

# Observing SPORTS

By George Maskin

It happened the other evening in a Little League baseball game.

The runner on first took off for second, as the pitcher delivered the ball to the plate. It was a bouncing sort of pitch, popping in and out of the catcher's glove and rolling past the backstop into a crowd of fans.

By the time the ball had rolled out of play, the runner, who had started with the pitch, was well on his way to third. Even had the catcher picked the ball up, before it crossed the boundary line, it's doubtful if he could have nailed the runner.

The umpire surveyed the situation. There was the runner plopped on third.

His manager, Johnny Miller, was patting him on the back. But, then the ump walked toward third and ordered the runner back to second.

"Hey, what gives," yelled Mr. Miller, by profession a sports writer at the "It You Read the News, You Know."

Miller never moved in the composing room the way he did toward the ump.

"My man had the play beat. He belongs on third," he contended.

Miller had supporters, like mothers and fathers, and several of his players. They couldn't "buy" the ump's ruling.

"I'll have to protest," contended Miller.

"Go ahead," snapped the ump. "You'll waste your time and money."

It may surprise you that the ump was right. After all, the rule book specifically states that when a pitcher delivers the ball from the rubber, the most a base runner can advance is one base in event the ball should head out of play without being touched by a bat.

Therefore it makes no difference how far the runner advances. He had started from first with the pitch . . . and all he is entitled to is second.

This is just one of the many plays that has produced a flood of arguments in recent weeks in these parts.

Take the one which starts with one out and the bases are loaded. The batter cracks a safe hit into right center. Two men zip across the plate, but the third is flagged down. The catcher then tosses the ball to the first baseman, who appeals that the original base-runner, now on third, didn't touch first.

The ump concurs and calls the batter-runner out. So, how many runs scored?

If you said NONE, you're entitled to two free tickets to the forthcoming All-Star game in California. If we had them, Why None?

Well, doesn't the rule book say that no runs can score on any play in which the third out results, from the batter-runner's failure to reach first base safely? It does.

In this case, the fact that the runner missed first is the same as his never getting there in the first place.

Granted, it's a confusing call . . . but don't bet the family jewels against it.

Okay, let's try this one:

The batter slams a drive that hits the pitcher's rubber and shoots into foul ground between the plate and first. Fair ball? Foul ball? Foul it is.

Very few understand this one: The batter swings, the ball bounces in foul territory, then in fair . . . and stays Again Fair or Foul?

Fair. This should be fair warning for defensive players to keep alert.

Here's only one that usually creates problems on the sandlots and often is handled wrongly because of ground rules which actually can't supercede the rules of baseball.

There's a runner on second. The batter slams one to the shortstop. He bluffed the runner back to second and then throws one ten miles over the first baseman's head into the stands.

You see it happen frequently. The runner from second is placed on third, but the batter-runner is awarded two bases. The contention is that the runner on second, wasn't going to third.

The verdict is wrong. The guy who was on second should be allowed to score. After all if you award the batter-runner two bases, everybody else on base when the play started should be allowed to advance the same distance.

Logical? Yes, and it should be that way, although too often it isn't.

Can there be four outs in an inning?

It's possible. There are runners on first and second with two outs. Batter drills a hot shot to right and the ball drops in. Runner from second scores. The runner from first follows him across before the batter-runner is tagged trying to take an extra base.

This should end the inning. But wait, the third baseman wants the ball. He appeals to the umpire that the runner, who was on second, didn't touch third. The throw is made to third, the ump upholds the appeal.

As a result what would have been the third out at second is overlooked, the third out becomes the play at third because as a force play it nullifies any runs. The worse penalty is always inflicted.

Any more stickers? We'll try and answer them.

## King, Court Again Bound For Redford

Area sports fans are in for another special treat on Friday evening, July 14. The King and his Court are going to make their annual visit to Redford Township's Claude Allison Field.

The King is Eddie Feigner, the premier softball pitcher in the world. He's so good he needs only a catcher, shortstop and first baseman to tickle teams manned by the regulation number of players.

At Redford, Feigner will oppose a team of All Stars with game time slated for 9 p.m. Advance admission prices for adults are \$1.25.

Feigner, who has appeared from coast-to-coast and on many television programs, including the Johnny Carson show, even pitches blindfolded during games.

## Prep Star Inks Bonus With Orioles

Bill Ray, star pitcher for the last three seasons at Belleville High School and a member this summer of Redford Township's Detroit Free Press baseball team, has been signed by the Baltimore Orioles.

Ray was named on the Suburban Six League's All-Star team this past spring.

He had a 2-0 mound record with the Townships in Free Press play. When not bustling, he operated in the outfield and was swatting the ball at a 440 clip.

Ray reportedly received a small bonus from the Orioles. He will report to one of their farm clubs this week.

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## Wing Aide Pacer Shows Why Shifted to New Post

John Mitchell, assistant to Red Wing general manager and coach Sid Abel for the past five seasons, will return to the Johnstown (Pa.) Jets of the Eastern League next season as vice president and general manager.

Mitchell, 59, a player, referee, scout, coach and GM during his 40-plus years in hockey, was boss of the Johnstown club from 1958-59 to 1961-62 and won three league championships in those four seasons.

Abel said Mitchell is being given the Johnstown assignment because the Red Wings want an official from their own organization directing the EHL club. Mitchell has maintained a working agreement with the Jets for several seasons and last year had a dozen amateur players on the Johnstown roster.

Mitchell will head the entire Johnstown operation and also serve as Detroit's chief scout for the EHL. Abel said the EHL will be a prime source of player development now that the National Hockey League has expanded to 12 teams.

Other moves in the Detroit organization will be made later this summer to fill the gap left by Abel's new appointment, Abel said.

Mitchell, a native of Kirkcubright, Scotland, joined the Red Wing organization in 1952 when he became chief scout and farm director under former General Manager Jack Adams.

He left Detroit in 1958 to become GM at Johnstown and returned four seasons later in 1962 to become Abel's assistant.

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Clicks for Ace

Charles Small made it big last Thursday when he dropped in an ace on Farmington Country Club's 120-yard third hole. Small turned the neat trick with a seven iron.

Perfect Game

Larry Way of Livonia will be finding his way to Farmington and the Bel-Aire Bowling Lanes more frequently.

For it was at Bel-Aire that the 200-average Way shot himself a perfect 300 game.

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## 18 Stakes to Highlight 1967 Festivities at DRC

Eighteen stakes, headed by the \$100,000 added Michigan Mile, are on the 1967 Detroit Race Course stakes list.

The DRC will open an 84-day racing season on July 31, continuing through Nov. 4. The Michigan Mile will be raced on Sept. 16.

The breakdown on the stakes program shows two events for two year olds; three for three year olds; two for three year old fillies; three for fillies and mares, three and up; and eight, including The Michigan Mile, for three year olds and up.

This will mark the second year the Michigan Mile has carried an added value of \$100,000. It is the richest event on the Michigan racing calendar. The Mile, today, is contested at a mile and one-eighth.

In 1966, The Mile attracted 11 starters including Tom Rolfe, Amberoid, Baup, Solari and upset winner Stanislas from the stables of Mrs. Mildred Kerr.

Nominations for The Mile will close August 19.

Dale Shaffer, President of the DRC, authorized the inauguration of a companion stake for The Mile, for 1967. It is The Milette, a mile and an eighth event for fillies and mares, three and up, to be raced on October 7.

The Milette will have a value of \$35,000 added.

The complete DRC stakes program follows:

- July 31—The Curtains Up Handicap, 1/2 mile, \$25,000 added.
- Aug. 5—The Bullseye Handicap, 1/2 mile, \$25,000 added.
- Aug. 12—The Good Neighbor Handicap, 1/2 mile, \$25,000 added.
- Aug. 19—The Michigan Mile, 1 mile and 1/8, \$100,000 added.
- Aug. 26—The Sweet Patience Handicap, 1/2 mile, \$25,000 added.
- Sept. 2—The Sweet Patience Handicap, 1/2 mile, \$25,000 added.
- Sept. 9—The Sweet Patience Handicap, 1/2 mile, \$25,000 added.
- Sept. 16—The Michigan Mile, 1 mile and 1/8, \$100,000 added.
- Sept. 23—The Sweet Patience Handicap, 1/2 mile, \$25,000 added.
- Sept. 30—The Sweet Patience Handicap, 1/2 mile, \$25,000 added.
- Oct. 7—The Milette, 1 mile and 1/8, \$35,000 added.
- Oct. 14—The Milette, 1 mile and 1/8, \$35,000 added.
- Oct. 21—The Milette, 1 mile and 1/8, \$35,000 added.
- Oct. 28—The Milette, 1 mile and 1/8, \$35,000 added.
- Nov. 4—The Milette, 1 mile and 1/8, \$35,000 added.

Oh, That '6'—It Steals Trotting Show

Northville Downs had one of the most unusual oddities of the Michigan season last Thursday, June 29, when horses in the No. 6 position won seven races, second out of the money once and one scratch in 10 races.

It was No. 6 (Pleasant Yankee) in the first No. 6 (May's Delight) in the second for a daily double worth \$17.50. Then No. 6 (Ragan Way) won the third and (Skip Spencer) the fourth. It was Prachasount (second in the fifth) and Adios Tip, out of the money in the sixth, when Sister's Joy won and paid \$141, biggest win mutuel of the meeting.

Then No. 6 (Red Warpath) won the seventh, Red Rainbow in the ninth and Dean MacDuff in the 10th.

That made El Darno the winner and the six-year-old paid \$139.40.

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