

observing sports

Baseball managers, like anybody else, need to be consulted at times. Especially after they get involved with an umpire over a decision.

Because they know that the chronicle of this effort calls 'em from time to time, team pilots frequently look for a little "ump" when they report their scores and write-ups in the Observer.

Maybe I'll disillusion many, but the umpires nine times out of ten render the CORRECT decision.

Takes the hectic finish that involved a recent Class A battle in the Greater Livonia League.

The score was tied at 1-1. It was the last inning.

The home team had runners on third and first and one out. The batter hoisted a fly to left.

The ball easily was caught. The runner at third took off for home and the man from first started toward second and checked in there as the winning run crossed the plate.

But, wait. Somebody on the defensive team realized that the runner, who was on first, had left the base.

The umpire called a balk. The runner at third was relayed over to first and an appeal was registered.

It was a double play. Yet the game was over with the final score, 2-1.

The defensive team couldn't believe it. How could the winning run score on a double play?

An argument ensued. The ump's won and the rules backed 'em up.

Here's why: The final out didn't result from either a direct force-out or the failure of the batter to reach first base.

Since the runner had crossed the plate before the out was declared on the runner at first the run was legal. Had the out been adjudged before the runner reached home, the run would NOT have counted.

THEN THERE WAS the situation that popped up in a Farmington American Legion play.

A Clarkston batter drilled one deep to center. The Farmington outfielder snared the ball on the run, seemingly brought the ball back to a throwing position, then let it skid from his hands.

The ump claimed the fielder didn't have the ball long enough. Farmington supporters contended he did.

What is a legal catch frequently precipitates some squawks. The rule book says the fielder must have firm possession.

Different ump's have different ideas what "firm possession" is.

It's a judgment call . . . and you can't protest judgment verdicts.

TWO TEAMS were playing in the Free Press League up at Northville.

The batting team trailed by a run in the last inning and had two men aboard with two out.

The manager called for a pinch-hitter. The newly assigned batter took his time getting off the bench. Then in characteristic Rocky Colavito fashion he started swinging a couple bats.

The ump told him to get into the batter's box. The batter went through some more exercises.

Now a little angry, the ump ordered the pitcher to deliver the ball plateward.

"Strike One . . . Strike Two . . ." the ump shouted.

And the batter hadn't even been in the box. A rumpus broke loose. But the ump held his ground and the batter finally stepped in to face the pitcher with a two-strike count. He quickly was retired.

"How can it be?" the losing manager beamed. "My man was put in a jam. He's entitled to some time to loosen up."

Granted . . . but there is a rule that deals with stalling. Again, different ump's look at stalling tactics in different ways.

The rule works both ways. If a pitcher doesn't get on the mound, the ump can call bats.

Lions Swap Clark For Defensive End

The Detroit Lions hope they have filled the gap created by the retirement of defensive end Dennis McCord by obtaining Joe Robb from the St. Louis Cardinals in exchange for ex-Michigan State Ernie Clark.

Robb played with the Chicago Bears and Philadelphia before going to the Cards in 1961. He has been a starter with the team since '62. Clark played for the Cardinals in 1961, but was used only in a reserve role last season.

HAMTRACK'S Peaches Bartkovic failed to survive his first match in the Wimbledon tennis championships in England. She was matched against defending champion Mrs. Billie Jean King of Los Angeles, Calif. Mrs. King had her hands full dominating the Hamtramck teenager, 7-5, 6-4.

ALL AMERICAN Lew Alcindor says he'll finish his college career at UCLA before turning professional. He has one more year to go on the NCAA champs. Rumor has had it that Alcindor would sign with the Harlem Globetrotters for a million dollars.

SUNDAY'S WINDUP DAY for the Detroit News Show at Bloomfield: Hunt Club on East Long Lake Road, near Woodward. There'll be a morning and afternoon session to wind up the biggest and richest outdoor horse show in the country.

RETIRED GOALIE Jacques Plante believes that life begins at 40. He has decided to end a three-year rest and return to hockey next season with the St. Louis Blues.

TELEVISION HAS BEEN A big boon for bowling. In less than 10 years prize money has jumped from \$47,000 for league tournaments to nearly \$1.8 million for 38 meets.

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A NEWSPAPER STRIKE has forced the postponement of a fight between middleweight champ Nino Benvenuti and Jimmy Ranges in Turin, Italy.

BUD STEVENS of Redford Township and his brother Don captured the Michigan Amateur Best-Ball golf championship as a prelude to the State Amateur Journey in Charlevoix.

They shot a best ball of 156 over 36 holes to tie Jim Rice and Lynn Jansou of Lansing and then won a playoff for the crown.

Both Stevens were major contenders for the state amateur title. Bud has won it three previous times, Don once.

CALE YARBOROUGH will be the favorite in Thursday's Firecracker 400 auto race at Daytona Beach, Fla. He'll be seeking victory in the race for the third straight year.

A touring powered car, driven by Joe Leonard, has been entered in the July 7 Rocky Mountain 150-mile race in Castle Rock, Colo. This was the same car that dizzled out in the Indianapolis 500-Mile race with nine laps to go.

THE U.S. AUTO CLUB, meantime, has turned down a move to ban turbine cars from racing.

CHARLIE GREENE and Jim Hixon both were timed in 9.9 seconds to set a world record in the 100-meter AAU track championships. Set their times in semifinal heats before Greene came back to win the finals in 10 seconds flat.

FARMINGTON'S BOB JOHNSON shot 39-39-78 in the fifth annual Horton Smith Memorial Golf tournament at the Detroit Golf Club. Pete Green of Orchard Lake won the event with a striking 35-34-69. Mike Jackson of Red Run followed with a 70.

SPORTS BRIEFS

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