

Tabletop Football's Big Three — APBA, T.H.E. and TSG

by Julian E. Compton

I'm finding it difficult to write about three football games which lie on the floor before me. They call up Proustian memories of friends and experiences which I just can't put into cold, hard analysis, as if they were merely print on cardboard and several colors of dice. With APBA I remember playing Jim Brown and running **ad infinitum**: my opponents never got the ball; I ate up the clock and games went quickly. In another age, I was Daryle LaMonica with three ones on his card, trying to get up to the 41-yard line so I could throw the bomb. (From 59 yards a one was a T.D., no matter what your opponent did.) For ten years I played APBA Football and loved every minute of it.

For two years I've played TSG in a local draft league. At first I couldn't stand the complexity of the game, questioned its realism and especially objected to all-star draft teams. Then I had Tarkenton and O.J. on my team, learned to mix up those complicated plays and appreciate defensive football. A few months back a friend used my old data books to compute the 1962 Packers in TSG formulae. We staged the Packers versus the 1972 Dolphins in a fantastic shoot-out for the all-time championship. The game put us both in a trance of football greatness as Miami used four field goals and held on to win 26 to 20 when it ended. The game was a masterpiece, played on a fantastic table game, which unfortunately had gone out of business. Now Gamecraft is going to put out the game and I'm glad TSG lives again.

If two football games weren't enough to demand my attention, a surprise came along. For purposes of this review I received a complimentary copy of T.H.E. Pro Football Game and began playing it. Immediately I was struck by the similarities with TSG. As play continued several unique features emerged which established T.H.E. as a more complex and equally interesting game. Although I have very little experience with the game, it impresses me as the football game I will be playing in the future.

What is it about T.H.E. that immediately whetted my interest and might cause me to give

League Directory To Be Regular Feature

Beginning with the July issue, "Table Top Sports" will be carrying a continuing section called "League Directory." This section will carry a brief listing of sports table game leagues that are seeking managers. Information included will be the league name and address, the sport, the particular game(s) being used, the membership fee, and whether the league is seeking active or reserve managers. All league executives are encouraged to either send us the above information in a letter or on a postcard or to put us on the mailing list for their newsletter (or both).

up a game I've played for thirteen years? T.H.E. has a flow to it. By this I don't mean it is a quick game — surely no decent football game is. Flow is that element of a game which keeps it moving at a steady pace, which is somewhat akin to the event it is simulating. In football, whether it be kick, pass, run, penalty or injury the game keeps going without the player's having to fumble with 30 players cards, multiple game boards, offense-defense matchups, and endless dice rolls. The ultimate example of a flowing game is APBA Baseball. After playing it awhile, you know what to expect on about half the dice numbers and don't have to refer to either the player card or the game board. With two-thirds of the game player's responses eliminated much of the time, the game flies. T.H.E. Football has some of that, not that you can remember many ratings from player to player, but that the whole team is before you on one 11 x 17 board. There is no fumbling for minor players; everybody who did anything the previous year is rated for it on the card. About half the play results are on the team card and the remainder give a number to refer to on the game board. Simplicity!

Traditional elements which serious game players look for include realism, playing time accuracy, and general appearance. APBA plays quicker, but T.H.E. and TSG both surpass APBA on realism and accuracy. APBA offer: two passes — long or short; TSG has five — screen, quick, circle, zig and fly patterns; T.H.E. has seven — flair, quick-in, quick-out, slant-in

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From the Editor

"From the Editor" — not a very exciting or clever title. When we were considering the choice of headings for our editorial and letter columns we made a search through other magazines to see what nifty little titles they had come up with. We ran across *The Mailbag*, *From the Mailsack*, *What the Readers Say*, *The View from Here*, and numerous other examples. After looking over all of these and vainly searching for something that would top them all, we finally decided to save a lot of time and just shuck the idea. "From the Editor" may not be a cute heading but it gets the job done. Same thing for "From the Readers." And after having gone this far out on the limb we are going to continue the trend and call our classified ad column "Classified Ads." You can look for other inventive ideas in the July issue.

Some of you may have noticed that January's issue was a little late — two months late to be more exact. The problem was that the publishing date of mid-January came just at the time we were busy scurrying around getting the new Fourth Edition of "Extra Innings" ready for publishing. We finally got "EI" ready, except for the 1974 ratings, about February 11 — three or four weeks late. The 1974 ratings were completed about two weeks later and the first issue of "Table Top Sports" debuted another two weeks later. Not an enviable record but an acceptable one for novice publishers we hope.

At any rate, the April issue of "TTS" is coming out on time; at least it is as this column is being written. There is always the possibility of press breakdown, bad alignment of the stars, and cattle stampedes. But as of the first of April everything looks full speed ahead. (We should probably mention here that the lack of general articles for this issue is a result of the small span of time between the first two issues.)

While corresponding with various people about the setup and contents of the January issue, we happened to exchange letters with Dan Dischley, editor of "The Trader Speaks." Dan mentioned in an aside to his letter that in all of his years of publishing "The Trader Speaks" he had never been so much as a day late — even if it meant taking time off from his regular job as a policeman. We immediately thought this to be a despicable habit, particularly since it was already the first of February and our press was still spewing forth the material for "EI," with no thought of being able to get to the January issue of "Table Top Sports" for several weeks. It was doubly disgusting since game and magazine publishing has become our full time business. We have decided it is people like Dan that give the publishing business a bad name. If there were no publications put out on time, then there would be no reason to heap abuse on us laggards. After thinking about this situation awhile, we finally got pretty hot under the collar. We came very close to taking the next plane to New York and bopping Dan right on

the nose. That is, until we remembered our travel budget for 1975 was only \$6.50 and that that would barely get us to the airport at Wichita Falls. Finally, the plan was definitely scratched when we recalled that Dan was a policeman. Probably knows a lot of kung fu stuff.

In another series of recent communications regarding advertising in "TTS," we have received the first two issues of "Sports Fan Digest," compliments of David A. Barlos, Editor, and Kurt Smeby, International Representative. "Sports Fan Digest" is the official publication of the International Sports Fan Association. This is a new organization formed to promote sports and to serve as a center for the exchange of information and new ideas. In the most recent issue, "SFD" contained such articles as "What Are Sports Table Games??", "The Olympics... Can America Accept the Challenge?" "The Early History of Sports" and an article giving the addresses of all of the major pro sports teams — 96 in all. (I counted them!) If you think you would enjoy a general sports publication such as "Sports Fan Digest," one with a personal touch and oriented toward the exchange of information among its readers, then you had better subscribe now. Mr. Barlos has informed us that the subscription price is going to increase from the introductory rate of \$3.75 to the regular rate of \$4.25 in the near future.

Finally, before we lose your attention for another quarter of the year, we want to put an idea on the bulletin board to which you can give some thought. This is addressed in particular to the buyers of any of the Gamecraft line of games, especially "EI." We are considering inaugurating a table gamer's directory service (a sort of "EI" Dating Game, as Jack Kavanagh snidely put it). Since table gamers often enjoy getting together with others in order to play head-to-head or even just to discuss the merits of their favorite games, we propose to use our zip

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coded file of purchasers to help get them together. For those who would be willing to invest a dollar, we would send the names and addresses of the four closest game owners...

If there is anyone out there interested in this idea you had better let it be known to us. If no interest is expressed, we will drop it. On the other hand, if you are opposed to having your name used in such a commercial manner...

Big Three continued

square-out, post and flag patterns. With T.H.E. the patterns can go to the right or left. APBA has two running plays — plunge and end run; TSG has four — plunge, off tackle, end run and draw; T.H.E. has six — draw, power, off tackle left and right, and end run left and right.

If realism implies complexity in a football game, then T.H.E. may be the magnum opus of the medium. Since the final determinant of differences between two teams in all three games is a matchup of their offensive and defensive teams, the way each game does it is instructive.

the offensive right guard and tackle against the defensive left end and tackle.) Passing matchups are more involved with TSG and T.H.E., again being more complex.

I'm sure all three games are quite accurate; however, I would like to quarrel with one obvious inaccuracy. APBA usually requires 35 receptions for an "A" receiver rating. In 1972 Warfield had 29 receptions, averaging 20.9 yards per reception. APBA gives him an A-short, B-long rating. They can't give him an A-long rating by their formulae, even though he has a high yards average and he plays on a team which throws less.

A few basics on each of the games should give a clearer picture of each. Dice: APBA — two, three for solitaire play; TSG — five; T.H.E. — three, four for solitaire. However, T.H.E. usually requires two rolls of the three dice per play, whereas the others require only one. Principal Parts: APBA — three double side boards and 30 individual cards per team; TSG — one double-side board and 30 individual cards per team; THE — one single-side board and one large team board per team.

As to versatility of play — solitaire, head-to-head, draft possibilities, etc., these games have some weaknesses. All are excellent for head-to-head play. APBA and T.H.E. have solitaire instructions, but I find both lacking, and particularly T.H.E., for it loses much of its complexity. As for drafting teams, APBA's linemen don't have enough variety to make for good draft teams. TSG has been a good draft game,

but sometimes good linemen on good teams don't get the individual ratings they deserve. T.H.E. has all the necessities for a great draft game, but since all a team's players are on one card, it would require considerable cutting and pasting or recopying to do it.

A final note: After flow of play, the one item of table games which most appeals to me is the rating of great teams of the past. Not only does it allow the playing of great teams in an effort to determine the all-time bests, but it demands a system of formulae which go beyond season-by-season ratings and allow match-ups of many styles of play and great varieties of performance. Despite its obvious weaknesses, APBA does allow the matching of Miami, Lombardi's Packers and the old Chicago Bears. The next step for TSG and T.H.E. is to produce a set of great teams of the past. When they have done so, I will be prepared to quit buying APBA cards.

Ed: Julian E. Compton is best known to table gamers as the boxing editor of SCOREBOARD. His interest and background is not confined to boxing, however, but ranges from "All-Star Baseball" way-back-when through "T.H.E." in 1975. He is currently a professor at Florida A & M University.

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From the Readers

Because of the lateness of the January issue there was not enough time to receive very many letters before the deadline date for the April issue. We have received a few comments, however, mostly contained in letters also dealing with several other matters. The comments have been favorable for the most part, with a few minor suggestions for improvement here and there. Hopefully, by the July issue a number of you will have taken the time to inform us of your opinions of "Table Top Sports," how we can improve it, etc. Don't forget — there is no fun in doing anything if you don't think someone somewhere is paying attention.

Of the letters we have received, we have selected Bill Rehrig's, Joppa, Md., as being both representative and interesting. We are trying to round up correspondents capable of writing on subjects such as Bill has suggested. If you happen to be a half-way literate type of person — able to put together a complete sentence — and you have an idea for an article that you would like to write and which would be suitable for "TTS," let us know. Sometime in the near future you might have a chance to see yourself in print. (Ed.)

Dear Jerry,

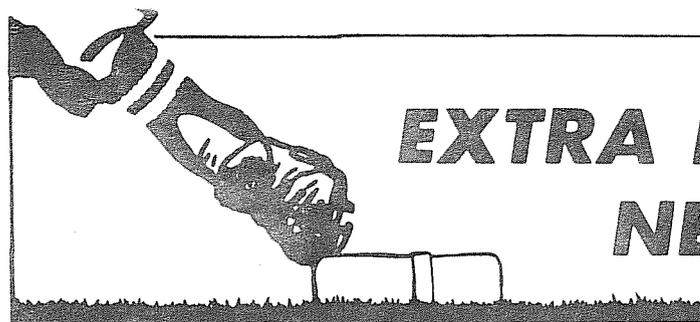
I received Vol. 1, No. 1 of "Table Top Sports" along with the 1974 "EI" rosters. I've read "TTS" from cover to cover, and I'm very impressed. I like the reviews and especially enjoyed the reprint of Bob Hunter's Baseball Games comparison.

I personally would like to see background-type articles based on the historical aspects of various sports, which would enrich one's attempt to replay on the table-top, i.e. "The Greatest Football Game Ever Played" or "The 1948 AL Race — Down to the Wire." I also would like to see articles on the various techniques of table-gaming: Solitaire Play Techniques, Mail Leagues and How to Organize Them, and Automatic Strategy in Solitaire Play.

Also, please continue your policy of actively involving the creators of the various games. This will add greatly to your publication . . .

BACK ISSUES \$1.00 ea.

Vol. 1, No. 1 Jan. 1975. Game Reviews: "Face-Off," "World's Greatest Hockey Game," Statis-Pro Football, "Fast Break," and a detailed summary of all the major baseball games. Plus "Extra Innings Newsletter" with "New Top 400," Fourth Edition of EI Now Ready," and "New Newsletter - New Title."
Vol. 1, No. 2 April 1975. Game Review: "Tabletop Football's Big Three - APBA, TSG, and THE." "T.H.E. Newsletter," "TSG Newsletter," and "EI Newsletter" with "1927 Yankees Set Pace for 40 Team Marathon" and "Resource Materials for Rating Past Players for EI."



EXTRA INNINGS NEWSLETTER

Game Designer: *Jack Kavanagh*

1927 Yankees Set Pace for 40 Team Marathon

The 1927 Yankees, pre-season choice among 40 great teams, completed a 156 game schedule with a 95 win, 61 loss record and a winning percentage of .609. They met each of the 39 other teams in this gigantic competition four times, twice at home and twice away. The "Marathon League" is composed of the 39 teams in the Historic Team Roster section of "EI" augmented by the 1973 Oakland A's. The 40 teams, meeting four times each, provide a 156 game schedule.

The 1927 Yankees ground out their better than .600 pace steadily. Except for one stretch where they swept four game sets with the 1953 Yankees, 1954 Giants and 1954 Indians, they only had two other "sweeps"; their opening set with the 1894 Orioles and a mid-way meeting with the 1939 Yankees. The games were played in chronological order.

The 1927 Yankees were not swept by any of their opponents. The following teams took three out of four: 1906 Cubs, 1913 A's, 1932 Yankees, 1935 Tigers, 1948 Indians, 1960 Pirates. All other four game sets were split or won, three to one, by the 1927 Yankees. The teams breaking even were: 1897 Boston, 1909 Pirates, 1922 Giants, 1927 Pirates, 1928 Cardinals, 1929 Cubs, 1929 A's, 1936 Yankees, 1940 Reds, 1941 Dodgers, 1946 Red Sox, 1947 Dodgers, 1951 Giants, 1955 Dodgers, 1961 Yankees. The 1927 Yankees edged 13 opponents in three out of four games in their sets.

The team of Ruth, Gehrig, Hoyt, Combs, etc. won 50 and lost 28 at home, a .641 average and were 45 and 33 on the road for a .576 mark.

The most noteworthy game was a 26 inning contest against the 1946 Red Sox. There has only been one contest as long in the history of major league baseball. This game was finally won by the Red Sox, 7-6.

Playing in the 1927 American League, these Yankees won 110 and lost 44, with one tie game, for a percentage of .714. Against this all-time championship calibre opponent, the average of .607 seems exceptional and will serve as a challenge to each of the remaining 39 teams as each takes its turn against all opponents. Each team's cycle will, of course, reduce

the number of games remaining for each team. By the time the 38th team has been guided through it will have to play only eight games against two opponents and the 39th and 40th teams will complete their schedules with one series against each other. It is expected that the full schedule will be completed in about three years.

Individual performances were well below actual season totals due to the strengths of opposing pitching staffs on these all champion squads. The Yankee pitchers likewise were not as effective meeting a succession of potent batting lineups as they'd been against their league opponents in 1927. None-the-less, Babe Ruth again topped his team mate Lou Gehrig in home runs, hitting 49, in contrast to his record 60, while Gehrig hit 48, topping his actual 1927 total by one. As Ruth topped his 1927 totals in doubles and triples the effect on his home run total by the new ERA Adjustment Chart which takes away power lines as well as hitting lines can be seen.

Ruth's season batting average was .295. Gehrig was off thirty points from his 1927 mark of .373, hitting a strong .343. Earl Combs also topped the .300 mark among the regulars with a .302, off from .346 in actual 1927. This replay contest uses a team's roster according to the actual number of games played, times at bat, innings pitched, games started, increased slightly to account for an extra game for the 1927 Yankees. For some of the older teams when less than 154 games were played adjustments will be made.

It is this factor which gives the overall strength of the 1927 Yankees an extra dimension. The "big three" of the team, Ruth, Gehrig and Combs hardly missed a game all year. This means you have them playing in virtually every game. By contrast a team like the 1930 Cubs finds Stephenson (.362) missing 24 games and Cuyler (.360) missing 25 games.

The 1927 Yankees pitching staff was very solid with starters Hoyt having a minus 5 lines on the Adjusted ERA Chart; Pennock, minus two; Shocker, minus four and Wiley Moore, minus eight. Moore is a real strength to this staff for he not only started 12 games but appeared in a total of 50 with 120 relief innings worked. The Yankees' double play rating and team error rating are not exceptional, but not woefully weak either. The presence in the

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From The Bench

Resource Materials for Rating Past Players for "Extra Innings"

My usual explanation to my wife for spending as much as I have to put together a comprehensive baseball library is that I am obtaining reference materials useful for "Extra Innings." She feels this article should be titled: "How You Can Rate Players With Only \$2,000 Worth of Reference Materials."

Actually, the basic item is a relatively inexpensive volume, "Sports Encyclopedia: BASEBALL." This can be ordered, soft cover edition, for only \$4.50, from AJ Products, 415 Cotswold Lane, Wynnewood, Pa. 19096. At the price it can't be knocked. For rating purposes it lacks stats prior to 1900; pitcher hitting stats; defensive stats, including team FA and DPs.

To get team FA and DPs you could use MacMillan's Baseball Encyclopedia which is obtainable from AJ Products at \$14.50. From this publication (1974 edition) you can get hitting stats for most regular pitchers. Some table gamers, rather than using either a standard hitting line for all pitchers or computing each one individually, separate the staff's batting records from the team stats and use the average. You could do that, with a little arithmetic work, from the team stats in "SE:BASEBALL."

The best source for defensive judgments for players whose careers have ended is "The Baseball Register," published by the Sporting News. This has been published yearly since 1940 and completing a set can be very costly. The 35 copies can rarely be obtained as a complete set (although I was lucky and picked up a complete run for a relatively low price) and you will probably end up averaging about \$6.00 a copy as you piecemeal a set. "The Baseball Register" is quite useful for season replays as it gives the particulars of trades of individual players, including the data of the trade. For those who'd want to use a particular player in those games played when he was on the roster this is a value.

"Who's Who In Baseball," published by Baseball Magazine, and not to be confused with "Who's Who In Major Leagues" which is of no value for stats, serves the same purpose — regarding trades — as "The Baseball Register" for the years 1912 through 1939. Again, you are in the high brackets for purchase from collector sources. Figure an average of \$10 each as the earlier years are very scarce as would be expected.

Of course, we are really honing fine points expensively when we turn to the use of Registers, Who's Who, and Guides. The Guides are useful for defensive data as you can check a

player's stats against his league. If you are tempted into building a set of Guides (Reach or Spalding from 1941 back to 1876; Spink — Sporting News from 1942 to the present) you are confronted with high prices. From 1900 on they'd average to \$15 with the early years of this century on the high side and declining as you get into the 1960s and 70s. Prior to 1900 you are in an astronomical range but Bell & Howell has made guides from the 1860s up through the first decade of this century available in photo print, hard cover, form for prices which vary with the number of pages but average out about \$8.00 each.

The best sources of reputations (good or bad) for defensive play are in the many volumes of history and biography which have been published. The most enlightening, for a distant period, is "The National Game," Charles Spink, 1910 and 1911. Spink provides short evaluations on hundreds of players who performed before the turn of the century based upon his own observations of them. This is a rare book and turns up occasionally for \$75 to \$100.

The best source for random, but often valuable, observations are the books which make up the Putnam Series. In the 1940s and early 1950s, Putnam published a series of books on the history of each major league franchise. They were mostly written by Fred Leib, Lee Allen, Frank Graham, and other excellent historian-authors. They turn up frequently in used book stores with a sports shelf, or on lists in collector publications, and a set can be assembled for about \$5 a copy. Fred Leib's "Connie Mack" serves as the history of the Philadelphia Athletics, as well it might.

We have heard that MacMillan will issue new team histories and that four will be released this year. These will, presumably, repeat some of the content of the Putnam series books, and serve as an up-date and to cover expansion teams.

Local libraries, particularly university and college libraries, are often excellent sources for old and out-of-print books. There are only two important rare baseball books which aren't on our shelves. Yet, when we want to examine Richter's "History and Records of Baseball" we can go to nearby Providence College and Ellard's "Baseball In Old Cincinnati" is on the shelves at the Rockefeller Library at Brown University.

Almost any major library can be presumed to have microfilm of the New York Times. This can be used to provide replay enthusiasts who wish to be faithful to lineups with a source of batting orders. For pennant winning teams, "World Series Records," updated annually by The Sporting News, is an obvious choice.

I keep assuring my wife that my purchases of books on baseball are an investment and she will reap a handsome dividend when she settles my estate. Like everything else (except "Extra Innings") the price keeps going up on such items, particularly publications which are is-

sued annually, such as Guides, Registers, Who's Who, etc.

I have mixed feelings when I see bubble gum cards bring unbelievable prices (such as \$20 for a 1933 Lou Gehrig card which is no more rare than one for a utility player in the same set). Books and publications haven't gained in cost as drastically. However, they at least follow the inflationary rise and pre-WW One items are bringing very high prices.

One thing that is presently lacking is a comprehensive bibliography of publications about baseball. Actually, it is not a major matter of research as a very comprehensive bibliography appears in "The Official Encyclopedia of BASEBALL" (Jubilee Edition) Turkin & Thompson, published by A. S. Barnes and Co. N.Y. in 1951. I have never heard of a publication prior to 1951 which isn't listed. It would be a reasonable expectation that it could be brought up to date, even though books on baseball subjects are proliferating fantastically in recent years.

I have more than 500 books and publications at hand. I can make an educated subjective evaluation on just about any player who has appeared in the majors in regard to his fielding and running skills. But, in all honesty, that's not why I have assembled my library; I just enjoy reading and re-reading about the great games and players of the past. (J.K.)

Heard from the Grandstand Managers

Reprinted below are a couple of the letters concerning "EI" that have filtered into the Gamcraft office the past few weeks. The first is from Leif Pafvels, Jarfalla, Sweden. The Publication "Table Game Review" he mentions is nothing but "Table Top Sports." We decided to change the name after we had already circulated a few brochures for the now discarded title.

"Recently I bought your basketball and football games. Enclosed with the games was information of a publication named Table Game Review. As an avid player of table sports games I would very much like to subscribe to this publication. Games I own include APBA, Extra Innings, Strat-o-Matic, Sports Illustrated and Replay baseball games; APBA, TSG and Strat-o-Matic football games; Jww hockey game; and APBA, Mickey Games and Strat-o-Matic basketball games. I am playing shortened league schedules in every game and to get variation I play let's say a few APBA baseball games, a TSG football game and so on thru the games. One thing I like about your publication is the contributions of Jack Kavanagh and Jim Hallo as I consider EI and TSG the best games I have played in their respective sports. Games of this

type are totally unknown in Sweden so I am always playing solitaire and of the non-baseball games I consider TSG the best for solo play. The best features are the methods for selecting defenses (always difficult to do honestly and realistically when you know what the offense will do) and secondary receivers. Among EI's strong points are three dice concept and also of course the explanation of the rating formula. I am just starting a league consisting of teams I have selected from earlier pennant winners in the majors, in fact one AL and one NL team from each decade since 1920. As I did not completely agree with the pre-rated teams included in the game I rated a few teams myself using the MacMillan Baseball Encyclopedia to get the stats . . ."

The following informative (and very nice) letter was received from Jim Fagan, West Seneca, New York.

"Enclosed please find my check . . .

I somehow manage to keep slipping off your mailing list and apparently my subscription expired with your January 1974 issue of the newsletter, the last one I received.

I do hope this letter will put me back on your mailing list and I'll be more careful in the future to watch for my expiration date.

I enjoy your game and have for the past three years. I've tried all the others, APBA, Strato-Matic, BLM and the like but find yours the most challenging of all.

I've been an avid baseball fan and table gamer for more years than I like to admit and the hours of pleasure I've derived from games such as yours are countless.

Incidentally, I've completed 91 games of a 154 game schedule, featuring players from your normalized list, Hall of Famers or would-be Hall of Famers, the best of the national league vs the American League.

Ty Cobb is being pressed by Tris Speaker as the AL's leading hitter. The batting averages are rather anemic with Cobb at .310 and Speaker at .300 but when you consider the pitching of the NL — Alex, Matty Dean, Koufax, etc you can readily understand why. Roger Hornsby . . . leads the NL in hitting . . . and at one point hit safely in 23 consecutive games.

Babe Ruth is ahead of his 1927 pace hitting 35 homers (15 games ahead of his 1927 Mark to be exact) . Mays has 28, Aaron 26 and Lou Gehrig 21. Ruth and Medwick each hit 3 home runs in a game.

Alexander has won 12 and lost one to pace the NL pitchers while Walter Johnson's 11-8 is tops in the AL.

Dazzy Vance struck out 14 batters in one game and Alexander struck out 5 American Leaguers in a row.

Thanks again for many hours of enjoyment."



TSG I: Pro Football Newsletter

Game Designer: *Jim Hallo*

Game Statistician: *Jed Duty*

T. M.

As a result of contacts initiated by Gamecraft in the summer of '74, Gamecraft and TSG have signed an agreement which resurrects TSG I. Alleluia . . . it is risen.

Gamecraft will produce TSG I and Dr. Jed Duty will continue to provide the player data and game modifications necessary to keep the product updated. I will aid wherever possible and will "guarantee thorough field testing."

Dr. Duty and I pledge our complete support and offer our sincere wishes for success to Gamecraft. If we make some money, terrific. However, we would have given it to a publisher for nothing just to have it alive. (Ed://fi&!fi&! Why didn't you tell us this before we signed the contract?)

For those of you who are not familiar with the game, TSG I: PRO FOOTBALL is a thorough simulation of the sport of pro football and those who participate in it. Through luck and design, TSG I is pro football. The format is flexible — as flexible as pro football itself. Modifications are easy due to the fact that rule changes, options, etc. are easily incorporated into the product. Using other products on the market, you are conscious that you are playing a game. In TSG I you are *in* the game. You play a game of **football** alternating as head coach, quarterback and defensive captain, using the best players in the world.

As a matter of fact, TSG's economic troubles to date may be because it is too good. It is by decision a sophisticated product simulating a complicated sport. This may limit its marketability. You must reach the masses to make money. TSG I reached only the sophisticated sports gamers.

The development of TSG is inevitably linked to my past table gaming history, of course. I began playing sports games in the forties. My first real involvement was with "All Star Baseball" (still on the market today) where I made my own player discs and played out league seasons. In the 50s and 60s I bought every sports game produced, played them, modified them as possible or necessary. A typical guilt-feeling, secretive, solo player. In the late 60s and early 70s I discovered that sports games were out in the open and that it wasn't necessary to hide.

In 1969 I formed a head-to-head league in Northern New Jersey. We played APBA baseball and football. The league still exists today although we quit playing football when

TSG I was not going to be available. We're now scurrying around preparing to reform. I'm also a member of the NEL, the oldest and by far the best mail baseball league (current cards, drafted, 12 teams) in the country.

TSG I: PRO FOOTBALL was first developed over 1969 and 1970. After some calls to the NFL and Players Association convinced me that the Players Association would "crack down" on non-licensees in 1970, I discarded the project although some friends and I played a modified version in 1970 using the APBA football game with many refinements.

(People ask "why a football game?" The answer is not very original. Years of sports gaming left me with an urge to "do it better." Football was not only my favorite sport but also the sport with the poorest, most artificial products simulating it.)

When 1970 brought no crack-down (that came in 1973), I decided to go ahead and prepare: incorporation and product development mostly. In February 1971 I resigned from my job as Operations Manager of a machinery manufacturer and devoted the next six months of my life to TSG, Inc. That period was a labor of love and extremely busy. I never had to pause and consider what to do next; it was always piled up ahead of me: finances, game development, ads, samples, visits to vendors, art work, drafting, layout, typesetting, etc. Although March 1st until first shipment is a blur of activity in my memory, it was an involved, pleasant, satisfying period.

The response of the sports gaming world to TSG I was astonishingly favorable but unfortunately TSG I cost more to produce and drew less orders than anticipated. By August, it was obvious that TSG, Inc. was not going to produce enough income to allow full time attention (I had planned to go directly into a baseball product). Somewhat disappointed, but proud also, I returned to the 9-5 world in September of 1971.

My foremost critics and TSG's most ardent fans were in Toledo, Ohio: Dr. Joseph E. Duty, Jr. and Ron Rectenwald. Dr. Duty became my partner in early 1972. His indefatigable efforts have made TSG I the incredibly faithful sports simulation product it is today. I **aided him** in the publication of the 1972 and 1973 editions.

Although sales grew for the 1972 and 1973 editions, production and advertising costs, the Players Association in 1973 and the necessity to make major new purchases for the 1974 edition

continued on next page

caused our reluctant decision to dissolve TSG, Inc.

Ed: To give you a bit of personal information on Jim Hallo, we might mention that he is a Cornell University graduate, BME '58. Upon graduation he worked first as an engineer but in the years since has moved up through manufacturing supervision into various positions of increasing responsibility in manufacturing management. All letters to Jim Hallo or Dr. Jed Duty should be addressed in care of Gamecraft. The July issue will carry a greatly expanded version of "TSG Newsletter" using approximately the same type of materials as normally found in "EI Newsletter."

1927 Yankees continued

outfield of two T-1 arms, Meusel and Ruth, plus an SD center fielder in Combs, holds base runners down. An SD rating for Lazzeri is highly useful.

If the team can be considered to have any weakness it is the lack of a star catcher. Yet Pat Collins, who was in 89 games, not only hit a respectable .275, he has a 1-2-1, 1-2-3, 1-3-5 power rating.

The team is not "over-rated" in the subjective areas. The T-1 arms on Meusel and Ruth are more than justified by their stats and reputations as two of the best throwing outfielders who ever played. Combs and Lazzeri rate with the best gloves and ground coverers of all times at their positions. The team's reserves are led by outfielder Ben Paschal a .317 hitter but do not require much depth due to the almost daily presence of Ruth, Gehrig, Combs and Lazzeri with Meusel appearing in 131 games.

The idea of taking one team at a time through a long schedule has this appeal: it enables the surrogate manager to steep himself in the team and to build an identity with it. As it brings into action a new opponent every four games, and each loaded with its own super stars, it avoids the dullness of repetition of games among the same teams and meaningless games between tail enders.

The manipulation to obtain actual game appearances, at bats or games started and innings pitched; to limit pinch hitters to actual use, etc., adds a completely new dimension of gamesmanship. It requires frequent tabulations on the use of players and a watchful eye on over use. The Yankees were able to finish the season at full strength and this resulted in four successive winning series, each three victories, over the post-expansion teams, 1963 Dodgers, 1969 Mets, 1969 Orioles and 1973 A's.

This form of competition also keeps the project open-ended without the necessity to complete a replay of a season before the advent of a new one as is the case with those who replay current seasons.

Play has already started with the second team to be steered through its schedule, the 1932 Yankees. The intention is to take each Yankee team appearing in the Historic Team section in order. This gives a certain sense of

continuity from team to team. For example: Ruth, Gehrig, Combs, Lazzeri, Moore, Pennock and Pipgram are present on the 1932 roster and were on the 1927 team. The circumstance of Lou Gehrig's consecutive game playing string and the wish to avoid the incongruity of him playing against himself has been resolved by having him bat in the first inning for the visiting team, while someone else plays first base for whichever Yankee squad is the home team. Then, he shifts teams and gets a plate appearance for one and a full game for the other. The obvious weakness of this approach is that neither Yankee team is at full strength when Gehrig is absent from the lineup except for a first inning appearance at the plate. The other duplicated players, since none played in all their team's games, can use these conflict occasions to be rested. This removes from the "head to head" competition full strength squads and lessens comparisons. However, the results achieved by each team will be meaningful when they have completed a full schedule and it is known how each fared against all opponents. (J.K.)

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Classified Ads

INTERNATIONAL REPLAY BASEBALL LEAGUE needs several managers. This 24 team mail league, that uses the Replay Baseball Game, is in its second successful season. For a copy of the latest newsletter, send two 10¢ stamps to: Barry Koopersmith, 1468 N. Jerusalem Rd, Merrick, New York 11566.

Applications are now being accepted for NBA replay, NFL replay, draft hockey and 1930 baseball winter replay in the All Sports Conference. ASC has been around for 6 years and features only **DEPENDABLE** gamers. Membership fee of \$4 includes 12 issues of ACTION (Newsletter). For a sample copy, send 55¢ to Bob Collins...25 Peterborough #14, Boston, MA 02215.

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EI's players find this game makes all others seem like child's play. Truly an adult game that is unmatched for accuracy, and is skillfully designed to blend realism with gamesmanship. Use it for competition with today's teams, with the greats of earlier years whatever pleases you most EI lets you do your own thing...play solitaire or head-to-head games in 20 minutes. What's more EI shows you how to rate players from stats - you don't have to keep buying new cards every season. You can bring back any team or star who ever played. EI comes in a binder. All charts and instructions are in place. Use the binder to keep your own records...take the charts out and tack them up-handle it the way you want. With the game, you get ready-to-play - all major league teams on 1974 records...over 600

players, rated to hit accurately for average and power, for fielding skills, running, team DP's. Pitchers graded to ERA and rated precisely for walks and K's. In addition to today's teams, you get 39 of the great teams of the past...plus all Hall of Famers, career rated...plus the "top 400 players of all time", best-season rated! Order direct for \$8.98, plus \$1.00 for postage. Or, send one dollar and ask for more information. When you purchase, the dollar will be credited to the sale.

This is "EI's" sixth great year. A review by Steve Goldstein in May '74 THE TRADER SPEAKS said, "EI Baseball is nothing short of fantastic, and fully deserves the highest rating thus awarded by this major league teams on 1974 records...over 600 columnist. **RATING A**"

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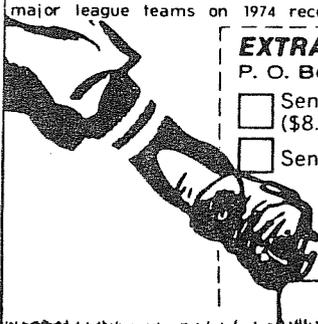


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21st Century Sports

21ST CENTURY SPORTS SUMMER OLYMPICS

Experience all the drama of track and field as 70 different athletes, rated on individual cards, perform for you just as they do in real life. Athletes come from all over the world and include today's top performers as well as selected all time greats.

RUNNING EVENTS: 100 yard dash, 220 yard dash, quarter mile, half mile, 1 mile, 2 mile, and 3 mile.

PACE-SPRINT: All runners will reflect their real life characteristics. Filbert Bayi will set a fantastic pace, Dave Wottle will have a great "kick", and Steve Prefontaine will rely upon his driving finish. On shorter races, the athletes who are slow starters, exceptional "curve" runners or great finishers will perform with amazing realism.

ENDURANCE: Runners tire as the race progresses and an athlete must truly pace himself if he is to run his best race. There is even an endurance factor that comes into effect when a runner is in the *lead* and must cope with the pressure this position exerts.

21st CENTURY SPORTS

TENNIS

Hit a *winner* with 21st CENTURY SPORTS TENNIS and capture the drama and realism of the professional tennis world.

PLAYER CARDS

21st CENTURY SPORTS TENNIS rates the top 15 men and top 5 women players in the world. Each player's ability is computed, and all players are represented on individual player cards. Now you can replay your own Forest Hills or Wimbledon tournament!

RATINGS

Every player is rated in the following areas:

SERVE: A player's serve rating (first and second) reflects the player's tendency to double fault, his ability to serve the "ace", and his general serving style. You can expect Stan Smith to display a devastating serve, while Ken Roswall will be considerably less overpowering.

NORMAL SHOTS: Every player is rated on his ability to hit ground strokes, both forehanded and backhanded. Additionally, some players will demonstrate an exceptional defensive prowess that will enable them to chase down shot after shot. Others will consistently hit winners when their opponent makes a weak return.

NET DEFENSE: The all important ability of a player to hit accurate passing shots or lobs is also reflected in 21st CENTURY TENNIS. Again, players are rated for both forehand and backhand performances, and their effectiveness of play may vary drastically when their opponent rushes the net.

NET VOLLEY: No tennis game could be accurate if it did not pay attention to the net volleying that is often decisive in big time tennis. 21st CENTURY TENNIS rates every player on his ability to volley at the net.

TIMING: A unique and simple timing system allows players to time each race and determine when a *new record* has been set.

FIELD EVENTS: Shot put, discus, pole vault, high jump, long jump, & javelin. The height of realism is captured as each event is broken down into 3 vital phases and athletes are rated on their abilities in each phase. For example, Bob Seagren will generally have a speedy run in the pole vault, and he will also display fantastic strength in his "life", but he will lack the technical perfection that some other performers have when "clearing the bar".

SUPER EFFORTS: As in real life, each athlete will at times make an all out effort to "set the record" or win the event. Of course, these super efforts are limited and must be used at the right time if an athlete is truly to be the winner.

STRATEGY: In Summer Olympics, your strategy is crucial. You choose when your field performer will pass at a height, or make a *super effort*. You decide where your runner should be in the pack and when he should "make his move" with a sprint.

SOLITAIRE: Although very enjoyable as a two player game, Summer Olympics is *perfect* for solitaire play.

GAME QUALITY: Summer Olympics is produced on high quality card stock materials and comes complete with attractive molded plastic runners.

VERSATILITY: The athletes in Summer Olympics are divided into four general teams (U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Europe, and 3rd World). Hold your own *olympics*, *duel* or *invitational meet*. You can even establish a *pro track circuit*.

ORDER TODAY AND FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF IF JIM RYUN CAN EVER CATCH KIP KEINO.

EXTRAS: In addition to the major categories listed above, 21st CENTURY SPORTS TENNIS insures further realism by its attention to overheads, net coverage, and doubles play.

CHARACTERISTICS

21st CENTURY SPORTS TENNIS does more than just rate players. It strives to represent each player's characteristics and style. Thus, John Newcombe will often hit his top spinning winners; Chris Evert will be devastating with her baseline drives; Bobby Riggs will hit the drop shot with a superb touch, and Stan Smith will be awesome with his net game.

STRATEGY

In 21st CENTURY SPORTS as in real tennis, a player's strategy will often determine the outcome of a match. You must decide when to rush the net, when to play to your opponents weak backhand, and when to lob yourself out of trouble.

GAME SYSTEM

The game system of 21st CENTURY SPORTS TENNIS is extremely simple, but amazingly accurate. Play flows smoothly, and playing time for 3 sets is about 45 minutes. 21st C.S.T. is equally enjoyable as either a two player or solitaire game.

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21st C. S. Summer Olympics \$7.75

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T.H.E. PRO FOOTBALL

NEWSLETTER

Game Designer: *Steve Keplinger*

We felt the best way to introduce you to the ultimate in table football would be to give you a little historical background.

T.H.E. Pro Football Game made its debut on the wild tabletop market with the issuance of charts based on the 1972 season. Of course, like most of its competitors, T.H.E. was really born years before. Maybe it all started when someone saw an advertisement in BOYS' LIFE Magazine for a "totally realistic" sports game. Maybe it was the realization that "totally realistic" was not what someone thought totally realistic meant. Or maybe it was that night someone noticed that O.J. Simpson had slightly over a one yard average six weeks into the season, using a game known for its realism.

At any rate, T.H.E. was soon underway. It started more as an attempt to convince ourselves that the game we wanted, and we felt the overwhelming majority of sports game players wanted, could possibly be designed. Within a six month period from that time, we were convinced it could be done. Years later, it was done.

This season will make T.H.E.'s third edition, and as of June 1st, 1975, Gamecraft will take over the manufacture and sale of T.H.E. We will still handle all the designing and computing of players statistics, etc. We feel this will give us the extra time needed to concentrate our efforts at keeping T.H.E. at its present level of sophistication. The burden of handling all aspects of the

business of T.H.E. Game sooner or later would have to affect the quality of it. We now feel we can avoid losing our game to that big dollar bill in the sky.

For those of you who are not familiar at all with T.H.E., let us give you a little basic information. T.H.E. Pro Football is based on the roll of three dice, added together. The individual player cards are produced on a team chart that includes every player who made a single offensive or defensive contribution to his team. Along with all individual ratings, there are team ratings for such things as fumble returns, interception returns, injuries, "unusual plays," offensive and defensive ball aggression and penalties.

T.H.E. Game has been acclaimed by many as the most sophisticated game of its kind on the market, i.e.: Al Simon, All-Sports Digest; Reeder Herrick, Scoreboard Magazine; Roger Verhulst, Chicago Tribune. We recommend you give us a try. Our 30 day money back guarantee protects you in case you are not satisfied. Our deluxe game, containing all twenty-six teams, sells for \$15.00 plus \$1.00 for postage. Partial games with various numbers of teams are also available. You can order or write to us for more information at: T.H.E. Game Company, P.O. Box 113, Glyndon, Md. 21071 until June 1st. At that time, T.H.E. Game can be purchased directly from Gamecraft.

Expanded newsletter next issue

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FIRST CLASS