

LITHIANS WEAK IN PRACTICES

Jack Balding, newly appointed playing manager of the Ashland Lithian baseball team, is going around this week tearing his hair out in copious handfuls over the reluctance of potential talent to show up at practice sessions.

"What with bad weather and spring fever, the turnouts have been disappointing so far, although several players have practiced who show plenty of stuff," Balding commented yesterday.

The initial trial game for the Lithians with Hills on the northern California diamond is just one week away, April 24, and one open date remains after that before start of Southern Oregon league play May 8. Henry DeClerck, manager at Hills, has indicated that his boys have been biding their time until they can shovel base-lines through snow on the playing field and, consequently, also will lack practice.

Practice for the locals will be rushed during the balance of spare time, sessions being scheduled for this afternoon, April 15, and Tuesday, Thursday and Friday next week. Meanwhile Balding will be out drumming up reserve strength for the club.

A tentative starting lineup for early-season games fills the posts as follows: Pitcher, Larry Pepper and Phil Griggs, both right-handers and both new on the Ashland lineup but veterans in league play; catcher, Cliff McLean and Al Simpson, vets; first base, Jess Barton, promising SONS donation; second base, Balding, regular last year; shortstop, Parker Hess, 1937 reserve; third base, the team's big question mark with Arba Ager working out with Medford; outfielders, Jock Kennitzer, heavy-hitting Normal athlete, Darrell Leavens, one of the most dependable regulars last season, Tommy Kenton, import from Eagle Point, Don Montgomery, talent slugger, and Marion Mann, SONS prospect.

SONS LAUNCH SPRING SPORTS

For the first time in the history of Southern Oregon Normal school SONS athletes will represent the local college at intercollegiate spring sports in recognized track and minor sports meets if plans for the current season go through.

Jean Eberhart, SONS athletic director, is overseeing an intensive program of competitive intramural events with an eye to picking individuals likely to do well against stars from other schools. Several meets are on the tentative plan sheet at present, among them being one with Humboldt State, another at Pacific U, the invitational small college relay carnival in Eugene and the Reed college minor sports carnival, all of which fall in May.

Likely looking candidates at present for places on teams are Mark Smith and Amos Velande, tennis; Jack Cady and Bob Napier, golf; Mel Atkins, ping-pong; track: Bill Tyler, Jess Barton, Allan Esselstrom, Norman Kerr, Everett Sandberg, Earl Chamberlin, Smith; field: Napier, Jock Kennitzer, Larry Kaiser, Ken LaBranch, Barton, Bob Durbin, Smith, Ernie Faust and Sandberg.

Kittenball Planned For Summer Debut

Plans for a city kittenball league to be run throughout the summer on the newly lighted high school field, are being formulated this week under direction of Skeet O'Connell, high school coach who met last Thursday in Medford with representatives of Medford, Grants Pass and Klamath Falls who want a team picked from Ashland for inter-city competition.

Teams highest in standings previous to each scheduled game would represent the various cities. In Ashland, as in other towns, teams would be sponsored by various business houses and organizations and would play a regular schedule with games several days weekly throughout the season. A similar plan was successful in the three other southern Oregon cities last year.

AND THEN THE FUN BEGAN!



Hunting Out Sports

By LARRY HUNTER

NEVER let it be said that this scribe is not in favor of the grand national pastime—quite the contrary, in fact—but if the local exponents of baseball (namely players) do not turn out more frequently within the next fortnight the Lithian club either will have to trade a sack of seed spuds, some Confederate shrapnel and a small piece of rope for a franchise in the Mad River and Whip-Poor-Will Valley league or draw straws to see who shall represent the club in the national beanbag tourney.

It is very discouraging, to say the least, to deep dyed-in-the-wool fans and nearly degenerating to poor ol' Massa Jack Balding, the outfit's Simon Legree this season. Balding has been out at every practice session he has called and at most of them has been able to keep track of the huge crowd present without removing his infielder's glove to tally on his fingers.

Of course, bad weather has had a lot to do with it. No one really gets baseball conscious until he can sunburn his tonsils while scanning the balmy sky for the soul-tingling sight of errant fly balls and even if he could catch a glimpse of one the braw breezes which whistle around the diamond during this kind of climate would chill the ardor which had managed to raise its head through the other difficulties.

Nevertheless, there are several guys who are holding up the parade for one reason or another. In a town of this size and situation there are few enough jobs to entice the players who otherwise would receive nothing for their summer efforts but fallen arches, if they are fortunate enough to hang a clout on the horsehide. Some of the best bets, though, are fellows who will be in town anyhow but who insist on gysying around southern Oregon to get in trial licks with every club in the league before eeny-meeny-miney-moing their way to an eventual decision.

This department still holds out

in favor of a ruling which will determine club membership adequately in advance of the season so that dilly-dallying of that sort can be eliminated.

Not only does the indecisiveness unnerve sportswriters and bring managers down to a sobbing, blubbery mass before a team even takes the field but it kills a certain amount of spectator interest and hurts the gate for the rest of the season—or at least until enough of the prodigals return to perform a miracle like the one which happened last year when the Lithians were lurking near the cellar all during the first half of the slate only to come back with vim, vigor and vitality to give Crescent City a nip-and-tuck squabble for the flag.

Players undoubtedly have the right to choose and choose well before they make their position known but it might help some of them if they are reminded that a baseball player, particularly among the bushers, who is just another name on the scoresheet to an out-of-town audience is a minor Joe DiMaggio when he pulls a hot game out of the fire before a bleacher full of his friends and ever-loving relatives. Considering the fact that none of the southern Oregon leaguers will be able to retire on their season's earnings, we might add that loudly voiced approval all Sunday afternoon is not to be scorned.

Maybe it's the influence of major league holdouts who have put the bee in the bonnets of the continually absent ones. One thing is certain—they can't expect to loaf previous to start of the season and then play without kicking the ball around. A bad season or two is just about enough to set town baseball in Ashland right

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back where it was in 1935 and '36—behind the well-known eight-ball, and the bad news can be added right up from there. One club goes blooey, the schedule gets less interesting for the rest of the teams. Soon another drops out, a town less ideally located geographically is contacted frantically to plug the gap in ranks. Trips become longer and, first thing you know, baseball will be something only the old inhabitants will remember.

Territory jumping by member clubs should be discouraged by all managers and club officials who have more than one immediate win in mind and who like the game as THE game. Mark us down "present" when the roll call is sounded for those who oppose this uncivil "civil" war.

McDonald, Kennaston To Indulge in Grudge Gripfest Monday Eve

Battling Bob Kennaston, the Gold Hill Marine, returns to the Medford wrestling ring after an enforced vacation of several weeks because of a broken foot Monday night in the Medford armory. He will top the card with Sockeye Jack McDonald, former Puget Sound logger. This match promises to be one of the best crowd pleasers billed this season.

Second up on the card and equally interesting will be Wild Red Berry, the Kansas Panther, and Gentleman Ken Hollis, the roughest lad to leave the state of Arkansas. Berry took Jack McDonald into camp two weeks ago

and the odds are two-to-one that the Arkansas Terror won't be able to stand the competition.

Opening Promoter Mack Lillard's all-star card will be Marshall Carter, former Missouri state wrestling instructor, and Paul Murdock of Oklahoma. Both wrestle clean and are fast.

The armory doors will be open at 7:30 p. m. Monday night with the first match getting under way at 8:30 o'clock.

Coach Skeet O'Connell of Ashland high school said this week he has two complete teams of Grizzly pigskin aspirants working out daily, as well as a squad of graduating seniors who are doing their drilling under the watching eye of Leonard Warren, former high school star.

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