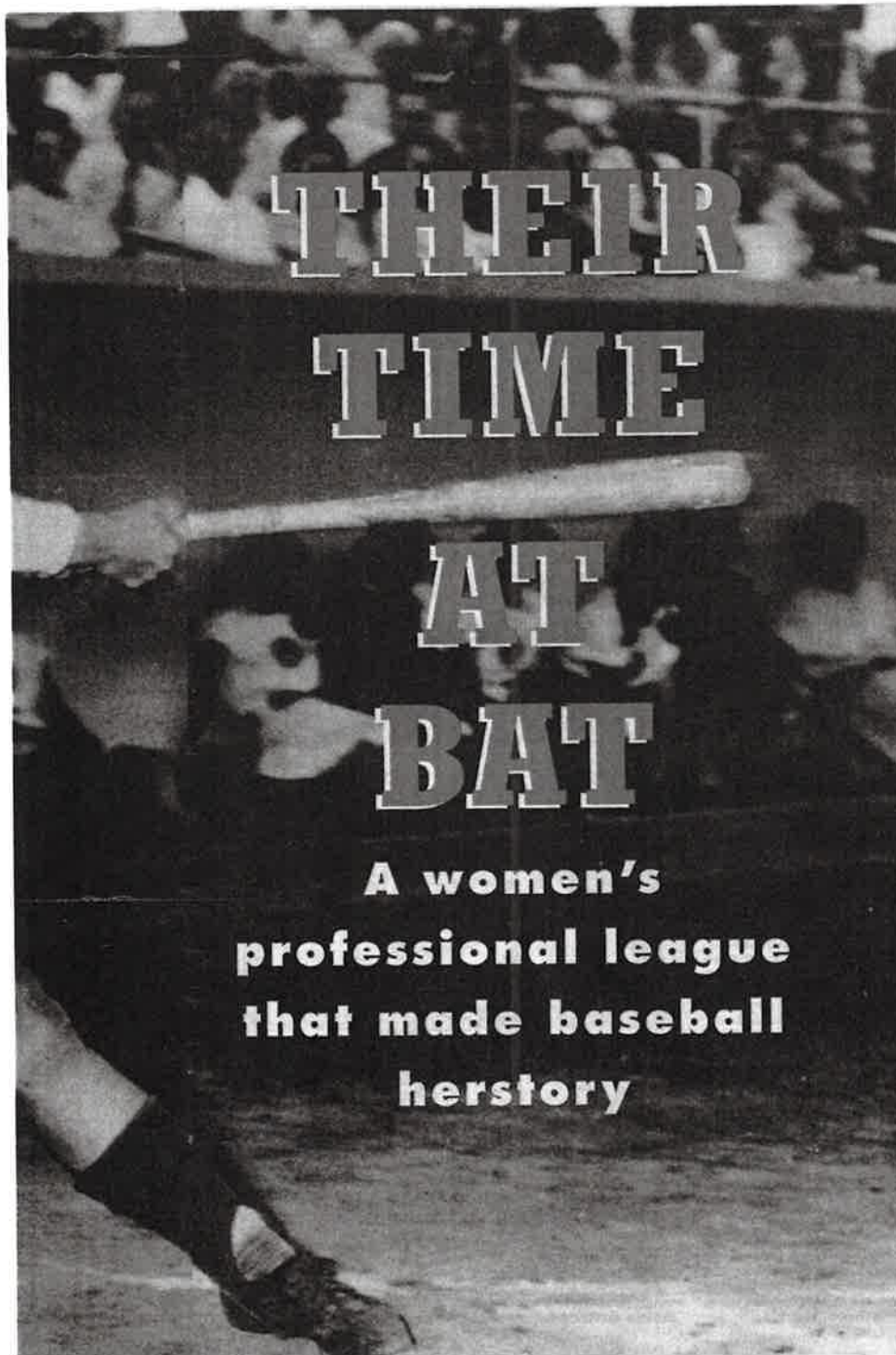
When a
unique brand
of baseball
had its day in
the sun

PLUS: A color-splashed portrait of Humboldt Park



Dorothy 'Mickey' Maquire of the Muskegon Lassies

prof
that



THEIR TIME AT BAT

**A women's
professional league
that made baseball
herstory**

Chicago Tribune Magazine
JULY 6, 1992

By Nancy Randle

IT'S 1937, AND SPRING IS IN THE AIR. AS DUSK SETTLES ON A WHITE FRAME FARMHOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF SADORUS, ILL. (POP. 800), DOTTIE SCHROEDER AND HER TWO BROTHERS GULP DOWN THEIR SUPPER AND BOIT FROM THE TABLE. THEY RUN LIKE CRAZY PAST A HUGE RED-AND-WHITE-STRIPED BARN TO THE PASTURE BEYOND. IT'S TIME FOR THEIR TWILIGHT RITUAL. IT'S TIME TO PLAY BALL!

THE LAST RAYS OF SUNLIGHT GLISTEN ON THE CORNFIELDS AS THE SCHROEDER KIDS ASSEMBLE IN THEIR MAKE-BELIEVE BALLPARK WHERE LIVESTOCK GRAZED EARLIER IN THE DAY. THERE'S NO MONEY FOR FANCY EQUIPMENT, SO THEY DO WHAT CHILDREN DO—TRANSFORM THE ORDINARY INTO THE MIRACULOUS. A SMALL TREE TRUNK BECOMES A BAT. THEIR BASEBALL IS IMAGINARY.

Dottie lines up at home plate. Brother Don delivers the pitch, and with a toss of her pigtail, the young girl "hits" a screaming line drive past an imaginary second base. She runs like the wind, circling the field to the roar of an imaginary audience as she revels in the glory of the game. She's running for a home run, and she's running headlong into a future exceeding her wildest dreams.

Six years later, 14-year-old Dottie and her dad climb aboard the train that speeds past their farm every day. They're on their way to St. Louis and preliminary tryouts for the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League. Walter Henry Schroeder had read about this new league in the Chicago Tribune. The inspiration of Chicago Cubs owner P.K. Wrigley, the league was the first such professional aggregation for women in the country.

Schroeder figured his daughter had a pretty fair chance to make the grade. She would and then some. In St. Louis, Dottie Schroeder would survive the cut from 66 to 2; turn 15 on her way to Wrigley Field for final tryouts; make the second cut to play with one of the first teams in the league; become an All-Star shortstop in 1952-54; and be the only woman to play all 12 years of America's only
(Continued on page 12)

Nancy Randle is a freelance writer based in Los Angeles.

Time at bat

Continued

professional women's league.

Dottie epitomized the kind of fresh-faced young women who traveled from all over the country to join the AAGPBL and become local heroes in the Midwest. Substitute a name and a few details and you've got Phyllis "Sugar" Koehn. Or Sophie Kurys. Or "Terrible Terry" Donahue. Or Doris Sams. Or Alma "Ziggy" Ziegler. Or Faye Dancer.

Their personalities ran the gamut from outrageous to subdued, but their backgrounds and character were similar. They were young; average age 20. They were innocent. For most, it was their first time away from home. The majority grew up in small towns, in families of modest means, and would rather play baseball than eat.

By 1948, their league grew to 10 teams and attracted more than a million fans. These Sweethearts of Swat played in dresses on teams that sported such names as Chicks, Lassies and Daisies. Their stars racked up stats worthy of many major leaguers. They fulfilled their dreams at a time when most of us are just beginning to conceive them. Along the way, they created a pre-eminent moment in baseball, feminism and American history that almost drifted into the past unrecognized and untold.

Long one of the nation's best-kept secrets, The All-American Girls Professional Baseball League has crossed the threshold from anonymity to renown. In the fall of 1988 Cooperstown's National Baseball Hall of Fame unveiled a "Women in Baseball" exhibit. The collection of tarnished trophies, faded photographs and unique uniforms honors the 545 women from the United States, Canada and Cuba who served in the league from 1943 until it ended in 1954.

"My feet are not hitting the floor yet," former MVP Doris Sams told a filmmaker documenting the ceremony, her immense pride mirroring that of her baseball buddies as recognition of their league grows.

They are gathering in theaters this month to watch their achievements immortalized in director Penny Marshall's movie "A League of Their Own," which is set in 1943 and stars Geena Davis, Tom Hanks and Madonna. The comedy/drama is written by Babaloo Mandel and Lowell Ganz, the screenwriters behind hits such as "City Slickers" and "Parenthood."

ONE DAY IN THE FALL OF 1942 PHILIP K. Wrigley, chewing-gum magnate and owner of the Cubs, summoned Ken Sells, the club's assistant general manager, to his office. The Office of War Information had warned Wrigley that the drafting of major-league players to serve in World War II might necessitate the shutdown of



NATIONAL BASEBALL LIBRARY PHOTO

Dorothy Kamenshek of the Rockford Peaches.

big-league baseball (a move that never materialized). "We've got to have something to put in the ballpark next year. Find something," Wrigley told Sells.

The two men and the Cubs board of directors brainstormed and came up with a solution: a women's baseball league. These "belles of the ball" would entertain a war-weary public trapped in medium and small towns by gas rationing. If the major leagues folded, Wrigley would move their games into the big-league stadiums.

Millionaire Wrigley supplied start-up costs and operating expenses for the teams for the first two years. In 1945 he sold off his interest to Art Meyerhoff, his Chicago advertising man. Meyerhoff handled publicity and management of the league, local businessmen from sponsoring cities owned the teams and Sells took on the job of president of the AAGPBL. "We only had about nine months to pull it off," remembers Sells, now an active 86-year-old living in Scottsdale, Ariz.

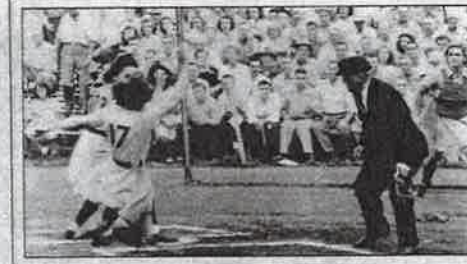
Scouts fanned out across the United States and Canada to recruit the best female athletes. They called the ranks of the enormously popular women's softball teams and held tryouts around the country. League candidates were offered the tempting wages of from \$50 to \$125 a week—salaries that meant a player's income often surpassed her father's.

In May the finalists traveled to Chicago and Wrigley Field, site of the deciding tryouts and the first spring training. The atmosphere crackled with anticipation.

Downers Grove resident Koehn recalls her moment of acceptance with crystal clarity. She got a signal from scout Jimmy Hamilton to follow him up to the Cubs' office above the grandstand. "It's hard to describe the joy of that moment," she says, slipping into a tearful silence and struggling for composure. "Talk about being on Cloud Nine. They offered me \$60 a week to play with the Kenosha Comets. That was twice the money I made on my job as a secretary at Oscar Mayer. I couldn't be-



The personalities ranged from outrageous to subdued.



The league's balance between superb athletics and feminine wiles took the sting out of potential critics.



NATIONAL BASEBALL LIBRARY PHOTO

Dottie Schroeder scores for the Kalamazoo Lassies.



The Ro

City:

- Rockford
- South Bend
- Kenosha
- Racine
- Milwaukee
- Minneapolis
- Fort Wayne
- Grand Rapids
- Peoria
- Muskegon
- Muskegon
- Kalamazoo
- Battle Creek
- *Chicago
- *Springfield

Compiled by form various league pu

*Official league m in 1949-50, also ser

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The players selectec first four teams—t Peaches, South Ben Racine Belles and Ken Sells picked these cities offered good ballpar proximity to Chicago easy to supervise.

At 10 a.m. on May 1 few took the field to k points of an entirely ne inherited the responsi ing Wrigley's vision, stipulation that thes like men. "We rewro



ous to subdued.



athletics and potential critics.



TRIAL BASEBALL LIBRARY PHOTO
mazoo Lassies.



The Rockford Peaches in 1943

AAGPBL Teams

City:	Team Name	Years Played
Rockford	Peaches	1943-1954
South Bend	Blue Sox	1943-1954
Kenosha	Comets	1943-1951
Racine	Belles	1943-1950
Milwaukee	Chicks	1944
Minneapolis	Millerettes	1944
Fort Wayne	Daisies	1945-1954
Grand Rapids	Chicks	1945-1954
Peoria	Redwings	1946-1951
Muskegon	Lassies	1946-1950-53
Muskegon	Belles	1953-1954
Kalamazoo	Lassies	1950-1954
Battle Creek	Belles	1951-1952
*Chicago	Colleens	1948
*Springfield	Sallies	1948

Compiled by former AAGPBL member Foye K. Dancer from various league publications.

*Official league members in 1948 only; played exhibition games in 1949-50, also serving as player-development teams.

lieve it. I was going to be paid to do what I loved to do most."

The players selected made up the first four teams—the Rockford Peaches, South Bend Blue Sox, Racine Belles and Kenosha Comets. Sells picked these cities because they offered good ballparks, and their proximity to Chicago made them easy to supervise.

At 10 a.m. on May 17, the chosen few took the field to learn the finer points of an entirely new game. Sells inherited the responsibility of fulfilling Wrigley's vision, including the stipulation that these teams play like men. "We rewrote the rules,"

Sells says. So that first season fans watched a hybrid—a blend of softball and baseball.

In the major leagues, the men threw a 9-inch ball overhand 60 feet 6 inches to home plate and ran on 90-foot basepaths. Women's softball players pitched underhand, using a 12-inch ball. Basepaths were 60 feet and the pitching distance was 43 feet. Softball rules forbade sliding or base stealing.

In the first year of the AAGPBL, the women threw a 12-inch ball underhand 40 feet to home plate. Basepaths were 65 feet. Runners were permitted to lead, slide and



PHOTO BY F.L. SIEGEL JR. STUDIO

steal. There were nine players instead of the usual ten in softball.

By 1948, the ball had shrunk to 10 1/2 inches, basepaths were lengthened to 72 feet, the pitching distance to 50 feet and, for the first year, the ball was thrown overhand.

By the end of 1954, the ball was 9 inches, the basepaths 85 feet and the pitching distance 60 feet. The women—give or take a foot or two—were playing regulation baseball.

Sells hired such future Hall of Famers as Max Carey and Jimmie Fox to manage the teams and keep up the quality of the play.

THE SECOND PART OF WRIGLEY'S VISION made it imperative for players to retain their femininity, on the field and off. The baseball mogul wanted to avoid the mannish, rough-and-tumble image of contemporary women's softball teams and the barnstorming Bloomer Girls of bygone days. Thus the command came down: "Look like women. Play like men."

Shoulder-length hair was mandatory, makeup essential, both on the field and off. The rules of public conduct and dress were specific: no slacks or jeans, no smoking or drinking, curfews observed. Chaperones traveling with the teams took on the roles of nurse, mother confessor and guardian of the feminine ideal.

The first three seasons, players attended charm school as part of spring training. Beauticians from the Helens Rubinstein Salon conducted classes in 1943; later, Chicago Tribune beauty and fashion editor Eleanor Nangle took over instruction in makeup, manners and "graceful social deportment at large."

Lavone "Pepper" Paire Davis, a shortstop and catcher for three teams and now an active retiree in California, offers one woman's perspective.

"All night long they expected us to sweat and swing and slide. All day long they expected us to giggle and glow and glide. Did you know that ladies glow, they don't sweat? We learned that in charm school."

The uniforms drew some criticism for their impracticality. Champion base stealer Sophie Kurys still sounds a little miffed when she dis-



Chicago's "Terrible Terry" Donahue in her playing days and today.

TRIBUNE PHOTO

usses the disadvantages of playing in a dress.

"They weren't conducive to good play. They did get some sliding pads for me and taped them to my thighs, but they were too cumbersome. So I took them off and took my chances with strawberries (severe abrasions). I had strawberries on strawberries. Sometimes now, when I first get up in the morning, I have problems with my thighs."

Even players who thought the charm school or the rules or the uniforms unreasonable took them in stride. If you were a woman in 1943 and had been hired to play baseball in a first-class league, putting your hair up in pin curls at night seemed a small price to pay.

Though it may seem sexist from the vantage point of the '90s, Wrigley and his players understood the nature of the times. Although it is true that in the age of Rosie the Riveter women enjoyed freedoms they'd never known, they were taking the place of men on the assembly lines out of necessity. Working outside the home still remained a mildly suspect activity, baseball a male preserve. The AAGPBL's balance between superb athletics and feminine wiles took the sting out of potential critics.

LEAVING FAMILY AND FRIENDS BEHIND, the girls of summer set out in rickety, unair-conditioned buses to bounce around the back roads of America and blaze a trail for women athletes to come.

Screenwriters Mandel and Ganz marvel at their gumption. "What struck us was, what a nerve thing to do," Mandel says. "We wanted to get that sense of you're 18, it's 1943 and you're a woman sitting in the middle of Oregon who is expected to stay home and marry the mailman and have about 700 kids. And you get on this train and you go to Chicago to play baseball. We hope what we've done in this movie is get a sense of, 'Wow, what a move that was!'"

Not everyone would agree at the time. One anonymous writer, in a Time magazine piece titled "Ladies of the Little Diamond," characterized the league as one of Wrigley's "radical ideas," called women's softball umpire Harry Wilson "henpecked," assessed women players as a "reasonable facsimile of the male" and described a disagreement between two players as a "fishwife argument."

But the condescending writer represented a minority voice; the (Continued on page 14)

Time at bat

Continued

league rapidly won an enthusiastic audience. The first time out, fans came for the novelty, but they came back for a better reason. "They might come out to see a flying pair of legs, but they would not have come back night after night, year after year if we weren't out there playing a darn good game," Davis says.

As crowds gathered in grandstands in parks illuminated by moth-battered floodlights, they beheld poetry in motion and an accumulation of first-rate stats.

A scam named Sophie Kurys nailed down astonishing stolen-base marks: 201 for a single season, 1,097 for a lifetime. For purposes of comparison, the Oakland Athletics' Rickey Henderson, the major leagues' all-



Madonna in the recently released movie "A League of Their Own."

time leading basestealer, has a single-season high of 180; a career high of 994 (through the 1991 season). Kurys did it in eight years; Henderson amassed his total in 13.

Helen Callaghan St. Aubin, mother of Casey Candaele of the Houston Astros, won the league's batting title in her second season with a .299 average. Newspapers called her a female Ted Williams. Two-time Player of the Year Jean Faut Eastman dominated the overhand pitching era with a 1.24 career earned-run average, including two perfect games. Compare that to all-time recordholder Walter Johnson's career ERA of 2.17.

Considered the best all-around player in the league, Dorothy Kamenshek inspired Wally Pipp, a superb glove man for the Yankees in the 1920s, to say she was "the fanciest fielding first baseman I've ever seen, man or woman." Kamenshek, a seven-time all star, turned down an offer from a minor-league men's

team to buy out her contract from the AAGPBL. "Strikeout Queen" Dottie Wiltse Collins mesmerized audiences on June 7, 1946, when she struck out a total of 16 Peoria Redwings en route to a season high of 294 strikeouts. The list goes on and on.

"It was just like men play now," says Chicago resident Terry Donahue, a sturdy utility player for the Redwings. "Except we didn't chew tobacco."

THE AAGPBL PROS MADE BASEBALL come alive despite a grueling schedule: six games a week plus a doubleheader on Sunday. Davis describes a typical routine: "We'd drive all night and sleep on the bus, get into a new town at 10 a.m., change our clothes and be on the field for a doubleheader by 11 a.m. on Sunday."

In 1949, when Chicago native Arlene Kotil played with the city's traveling team, the Colleens, they hit 40 different cities in 20 different states in three months. Her memories of that blur of activity are still vivid: daily letters home to family with every detail of every game and endless breaded veal cutlets. "I'd read the menu from right to left and order cutlets because they were the cheapest. To this day, I hate breaded veal cutlets."

A four-month season consisted of a 120-game schedule, plus a championship series. Players got four or five days off during the season. Teams traveled with a maximum of 15 members, meaning they played with injuries or, in the case of Dottie Collins, under unusual conditions.

Collins, one of the few married players, pitched right through her sixth month of pregnancy, a decision she made with a progressive doctor and disclosed only to her manager and her family. "He said, 'You'll know when to quit,' and I did." When she played games at home, Collins, who today is secretary-treasurer of the league's alumni association, cooked breakfast, made the beds and did the dishes every morning before practice.

The veterans of this rigorous schedule love to take good-natured jabs at the playing habits of today's baseball giants. "The men today are a bunch of babies," Koehn sniffs. "If they have a hangnail, they won't play," snarls Californian Faye Dancer, who would turn cartwheels and backflips on her way to centerfield. Adds St. Aubin, "If one of them has a little pulled muscle, he doesn't play."

ACTRESS ROSIE O'DONNELL, WHO PLAYS Madonna's best friend in "A League of Their Own," believes the message of the movie is, "Be yourself, go toward what is natural to you, even if it's baseball in the '40s and, supposedly, that's not for you." That's precisely what the All-Americans did, and their passion for the game started an epidemic of baseball fever.



Two Chicago Colleens in 1948, the only year the team was an official member of the AAGPBL.



The impracticality of the uniforms was a hindrance. Here chaperone Dorothy Green attends to a "strawberry" on the leg of Lois Florreich.

Fielding, pitching and batting their hearts out, the players inspired fierce loyalty in fans—even on foreign shores. In Havana, where spring training was held in 1947, the AAGPBL's exhibition games outdrew the Brooklyn Dodgers. Bodyguards accompanied players to beaches to fend off overexcited fans. Movietone News arrived on

the scene to shoot a game and released the footage in U.S. theaters under the title "Diamond Gals." The newsreel exposed millions of moviegoers to their skill.

On the home front, families filled the bleachers on a nightly basis. Residents competed for the privilege of housing the women when the teams played at home. "They

treated us like queens," Donahue called a couple with Ma and Pa and sta with them for the n years.

Townpeople invited over for chicken and cor Kenosha Chamber of bought corsages for t When the Rockford Pa went under, fans rai money to keep them Koehn, who once receiv for "accidentally" bum pire in the heat of an ar reimbursed by fans learned of the penalty.

War-time pressures u and fans in a mutual vival, and baseball helps sane. The All-American hibition games for sold camps and jitterbugge later at canteens. "We loved ones over there f some died," Pepper Dav felt it was our job to e people and keep morale doing our bit for the we

One of those exhibi made baseball histor known," Koehn says, not the Chicago Cubs the first night game Field. On July 1, 1943, teams from the AAGP night exhibition game gigantic WAG recruitin

BEING A LOCAL HERO OF fringe benefits. They Clubhouse Clydes or I Leonard—male baseb who took a shine to the field. "Wherever we wea to hang outside our hot up to us," St. Aubin

"We'd throw our bras do Pepper Davis, who o nickname honestly, we dating a different guy i One night it caught up another team member.

"We had been playin Rapids and came hor dates with fellows in There was gas ration thought we were safe. V in the stands and boyfriends from Grand our Ft. Wayne dates sit each other! We handle leaguers and hid unde stands after the game our chaperone into tel boys we had an emerg emergency. A red-gency!"

Faye Dancer ran Di race when it came to he you visit Cooperstown, y photo of Dancer making hook slide into third bas buoyant energy that fue earned her a reput ringleader when it carr stunts. "You didn't have to do anything twice," "Faye broke every rule! Koehn reports.

A week after joinin

found us like quana," Koehn says. Dunbar called a couple the roomed with Ma and Pa and stayed in touch over for chicken and corn roasts. The people invited entire teams from the Rockford Peaches almost when the Rockford Peaches almost went under fans raised enough money to keep them going. Sugar Koehn, who once received a \$10 fine for "accidentally" dumping an urn in the heat of an argument, was reimbursed by fans when they learned of the penalty.

Wartime pressures united players and fans in a mutual spirit of survival, and baseball helped keep them sane. The all-Americans played exhibition games for soldiers at Army camps and intertwined with them later at centers. "We all had our loved ones over there fighting, and we died," Pepper Davis says. "We did it was our job to entertain the people and keep morale up. We were doing our bit for the war."

One of those exhibition games made baseball history. Let it be known," Koehn says, "that it was not the Chicago Cubs that played the first night game at Wrigley Field. On July 1, 1943, two all-stars from the AAGPBL played a night exhibition game as part of a public WAC recruiting rally."

Being a local hero opened other fringe benefits. They were called Clubhouse Clydes or Locker Room Knights—male baseball groupies who look a shine to the girls on the field. "Whenever we were, guys used to hang outside our hotel, holding up to us," St. Aubin remembers. "We'd throw our hats down to them." Pepper Davis, who came by her name when it came to ball-playing. If you visit Cooperstown, you will see a block of Dancer making a similar look into third base. The same boyan't energy that fueled her play earned her a reputation as a night rider when it came to pulling skirts. You didn't have to ask Faye to do anything twice," Davis says. "Faye broke every rule in the book," Koehn reports.

A week after joining her team, Dancer ran a stol of curfew after a little innocent cavorting. When she was seated in the hotel lobby, the manager called her manager and her chapter one seated in the hotel lobby. When she doubled back to the rear entrance and stacked beer barrels on top of a pile of coal to reach the fire escape. Black with coal dust, she stripped off a screen, climbed through the window and beat a path to her room. "I was so scared of being caught, I didn't even go down to breakfast that morning."

ON SEPT. 5, 1964, THE ALL-AMERICAN KUNDEL BELIEVES SOMEDAY THE AAGPBL MAY PASS THE TORCH TO A NEW GENERATION. "THERE IS FEASIBILITY FOR A WOMEN'S BASEBALL LEAGUE. I BELIEVE THERE IS THE TALENT IN THIS COUNTRY TODAY TO DO IT. NO QUESTION ABOUT THAT. IT ALL COMES DOWN TO MONEY AND THAT MIRACLE, LIKE WE HAD BEFORE."

uhide director of the AAGPBL players association. "It will never happen quite the same way again." Koehn believes someday the AAGPBL may pass the torch to a new generation. "There is feasibility for a women's baseball league. I believe there is the talent in this country today to do it. No question about that. It all comes down to money and that miracle, like we had before."

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only year the AAGPBL.



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Women's Baseball during World War II



While the young men fought on the battlefield, young women took their place on the ball fields. Pictured here are members of the Springfield Sallies, one of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League teams.

Adam Peterik
Geneva Community High School, Geneva

America was in the middle of World War II. Baseball was at risk because, as citizens saw generously paid athletes "swatting balls while their loved ones were dying on foreign shores," interest declined and criticism went up, wrote historian Lois Browne. She also concluded that "war and baseball fished in the same stream. Both demanded the young and vigorous." Could baseball survive when all of its players were needed in combat?

Pearl Harbor had been attacked on December 7, 1941, and tensions grew. Americans everywhere prepared for shortages in food, clothing, gas, and many other daily items. "Citizens wondered if there would be enough to eat when soldiers needed food, or if there would be a way to travel when army tanks needed gasoline," wrote one historian.

During all this chaos Philip K. Wrigley wondered about baseball. Wrigley was the owner of the Chicago Cubs and a chewing gum factory. What would happen to him when guns were needed more than gum, and his players were needed for war? Many

men and women worried. Everyone worked to help in the war effort. Wrigley pitched in, too. He directed his gum-tree tappers to tap rubber trees for the war. He stopped wrapping his gum in foil and sent free gum to the soldiers.

Baseball was a bigger challenge. The president of the professional league wanted it to end because he thought that interest was gone and the league would lose money, but President Roosevelt convinced him otherwise. Roosevelt fought unemployment during the Depression by creating jobs. Now the war brought new jobs. Working men left to serve just when factories needed them for war production. Many of the workers who replaced them were women. During the war, women were building tanks, airplanes, trucks, and ships.

Wrigley believed these women could help more by playing baseball. Wrigley believed that baseball's survival depended on women during the war. "By 1942, when Wrigley was forming his professional women's league, the sight of a woman wearing pants was no longer offensive, as it had been. . . . But women who competed were still frowned upon," claimed historian Diane Helmer. Wrigley

wanted women to play. But, could women be popular and successful? Wrigley's advisors invited them to play. Wrigley pitched in, too. He directed his gum-tree tappers to tap rubber trees for the war. He stopped wrapping his gum in foil and sent free gum to the soldiers.

Overall, a game played by women was not the same, but it was a game played by women. Wrigley pitched in, too. He directed his gum-tree tappers to tap rubber trees for the war. He stopped wrapping his gum in foil and sent free gum to the soldiers.

Illinois soldier's end of World War II



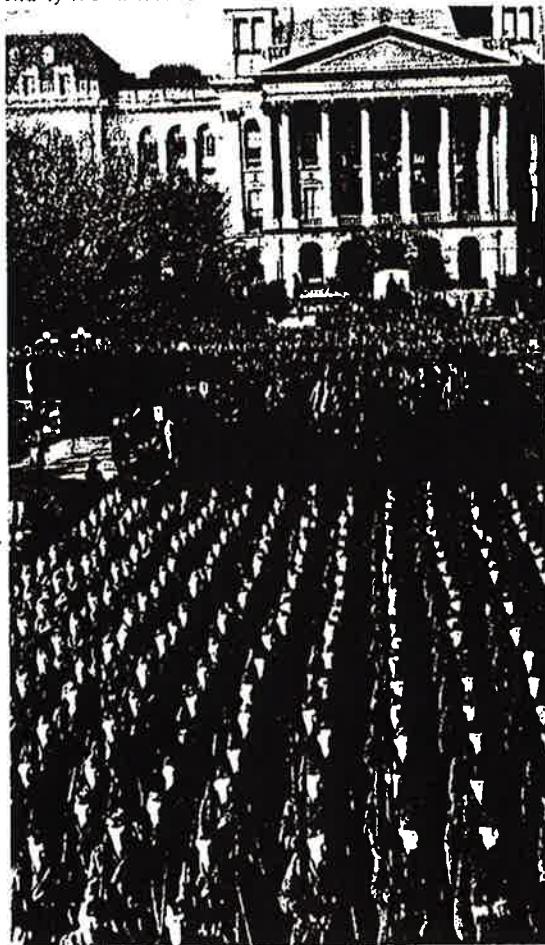
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wanted women playing hardball instead of softball. But, could women play hardball? Since softball was popular and available to women, Wrigley and his advisors invented a mix of the two. Underhand pitches of a 12-inch ball and 65-foot base path stayed the same, but runners were allowed to steal a base and lead off.

Overall, the game was similar to the baseball game played in the 1800s. The girls were to wear skirts to look like ladies and were to play exhibition games for soldiers at training camps, and visit military hospitals. They were to sell war bonds and teach young children to play baseball. Additionally, Wrigley paid them well. He invested \$100,000 of his own money to start the league, with \$22,500 going to each of four first-year teams. The \$10,000 left was used to run the league office in Chicago. As a result of the travel restrictions the cities had to be close to each other. Thus, four cities were chosen: South Bend, Indiana; Kenosha and Racine, Wisconsin; and Rockford, Illinois.

During the war, families were given just three

Illinois soldiers prepared for war, even as they marched in Springfield's annual Armistice Day parade, marking the end of World War I.



gallons of gas a week and the government allowed extra gas for people car-pooling to work. In 1943 cars could travel forty miles on three gallons of gas. Wrigley's plan was coming together; all Wrigley needed now were players.

Wrigley's recruiters tried to find women in high schools, village churches, organized sports, and industrial leagues in the U.S. and Canada. The most promising place was the Girls Athletic Association (GAA). Here were found many talented players and coaches. These players tried out for the first time from May 17 to May 26, 1943. At last, on May 26 the team rosters were announced and play began the next summer after spring training.

Home cities of the teams supported their team and got involved. Some even provided a home for these girls. During the war, many sacrifices were made and life was not fun. Men and women who stayed home waited by the mail box for a letter to arrive confirming their loved ones were still alive. Baseball had become a big part of the war effort because it kept people interested in daily activities. The All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) provided a means of escape from war worries and concerns. Of course, the girls never forgot about the troops. For example, in their pre-game, they would line up in a "V" formation for victory in a show of support for the troops overseas.

Then, in 1945 when the war finally ended, things changed for the worse. By 1948 the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League had reached its high point, and pitchers adopted overhand motions. The players who could not or would not throw overhand quit the league. New teams in Chicago (Colleens) and Springfield (Sallies) were formed but each failed by the end of 1948. Recruiting procedures declined greatly and so did attendance. As a result of post-war layoffs, unemployment rose and women could not find jobs in the winter. The league tried to expand, but, as a result of players having to leave and the lack of new players arriving, expansion failed. Many teams went into debt, and from 1949 to 1951 the league dwindled to nothing.

Men's baseball, though, went on. Merrie Fidler, one of the players, organized information on the girls league and said, "I didn't realize at the time I was being a pioneer. I was just doing my thesis." The players she met were also pioneers who had not considered themselves as such; they had just been playing the game they loved. As another woman said, "We were just kids then, and all we wanted to do was play baseball."—[From Lois Browne, *Girls of Summer; Baseball* (Videocassette, Ken Burns Production); Barbara Gregorich, *Women at Play*; Diana Helmer, *Belles of the Ballpark*; Susan Johnson, *When Women Played Hardball*; Michael Kiefer, "Hardball," *Women's Sports and Fitness* (Ap. 1992); Sue May, *A Whole New Ball Game*; Andrew Tilin, "A League of Their Own," *Women's Sports and Fitness* (Dec. 1991); David Quentin Voigt, *American Baseball*.]

The All-American Girls Professional Baseball League
Amazing Plays/Amazing Stories
by Jeff Eldridge
for the Midway Village and Museum Center, Rockford, IL

For twelve seasons, the Rockford Peaches thrilled their fans with some of the best baseball the AAGPBL had to offer. In the process, they won four league titles -- more than any other team -- including three in a row from 1948-50. Here are just some of the many exciting moments Rockford's "diamond girls" gave their fans:

OLIVE LITTLE THROWS THE LEAGUE'S FIRST NO-HITTER

On Sunday, August 15, 1943, the Peaches squared off against the first-place South Bend Blue Sox for a doubleheader matchup. The Peaches, for their part, were mired in a battle for last place with the Racine Belles. Unfortunately, it was a battle they would win. Having already finished in the cellar for the season's first half (behind the third-place Kenosha Comets), the Peaches were on their way to matching the feat for the second half. But on this Sunday afternoon, Peaches' hurler Olive Little would stun the league leaders in their own home park, temporarily slowing what would be their drive to the first girls' league title.

As it would happen, Little's opponent, Doris Barr, also pitched a no-hitter that day -- but only from the second inning forward. After retiring the first two Peaches in the top of the first, Barr opened the door for Rockford's offense. She gave up a base hit to Irene Ruhnke, and then walked the next two batters she faced to load the bases. Betty Jane Moczynski then singled to left, driving in two runs. Not a Peach would reach first base the rest of the way, but the damage had been done.

Although the *Rockford Register-Republic* would report Little's performance as the league's first perfect game, this wasn't true. A perfect game is one in which no batter reaches base. Little would walk three Belles this day, but still, her performance made AAGPBL history as its first no-hitter. Not only that, one of the free passes proved to be a blessing in disguise.

Little walked rival hurler Barr to open the Belles' half of the fifth. The next batter, Jo D'Angelo sent up a fly ball to left field. It looked like an out, but left fielder Moczynski came up short, allowing the ball to hit the ground before scooping it up. Barr, having held at first to prevent being doubled up, was then forced out at second. As a result, D'Angelo's at-bat was ruled a fielder's choice rather than a hit, preserving Little's date with history.

If the Peaches' first campaign would prove abysmal, Olive Little gave the Rockford faithful an early taste of glory in the process. It would be, as they say, a taste of things to come.¹

1948 -- THE FIRST OF THREE STRAIGHT

The Peaches won the first of their record four AAGPBL titles in 1945, knocking off the Fort Wayne Daisies four games to one in what the league dubbed the "Shaugnessy Playoffs."² But it was the years 1948-50 that would see the real Rockford dynasty. Here, then, is a brief account of the first of those championship runs.

In its summation of the Peaches' season following their successful playoff campaign, the *Rockford Register Republic* portrayed a team of overachievers:

¹ "Olive Little Hurls First Perfect Game in All-American," *Rockford Register-Republic*, 16 August 1943, 19.

² I have yet to determine where this name comes from. Presumably Shaughnessy was someone affiliated with the league, but at this time, who that is remains a mystery to me. In all of my research, I have yet to come upon anyone by that name.

"(Manager Bill Allington has done) what many an observer considers the best job of managing the league has seen in many a year. Bill, who also guided the Peaches to their first series championship in 1945, this past spring took over a team on which rookies filled several key spots.

He had the Peaches playing ball for him all the way. For a time they were in first place, then slipped down in the standings as more experienced outfits began to fashion winning streaks of their own. But when the season entered the final stretch, he had the Peaches at their peak. Injuries were at a minimum, pitching was the best in the league, the fielding was steady -- but best of all, the Peaches were a 'running ball club,' carrying the fight to the opposition."³

Final league regular season standings remain at question to this point. Officially documented records on the AAGPBL website are contradicted by contemporary figures published in the *Rockford Register-Republic* on September 8, 1948. I submit both sets of league standings here.

*Final league standings for the 1948 season as recorded at www.aagpbl.org, followed by team records as reported September 8, 1948 in the *Rockford Register-Star*, in bold.*

EASTERN DIVISION

Grand Rapids Chicks (77 - 47) (77- 48)

Muskegon Lassies (66 - 57) (67- 58)

South Bend Blue Sox (57- 69) (57- 69)

Fort Wayne Daisies (53 - 72) (53 - 73)

Chicago Colleens (47- 76) (47- 77)

WESTERN DIVISION

Racine Belles (76 - 49) (77 - 49)

Rockford Peaches (74 - 49) (75 - 50)

³ "Allington Says His Farewells, Promises to Be Back in 1949," *Rockford Register-Republic*, 29 September 1948, 23.

Peoria Redwings (70 - 55) (71 - 55)
Kenosha Comets (61 - 64) (62 - 64)
Springfield Sallies (41 - 84) (41 - 84)

Regardless of which figures may be correct, in 1948 Rockford's Western Division dominated, with its teams posting three of the top four regular season records. The Peaches' mark was third best in the league.

They entered the championship series on a roll, having won six in a row to sweep both Kenosha and Racine in the first and second round series of the playoffs, respectively. They'd done it mainly with strong defense and fabulous pitching. In the first round, amazingly, two Rockford pitchers threw no-hitters. In game 1, Lois Florreich recorded her *third* no-hitter of the season, blanking the Comets, 6-0.⁴ Kenosha scratched out just two hits against Nicky Fox the next day in a 3-2 Peaches victory.⁵ Then Marge Holgerson no-no'd the Comets again to take the series.⁶

Round 2 against Racine continued the sterling mound work from Rockford pitchers. Lois Florreich displayed her mastery again in Game 1, carrying another no-hitter into the seventh, when Racine's Eleanor Dapkus reached safely against her. Florreich quickly

⁴ "Peaches, Comets Play in Kenosha Tonight; Here on Saturday," *Rockford Register-Republic*, 10 September 1948, 26.

⁵ "Peaches Return to Home Field; Meet Comets Again Tonight," *Rockford Register-Republic*, 11 September 1948, 13.

⁶ Unfortunately, I have been unable to come up with the score of the decisive third game against Kenosha. It was played on a Saturday; the *Register-Republic* did not publish on Sundays, and Monday's paper simply alluded to the fact that Holgerson had thrown a no-hitter to clinch the series. It then went on to report on Sunday's second round opener against Racine. Examinations of the *Chicago Tribune* of those days revealed no reportage at all of AAGPBL playoffs. Holdings of the *Chicago Sun-Times* at Founders' Memorial Library at NIU date back only as far as 1960. I have yet to find any sources that might contain this information.

regained form, however, as that would be the only Racine hit of the game, which Rockford took, 2-0.⁷

By comparison, Racine's six hits in a 3-1 loss to the Peaches in game 2 represented an offensive outburst. Rockford's Fox got into trouble early, giving up a triple and two singles in the first inning, but she was bailed out by her teammates' stellar defense. In particular, catcher Jean Lovell nailed two would-be base stealers in the frame to minimize the damage. With her help, Fox was able to hold the opposition to a single run in the first, which would prove to be the extent of their offensive output for the day.⁸

Following her no-hit performance against Kenosha, Marge Holgerson dominated again in Game 3, holding the Belles to just two singles. It was a good thing, because her Racine counterpart, Irene Kotowicz, was also on her game. Rockford scattered just five hits against Kotowicz, scoring only once. In the fifth inning a single, an error and a couple of well-placed sacrifice bunts allowed the Peaches to manufacture their only run of the ballgame. But behind Holgerson, it was enough and the Peaches clinched the second round with a 1-0 win.

A tally of the statistics reveals some stunning numbers. All told, in these first six playoff games, Rockford hurlers gave up just three runs and eleven hits in 54 innings. One would be hard pressed to find a more impressive post-season performance by any pitching staff -- in any league.⁹

For all their success on the diamond, though, the Peaches had a "field" problem of a much different sort on their hands. The lease on their home stadium, Beyer Field, had actually expired during the Racine series. Normally, in September the "Peach Orchard," as it was

⁷ "Florrelch's One-Hitter Gives Peaches 2-0 Win Over Racine," *Rockford Register-Republic*, 13 September 1948, 40.

⁸ "Peaches Need One More Win as Play-off Switches to Racine," *Rockford Register-Republic*, 14 September 1948, 13.

affectionately called, was turned over to high school football. As the Peaches prepared to meet the Fort Wayne Daisies for the championship, there was uncertainty as to whether the Rockford girls would have a home field to play on.

With football already scheduled in conflict with the opening weekend of the AAGPBL championship series, there was talk of the action being moved to nearby Rox Park. But in the end the local schools agreed to allow the Peaches to finish out the season in their Orchard. This was offered on condition that the infield be re-sodded by the following Wednesday, by which time the series was to shift to Fort Wayne for its conclusion.

The Daisies had problems of their own to contend with. Their manager, Dick Bass, had recently left the club and no replacement had materialized¹⁰. In addition, one of the club directors, Hans Mueller had resigned just before the playoffs began. It should be accounted to the team's credit that despite their poor regular season performance, they had reached the championship series behind what they dubbed "the board of strategy," a tandem of three Daisy players.¹¹

Details -- even the final score -- are thus far unavailable for Game 1. As noted in the footnotes for this essay, the *Rockford Register-Republic* did not publish on Sundays. Typically, the paper made only passing -- if any -- mention of Saturday games in Monday's sports sections. In the case of the first game of the 1948 championship series, it can only be stated that the Peaches won. The first reportage of series play was of Game 2, which noted

⁹ "Peaches Uncertain of Playing Field as Final Round Nears," *Rockford Register-Republic*, 15 September 1948, 19.

¹⁰ The *Register-Republic* is unclear as to the nature of Bass's departure or when it occurred. It only reported, on September 17, that "Dick Bass is out as pilot and Hans Mueller, one of the club directors, resigned just before the play-offs started." One can only presume, given these facts, that Bass must have departed too recently for the Daisies to replace him.

¹¹ "Championship Round Opens Saturday Night at Peach Orchard," *Rockford Register-Republic*, 17 September 1948, 29.

that Rockford's victory gave them a 2-0 advantage in games played. No direct mention of Game 1 -- in any respect -- was given.

A franchise-record crowd of 6,047 saw the Peaches take a 3-2 victory over Fort Wayne in Game 2. Only two Peaches were able to score hits off Daisies pitcher Donna Cook, but the most was made of them. Dotty Ferguson led the way, driving in two runs on a 3-for-3 hitting performance.

Fort Wayne drew first blood, touching Nicky Fox for a run in the top half of the first. The Peaches tied the game in their half of the inning when Dotty Kamenshek stole home -- one of six steals by Rockford base runners in the frame. Despite the frenzy on the base paths, Cook and the Daisy defense held tough and the inning ended at 1-1. Single runs in the fourth and six innings proved enough. The Daisies rallied in the eighth to trim the score to 3-2, but Fox and the Rockford defense made it hold up the rest of the way to give the Peaches a 2-0 series advantage.¹²

Having chalked up eight straight playoff victories, the Peaches were anxious to get one last home win to carry a commanding 3-0 lead to Racine. Mother Nature, however, would try their patience. Two straight days of rain on Monday and Tuesday postponed Game 3 until Wednesday night, when the Peach Orchard had finally dried out. The Rockford schools again cooperated, allowing an extension on the Wednesday deadline for re-sodding, determining that the ground was too wet for the work to be done anyway.

For the long-awaited third contest, Fort Wayne put southpaw Annabelle Lee on the mound. The Peaches promptly rocked her for four runs in the first, followed by four more in the second, chasing Lee to the showers before she'd retired a single batter in the inning. From

¹² "Record Crowd of 6,047 Sees Peaches Beat Fort Wayne, 3-2," *Rockford Register-Republic*, 20 September 1948, 28.

there, the Peaches cruised to a 10-0 win behind yet another masterful performance by Marge Holgerson. She threatened to pull off yet another Rockford no-hitter until it was spoiled by a couple of Fort Wayne singles in the ninth. Undeterred, she buckled down to fan the last two Daisies she faced to end the game.¹³

The Peaches had now established a new AAGPBL record with nine straight post-season victories and were gunning for a perfect 10-0 sweep as the action shifted to Fort Wayne. With their ace, Lois Florreich, scheduled to start, the stage was set.

Florreich once again turned in a fine performance, going the distance and giving up just three hits with eight strikeouts. Unfortunately, however, the brilliant Rockford defense committed an uncharacteristic three errors (including one by Florreich) to escort the Daisies to a 4-2 victory. The masterpiece post-season drive had been marred, but the Peaches were still in command at three games to one.¹⁴

The next day, Saturday, September 25, the two teams squared off for Game 5 with Nicky Fox taking the mound for the Peaches. At the outset, it looked as if Rockford's bad luck might continue as a first inning error helped Fort Wayne to a 1-0 lead. After that, though, Fox pitched shutout ball until she was relieved by Lois Florreich in the seventh.

The Peaches scored all their runs in the fourth. Fox and centerfielder Dotty Ferguson drew walks, and Fox scored on Dotty Kamenshek's single. Shortstop Snookie Harrell bunted safely to score Ferguson. Daisies pitcher Annabelle Lee then tried to pick Harrell off at first, resulting in Harrell being caught in a rundown. As Fort Wayne's infield was closing in on her, Kamenshek bolted for home. That's when shortstop Dotty Schroeder opted to let Harrell go, gunning to nail Kamenshek at the plate instead. In the confusion she failed to see her second

¹³ "Peaches Sweep 3rd Straight Play-off Game from Daisies, 10-0," *Rockford Register-Republic*, 23 September 1948, 31.

baseman, Marge Callaghan, bouncing the throw off the top of Callaghan's head and into the grandstands. When the dust had settled, Kamenshek had scored and Harrell was at third. The Peaches would post two more runs for a 4-1 lead at inning's end.

Fort Wayne fought to the end, scoring in the ninth to make it 4-2 and threatening to do much more. They would load the bases before Florreich finally retired the side to end the game. The Rockford Peaches had won the 1948 title.¹⁵

Besides celebrating their championship, the girls were thrilled at the prospect of a handsome post-season payday. Fans of today's multi-million dollar sports industry might be intrigued (or amused) at just what was considered big money in those days.

The AAGPBL's post-season was considered to be a collection of "players' series," with all revenues (minus taxes and expenses) being shared by the players and coaches. For each playoff series, the proceeds were split on a 60-40 basis, with the winners taking the sixty-percent share. The Peaches, of course, were due for sixty percent of the take for all of their games. 36,516 fans attended the eleven games Rockford played -- a league record. They divided their winnings into seventeen equal shares -- fifteen for the girls, and one each for Manager Bill Allington and chaperone Dotty Green. When all was said and done, each share amounted to \$432.12.¹⁶ To put this in perspective, consider that today's highest-paid

¹⁴ "Fox Picked to Hurl Tonight," *Rockford Register-Republic*, 25 September 1948, 13.

¹⁵ Account of Game 5 from "Peaches Slice Prize Melon," *Rockford Register-Republic*, 27 September 1948, 31 -- *except* details of Rockford's fourth-inning scoring, from "Allington Says His Farewells, Promises to Be Back in 1949," *Rockford Register-Republic*, 29 September 1948, 23. This second account of the fourth inning contains factual differences in the sequence of events that led to Rockford's scoring (without acknowledging there to be any discrepancies). I am operating under the assumption that where the two accounts differ, the second one is likely to have been presented with corrections to the first.

¹⁶ "Peaches Split \$7,000 Play-off Purse into 17 Equal Shares," *Rockford Register-Republic*, 6 October 1948, 21.

ballplayer, Alex Rodríguez of the Texas Rangers, earns over \$150,000 *per game*.¹⁷ And he doesn't even have to slide in a skirt.

* * * * *

In addition to their collective success, several Rockford Peaches were individually honored by being named to the 1948 AAGPBL All-Star team. While the Grand Rapids Chicks landed the most starters on the squad (four), the Peaches had the most players on the unit as a whole (five). The full roster is shown here:

FIRST TEAM:

1B - Dorothy Kamenshek - **Rockford**
2B - Sophie Kurys - Racine
SS - Dorothy Harrell - **Rockford**
3B - Madeline English - Racine
LF - Audrey Wagner - Kenosha
CF - Merle Keagle - Grand Rapids
RF - Connie Wisniewski - Grand Rapids
C - Ruth Lessing - Grand Rapids
P - Alice Haylett - Grand Rapids
P - Dorothy Mueller - Peoria
P - Lois Florreich - **Rockford**

Utility Infielders:

Bonnie Baker - South Bend
Marge Villa - Kenosha

Utility Outfielders:

Marie Mahoney - South Bend

¹⁷ Based on Rodríguez' \$25 million annual salary divided by 162 regular season games.

Eleanor Callow - **Rockford**

Mary Reynolds - Peoria

Thelma Eisen - Fort Wayne

Lillian Faralla - South Bend

Melba Alspaugh - **Rockford**

SECOND TEAM:

1B - Mary Wisham - Peoria

2B - Dorothy Stolze - Muskegon

SS - Ernestine Petras - Chicago

3B - Pauline Ptrok - South Bend

LF - Edythe Perlick - Racine

RF - Doris Sams - Muskegon

C - Dorothy Chapman - Muskegon

P - Joanne Winter - Racine

P - Eleanor Dapkus - Racine

(No center fielder is listed for the second team.)¹⁸

¹⁸ "Three Peaches Are All-Stars," *Rockford Register-Republic*, 30 September 1948.

**The All-American Girls Professional Baseball League
Charm School Guide**
by Jeff Eldridge
for the Midway Village and Museum Center, Rockford, IL

The following text was taken from the charm school guide located in the collections of the National Baseball Hall of Fame Library.

- **Foreword**
- **Beauty Routines**
- **Clothes**
- **Etiquette**

FOREWORD

When you become a player in the All-American Girls Baseball League you have reached the highest position that a girl can attain in this sport. The All-American Girls Baseball League is getting great public attention because it is pioneering a new sport for women.

You have certain responsibilities because you too, are in the limelight. Your actions and appearance both on and off the field reflect on the whole profession. It is not only your duty to do your best to hold up the standard of this profession but to do your level best to keep others in line.

The girls in our League are rapidly becoming the heroines of youngsters as well as grownups all over the world. People want to be able to respect their heroines at all times. The All-American Girls Baseball League is attempting to establish a high standard that will make you proud that you are a player in years to come.

We hand you this manual to help guide you in your personal appearance. We ask you to follow the rules of behavior for your own good as well as that of the future success of girls' baseball.

In these few pages you will find many of the simple and brief suggestions which should prove useful to you during the busy baseball season. If you plan your days to establish an easy and simple routine, so that your meals are regular and well balanced, so that you have time for outside play and relaxation, so that you sleep at least eight hours each night and so that your normal functions are regular, you will be on the alert, do your job well and gain the greatest joy from living. Always remember that your mind and your body are interrelated and you cannot neglect one without causing the other to suffer. A healthy mind and a healthy body are the true attributes of the All-American girl.

BEAUTY ROUTINES

Your
ALL-AMERICAN GIRLS BASEBALL LEAGUE BEAUTY KIT
Should always contain the following:

Cleansing Cream/Lipstick
Rouge Medium
Cream Deodorant
Mild Astringent
Face powder for Brunette
Hand Lotion
Hair Remover

You should be the best judge of your own beauty requirements. Keep your own kit replenished with the things you need for your own toilette and your beauty culture and care. Remember the skin, the hair, the teeth and the eyes. It is most desirable in your own interests, that of your teammates and fellow players, as well as from the standpoint of the public relations of the league that each girl be at all times presentable and attractive, whether on the playing field or at leisure. Study your own beauty culture possibilities and without overdoing your beauty treatment at the risk of attaining gaudiness, practice the little measure that will reflect well on your appearance and personality as a real All-American girl.

Suggested Beauty Routine

"After the Game"

Remember, the All-American girl is subjected to greater exposure through her activities on the diamond, through exertion in greater body warmth and perspiration, through exposure to dirt, grime and dust and through vigorous play to scratches, cuts, abrasions and sprains. This means extra precaution to assure all the niceties of toilette and personality. Especially "after the game," the All-American girl should take time to observe the necessary beauty ritual, to protect both her health and appearance. Here are a few simple rules that should prove helpful and healthful "after the game."

1. Shower well and soap the skin.
2. Dry thoroughly to avoid chapping or chafing.
3. Apply cleansing cream to face remove with tissue.
4. Wash face with soap and water.
5. Apply skin astringent.
6. Apply rouge moderately but carefully.
7. Apply lipstick with moderate taste.
8. Apply eye makeup if considered desirable.
9. Apply powder.

10. Check all cuts, abrasions or minor injuries.

If you suffer any skin abrasion or injury, or if you discern any aches or pains that do not appear to be normal, report them at once to your coach, chaperon or the person responsible for treatment and first aid. Don't laugh off slight ailments as trivialities because they can often develop into serious infection or troublesome conditions that can handicap your play and cause personal inconvenience. See that your injuries, however slight, receive immediate attention. Guard your health and welfare.

Additional Beauty Routine

"Morning and Night"

In the morning, when you have more time to attend to your beauty needs, you will undoubtedly be enabled to perform a more thorough job. Use your cleansing cream around your neck as well as over the face. Remove it completely and apply a second time to be sure that you remove all dust, grease and grime. Wipe off thoroughly with cleansing tissue. Apply a lotion to keep your hands as lovely as possible. Use your manicure set to preserve your nails in a presentable condition and in keeping with the practical needs of your hands in playing ball.

TEETH

Not a great deal need be said about the teeth, because every All-American girl instinctively recognizes their importance to her health, her appearance and her personality. There are many good tooth cleansing preparations on the market and they should be used regularly to keep the teeth and gums clean and healthy. A regular visit to a reliable dentist is recommended and certainly no tooth ailment should be neglected for a moment.

BODY

Unwanted or superficial hair is often quite common and it is no problem to cope with in these days when so many beauty preparations are available. If you have such hair on arms or legs, there are a number of methods by which it can be easily removed. There is an odorless liquid cream which can be applied in a few moments, permitted to dry and then showered off.

DEODORANTS

There are a number of very fine deodorants on the market which can be used freely all over the body. The most important feature of some of these products is the fact that the fragrance stays perspiration-proof all day long. These deodorants can be used especially where excess perspiration occurs and can be used safely and effectively without retarding natural perspiration. The All-American girl is naturally susceptible because of her vigorous activities and it certainly pays dividends to be on the safe side. Deodorant keeps you fresh and gives you assurance and confidence in your social contacts.

EYES *"The Eyes are the Windows of the Soul"*

The eyes indicate your physical fitness and therefore need your thoughtful attention and care. They bespeak your innermost thoughts, they reflect your own joy of living or they can sometimes falsely bespeak the listlessness of mind and body. Perhaps no other feature of your face has more to do with the impression of beauty, sparkle and personality which you portray.

A simple little exercise for the eyes and one which does not take much time can do much to strengthen your eyes and add to their sparkle and allure. Turn your eyes to the corner of the room for a short space of time, then change to the other corner, then gaze at the ceiling and at the floor alternately. Rotating or rolling your eyes constitutes an exercise and your eyes will repay you for the attention that you give to them. There are also vitamins prescribed for the care of the eyes. Drink plenty of water and eat plenty of vegetables. We all know well that the carotene forces found in carrots a definite dietary aid to eyesight. Use a good eyewash frequently and for complete relaxation at opportune moments, lie down and apply an eye pad to your eyes for several minutes.

HAIR *"Woman's Crowning Glory"*

One of the most noticeable attributes of a girl is her hair, woman's crowning glory. No matter the features, the clothes, the inner charm or personality, they can all suffer beneath a sloppy or stringy coiffure. Neither is it necessary to feature a fancy or extravagant hairdo, because a daily program for the hair will help to keep it in healthful and attractive condition.

Neatness is the first and greatest requirement. Arrange your hair neatly in a manner that will best retain its natural style despite vigorous play. Off the diamond, you can readily arrange it in a softer and more feminine style, if you wish. But above all, keep your hair as neat as possible, on or off the field.

Brushing the hair will help a great deal more than is realized. It helps to stimulate the scalp which is the source of healthful hair growth. It develops the natural beauty and luster of the hair. And it will not spoil the hairdo. When brushing, bend over and let your head hang down. Then brush your hair downward until the scalp tingles. Just a few minutes of this treatment each day will tend to keep your scalp in fine condition and enhance the beauty of your "crowning glory."

MOUTH

Every woman wants to have an attractive and pleasing mouth. As you speak, people watch your mouth and you can do much, with a few of the very simplest tools, to make your mouth invitingly bespeak your personality. Your beauty aids should, of course, include an appropriate type of lipstick and a brush. They should be selected with consideration and care.

With your lipstick, apply two curves to your upper lip. Press your lips together. Then, run your brush over the lipstick and apply it to your lips, outlining them smoothly. This is the artistic part of the treatment in creating a lovely mouth.

Patient practice and care make perfect. Open your mouth and outline your own natural curves. If your lips are too thin to please you, shape them into fuller curves. Now, use a tissue between your lips and press lightly to take off excess lipstick. If you wish to have a "firmer foundation", use the lipstick a second time and use the tissue "press" again.

Caution: Now that you have completed the job, be sure that the lipstick has not smeared your teeth. Your mirror will tell the tale and it is those little final touches that really count.

HANDS

The hands are certainly among the most expressive accoutrements of the body. They are always prominent and noticeable and while feminine hands can be lovely and lily white, as described in the ads, the All-American girl has to exercise practical good sense in preserving the hands that serve her so faithfully and well in her activities. Cleanliness and neatness again come to the fore. Your hands should be thoroughly cleaned and washed as frequently as seems desirable or necessary, and especially after games, they should be cleaned to remove all dust and grime. Soap and water and pumice will do this job to perfection. Then a protective cream should be applied to keep hands soft and pliable and to avoid cracking and over-dryness. Your nails should be gone over lightly each day, filing to prevent cracks and splits, oiling for the cuticle.

The length of your nails, of course, depends largely upon the requirements of your play. Keep them neat and clean and your hands will always be attractive.

FACE *"All Beauty Comes From Within"*

To the All-American girl, who is exposed to the elements, to the sun, to the wind and to the dust, it is most essential that every precaution be taken for the care of the skin. It should be covered with a protective substance of cream or liquid, depending entirely upon whether your skin is dry or oily. If it is dry, the cream type is recommended and if it is oily, you should use the liquid type. A good cleansing cream can serve as a cleanser, a powder base, a night cream and also a hand lotion. It is a good idea to have such an all-around utility cream on hand at all times and to use it regularly for these purposes.

FOR YOUR COLORING - again it depends on your particular complexion and whether you have an abundance of natural color tones or need very little coloring. You can determine this in keeping with good taste to acquire the necessary results. People who are naturally pale, of course, need the coloring to help their complexion.

CLOTHES

Clothes, of course, have always been one of woman's great problems and it might seem so to the All-American girl. However, with the exercising of good taste, the All-American Girls Baseball League player can solve her problem in a tasteful manner and without great expense, without being encumbered with too great a wardrobe for the summer months. The accent, of course, is on neatness and feminine appeal. That is true of appearances on the playing field, on the street or in leisure moments. The uniforms adopted by the league have been designed for style and appeal and there is a tremendous advantage to the girl and to the team which makes the best of its equipment. From the standpoint of team morale, there is a real "lift" noticeable in the smartly turned out and neatly arrayed aggregation. And from the public appeal standpoint, it is surprising how the crowd will respond to the team that appears on the field with a neatness and "snap" in its appearance. The smart looking teams invariably play smart ball and you can add to your own drawing power and crowd appeal by looking the part of a ball player on the field. Wear your cap and keep it securely in place. Keep your uniforms clean and neat as possible. Always secure your stockings so that they are smooth and neat and remain in place. Keep your shoes clean and shining. And see if you don't feel better and play better ball.

Here are some suggestions for the type of wardrobe which still proves most useful and practical for you during the ball playing season:

1. A dark suit made of material that is not easily crushed. (A dark suit is suggested in preference to a light suit because it will retain its neatness better in traveling and also in inclement weather.)
2. Blouses that are easily laundered will add sparkle and versatility to your suit.
3. Skirts, blouses and sweaters are worn a great deal and will simplify your baggage problem on road trips.
4. Sports jackets and sports coats are very popular and are worn with skirts a great deal in leisure moments at home or on road trips.
5. It is recommended that your wardrobe include a dress or two for civic luncheons and other social functions in which you may participate during the summer.
6. Slacks are not permitted for street wear but depending upon your other recreation and sports activities, you might want to include shorts or sportswear for tennis, golfing togs, swim suit or such other items as you feel you may need.

7. Shoes are for the most part casual. For streetwear and travel, the various types of sport shoes are popular flat walking shoes, saddle oxfords, etc. It is suggested that at least one pair of dress shoes be included for wear with frocks at more dressy affairs or social functions and luncheons.

8. Hats are seldom worn but if you wish to adorn your tresses, you will find that the small type of sports hat is often popular in the form of a cap or small brimmed slouchhat.

9. Bobby socks are generally acceptable but, of course, you will want two or three pairs of regular stockings for dresswear.

10. A raincoat is a desirable item of the wardrobe and it might be desirable to have a lightweight, compact type to simplify your baggage problem on road trips.

11. Always carry your beauty kit with you when you go on road trips and equip yourself with all necessary articles for your toilette.

ETIQUETTE

Emily Post says that "charm cannot exist without good manners." You do not have to have manners that follow particular rules but the continued practice of kind and friendly impulses, a kind, proper and courteous approach, cannot help but add to your personality and give you a big advantage in dealing with your every day contacts. Here are some simple suggestions that will help you in your development of a pleasing personality on and off the playing field.

1. INTRODUCTION. Always acknowledge and always make an introduction in a pleasant and correct way. A man is always presented to a lady, such as: "Miss Young, may I present Mr. Smith," or "Miss Young, may I introduce Mr. Smith." The words "present" and "introduce" are equally proper. You can also present two people without the formal words of presentation merely by pronouncing the two names, such as: "Miss Young, I want to make you acquainted with Mr. Smith." Under all possible circumstances the reply to an introduction is "How do you do?" Well bred people do not say: "Pleased to meet you" but when it is actually true, you can say: "I am VERY glad to meet you." When a gentleman is introduced to a lady, she smiles, bows lightly and says: "How do you do." It is her place to offer her hand or not, as she chooses, but if he puts out his hand, she of course gives him hers.

2. SPEECH. "You know she is a lady as soon as she opens her mouth." The first requirement for charm of speech is a pleasing voice. A low voice, instead of a high-pitched voice, is always most pleasing. Making yourself heard is also most desirable. Speak out clearly and enunciate properly. Be careful with the use of slang and the slurring of words in your contacts and conversations with the public.

3. IN PUBLIC PLACES. The All-American girl should avoid behavior that would make her conspicuous in public. One of the cardinal rules is not to talk too loudly. She should avoid using other people's names in a loud voice or making personal remarks that might be overheard by others. And there is nothing more vulgar than bragging about personal possessions, accomplishments or achievements. Do not use a loud voice, do not stare at people, do not knock into people and do not indulge in loud argument in public. In short, avoid attracting attention to yourself through poor manners.

4. SPORTSMANSHIP. Sportsmanship on the field and off is definitely aligned with etiquette. There is such a thing as wanting to win and fighting to win with all your heart and this is both commendable and desirable. It is another thing, however, to become known as a "poor loser" who cannot accept the inevitable defeats in good grace. When you play ball, play hard and play for all you are worth. It is understandable, in the heat of excitement and the intense desire to win, that you may occasionally differ with a decision and impulse to protest violently is hard to control. The usually accepted pattern of a sportsman is the one who gives no expression or gesture of either chagrin or satisfaction and this is an admirable pattern. However, it is hard to control emotions completely and it is expected that a player might show dissatisfaction in the face of a bad "break" in the game and equal pleasure with a successful maneuver. Your pleasure may appear as gloating or bragging to your opponents. Win gracefully and modestly and lose gracefully too, if you can. Above all, avoid the showoff attitude in front of your opponents and the public. Be courteous and considerate in the event of unavoidable accidents or contacts on the field. Play the game hard and fair and you will earn the recognition and respect of teammates, opponents and public.

5. THE BASEBALL FAN. There is an old saying that "the customer is always right." This, in a sense, holds true of the baseball fan, who exercises the right to talk to you without knowing you, to shout at you from the stands and to voice his opinion, good or bad, of the play on the field. After all, he is your customer and he feels that you, as a player, and the team, belong to him. For the most part, the fans encountered in the All-American Girls Baseball League are understanding and considerate. They are loyal to their home team and its players and it is not often that a player is subjected to even good natured verbal abuse for any shortcomings or failures. In other cities but your hometown, you may expect the crowd to be good naturedly hostile to your cause. It is naturally pulling for the home town to win. Don't let this attitude bother your play. Ball players who hear all the pointed shouts and remarks in the stands are said to have "rabbit ears". Above all, don't let the remarks of any fans arouse your own ire to the point where you make a scene or display poor sportsmanship. Fans who become seriously objectionable in language or actions are automatically

taken care of by the management, and the fans at All-American girls League games are the highest caliber attending any sport in America.

6. DEALING WITH THE PUBLIC. Because you are a ballplayer and a member of the team in your home town city, it is taken for granted that you will be popular and well known by sight. Both younger and older people will be interested in you and you will soon get over being surprised when strangers approach you and call you by your name. You may not know them and may never have seen them before but at the ball park, especially, you will know that they are fans who are interested in you and interested in the team. You will be asked for autographs and you will be asked questions about yourself and about the team. Be as friendly and gracious as you possibly can on these occasions. Your own personality represents your team and all of the girls in the All-American League. Don't be abrupt or rude to fans if you can possibly avoid it. Letting them feel that they know you, giving them a good impression through your speech and mannerisms, will help to make them regular and steady fans and will develop more "customers" for the league and greater success for you personally. Autograph "hounds" and other people can sometimes appear to be pests but these things must go with success and exposure to an admiring public. Do what you can to make them happy and if the situation becomes difficult at a busy time or when your presence is requested elsewhere, avoid it gracefully without hurting their feelings and promise that you will attend to them later or at some other time. Away from the park, if people approach you in a friendly manner, be polite and agreeable. On occasion, if any person should attempt to be over friendly or obnoxious, extricate yourself from the situation without being rude or abusive yourself. There is always a way in which a lady can politely avoid unwanted company or attention. If you conduct yourself as a lady at all times you will retain your own self-respect and that of others.

7. PUBLIC RELATIONS. Publicity is important to you as a ball player and highly important to your team and the All-American Girls Baseball League. In the interests of publicizing you as an individual or your team and league in general, you might be expected to cooperate with the publicity managers in various cities or with the newspaper and magazine writers. Don't look upon this as too much of a chore because it usually brings pleasing results. If the newsmen and photographers want special pictures or interviews and articles, do what you can to help them because in doing so you will help yourself and the future of girls' baseball. Give all the information you can that you think will be helpful to them and try to give the time that is necessary and desirable in order that they, in turn, may present the facts and information in an intelligent manner.

8. Your chaperon is your friend, your counselor and guide. She comes into the All-American Girls Baseball League with a specific assignment and she has her job to do in keeping with her duties and her responsibilities, just as you have your own job to fill. Be helpful, friendly and cooperative with her and do not take advantage of her good nature or her desire to be your friend. She has a direct

responsibility to you, to your family, to the club which employs her and to the League which she represents. Adhere to the rules and regulations in a manner that will not reflect upon her. Feel free to go to her with any of your personal problems and you will all derive a greater enjoyment and a finer benefit from your association.

9. Accept invitations or decline them with graciousness. You may have opportunities to attend local functions and whenever it is in the best interests of the team and league, make every attempt to cooperate. Choose your new found friends carefully and well and when you participate in the social life of the community, always act and behave in good taste. If you are gracious, ladylike, friendly and cooperative, you will have the opportunity of choosing your own friends. Don't become over friendly or too forward among new acquaintances or those in the community who wish to entertain you or you can readily wear out your welcome. Express your thanks and appreciation for the kindness and hospitality that are extended to you and make yourself welcome again.

10. In a final summing up, be neat and presentable in your appearance and dress, be clean and wholesome in appearance, be polite and considerate in your daily contacts, avoid noisy, rough and raucous talk and actions and be in all respects a truly All-American girl.

The All-American Girls Professional Baseball League
Public Image & the Evolution of League Rules
by Jeff Eldridge
for the Midway Village and Museum Center, Rockford, IL

The ladies of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League¹ quickly found that expectations of them would extend beyond simply throwing, catching and hitting. League founder Philip K. Wrigley knew that the league's appeal would be dependent upon the public receiving his players in a favorable light. It was not by accident that it was called the *All-American Girls Professional Baseball League*. Wrigley had determined from the start that a clean, wholesome, "All-American girl" image would be necessary for popular acceptance of his sporting concept.

In 1940's America, athleticism was not generally considered to be among the chief qualities of the feminine ideal. In fact, many Americans of the day considered athleticism in a woman to be associated with a distinct *lack* of femininity. Wrigley was keenly aware of this sentiment, possibly held it himself, and knew that if his league were to survive, it would have to successfully combat the prevailing stereotype of the "butch" female athlete. His girls would display no part of the rough and tough tomboy image widely associated with female softball players of the time.

The women of the AAGPBL would have to be more than just stellar athletes. They also needed, each one, to be a shining example of the "All-American Girl." The idea to be

¹ The reader should note that, at its inception, the league was officially named the "All-American Girls Softball League," (AAGSL) and early in its first season, was renamed the "All-American Girls Baseball League" (AAGBL). Further, it was later re-christened, the "All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL), the name it would retain for the duration of the league's existence, and by which it is officially known today. For consistency, except when referred to by one of its earlier names for specific reasons, the league will herein be referred to as the "All-American Girls Professional Baseball League" or by its acronym, "AAGPBL".

conveyed was that these girls were proper ladies who, it just so happened, could throw or hit a breaking fastball. Beauty and femininity, then, were every bit as important as a solid bat and a good glove. As such, the AAGPBL established and enforced strict dress codes and rules of deportment upon its players. Physical appearance and social behavior -- both on and off the field -- were to be exemplary at all times. So serious did Wrigley consider these matters to be that he contracted with the famed Helena Rubinstein Beauty Salon to meet with the players at spring training and to tutor them in the ways of femininity.

On the field, the women were called to maintain the most ladylike appearance possible while exerting themselves physically in all types of weather. Female athletes today might scoff at the notion of wearing makeup during a doubleheader in ninety-degree heat, but it was *de rigueur* in the AAGPBL. Polished nails and neatly coiffed hair, likewise, were part of the necessary equipment.

Of course, central to a player's appearance was her uniform. To present his girls and their sport properly, Wrigley had his art designer, Otis Shepard, design special uniforms for the teams. Shepard's creation was a one-piece, short-skirted, flared tunic, fashioned after figure skating costumes of the period. Beneath their skirts, players wore short satin tights and knee-high socks. A baseball cap completed the ensemble. Each city had a different colored uniform bearing its own symbolic patch.²

Unfortunately, what the outfits gained in femininity was sacrificed for in practicality. A ballplayer today (male or female) might blanch at the thought of sliding in skirt, but for the women of the AAGPBL, it was all in a day's work. Among the most common of injuries would be the "strawberry," an abrasion of the leg, often received from sliding into a base.

Off the field, players were expected to dress and behave strictly as ladies. A "Charm School Guide," given to each of them, outlined modes of dress and comportment that taught them just how achieve that ideal. The tone was set in the opening paragraphs:

"When you become a player in the All-American Girls Baseball League, you have reached the highest position that a girl can attain in this sport. The All-American Girls Baseball League is getting great public attention because it is pioneering a new sport for women.

"You have certain responsibilities because you too, are in the limelight. Your actions and appearance, both on and off the field, reflect on the whole profession. It is not only your duty to do your best to hold up the standard of this profession, but to do your level best to keep others in line."³

The guide contained advice about proper attire, makeup, hair and skin care, and beauty tips tailored to the traveling -- and highly visible -- female athlete. It also outlined rules of proper etiquette for various situations, from interaction with spectators to conduct at public appearances outside the game. (Players would be called upon to contribute to the league's public image by attending civic luncheons, war bond drives and the like.)

While the information in the Charm School Guide was presented with an air of being (strongly) suggested, the "Rules of Conduct" laid down the law. Among other things, players were forbidden to drink or smoke in public, with hard liquor banned under all circumstances. They were to wear suitably feminine attire at all times, both on and off the field. They were not permitted to hold other jobs during the season. All social engagements -- particularly dates --

² Description and origins of uniform design drawn from "Team Formation" section of "League History" web page at www.aagpbl.org, the official website of the AAGPBL. Accessed 30 January, 2003.

³ From the "Charm School Guide" distributed to each player of the AAGPBL. Accessed 31 January 2003 from www.aagpbl.org.

were permissible only with approval by the team chaperone (by whom, the gentleman in question would generally be interviewed), and players were strictly forbidden to drive their cars beyond their cities' limits without prior approval of their field managers.

Although these strictures might seem, to today's woman, coercive and condescending, most players appear to have gone along rather agreeably. According to a survey of former players published in 1994:

*"Overall, the women who responded believed this was a special and unique opportunity afforded to them. Restrictions imposed were, for the most part, accepted as congruent with what were appropriate roles for women in society during this era . . . the majority believed the restrictions imposed upon them and the treatment they received during their playing years were acceptable."*⁴

If the players had to accept certain rules and restrictions, most seem to have thought it a small price to pay in exchange for an unprecedented opportunity to play professionally the game they loved.

The start of professional girls' baseball play on May 30, 1943 was greeted with a predictable mix of curiosity and humorous deprecation, as evidenced by this report of the league's opening day action in the *Rockford Register-Republic*:

"Clad in something akin to ballet skirts, a group of girls invaded the male stronghold of professional baseball last night and proved that there's more to the "powderpuff" brand of the game than meets the eye -- but what meets the eye is nice, too.

⁴ Karen H. Weller and Catriona T. Higgs, "The All American Girls Professional Baseball League, 1943-1954: Gender Conflict In Sport?" *Sociology of Sport Journal* 11 (1994): 294-95.

"Fresh from the beauty parlor, South Bend took a double-header from Rockford, Ill., 4-2 and 12-9, to open the All-American girls' softball league -- the nation's first league of feminine ballplayers.

"But it was more than ordinary baseball. It was a new career for career girls and another milestone for the national pastime. It proved that figures are not always accompanied by decimal points, and that baseball has an answer to the manpower problem.

". . . The new league . . . has the backing of P. K. Wrigley, owner of the Chicago Cubs, and Branch Rickey, president of the Brooklyn Dodgers, both of whom used to take their baseball straight."⁵

If this first piece of reportage on league play seems, to say the least, rather condescending, the *Register-Republic* apparently took the game more seriously afterwards. Subsequent coverage as the season progressed seems to have concerned itself chiefly with runs, hits and errors. Even the next day's sports page, for instance, doled out the facts of girls' league play with no more mention of skirts and lipstick than it gave for the men's leagues.⁶ By the following week, the *Register-Republic* seemed to allow for the notion that the previously chided Wrigley and Rickey might, indeed, have been on to something:

"Customers who braved the weather for a glimpse of the girls in the (Peaches' home) opener Saturday got an excellent idea of the class of ball that is being played in this new league. The girls are fast, and though they'll need a few more games in which to polish up their defense, lack little in the way of offensive ability right now.

"Despite the lengthening of the base paths five feet beyond the usual softball limit, speed still remains a major feature of this game and the customers were intrigued by it."⁷

⁵ "South Bend in Double Victory," *Rockford Register-Republic*, 31 May 1943.

⁶ "Rockford Wins at South Bend," *Rockford Register-Republic*, 1 June 1943.

⁷ "Rockford Peaches to Meet South Bend in Twin Bill Tonight," *Rockford Register-Republic*, 7 June 1943.

League officials knew that for all the attraction, as it were, of fans to the "All-American girls" they were presenting, the real and lasting attraction would be that of exciting, well-played baseball on the field. To that end, rules and equipment were constantly evolved to provide fans with the best product possible.

THE EVOLUTION OF LEAGUE RULES

As noted previously, the league began its existence as the "All-American Girls Softball League, but even then, the rules established a game that was closer to baseball than traditional softball. For instance, softball rules called for ten players on the field; AAGSL rules provided for nine, as in baseball. Also unlike softball, base runners were permitted to lead off and steal bases in accordance with baseball rules.

As explained at the official AAGPBL website:

"With only a few exceptions, girls' baseball was the game being played in the Major Leagues by men's professional baseball players. All in all, the rules, strategy and general play were the same. Differences were only in the distances between the bases, the distance from the pitching mound to home plate, the size of the ball, and pitching styles. These differences varied from the beginning of the league, progressively extending the length of the base paths and pitching distance and decreasing the size of the ball until the final year of play."⁶

When league play began in 1943, the women used a 12-inch softball, "fast-pitched" underhand at a distance of 40 feet, and base paths were 65 feet in length. By the league's final season in 1954, a regulation-sized (9-inch) baseball was pitched overhand at a distance of 60 feet (six-inches shorter than in the men's game), and the base paths, at 85 feet, were just

⁶ From "Baseball . . . As played by our girls," accessed 30 January 2003 from www.aagpbl.org.

five feet shorter than in men's play. The table below, also provided by the AAGPBL site, gives a year-by-year account of these changes in league rules.

Record of AAGPBL Equipment and Facility Changes

Year	Ball Size	Length of Basepaths	Pitching Distance	Pitching Style
1943	12"	65'	40'	Underhand
1944	11-1/2 (midseason)	68' (midseason)	"	"
1945	"	"	42' (midseason)	"
1946	11"	72'	43'	Underhand and Limited Sidearm
1947	"	"	"	Full Sidearm
1948	10-3/8"	"	50'	Overhand
1949	10" (Red Seam)	"	55' (midseason)	"
1950	10" (liveller)	"	"	"
1952	10" (liveller)	"	"	"
1953	"	75'	56'	"
1954	Regulation baseball (9-1/4") (midseason)	85'	60'	"

This table was obtained from the official website of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (www.aagpbl.org). To access directly, see http://www.aagpbl.org/history/hist_rp.html. The authors of the table cite the following source material:

"Evolution of the Ball Size Used in All American Girls Base Ball League From 1943 to 1949, And Diamond Changes," Dalley Records, 1943-1946; "History During 1946-7," Dalley Records, 1943-1946; AAGBBL Board Meeting Minutes, 16 June, 1946, Dalley Records; "All-American Girls Baseball League -- 1948," Dalley Records, 1947-1949; AAGBBL Board Meeting Minutes, 8 June, 11 July, 1949, 18 January 1950, 14 November 1951, 12 March 1952, 10 June 1954, Dalley Records; AAGBBL Board Meeting Minutes, 20 January 1953, Carl Orwant Records, McCannon Folder, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Substantial information included in this essay, in addition to that specifically cited, was obtained from the official website of the AAGPBL (www.aagpbl.org). The author wishes to express his thanks to the keepers of that site for an invaluable source of information on the league.

**The All-American Girls Professional Baseball League
Rules of Conduct**
by Jeff Eldridge
for the Midway Village and Museum Center, Rockford, IL

The following "Rules of Conduct" were accessed from the official website of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (www.aagpbl.org). For direct access, see http://www.aagpbl.org/history/hist_rc.html. The keepers of the AAGPBL website acknowledge that a copy of the "Rules of Conduct" were provided courtesy of the Northern Indiana Historical Society, South Bend, IN.

THE MANAGEMENT SETS A HIGH STANDARD FOR THE GIRLS SELECTED FOR THE DIFFERENT CLUBS AND EXPECTS THEM TO LIVE UP TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT WHICH RECOGNIZES THAT STANDARD. THERE ARE GENERAL REGULATIONS NECESSARY AS A MEANS OF MAINTAINING ORDER AND ORGANIZING CLUBS INTO A WORKING PROCEDURE.

1. ALWAYS appear in feminine attire when not actively engaged in practice or playing ball. This regulation continues through the playoffs for all, even though your team is not participating. AT NO TIME MAY A PLAYER APPEAR IN THE STANDS IN HER UNIFORM, OR WEAR SLACKS OR SHORTS IN PUBLIC.
2. Boyish bobs are not permissible and in general your hair should be well groomed at all times with longer hair preferable to short hair cuts. Lipstick should always be on.
3. Smoking or drinking is not permissible in public places. Liquor drinking will not be permissible under any circumstances. Other intoxicating drinks in limited portions with after-game meal only, will be allowed. Obscene language will not be allowed at any time.
4. All social engagements must be approved by chaperone. Legitimate requests for dates can be allowed by chaperones.
5. Jewelry must not be worn during game or practice, regardless of type.
6. All living quarters and eating places must be approved by the chaperones. No player shall change her residence without the permission of the chaperone.
7. For emergency purposes, it is necessary that you leave notice of your whereabouts and your home phone.
8. Each club will establish a satisfactory place to eat, and a time when all members must be in their individual rooms. In general, the lapse of time will be two hours after the finish of the last game, but in no case later than 12:30 a.m.

Players must respect hotel regulations as to other guests after this hour, maintaining conduct in accordance with high standards set by the league.

9. Always carry your employee's pass as a means of identification for entering the various parks. This pass is NOT transferable.
10. Relatives, friends, and visitors are not allowed on the bench at any time.
11. Due to shortage of equipment, baseballs must not be given as souvenirs without permission from the Management.
12. Baseball uniform skirts shall not be shorter than six inches above the kneecap.
13. In order to sustain the complete spirit of rivalry between clubs, the members of different clubs must not fraternize at any time during the season. After the opening day of the season, fraternizing will be subject to heavy penalties. This also means in particular; room parties, auto trips to out of the way eating places, etc. However, friendly discussions in lobbies with opposing players are permissible. Players should never approach the opposing manager or chaperone about being transferred.
14. When traveling, the members of the clubs must be at the station thirty minutes before departure time. Anyone missing her arranged transportation will have to pay her own fair.
15. Players will not be allowed to drive their cars past their city's limits without the special permission of their manager. Each team will travel as a unit via method of travel provided for the league.

FINES OF FIVE DOLLARS FOR FIRST OFFENSE, TEN DOLLARS FOR SECOND, AND SUSPENSION FOR THIRD, WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE IMPOSED FOR BREAKING ANY OF THE ABOVE RULES.

The teams' field managers were responsible for the final selections. In the interest of competition, the league wanted the talent to be as evenly distributed as possible among its franchises. For this reason, the four groups of fifteen players were not actually assigned to their teams until the selection process had been completed. Since the managers couldn't know which group would play for whom, they did their best to spread the talent evenly. It was only after the squads had been determined that they were randomly assigned to the four inaugural teams: the Kenosha Comets, the Racine Belles, the Rockford Peaches and the South Bend Blue Sox.

**BASEBALL
BLUEBOOK**

BASEBALL BLUE BOOK

SUPPLEMENT NO. 9

NOVEMBER 1945


COMPARATIVE FIGURES FOR THREE COMPETING
CLASSES OF BASEBALL

•
OPERATIONS WITH AND WITHOUT NEWSPAPERS

•
SPECTATOR INTEREST DEFINED

•
MEASURING UNIT FOR PRODUCTION AND CONTROL
OF SPECTATOR INTEREST

OWNED AND OPERATED BY EARLE W. MOSS

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BASEBALL  BUREAU

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**BASEBALL CLASS
COMPETITION**

Baseball without
newspapers

A sports phenomenon of unusual significance to the business management of Professional Baseball took place in the Middle West last season (1945). It is seldom indeed that opportunity is presented to study the figures of three separate professional baseball enterprises, of three distinct types, all competing simultaneously for the same local patronage in a city of about 130,000. But this year the demonstration was phenomenal because the three separate enterprises performed for nearly half of the 55 home-game season in a city without newspapers. All newspapers in Fort Wayne, Ind. suspended operations on July 7th because of a union strike. They did not resume publication until August 20th, six weeks and three days later.

Girls
Lee

New competition for
Minor Leagues

The differences between the three competing organizations were such that under any circumstances the comparative figures for attendance would be interesting. But in this case the triangular exhibition was challenging because it demonstrated beyond question, first, that recent developments and practices in Baseball have, for the minor leagues, palpably weakened rather than strengthened the game as a public spectacle; and second, that in this prevailing form of the game the minor leagues are unnecessarily exposing themselves to a kind of competition that will be difficult to meet.

Girls'

Three kinds of
pro ball

Very few of the Bureau's correspondents enjoyed the opportunity of observing the competing events. Therefore I am sending this comment -- and since the viewpoint is from the side of business management it is going as a Blue Book Supplement.

Six cl.
leagu

Mens' hard
ball

The three sports enterprises to be compared are as follows:- *First*, a club of professional and semi-professional baseball players supported by a great industrial corporation employing upwards of 20,000 people. The athletic association backing the club boasted 5000 members. The team enjoyed the finest park in the city and booked the strongest independent clubs in America as well as Major League clubs. The season ran without interruption from the middle of May until the third week of September. Tickets were 50 cents each except for Major League exhibitions when the price was increased to \$1.00.

Gate
without

Championship
soft-ball

Second: The World's Championship Soft Ball Club: Not only champions but admittedly the greatest club of its kind ever put together. It won over 50 straight, against the nation's best, at home and on the road, and its composite record over several seasons has never been ap-

proached. It played on a municipal diamond in a public park with seating capacity for over 5,000 and all games were free.

Girls' pro League

Third: The American Girls' Professional Baseball League Club. It was the first season for this enterprise in Fort Wayne, Ind. Managed by a nationally known retired player of the major leagues the club was financed by a non-profit corporation which advertised that if profits accrued they would be used to support civic enterprises. Games were played at night in a high-school athletic field equipped with temporary bleachers seating a maximum of 3,000 spectators. Adult tickets including tax were 74 cents each, as compared with 50 cents for the mens' professional hard-ball games and the free tickets of the soft-ball champions.

Girls' salaries

The girls' club roster included 15 players. The lowest salary paid was \$55.00 a week and the highest \$90.00. Excluding the manager the weekly payroll was \$1075 and roughly comparable, therefore, to Class A-1 Professional Baseball.

Since the girls' game presents new comparative standards and since it establishes certain quantities which Professional Baseball should consider seriously and immediately you will be interested in the following attendance figures.

Six club girls' league "gate"

The total paid attendance for the six club league was 419,850 or an average of 69,975 a club and representing an increase of about 35% of the 1944 attendance. The adult paid attendance in Fort Wayne was 68,412 and on the road the club played to 69,927. You will observe that the league average was maintained altho 24 of their 55 home games were played during the newspaper strike.

Gate records without newspapers

The club played 21 games before the strike. The total paid attendance for this group of games was 16,233 or an average of 773 a game. The total paid attendance for the 24 games in July and August during the strike was 38,158 or an average of 1590 a game. No circus tactics were used to exploit the games. Simple radio announcements, small window cards and announcements during games carried the burden of advertising. Thus the club built up patronage week by week and game by game without newspaper assistance. The attendance for the games following the strike, seven in number was 14,120 or an average of 1,765 per game. At

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4
this stage the Fort Wayne club was in 2nd place and threatening the first place club.

The highest paid attendance in the league was at Rockford, Ill. where the league leaders drew 104,566. In addition to these regular season crowds the three Shaughnessy series including a total of 13 games played to an aggregate paid attendance of 30,463.

Men suffered in competition

While the professional girls were establishing this remarkable record the professional men's team was finding hard going. Games during the first weeks of the season were attracting from 500 to 800 spectators at fifty cents each. From the beginning, however, the competitive pull of the girls' games was apparent and finally during the newspaper strike attendance dwindled to as low as a hundred spectators -- even for exhibition clubs of wide reputation. During this period the men's club won the Indiana State semi-professional title in the tournament played on the local municipal diamond. The total gate for the entire series was less than 900.

It is not possible to present exact figures for the championship soft-ball club because the games were free to the public. Declining public interest however, was continuously apparent. After the return of the newspapers and toward the close of the season the general public had become so much more interested in the girls' baseball than the men's soft-ball that the sports pages were giving their bold headlines to the former while the soft-ball national champions were receiving secondary attention.

Facts VS prejudice

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Before setting down the reasons for the competitive success of this girls' league I want to expose some of the general prejudices concerning it. During the course of the season I found occasion to discuss the project with some of the Bureau's correspondents who represent major league interests. It was observed that they had become casually aware of "Girls' Professional Baseball" and had been led to believe or had jumped to the conclusion that it was one of three things: First, a sex show; Second, girls' organized soft-ball; Third, a passing novelty.

Dead

The Sex angle

A. If by "sex" some kind of burlesque is inferred the opinion could not be further from the truth. Whoever set up the league saw to that. There was not the slightest evidence of sex exploitation in any phase of



club management or individual conduct -- not even so little as a piece of lip-stick. Apparently these young women had been instructed that they were expected to maintain the dignity of their sex and American standards of sportsmanship, and so, true to the feminine protective instincts they did. The atmosphere was such that the crowd did not indulge in indignities. The players did not reflect sex-consciousness.

On the other hand if, by "sex," is meant the normal appeal of the feminine mode and attitude then most certainly sex was an important source of interest and a legitimate element of the league's success. The subtlety of the influence was manifest in the vehement denials from officials and fans that sex entered into the game at all. Nevertheless it was easily measured by a close comparison of the reception accorded the player of grace and charm with that of the ugly duckling of less feminine if more robust skill. The latter had the worst of it, not only with the crowd, but also, and no doubt quite unconsciously, with officials, with management and publicists. The effect of this influence could even be observed in batting and fielding records. It should be reemphasized, however, that the moral tone of the enterprise was beyond reproach. No higher grade patronage ever complimented a sports show and I have never seen any long continued program of athletic contests which secured and held such a large percentage of middle aged and elderly women.

Soft-ball or  
Baseball

B. Was it softball or Baseball. Referring to the second assumption that the Girls' Professional Baseball game is just another form of "soft-ball" the position can not be supported by the facts. Cricket is unlike Baseball altho both games employ a hard nine-inch sphere. Likewise softball and the girls' game differ fundamentally altho both use an eleven-inch sphere. (It is understood that their 11 inch ball is to be made smaller.) In method, in the number and deployment of players, whether at bat or in the field, the girls played real Baseball. They could run, steal, slide and do what was a revelation to most men -- throw, throw hard and with precision. Moreover, in that basic thing -- game strategy -- the girls' league exhibited Baseball according to high standards -- those comparable with major league performance.

Dead-ball Baseball

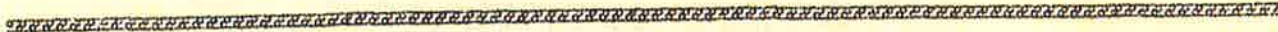
*The crux of the matter, however, and the most pointed and accurate way of differentiating this ball game in the general concept of Baseball is to call it "Dead-ball*

Baseball." If you think of the Baseball of thirty years ago, before the introduction of the modern "home-run strategy" you have a clear picture of what this league presented to the public, and the most important single factor in its success.

No one has ever proved which kind of Baseball, the old dead-ball or the modern "rabbit-ball" game, holds the larger capacity for the development of spectator-interest.\* But no one denies the interest making values of base-stealing, hit-and-run, sacrifice, etc., and it was by enhancing the opportunities for these factors that the girls' league made its outstanding success. Space will not permit detailed explanation of why this is so. But I will add that a consensus reached by veteran major league players, major league scouts, major and minor league umpires, three sports editors, two theatrical managers and a considerable number of leading business and professional men is as follows: The Girls' dead-ball game eclipses minor

\* See Foot Note No. 1

Dead ball VS  
Rabbit ball



\* Foot Note No. 1

Interest defined

It seems timely to define "spectator-interest" in connection with minor league operations, because "spectator-interest" is what Baseball trades in.

Suspense is pain

As everyone knows tickets don't sell without it. But few realize that much of interest is "suspense" and that "suspense" is in the nature of "pain." Moreover the degree of "suspense-interest" which means excitement, thrills and clicking turnstiles is apt to be acute, provocative, almost tormenting "pain."

"Keep 'em guessing"

It may appear paradoxical that people will crash gates for a condition of "pain" but it is true. It may also appear paradoxical to say that crowds fight to destroy the foundations of spectator-interest. But that is also true. We are all like the school girl who wants to read the last chapter of a love story first. Having done so the story is no longer "interesting." Similarly it is human nature to "end this suspense." When this is accomplished interest immediately lags. Therefore, never yield to fan pressure for such expedients. The hope of all exhibitions is to hold suspense to the last minute -- to keep the decision in doubt until the last act.

Incidental episodes

Unfortunately for Baseball and unlike the melodrama the main contest can't always be kept in doubt for a ninth inning decision. But most fortunately for Baseball the game is not too dependent upon the main contest. Inning by inning the game develops many subordinate, incidental interest-provoking races and contests which when properly staged rescue one-sided games from the zone of boredom. The problem of management is the scientific development and utilization of these.



league baseball as too frequently displayed by the lower classifications, and, as the records of 1945 indicate, will continue to outdraw minor league ball wherever the latter refuses to recognize the essential sources of spectator-interest and wherever park facilities and management are adapted to the girls' game. (In another paragraph some of the time factors of Baseball, dead-ball and soft-ball are set down. These show how spectator-interest is developed and how it can be measured and controlled in your own subsidiary installations.)

is girls' game  
a novelty

C. Is the girls' game a passing novelty. This assumption is obviously absurd in the premises. There isn't any form of public entertainment from which the feminine influence can be divorced whether it is wanted or not, but since when has it been a novelty to employ feminine talent in legitimate public entertainment? One might as well expect the elimination of soprano roles from operatic composition. If Baseball -- any kind -- is not a "novelty" it is because as an institution it has been established by an historic sanction. Under such a sanction girls' baseball qualifies as well as any other, and for obvious reasons it would probably be easier to organize the loyalty of a whole community back of a girls' club than a men's. Moreover, operators are assured, for reasons suggested herein that, as it was organized and played in 1945, the girls' game will be rough competition wherever it collides with minor league ball of the hobbled, colorless type presented in many places.

Reasons why Girls' Baseball drew larger crowds than Men's Baseball or Men's soft-ball

Hustle

1. A constant, never suspended, physical attitude of alertness was required of every fielder and was supported by continual player "chatter," by conference "huddles," by signalling and other conventional devices. The girls secured a far superior psychological effect from these devices than is obtained by the average minor league organization. "Stalling" was minimized; umpire baiting was limited; games (9 innings) seldom consumed more than one hour and 20 minutes.

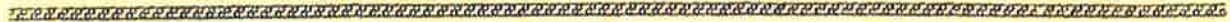
2. Most important of all was a fast moving procession of what one might call spotlighted episodes subordinate

to the game contest. These challenged the attention of the spectator throughout the game. For example if a runner was on a base the spectator was kept on edge by the runner's constant threat to steal.\*\* At the same time you were keyed up by the uncertainty of whether the batter would swing, hit-and-run or sacrifice. If two were on bases there was constant maneuvering for a double steal. When long hits inside the park were accomplished most of them involved close plays at second, third or the plate. These plays which gave spectators time to build up suspense-interest through periods ranging from seven to fifteen seconds punctuated every game and held the crowd in breathless suspense as contrasted with synthetic home runs over the fence and their frequent destruction of the suspense period. The chances for success in base stealing

\*\* See Foot Note No. 2

Fast movement  
and  
Base running

Consc



\*\* Foot Note No. 2

Spectator-interest  
can be measured

*Measuring unit for Spectator-interest.* In foot Note No. 1 the nature of the abstract thing we call "spectator-interest" was explained. Foot Note No. 2 is added to suggest how this stuff which we are selling to the public can be scientifically measured.

\*\*\*\*\*

How much of the commodity, "spectator-interest," must be exhibited in a ball game to make a professional club successful from a financial viewpoint may be a matter of opinion, but the essential thing about it is that "spectator-interest" can be analyzed in unit quantities. The unit quantities include all the incidental episodes, such as a stolen base or a long fly, which combine to produce the "suspense-interest" of a ball game. These units of measurement or episodes can be named, timed and tabulated, and can be employed by management to protect and build the game.

Baseball is particularly fortunate in that it probably holds a potential capacity for producing more different elements of "spectator-interest" than any other popular sport.

Obviously spectator-interest is not a continuously flowing stream. On the contrary it is carried along, unevenly, by a procession of overlapping or successive episodes. The strongest single source of interest naturally is the contest of the game itself which runs through from the first pitch to the last out and the final score. But, as we all know, there are too many uneven scores for success to depend upon the game-contest alone. The game-contest must be augmented by many other incidental contests.

Hor:

The unit of  
measurement

To mention only two or three of those which come immediately to mind there is that succession of contests between the pitcher and the batters who face him. There are at least 51 of these episodes in each game. Long flies to the outfield are life savers for spectator-interest in many a ball game. Often the fielder must run well over a hundred feet to catch the ball. Thus ample time elapses for suspense-interest to build up until it snaps at the catch, error or safe descent of the ball. Another valuable source

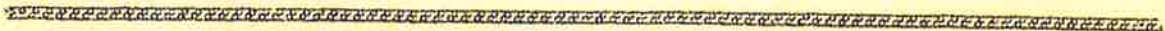
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were just about the right proportion to make the effort count in game strategy. Scoring was comparatively low and therefore, produced in a large percentage of the games the psychological effect of a close contest.

There were more intentional passes, strike-outs and bases-on-balls and a larger proportion of runners left on bases to runs scored than in standard baseball practice. But this condition produced a surprise element for this observer. It brought about a continual pressure and movement toward the plate -- an around-the-diamond threat, linked up all the way from first to third, to reach that focal point of game interest. I don't know whether this strategy was planned or not, or even whether the management was conscious of it but the home plate and what it

Conscious effort to score



of interest is the maneuver to steal a base. This is one of the elements which with questionable wisdom has been almost "adjusted" out of Organized Baseball, and will serve to illustrate the violation of a natural law of management. The law might be stated:- *Do not permit the introduction of any expedient which deprives the game of any potentials for interest producing episodes.*

A law of management

The most exciting incidental episode (in itself) of a ball game is an inside-the-park home run which ends with a long throw and close play at the plate. The reason is that it consumes 14 or more seconds -- a long time for the interest bubble to expand before it bursts.

Action plus time

The example illustrates the time element of the measuring unit. In other words the unit for measuring "spectator-interest" is made up of two elements, *action* and *time* -- "action" identifies the incidental contest, "time" permits the senses to perceive, evaluate and wait for the decision.

Horse racing

Emphasize the "action" quality of interest producing episodes and one can readily see why horse racing would never stand up economically without the synthetic stimulus of gambling. Big tracks can't exhibit enough incidental episodes to fortify the main event. If it is an uneven race it's a dud for interest. The little things which might save it are too far away to catch the attention.

Soft-ball

Emphasize the time element and one can readily see why Soft Ball as now ruled can never hope to command spectator-interest. The pitching distance and space between bases are too short. The action is all over before the senses have time to apperceive and build up suspense.

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means in Baseball stood up like a big goal post, all the time, in these games. It is something for Baseball to think about.

Game contest fortified by incidents

The game contest is, of course, the most valuable single element of spectator-interest. However, the girls' game was not as dependent as ours upon this backbone element. In a series of 25 games it was possible to estimate in a fairly accurate way that the girls' brand of ball was developing a considerably larger number of interest provoking episodes or suspense-interest elements (see foot note No. 2), than the average minor league ball I have access to. It appeared that this excess was over 15%. If so it helps explain the financial success of the league and presents a rather strong argument for the restoration of more of these interest making elements to our own game.

Time elements in Baseball

3. Time elements. Baseball men are apt to lose sight of the fact that time elements are all important quantities in the production of spectator-interest (see foot note No. 2). Major League pitching at 60½ feet is timed somewhere around four tenths of a second. Girls' pitching at 42 feet was apperceptively plus or minus five tenths. Being slower in coordination than men the extra tenth gave them time to develop a good swing. (Their bats were too neavy for them.) But the base distance established for the girls was a happy decision. Whether by intention or accident the 88 feet from home to first (the distance for soft-ball is only 60 feet) yielded for the girls almost the same time elements men require for the 90 foot base paths. From crack of the bat to first the girls' running time varied from 3.8 to 5 plus seconds depending on the usual variables, and they circled the bases in 13 to 15 seconds. One tall, raw-boned, narrow-hipped type was clocked at 12.8 seconds for a home run -- a speed which a high school boy would not have to be too ashamed of.

But the success elements referred to in paragraph 2 depended in part upon the relation of the dead-ball and out-field action with these infield time elements. Long flies with the live ball in the major leagues hang in air as long as 7½ seconds and travel well over 400 feet. An ordinary fly whether foul, pop-up or outfield, very often stays in the air about 5½ seconds. Thus the time element permits a good *three-factor* race between ball, fielder and runner with ample time for the building up of intense spectator-interest. Now in the girls' game the 5½ sec-

Girls

\*\*\* See

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\*\*\* Foot

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Questionat

Adjustment to



ond fly was also the prevailing time element. But the dead ball with its slower velocity pulled the distance element down to 200 feet or less. The result was that with the same time element the action was focused down to a smaller area where closer perception intensified the suspense building elements.

Dud

In only one way did this 5½ second and 200 foot combination work to destroy spectator-interest. When fast flies were hit to right field in the regular zone for safe singles the ball could be handled on the first bound by the outfielder for a put-out at first base -- a weakness which was offensive to the spectator's sense of justice and which could easily be eliminated by a simple ruling.

Girls' game O. K. in small park

4. The relation of the foregoing outfield time and distance factors was successful in the example herein presented -- that is, in a "bleacher park" with "Class D floodlighting" and for crowds not to exceed 5,000. The question is would the same success follow for larger potentials -- say, for example, class AA populations and park facilities.\*\*\*

\*\*\* See Foot Note No. 3

\*\*\* Foot Note No. 3

Perfection of 9 inch 5 ounce ball

There are scientific reasons for believing that the American baseball of 5 ounces and 9 inches is as near perfection as it can be made, in so far as weight and size go. On the other hand there is no scientific reason why baseballs of those dimensions should not be graded for elasticity -- for the objective of producing the best game for the particular grade of skill concerned and the physical character of the available park-crowd.

Questionable elasticity

It would be easy to make a baseball that could be batted over 500 feet. Would a pitcher be able to handle a line drive with such a ball? It would produce more home runs but would they add to spectator-interest in the parks now available? By the same token the "skyrocket" now used which soared up out of sight in the half-light of a class "C" park, which forced infielders into the outfield and outfielders back against the fence in a 3,000-crowd-town was a detriment to the game as demonstrated by "dead-ball baseball" in the unmistakable terms of dollars and cents at the gate.

Adjustment of elasticity to skill

Baseball schedules being long continuing programs are not good instruments for the one-day-circus kind of exploitation. Since conservatative management means success with continuing league programs the three basic elements to link up must be as follows: - *Right adjustment of game mechanics, to park lay-out, to crowd potentials.* The smaller the population the more the necessity for varied suspense-interest and intimate or close spectator contact. The larger the city the greater the liberty can be with sensational and spectacular effects -- for the very simple reason that great populations can present demands far beyond the capacity of any park to accomodate.



Obviously the data I have can not answer that question but the competitive situation detailed on pages 3 and 4 did make valid one general conclusion which is briefed as follows:-

Elasticity of the ball

A. The "rabbit-ball" now in general use is too elastic for the skill of the lower classifications of minor league organization as measured in competition and in spectator-interest. Safeguarding the size and weight of the standard baseball which has evolved to near perfection the product should be graded in elasticity and thus adapted to the skills and park facilities of the several classifications. Various reasons for this conclusion as measured in terms of spectator-interest appear elsewhere in the discussion and appended notes.

Keep crowd close to game

B. The arbitrary distance of 60 feet from base lines to grandstand is no doubt a practical limitation for large plants and crowds. But it is far too great for small parks and crowds up to three or four thousands. The 30 foot (approximate) distance proved to be a great advantage for girls' competition with men's baseball.

The 90° playing field of Baseball is what made Baseball possible as an exhibition for large crowds as contrasted with such a game as Cricket. Foul ball play, ground or fly, which is the ironic accidental of Baseball is a dud for spectator-interest anytime or anyplace and not worth the sacrifice of close spectator contact where safety factors permit.

! Irrefutable !

Acid test

STOP! LOOK!  
LISTEN!

5. The importance of the Girls' brand of Baseball has been measured in another way the significance of which I hope will not be overlooked by those who ought to be concerned. This is especially true in this period when we read continually of new devices, synthetic and otherwise, to build, promote or inflate interest in Baseball. The girls' game produced more sand-lot activity in this city among both girls and boys, than any influence of the last 25 years. That is a strong statement but it has been noticed by everybody. It is the first time in many years, in this national basketball center, that "garage-end" and "telephone-pole" baskets have been neglected for "rounders" in the vacant lot. The effect was accomplished because this new-old dead-ball game brought out more of the interest provoking elements with which baseball is so richly endowed while other forms of the game languished in competition.

# OFFICIAL UNIFORM PLAYER'S CONTRACT OF AMERICAN GIRLS BASEBALL LEAGUE

THIS AGREEMENT, by and between..... Rockford Peaches Inc......herein called  
the Club, and.....of.....herein called the Player:

**Parties and  
Recital**

The Club is a member of the American Girls Baseball League and as such jointly with the other members of said League is a party to the Constitution and By-Laws of said League, and the parties hereto hereby bind themselves to rules and regulations now or hereafter adopted by the League pursuant to its Constitution and By-Laws. The purpose of such Constitution and By-Laws, Rules and Regulations is to insure to the public wholesome and high class professional girls baseball by establishing and defining relations between the Club and the Player, between all Club members of said League, and between the Clubs and Players and said League, as the central organization of which, said Clubs and Players are a part.

Subject to the foregoing provisions, the parties hereto agree as follows:

**Employment  
Agreement**

1. The Club hereby employs the Player to render skilled service as a baseball player in connection with all games of the Club during the year 19..... including the Club's training season, the Club's exhibition games, the Club's regular playing season and any official series in which the Club may participate, and in any games or series of games following the regular playing season in the receipts of which the Player may be entitled to share, and the Player agrees that she is capable of and will perform with expertness, diligence and fidelity the services stated and such duties as may be required of her in such employment, and incidental thereto.

**Salaries**

2. For the services aforesaid the Club will pay the Player an aggregate monthly salary of \$..260.00 during the official playing season as follows: in semi-monthly installments after the commencement of the official playing season covered by this contract, such monthly salary to begin with the commencement of the Club's regular playing season or such subsequent date as the Player's services may commence and end with the termination of the Club's regular scheduled playing season. If the Player is in the service of the Club for part of the playing season only or if the playing season exceeds any calendar month, the Player shall receive such proportion of the monthly salary above mentioned in excess of any calendar month period as the number of days of her actual employment in the Club's playing season in excess of said calendar month period bears to a thirty-day calendar month.

**Loyalty**

3. The Player during said season will faithfully serve the Club or any other Club to which, in conformity with the agreements above, or hereinafter recited, this contract may be assigned, and pledges herself to the American public to conform to high standards of personal conduct, fair play and good sportsmanship.

**Service**

4. The Player agrees that, for the purpose of avoiding injuries and to remain in the best possible physical condition to perform the services she has contracted with the Club to perform while under contract or reservation she will not play baseball otherwise than for the Club or for such other Clubs as may become assignees of this contract in conformity with said agreements; and that, except with the written consent of the Club or its assignees she will not engage in any game or exhibition of basketball, hockey, or other athletic sport. The Player agrees that while under contract or reservation she will not play in any post season baseball game except with the permission of the Club. The Player agrees that her picture may be taken for still photographs, motion pictures or television at such times as the Club may designate and agrees that all rights in such pictures shall run to the Club and may be used by the Club for publicity purposes in any manner it desires.



**Assignment**

5. This contract may be assigned by the Club to another Club in the League and in case of such assignment the Player shall promptly report to the assignee club and accrued salary shall be paid by the assigning club to the date on which the player is directed to report to the assignee club, and each successive assignee shall become liable to the Player for her salary during the term of her service with such assignee, and the assigning club shall not be liable therefor after the date so fixed for reporting to an assignee. The same salary rate shall apply and be obligatory upon the assignee club from the time the player reports to such assignee club.

**Termination**

6. This contract may be terminated at any time by the Club upon giving official release notice to the Player upon payment of salary to the date of such release, together with transportation expense if necessary, for her return to her home, (as hereinabove designated.)

**Regulations**

7. The Player and Club accept as part of this contract the regulations printed on the last page hereof, and also such modifications of them and such other regulations as the League may announce from time to time.

8. The League Constitution, the Rules and Regulations of the League, the Official Playing Rules of the League, and all amendments thereto hereafter adopted are hereby made a part of this contract, and the Club and the Player agree to accept and abide by and comply with the same, and all decisions of the League Board of Directors pursuant thereto. In consideration of the rights and interests of the public in the sport of girls baseball, the League President or the Board of Directors may make public the record of any inquiry, investigation or hearing held or conducted, including in such record all evidence or information given, received or obtained in connection therewith, and including further the findings and decisions therein and the reasons therefor.

**Options**

9. The Player hereby grants to the Club or any assignee of the Club hereunder options to renew this agreement upon the same terms and conditions other than salary, for the term of each successive year hereafter, such salary rate to be agreed upon by the parties hereto, and in default of agreement by the parties the salary rate shall be determined as provided in paragraph 10 hereafter, but upon such determination and final decision rendered, the Player will accept the salary rate so fixed. Such renewal option shall be exercised by the Club by notice in writing to the Player, by United States Mail, postage prepaid, at the address designated by the Player on the records of the Club, on or before March 1st of each succeeding playing season.

**Disputes**

10. In case of dispute between the Player and the Club the same shall be referred to the President of the League as an umpire, and the decision of the President shall be accepted by all parties as final, unless the aggrieved club or individual shall appeal in writing to the Board of Directors within seven days of the date of such decision, whereupon the decision of the Board of Directors arrived at as soon thereafter as the Board may reasonably convene and act upon such appeal, shall be binding upon all parties hereto.

**Special Covenants**

11. The Club and the Player covenant that this agreement fully sets forth all understandings and agreements between them and that no other understandings or agreements whether heretofore or hereafter made shall be valid or of any effect unless expressly set forth in a new or supplemental written contract executed by the Player and the Club or its assignee, complying with all agreements and rules to which this contract is subject.

12. This contract is subject to Federal or State legislation, regulations, executive or other official orders or other governmental action, now or hereafter in effect, respecting military, naval, air or other governmental service, which may directly or indirectly affect the Player, the Club or the League, and is subject also to all rules, regulations, decisions, or other action to suspend the operation of this contract during any national emergency.

Signed this..... 18 .....day of..... May ..... A. D. 19. 51.

Player's Social Security No. .... Club Rockford Peaches Inc.

**Consent of Parent or Guardian**

By William J. Edwards  
Authorized Club Official

Consent is given to the minor Player executing this contract and any renewals thereof without any further renewals of this consent by the undersigned.

Player Sign Here

Player's Home Address--Street and No.

Parent-Guardian

City and State

This contract, supercedes, prior contract, issued for 1951 season in the amount of \$400.00

## REGULATIONS

1. The playing season for each year covered by this contract shall be as fixed by the League and the schedule therefor.
2. The Player must keep herself in first class physical condition and must at all times conform her personal conduct with high moral standards of good sportsmanship and good citizenship. The Player shall devote such time to practice and training as shall be prescribed by the Club or its assignee.
3. The Player when requested by the Club or by the League must submit to a complete physical examination without expense to her, and if necessary, to treatment by a regular physician or dentist in good standing, such treatment to be at the Player's expense, unless any physical condition or defect is caused by accident arising out of or in the course of her employment. Refusal of the Player to submit to medical or dental examination shall be a violation of this regulation, and shall authorize such penalty as may be deemed advisable under Regulation 7 of this contract.
4. Disability resulting directly from injury sustained while rendering service under this contract shall not impair the right of the Player to receive her full salary for a period not exceeding two (2) weeks from the date of her injury, at the termination of which period she may be officially released or at the option of the Club continued on the salary roll in an inactive or active capacity. The payment of any additional benefits to the Player by the Club following such injury shall not create any fixed or vested right to receive payments in addition to said period of two (2) weeks. Any other disability or any misconduct may be ground for suspending or terminating this contract at the discretion of the Club. A Player who sustains an injury while playing ball for her Club must serve written notice upon her Club of such injury, giving the time, place, cause and nature of injury within ten (10) days of her sustaining such injury.
5. The Club will furnish the Player with uniform exclusive of shoes. Upon termination of the playing season or the release of the Player, the Player agrees to surrender the uniform or her uniforms to the Club.
6. In order to enable the Player to fit herself for her duties under this contract, the Club may require the Player to report for practice at such places as the Club may designate and to participate in such exhibition contests as may be arranged by the Club for a period of ..... days prior to the playing season, without any other compensation than that herein provided; the Club however to reimburse the Player for traveling expenses and meals en route from her home city to the point designated for such training; traveling expenses irrespective of the means of transportation used shall consist of one-way coach fare from the Player's home city. The home city for players who have heretofore served any Club in the League shall be that city given as the Player's address on the last signed contract. For Players who have not previously served the League, the home city shall be the city where the Player's legal residence has been established. The Player shall pay all her living expenses in the home city of the Club. The Club will provide and furnish the Player while away from the Club's home city, or traveling with the Club to or in other cities, with proper and necessary transportation and hotel rooms in such hotels and in such rooms in hotels and in such combinations of players occupying such rooms, as the playing manager or chaperone of the Club may designate. All matters of transportation shall be arranged and paid for by the Club, and its choice of such transportation shall be final.
7. For violation by the Player of any rule or regulation or of the terms of her contract, the Club may impose a reasonable fine and deduct the amount thereof from the Player's salary or may suspend the Player without salary, or both, but if suspension is imposed by the Club and exceeds ten (10) days, the Player may appeal to the President of the League, and the decision of the President of the League on all such matters shall be final.



# ROCKFORD

1945

# PEACHES



HOME GAMES PLAYED AT 15th AVE, HIGH SCHOOL STADIUM



A message from President  
**MAX CAREY**



**ALL-AMERICAN GIRLS PROFESSIONAL BALL LEAGUE**  
A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION - Wrigley Bldg. CHICAGO ILLINOIS - PHONE WHI-7741

July 16, 1945

A Message to the  
Citizens of Rockford --

The history of our exciting, nationally-focused game of Girls' Baseball at Rockford should be an inspiration to the directors, sponsors and fans of All Clubs in the League.

The response of the general public to this new game, just in its third year, has far outstripped in interest and attendance, the best years of our national game as played locally by men.

The Peaches have been adopted as your own, and the names of their stars have become a household by-word.

All these factors augur well for the future of our game—a budding new national sport for women, and the goal of 100,000 attendance for 1946 should be within the realm of attainment.

May we offer our sincere congratulations to all the officials, sponsors and fans of the Rockford Peaches for your stellar accomplishments.

Very sincerely yours,

*Max Carey*  
Max Carey  
President

## BRIEF LEAGUE HISTORY

From the middle of the 1945 season, a quick glance backward at the ALL-AMERICAN GIRLS PROFESSIONAL BALL LEAGUE would reveal that the formation of the League, originally organized as the ALL-AMERICAN GIRLS SOFTBALL LEAGUE, was prompted by the realization that women had very definitely come into the national sports picture. With a background of war conditions, the League was created as a non-profit corporation controlled by a Board of Trustees - the players were signed by this corporation for all the teams in the league. The aim of the ALL-AMERICAN GIRLS SOFTBALL LEAGUE was to follow the recognized professional sports principle of getting the very best obtainable players throughout the country and to stage the game in the best possible manner. The teams were to be adjustable each year so that there would be no chance of one consuming the best of the talent.

The trustees of the League were Philip K. Wrigley, president of the Chicago Cubs, who financed the League; Branch Rickey, president and general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, and Paul V. Harper, prominent Chicago attorney and trustee of the University of Chicago, who was familiar with baseball as attorney for the Cubs.

Since the game played was not soft-ball, and since the players were of professional calibre, the name of the league was changed early in 1943 to ALL-AMERICAN GIRLS PROFESSIONAL BALL LEAGUE.

Just before the 1943 season officially opened, the Rules Committee announced drastic changes in playing rules, with a view to increasing fan-appeal. These changes included: the use of nine players instead of 10; the moving back of pitcher's box to 40 feet from home plate; (as this book goes to press in mid-1945-season the pitcher's box is being moved back to 42 feet from home plate, in an attempt to increase the batters effectiveness and also putting the pitcher's box on a line between first and third bases); the use of gloves by all players;

lead-off and stolen bases allowed; use of baseball bats; batter's box increased in size to that of baseball; distances between bases moved from 60 to 68 feet. Girls from all over the United States and five provinces of Canada applied to enter the League, and at the beginning of the training period in May, over 280 girls came for try-outs.

Contracts stipulate that no girl is allowed to have any other form of employment during the baseball season - their entire time must be spent playing baseball, and they are compensated accordingly.

Each club has a playing manager, a business manager and a woman who acts as advisor and chaperon. Managers assigned for the first season included Johnny Gottselig, Bert Niehoff, Josh Billings and Eddie Stumpf. The first four cities in the league were Kenosha and Racine, Wis; Rockford, Ill., and South Bend, Ind. For the 1944 season only, Milwaukee and Minneapolis were members of the league; prior to the 1945 season Grand Rapids, Mich. and Fort Wayne, Ind. were added to the league membership; all indications are that the league is operating very successfully with six teams - however it is felt that before long it will become an eight team league. In the two complete years of existence, attendance records show 176,147 in 1943 and 259,658 in 1944 -- an increase of 49% in 1944 over 1943, and it is quite evident that 1945 will show a substantial increase over 1944.

In the two years of play, Wisconsin teams have had a corner on the championships, Racine taking the title in 1943, and Milwaukee copping the crown in 1944, with Kenosha furnishing the opposition in the play-offs each year.

The girls of the ALL-AMERICAN GIRLS PROFESSIONAL BALL LEAGUE must not only be of professional ball player calibre, but must be of high moral standing as well. Rigid rules of conduct on and off the field are enforced. Each team has a chaperon, and the girls live at approved homes when in their team home-city or on the road. If the girls are to stay



at a hotel, that hotel is the home of all, and no group is separated.

In the first year of operation the league handled all the physical and financial problems, and operated all teams. In the second year franchises were granted to the four original clubs and the League operated Milwaukee and Minneapolis. Through the 1943 and 1944 seasons the league was controlled by a Board of Trustees. The new plan, adopted following the 1944 season, turns the league over to the member clubs.

The ALL-AMERICAN GIRLS PROFESSIONAL BALL LEAGUE is now set up as an association of member clubs, governed and directed by a Board of Trustees, this board consisting of a representative from each club in the league. The entire project has as its aim a self-supporting, sound business set-up.

1943 TEAM STANDINGS

| TEAM                 | WON | LOST | PCT. |
|----------------------|-----|------|------|
| RACINE               | 59  | 49   | .546 |
| SOUTH BEND           | 58  | 50   | .537 |
| KENOSHA              | 56  | 52   | .519 |
| ROCKFORD             | 43  | 65   | .398 |
| Racine won 1st Half  | 34  | 20   | .630 |
| Kenosha won 2nd half | 33  | 21   | .611 |

The winners of the two halves had a playoff and RACINE won the championship.

1944 TEAM STANDINGS

|                      |    |    |      |
|----------------------|----|----|------|
| MILWAUKEE            | 70 | 45 | .609 |
| SOUTH BEND           | 64 | 52 | .552 |
| KENOSHA              | 62 | 54 | .534 |
| ROCKFORD             | 53 | 60 | .469 |
| RACINE               | 53 | 64 | .453 |
| MINNEAPOLIS          | 45 | 72 | .385 |
| KENOSHA won 1st half | 36 | 23 | .610 |
| MILW. won 2nd half   | 40 | 19 | .678 |

The winners of the two halves had a playoff and MILWAUKEE WON THE CHAMPIONSHIP.

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS OF THE PEACHES

VICE-PRES.



CARL GLANS  
Branch Manager  
Kraft Cheese Company

PRESIDENT



HARRY M. HANSON  
Pres. - Damascus Steel Corp.

TREASURER



PHILIP PETERSON  
Pres. - Third  
National Bank

SEC. BUS-MAN.



ARTHUR LUNDAHL  
Sec.-Treas. - State and Madison Recreation

\*DIRECTORS\*

Hubie E. Braunig  
Andrew Charles  
Del Hilvers

\*DIRECTORS\*

Wilbur E. Johnson  
Arthur H. Peterson  
Alan E. Sponberg



PEACHES STOCKHOLDERS

|                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Aero Screw Corp.      | George Krischell        |
| Am. Cab. Hdw.         | Lithuanian Club         |
| Aragona Club          | L.L.L. Mutual Ben. Soc. |
| Baltic Lodge #56      | Clarence Larson         |
| W.F. & John Barnes    | Linden & Sons           |
| Joseph Behr & Sons    | Art Lundahl             |
| Bergen Plumbing       | Tony Lungo              |
| Harry Brant           | Dewey W. Lundquist      |
| Burd Piston Ring      | McHugh Brothers         |
| David Carlson Roof.   | R. A. Maltzen           |
| J.I. Case Co.         | Mandt Brake Service     |
| L. E. Caster          | National Lock Co.       |
| Central Iron Works    | Navy Club Of Rockford   |
| Comay's Jewelry       | Leslie Peters           |
| Cutler Furniture      | P. N. Peterson          |
| Damascus Steel Prod.  | Rockford Eagles         |
| Ebaloy Foundries      | Rockford Brass Wks.     |
| Ekstrom-Carlson Co.   | Rockford Die & Tool     |
| Elco Tool & Screw Co. | Moose Lodge             |
| Elks Club of Rockford | Rockford Mach. Tool     |
| Forest City Knitting  | Rockford Met. Spec.     |
| Forging & Stamping    | Rockford Mu. Ben. Assn. |
| Forest City Foundry   | Rockford Screw Prod.    |
| Free Sewing Machine   | Roma Benefit Soc.       |
| Carl Glans            | Ricks Bowling           |
| J. B. Glasner         | Rockford Drop Forge     |
| Globe Imperial Assoc. | Service Eng. Co.        |
| Greenlee Brothers Co. | Smith Oil               |
| Gunitz Foundries      | Sveas Soner             |
| J.H.Hallstrom Ins.    | J. August Swenson       |
| Harmony Singing Soc.  | Sall Bros. Co.          |
| Highland Lumber-Fuel  | Twin Disc.              |
| D. J. Hilters         | Vet. of Foreign Wars    |
| Edward Hocker         | Winn. County Beer and   |
| Holmquist Lumber-Fuel | 11quor Dirrs. Assn.     |
| Arthur L. Johnson     | J. C. Hutchins          |
| Eric B. Johnson       | Rockford Tire & Vulc.   |
| J. A. Johnson         | John Zanzinger          |
| Wilbur. E. Johnson    |                         |

ONE PAGE HISTORY OF THE PEACHES

There was word going around that a girls' professional ball league was in the making. A group of Rockford firms and individuals, listed on another page, interested in providing this community with healthful and enjoyable sports relaxation, put their minds, energy, and money behind Rockford's bid for participation in the league. You have already read the history of the league, and PEACHES history parallels it.

Rockford was one of the first four towns in the league. The color of Rockford's uniform was established before the name "PEACHES" was given the team; in fact a few games had been played before the name PEACHES received the winning vote in a contest.

In 1943, 46,882 fans attended the home games. Interest grew in 1944, with 80,069 fans enjoying girls professional ball. Up to Monday night, July 16, 1945, 53,969 people passed thru the gate witnessing 31 home games in 25 nights. That's an average of 2,158 per night. Local club officials are hoping to hit the 100,000 mark before the end of the season. The Rockford club leads the league in attendance, and at present, are leading the league in number of games won---and it's everyone's wish that they bring home the Pennant.

THE PEACHES ALL TOGETHER



TOP ROW (L to R); Carolyn Morris, Dorothy Green, Margaret Wigiser, Kay Rohrer, Mildred Deegan, Jean Cione.

MIDDLE ROW (L to R); Jo Fischer, Rose Gacioch, Dorothy Harrell, Irene Kotowicz, Jo Lenard, Marie Timm.

FRONT ROW (L to R); Bill Allington, Dorothy Ferguson. Helen Filarski, Olive Little, Irene Applegren, Dorothy Kamenshek, Betty Carveth.

BAT GIRLS; Nancy Manne and Doris Calacurcio.

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★ *All American Girls Professional Ball League* ★



★ A-A ★  
**GPBL**

*Rockford*

**GIRLS' PROFESSIONAL  
BALL CLUB**

**OFFICIAL**

**PROGRAM**

ALL HOME GAMES PLAYED AT 15th AVE, HIGH SCHOOL STADIUM





# American Girls

## BASEBALL

# L E A G U E



OFFICIAL 1952  
PROGRAM  
Price 10 Cents

---

All Home Games Played At BEYER FIELD  
(15th Avenue High School Stadium)







## *Additional Resources*

### **Books**

*A League of Their Own*. Sarah Gilbert. Pan Macmillan, 1992.

*A Whole New Ball Game: The Story of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League*. Sue Macy. Puffin Books, 1995.

*Breaking into Baseball: Women and the National Pastime*. Jean Hastings Ardell. SIU Press, 2005.

*Encyclopedia of Women and Baseball*. Leslie A. Heaphy, Mel Anthony May. McFarland & Co., 2006.

*Girls of Summer: In their Own League*. Lois Browne. Harper Collins, 1992.

*When Women Played Hardball*. Susan E. Johnson. Seal Press, 1994.

*Women at Play: The Story of Women in Baseball*. Barbara Gregorich. Harcourt Brace & Co., 1993.

*Women's Baseball*. John M. Kovach. Arcadia Publishing, 2005.

*Women in Baseball*. Gai Berlage. Praeger, 1994.

### **Other Media:**

"A League of their Own." Movie, made in 1992. Highlights the Rockford Peaches and the story of the AAGPBL. Rated PG.

### **Websites**

<http://www.aagpbl.org/index.cfm>

The Official Website of the AAGPBL. This site includes, if you look in the Articles section, Player Biographies, General information, Player Interviews and Manager Biographies.

<http://baseballhall.org/education/school-programs/curriculum/womens-history>

You can find in the student resource section a unit called "Women's History: Dirt On Their Skirts". There are different Curriculum levels

<http://www.centerforhistory.org/>

The Center for Northern Indiana History is the main repository for AAGPBL artifacts & documents. Click on Learn History and you will find more information on the AAGPBL.

<http://www.rrstar.com/carousel/x932340842/Old-park-for-Rockford-Peaches-finally-getting-new-look>

From the Rockford Register Star website, 'Rockford Peaches' old park finally getting new look'. Emily Tropp, April 18, 2010.