TABLE TOP SPORTS

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GAME REVIEW/Charlie Marshall

REPLAY BASEBALL

I first began my "tabletop-gaming habit" as an 8th grader in the spring of 1962. I played most of the games on the market over the next dozen years. While most of them were enjoyable and exciting, none of them were wholly satisfying. Then in July of '74, I spotted an ad in a national baseball journal for **REPLAY BASEBALL**. My first thought was "Oh no, not another baseball game, why not a good hockey game instead?" But, as is my habit, I sent for their brochure. After about two weeks of indecision, I decided to order the 1927 season as I've always had a weakness for baseball nostalgia.

The first item that struck me upon receiving the game, was that the player cards were of a thick card stock. I expected the usual paper-thin cards that seem to be the rage amongst the competitors. The cards were of 2 colors, black and red with a green backing-very attractive indeed. I have always felt that an indication of what the manufacturer thought of their product was reflected in the games contents-the quality of materials used. The game arrived in a very handy compact bookcase-style box. Inside are team envelopes for all the teams along with a roster card for each team. On the front of the roster cards are the team name and insignia, the back lists the players on the team along with their statistics for the season represented. Results are found in a handsome chart book which at first maked playing the game cumbersome, but after playing for a while can be eventually memorized. I've played many a game in barely 10 minutes, my average time is usually between 12–20 minutes per game. Since playing the game, I've found it to be more challenging and stimulating than the others although it does have its drawbacks which I will get to later. Each team contains individual batting cards, a team hitting card for the pitchers, and a taller pitching card for the pitchers.

REPLAY has several unique innovations not found in other games which I will explore shortly. Each batter's card contains a grid of 36 numbers divided into six columns. Fielding ratings, speed ratings, bunt and hit & run ratings are also on each individual card. Column 1 mostly reflects strikeouts and doubleplays; column 2 strikeouts, games missed; column 3 doubles & triples & caught stealing; column 4 concerns infield play; column 5 is mainly for walks while column 6 for the most part reflects homerun power. Each batter is rated for; average, types of hits, stolen bases and caught stealing, hit by pitcher, games missed, double plays and there is a lefty-righty factor. Pitchers are rated for stamina, control, strikeouts, hits allowed, homeruns and vs. the hit & run play. Two dice of different colors activate play.

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GAME DESIGN IV/David Minch

FINE TUNING

Fine tuning is nebulous subject. It depends on how much effort you are willing to expend, how much effort and accuracy you think is appropriate and the philosophy you are following in the design. For example, the design decision of whether the manager calls steals has an effect on how data for cards is handled. Let's get right to some practical stuff.

The intentional base-on-balls is common baseball strategy. There is an immediately obvious difference between intentional and unintentional walks. How should we treat the difference?

Rating pitchers to give up walks at a rate based on the total bases-on-balls they gave up is one way. These will then include walks issued for strategic purposes and allowing players to give intentional walks will make season stats come out wrong. Moreover, including intentional walks in the card calculations will distort the estimate of the pitcher's ability. A similar distortion will occur for batters. It will be most obvious in the case of batters who collected most of their walks on intentional passes. For example, 25% of Billy Williams' walks were intentional.

On the other hand, basing card values on unintentional walks almost guarantees that season stats will be different from their Major League counterparts. This is simply because of the difference in managerial styles. There are few table top managers who'll pull a pitcher as quickly as Sparky Anderson or as slowly as Red Schoendienst. The designer's choice is which sort of realism to maintain.

I'm partial to making the intentional pass a managerial decision. To fine tune the cards for that approach, we'll have to filter out the intentional walks awarded. Reference to last year's Major League data show's that intentional walks were about 10% of the total. That's such a nice convenient number, let's keep it. When figuring card values, remove intentional walks from the figures before making calculations. The numbers are tabulated and available, but if you can't find the data, use 10% of total walks, rounded to the nearest whole number, as an estimator.

The approach I outlined in the first installment, for figuring card values has some "noise" built into it. For greater accuracy in figuring card values and, hence, in reproducing season stats, we should tune it out. The noise I am referring to is in the use of a league average opposition for batters and pitchers. A league average includes statistics of a player's teammates, against whom he did not compete. The Cincinnati Reds led both leagues in homers last year and since Cincinnati pitchers did not have to face Morgan, Rose and Foster, their chances of

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From the Editor

I don't know what is going wrong here but it seems we're finally keeping a promise. This issue of TTS is going to press only two weeks after the last issue - just as I said it would in my last column. And we're going to attempt to mail the July - August copy by July 15. (Ha! Ha! you say. Well, rats to you, I say.) All of you columnists out there get your material in by June 28, at the latest.

Everytime we're really late with an issue - such as with the Mar - Apr, and before that the Jan - Feb, and before that the Fall 1977, and before that the Summer 1977, and so on - we get a lot of inquiries and a few gripes, all of which we deserve and all of which we ignore. But since we do receive a lot of gripes, we feel it's only fair to express a few of our own.

First, let's talk about renewals. A lot of you simply state on a catalog order blank "1 year subscription TTS $6.00." So, when filling your order we start your subscription by enclosing the current issue of TTS (if it's within a couple weeks of being new) along with the remainder of your order so that you won't have to wait two full months before receiving your first issue. We then place the order blank in the TTS bin so that we can later (about once per month) type up an address stencil for you. That's the point at which we discover some of you already **had** active subscriptions, had already received the "current" issue, and had actually intended " 1 year **renewal** Table Top Sports $6.00." Moral: If your $6.00 is for a renewal, tell us! Otherwise, you're liable to lose a dollar's worth of your subscription.

Second, let's discuss address changes. Every now and then we receive a long complaint from someone about not receiving the last one or two issues of TTS. Then, at the end, the person will state "Oh, by the way, I changed addresses a few months ago. Here's my new one..." Gee, thanks. We are always thrilled to provide missing issues to someone who is a couple of months late in bothering to let us know he's moved. In fact, I'm always so thrilled that I whistle a merry tune while I rip the letter into a million pieces. Moral: Let us know as far **ahead** of time as possible about changes of address. Otherwise, your issues will end up in the trash container in the alley behind your old post office.

Third, (boy, this is fun!) let's discuss something else about address changes. We get a few letters that state "Here's my new address." That's fine except that we have no way of finding your address stencil unless you provide us with your **old** address, also, since all stencils are filed by zip code. If we can't find your stencil, we can't change your address. Moral: Always give us your old address as well as your new address.

Fourth, (heck, can't think of any more) we come to the subject of information inquiries, e.g., "What's the address of the Cowbell Game Co.?" I'll be honest and admit that, after paying for typesetting (22¢ per magazine copy), printing (31¢), addressing (6¢), postage (7½¢), and advertising (about 15¢), we have a whopping 16¢ pure, unadulterated **profit!** Now, some of you are saying, "Shoot, if they've got 16¢ profit, they can spend 13¢ on a stamp to answer my question." You're right, we can; but we probably won't. That 16¢ profit goes to pay us for organizing all of this mess into a nearly-readable publication. It takes more than a few minutes a week. (If it didn't we would never be late.) The profit works out to a couple of dollars an hour, before allowing for the time and expense for replying to information queries. The Dartnell Business Institute estimates it costs over $4.47 for a company to write a business letter at 1978 prices. It doesn't actually cost that much here at TTS because your thrifty editor usually does most of the answering himself, however, it is still expensive, especially when I had really rather be doing something else. The cost of your subscription cannot begin to cover the cost of our operating as an information bureau for you. Moral: If you want a reply to a letter containing questions, be sure to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise, cross your fingers and hope I'm in a good mood the morning your letter arrives.

Now, on to more positive things. We're including a form by which you can order past issues of TTS. (If you wish, use a plain sheet of paper so as to not cut up this issue.) The back issues are selling well and many of them are limited in supply. For example, as of now we have 15 copies of Vol. 1, No. 1 remaining. If you intend to complete your collection, now is definitely the time.

From the Readers

The following is some material sent to us by Kerry J. Brassell, Frasier, Michigan.

Rating System - 12 Things To Know

After reading of other rating systems, I have come up with one of my own. I believe that it serves the purpose-i.e., it identifies 12 things any game buyer should know:

1. Game quality - This covers the box and its contents, including all game parts.

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TABLE TOP SPORTS

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Replay Baseball Cont'd.

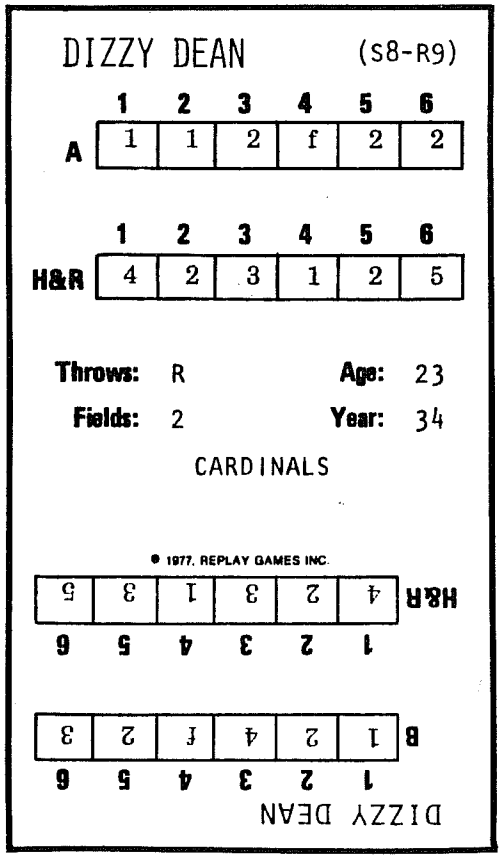
The first die indicates which column plus the pitchers rating for that particular column, while the second die determines the batter's number to be added to the pitchers rating. Pitchers are rated 1 to 5 in all categories, so there are no heavy mathematics involved. As baseball is pitcher vs batter, adding 2 ratings for one result is a natural, thus assuring pitcher affect as to the results. In column 4, an infielders rating is added to the batter's number.

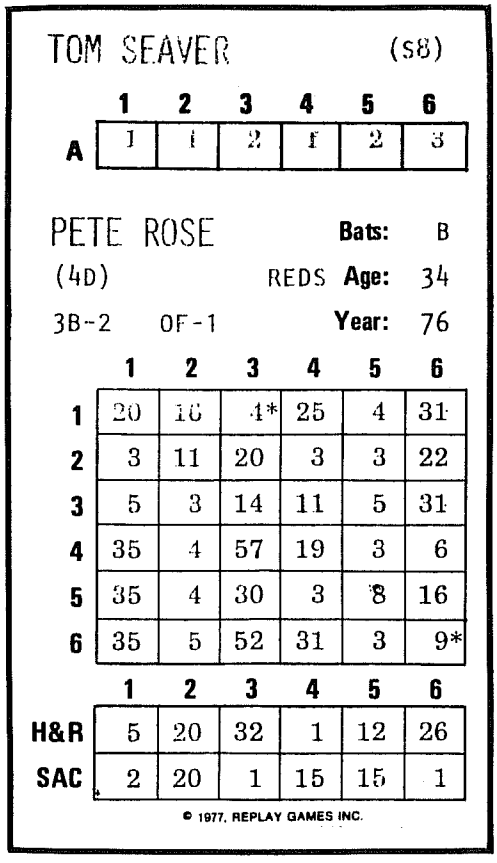
You may play your infield back, doubleplay depth (halfway), or in. You do not have to position all your fielders at the same depth. For instance, with a runner on first you may desire to bring in your first and third basemen to guard against the bunt while playing your second baseman and shortstop halfway for a double play. This requires both managers to be on their toes. One die is rolled on the bunt, with number on the batters card added to the rating of the fielder's. Thus, the fielding ratings and the individualized bunting ratings take on added significance. Of course, the team at bat may elect to hit away and a potential doubleplay may become a double or single with the cornermen drawn in. Such is baseball, such is **REPLAY.**

Pitcher ratings are unique in that each pitcher is given two sets of ratings. Starters are rated for the number of innings he can pitch before the card is flipped over to its "B grades", unless he allows 4 earned runs before his limit, or has not allowed an earned run up to and past his limit, in which case he remains on his "A" side until he allows an earned run and then must be flipped. Relievers are rated for the number of **Batters** they may face before their rating drops. Thus, it may prove to be disastrous bringing in your short reliever too soon, as his rating drops whether he allows any runs or not. This prevents pitcher overuse. Pitchers are also rated against the H & R and as in normal play, his rating is added to the batter's rating according to the dice roll. Thus, it will be harder to advance baserunners against the better pitchers. A batter's ability to protect baserunners is just as important in **REPLAY** as in real life. In another well-known game, if you bat Morgan ahead of Kingman and use the H & R, Joe is liable to steal 150 plus bases. Try that in **REPLAY** and you will find a strikeout-runner caught – stealing will be an all too frequent occurrence thus discouraging the H & R with a hitter like "Kong".

Probably the most unique feature of **REPLAY** is their games missed feature. The amount of action a player saw is built into each card, thus insuring proper usage. This is unlike other games in which a player may receive an injury rating but there is no guarantee of the player being out of the lineup as they usually occur at random. By insuring proper player usage, a player who had great stats in limited appearances cannot be employed as a regular.

Another unique feature is in the stolen base/caught stealing aspect of the game. Most games only rate players for the number of steals they made, not the number of times they were caught. Thus, a player who steals 20 bases but is caught 25 times can be expected to perform in a like manner. There are 2 steal systems with **REPLAY.** One is optional, allowing the manager to call for the steal, in the other the SB/CS frequency is built into the cards. The catcher's arm (rated 1 to 5) ratings are important in both systems. In the built in system, whenever an * appears, a stolen base opportunity is present, (a double **, is an automatic sb, with a chance to steal the next base). One die is rolled; if higher than the catcher's rating he steals, otherwise, he holds; his caught-stealing frequency is found on other result numbers on his card. Thus, fewer stolen bases are attempted against Bench as opposed to other catcher's and the % of successes vs. Bench is less than that of others.





REPLAY also comes with a **Rare Plays Chart** which enhances the game greatly. Catcher's interference, triple plays, ejections, brawls, even a batter getting hit by a foul ball in the on deck circle being forced to leave the game plus dozens of others.

Each team contains an average of 26 players. Also, **REPLAY** annually issues a famous season of the past. So far, card sets have been issued based on the 1876, 1927, 1934, 1955 & 1961 seasons.

Other unique features of **REPLAY** are that the runs scored and runs batted in totals are built into each players cards to guide them to realistic totals. Using another game, a player that batted in 90 runs in 150 games one year reached that total after 60 games. Also using the same game, the number 8 hitter on his team, who only batted in 40 runs on the year was leading his team with 54 at mid-season! Such occurrences are unlikely with **REPLAY.**

REPLAY is about as accurate statistically as any other game. In my '27 Yankees replay, Ruth hit 64 homers, but he got up on additional 38 at bats. As he actually hr'd in '27 once every 9 AB's, his homerun frequency was virtually identical. Also, the Yanks, winners of 110 ballgames that year, won 108 for me and ran over their opposition in much the same manner as in real life.

Now for the weak spots. (Bet you never thought I'd get around to it, did you?) In the original chart book, since revised, the put outs and assists were not distributed realistically. This has been improved somewhat by the revised chart book. Also, a successful squeeze bunt is a virtual impossibility. Finally, the game does not produce enough double plays, only approximately 3/4ths the proper total. Fielding stats are, however, for the most part accurate. Another weakness is that the catcher never fields the ball on an attempted sacrifice, it is either the first baseman, third baseman, or pitcher handling the play. Also, the pitcher and catcher don't appear to be involved in as many fielding plays as they should be.

Overall, the game is a good buy for $15. There are some more expensive games on the market using lesser quality materials. New card sets sell for $10. **REPLAY** is very responsive to customer's suggestions, although a bit slow in answering mail. Your order, however, is processed and shipped out rapidly.

From the Readers Cont'd.

2. Coaching ability required - This is a main facter - especially in games more suited for two-handed play, and **all** football games.
3. Offense - The part that offense plays, and how it is handled.
4. Defense - Same as offense.
5. Sport particulars:
   Baseball - Pitching
   Football - Kicking Game
   Basketball - Freethrows, 24-sec clock, etc.
   Hockey - Penalties
6. Statistical Accuracy
7. Playability - Is the game enjoyable? Will I play it again? Would I want to replay?
8. Timing System - i.e., how long each play lasts (baseball games always get C).
9. Cost - Is it **really** worth it?
10. Replay - Can it be used well for replay purposes?
11. Special Features
12. Overall Opinion

Each is given a letter grade, and they are averaged. I have rated some of the major baseball games below:

BABE RUTH **Bats:** L
(2) YANKEES **Age:** 39
OF-3 **Year:** 34

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	30	31	13	1	5	16
2	3	11	2*	19	3	9
3	30	1	5	9	6	16
4	35	1	19	1	3	7
5	30	2	30	31	6	16
6	35	2	19	1	4	11

	1	2	3	4	5	6
H&R	4	19	32	1	10	27
SAC	1	20	15	1	15	2

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NEW YORK YANKEES (97-62) 1976

	AB	H	2B	3B	HR	SB	CS	BA
C. Chambliss, 1B	641	188	32	6	17	1	0	.293
W. Randolph, 2B	430	115	15	4	1	37	12	.267
F. Stanley, SS	260	62	2	2	1	1	0	.238
G. Nettles, 3B	583	148	29	2	32	11	6	.254
R. White, OF	626	179	29	3	14	31	13	.286
M. Rivers, OF	590	184	31	8	8	43	7	.312
O. Gamble, OF	340	79	13	1	17	5	3	.232
T. Munson, C	616	186	27	1	17	14	11	.302
C. May, DH	351	91	13	2	3	5	1	.259
L. Piniella	327	92	16	6	3	0	1	.281
J. Mason	217	39	7	1	1	0	0	.180
S. Alomar	163	39	4	0	1	12	7	239
F. Healy	144	35	3	0	0	5	1	.243
E. Hendricks	132	23	2	0	4	0	1	.174
O. Velez	94	25	6	0	2	0	0	.266
C. Tovar	84	14	1	0	0	1	3	.167

	GS	GR	IP	SO	BB	W	L	ERA
C. Hunter, R	36	0	299	173	68	17	15	3.52
E. Figueroa, R	34	0	257	119	94	19	10	3.01
K. Holtzman, L	34	0	247	66	70	14	11	3.64
D. Ellis, R	32	0	212	65	76	17	8	3.18
D. Alexander, R	25	5	201	58	63	13	9	3.36
D. Tidrow, R	2	45	92	65	24	4	5	2.64
G. Jackson, L	2	32	78	39	25	7	1	2.54
S. Lyle, L	0	64	104	61	42	7	8	2.25

	APBA	BLM	EI	SOM	SP	LB	BU
1.	A	D	C	A	C	B	B
2.	B	A	A	B	B	C	C
3.	A	B	A	B	C	B	A
4.	C	C	B	B	C	D	B
5.	D	B	B	C	C	B	C
6.	C	C	A	B	B	C	D
7.	A	D	C	B	A	C	B
8.	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
9.	D	C	A	B	C	C	B
10.	B	D	B	B	C	B	C
11.	C	B	A	B	B	D	D
12.	D	D	A	C	B	B	B
Avg.	C+	C	A-	B/B-	C+	C+	C+

Calcu-Ball Ratings

Calcu-Ball is one of the easiest baseball games to do ratings for. The game is played by first subtracting the batter rating from the pitcher rating and subtracting 1 for each inning that pitcher has pitched (after his first). The number is then looked up on the play results list (available, along with the ratings, for $1.50).

Batting: Drop the decimal and divide batting average by 4. For example: Rod Carew hit .331 in 1976. His rating would be 331 divided by 4 or 83. **Make sure that no two batters on the same team have the same rating.** Use your own judgement as to the adjustment.

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serving a home run ball should be lessened. Considering the quality of Reds' pitching, it's only fair.

Though removing stats for a player's teammates adds difficulty, it gives a truer estimate of player abilities. Strictly, the opposition figure used in calculating card values should only include those players actually faced in the season. This gives the best estimate of player abilities but I don't expect anyone without computer time to really do it that way.

There's still more noise in the card values. The system suggested for estimating a pitcher's propensity to give up doubles and triples contains a good bit of noise. I can (and will) suggest two ways to make that generalization better.

The usual tabulations for pitchers gives hits allowed and home runs allowed. Subtracting home runs from hits leaves a total which must be subdivided among singles, doubles and triples. Table 1 presents the league average proportions of hits so that you can divide the remaining hits in that fashion. Of course, this sort of distribution of hits represents an average pitcher's performance. It will be very inaccurate in the case of very good and very poor pitchers. To remedy this you can "skew" the distribution either toward singles or toward triples. One easy way to do this is to compare the pitcher's proportion of home runs to total hits to the league average proportion. If he gave up more home runs in proportion, he probably gave up more triples and doubles in proportion. The remaining hits would be singles. If the pitcher gave up fewer home runs in proportion, he likely gave up fewer doubles and triples and in about the same ratio to the league average figure. Again, the missing hits become singles. This system will give a fairly satisfactory distribution of hits and one which is individually tailored to each pitcher. The card values can be easily adjusted with a calculator and a small effort.

Another way to work the skew is to base it on each pitcher's ERA. Pitchers above the league average ERA ought to be shifted toward triples and pitchers below the league average ERA should be shifted toward singles. You might also want to combine these two suggestions. I will leave the amount of shift for the ERA method and the means of combining the two to you. The ERA adjustment chart in **Extra Innings** may give you some ideas for the amount of shift with the ERA approach.

The systems outlined above are really aimed at improving existing estimates. They can't work perfectly. What can you do to eliminate necessary estimates?

One way would be some variation on this trick: rate pitchers to give up home runs at the proper rate and, general - ized, "hits" at the proper rate. If a hit result, other than a home run comes up, it can be allocated as a single, double or triple according to the batter's likelihood of such hits. This decision can be made by a second roll or some other procedure and can be modified according to the pitcher's ERA, Sisler Rating or designer's prejudice. Alternately, hits other than home runs could be removed from each pitcher's batters faced pitching. Card values would be calculated using this number instead of BFP. All hits other than home runs would come off the batters' cards and batters' card values would be calculated against a zero average opposition for singles, doubles and triples. Using **this** method, the IFC and OFC lines for batters will be smaller and for pitchers they will be larger. In consequence it will have effects not easily noticed on team fielding. For example, the current system for figuring IFC and OFC on a pitcher's card is based on the proportion of outfield to infield putouts by the team backing him; obviously a different team backing him will change things but the fact that the chances are based on the last team the pitcher was with may cause some annoyance. Traded pitchers, free agents and draft leaguers will not exhibit the differences of the new teams behind them.

To work a few examples, let's fine tune the card we did for John Denny back in the first installment. Denny walked 74 batters in '76. Our estimator gives 7 intentional walks, in 861 BFP, or **p** equals .078. Removing the Cardinals' stats makes **a** equal .086. So, the new card value for Denny is .070. Tabulated data for Denny indicates that, actually, only 3 of his walks were intentional. With this information **p** equals .082. This gives **c** equals .078.

To fine tune Denny's hit distribution, let's try it by comparison of home run percentages first. In 1976 Denny gave 189 hits, 11 of them over the fence, a proportion of .058. Referring to Table 1 shows that home runs were .066 of the total in the NL. The modifier for Denny's doubles and triples is

$$\underline{m} = .058/.066 = .879.$$

Multiplying the proportions of doubles and triples by **m** gives the new lines .006 and .029 for triples and doubles. Since the extra base hits have been decreased by a total of .004, the line for singles must increase by that amount and is now .169.

Another way of tuning Denny's hits is to eliminate hits other than home runs, as well as the at bats they represent. To do this,

$$BFP' = BFP - H + HR.$$

For Denny BFP' equals 683, so in the case of home runs,

$$\underline{p} = 11/683 = .016.$$

Totalling the lines for homers, walks and strikeouts leaves .772 which must be allocated to IFC and OFC. I'll leave that and the other possible tuning systems to you.

Next time out, we'll look into the matter of placement of batted balls, including allocation of double plays.

GAME REVIEW/David Minch

PAYDIRT!

The people at Avalon Hill are apparently very serious about improving their **Sports Illustrated** games. Among the first of the changes made to these is the updating of **Paydirt!**, the SI pro football game.

The original **Paydirt!** was nothing great to begin with and it has stagnated for more than five years. Its greatest liability was boredom; events on the field happened, mostly, without the gamers' control. The interaction of offense and defense was by combination of results found on offensive and defensive charts. In most cases, the defense had very little effect on the result of a play. I'm told that the original designers of **Paydirt!** were Neft, Johnson, Cohen and Deutsch, who since have gone on to produce the **Sports Encyclopedia** Books. They did about half enough work in the design of **Paydirt!** and there it sat, until recently.

The revisions to **Paydirt!** amount to both a redesign and a completion of the original design. The original **Paydirt!** lacked quite a few things, an acceptable kicking game being the most notable. The new **Paydirt!** has filled in almost all of the holes left in the original.

The revised game is wide-open. Many more options are

open to players than were available in the original game. This does a lot to reduce boredom. With the new game, to name just a few improvements, it is possible to punt for the coffin corner, fake a punt or field goal, or make a "squib" kickoff. Blocked kicks have been added as a feature of team performance and there is now much more strategy in kicking and receiving or defending.

The running and passing games have been revised to eliminate the previous limitations on draw plays and screen passes. There is also a "two-minute offense" option, allowing plays to be run quickly and permitting the quarterback to throw the ball out of bounds to stop the clock. There is even a rule allowing for "razzle-dazzle" plays. The new rules make **Paydirt!** a good game.

To be sure, there are many better games, still. **Paydirt!** is no longer a "poor relation", though, and it can be played and enjoyed in the new form. The new team charts, for the '76 season, are on superior stock and are printed in four colors. They are a marked improvement over the earlier charts. Seeing what has been done to improve **Paydirt!** makes me believe that AH can really do some good in the table sports hobby.

The revision on **Paydirt!** is due to Dr. Thomas R. Nicely, who is a professor of Mathematics at the University of Virginia. I know nothing else about him, and I can't vouch for his experience or promise in designing table games. On the face of it, I want to see more of his work. He seems talented, even though I do not always agree with his conclusions.

If you own **Paydirt!**, don't fail to get the new rules and team charts. They make **Paydirt!** a playable and fairly interesting game. It is still below average, in comparison to most other football games, but it is much better now than it was before. It's a good way to spend an afternoon, with a friend, some beer and an undemanding yet interesting game.

The new **Paydirt!** team charts and rules are available from Avalon Hill, 4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21214. Price is $7.00, plus $.90 postage and handling.

MAGAZINE REVIEW/Larry Green

GAMES & PUZZLES

If you are a gaming enthusiast that a subscription to the English publication "Games and Puzzles" is an absolute must! Each issue of "Games and Puzzles" is chock-full of gaming articles, reviews, news and advertisements. Most issues run about 50 jam packed pages. Publisher Graeme Levin tells me that "Games and Puzzles" has now been published for almost six years and tries to cover the entire field of indoor games authoritatively and comprehensively. Although table top sports games are covered, they are only a small segment of the total gaming articles included. Perhaps the best way for me to share my enthusiasm for "Games and Puzzles" is to give you a summary of its contents. The following are some of the general categories:

Editorial - Interesting opinion and thought by editor Albil Fiore. In the two issues I have he discusses video games and the "Games and Puzzles" annal game award of the year.

General Articles - One issue I have includes an article called "Inside the House of Games". The subject deals with the activities of John Watson, Marketing Director of Waddington's House of Games. Waddington's House of Games is a large game producer in England. There are a couple of excellent articles on war gaming in the issues I have. There is another excellent article by a game inventor.

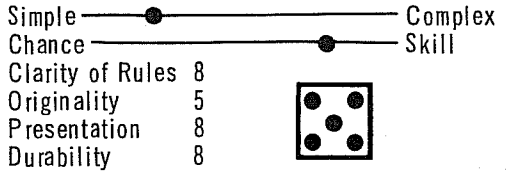
Across the Board - This section reflects comments and observations on the game scene by the staff.

Playroom - This is the area of the magazine where readers discuss their games, analyses and comments.

Platform - The page where personalities from the world of games air their views.

Forum - Letters to the editor.

Gamesview - Current games are reviewed by a panel of experts put together by "Games and Puzzles." Gamesview looks at new games and some that are not so new. Each game is described briefly by a member of the review team who specializes in that particular field and the game is also rated independently by the test panel who have examined it, played it and discussed it in depth. A die is used to show the panel's overall rating. (six-highly recommended: one-not recommended). The following is the panel's verdict on "Whosit?"



Advertisements - The back page has many small ads, club notes, events and opponents wanted. The magazine contains many ads of game manufacturers and distributors but the largest advertisement is that of "Games Centre". The "Games Centre" is apparently a large game wholesaler and retailer. Incidently, you could purchase from them such things as polyhedral dice sets, percentage dice and table rugby.

If all of this sounds good to you then I suggest you send $12.00 (cost of subscription-surface mail) to:
Games and Puzzles, 11 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1A 4XF England

Tell them Larry Green sent you.

NOTE: In the next issue I will tell you something about the "Games Centre".

GAME REVIEW/David Minch

NASL SOCCER

Universal Game Company's **NASL Soccer** is a system looking for a game. By that I mean that it is a beautifully simple, quick system for a "flowing" sport, attached to a simulation of soccer. Soccer, the world's most popular game, remains a curiosity in this country. Whether you follow pro soccer or are just curious - even if you know nothing at all about the sport - this game deserves your attention.

It comes with six pages of rules, a playing field on paper, various charts (most rarely consulted), two pairs of dice and a sheet for each member team of the NASL. Each of these sheets has individual cards for fifteen players, a team defense card and ratings for two goalies. They are reproduced on medium cardstock which is sturdy, yet easy to cut if you prefer individual cards. The only annoyance (slight) is that the reproduction is photostatic; evidently, a master sheet was prepared for each team and copied on a xerox machine.

This loses eye appeal and is sometimes confusing.

Each play represents one minute of real time. To activate any play the offense announces his choice of strategy and both pairs of dice are rolled. The offense is entitled to attempt to advance the ball, shoot or pass long or short. For any advance or pass, one pair of dice determines whether the result is to be read from the ball-carrier's card or the defensive team card. The offense may be successful in moving the ball or the defense may steal. On occassion, the final result will require a reference for a defender's rating or a chart referral to find who ends up with a pass. It's simple but not elementary.

The different abilities of players are obvious upon inspection of the cards. Some players are best suited as strikers (shooters) while others, because of their ability to pass or advance the ball, are play-makers. The offensive coach must decide how deep to work the ball before shooting and whether to pass or run the ball on the attack. Defensive choices are limited. There is an option for a "pressure defense" on plays which do not drive to the goal but that's it. Actually, this works rather well since the offensive/defensive result split will preserve the abilities of both teams on and against presuure defense.

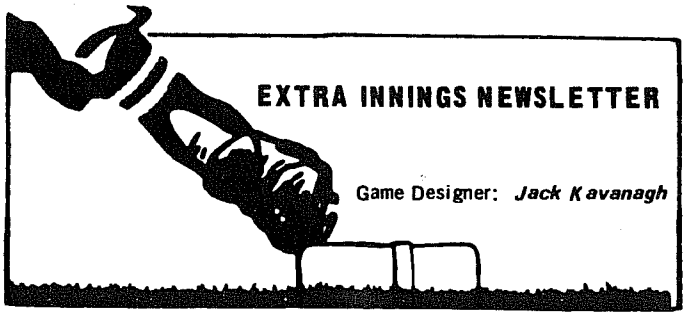
The simplest improvement to the game would be in the activator. It would be easier to decide whether the result will come from the ball carrier or the defense card with one die, a la' SOM, than with two. Replacement of the dice with a flip-deck would vastly simplify timing, now accomplished by marking a scoresheet. Both of these things can be accomplished by individual game owners who prefer them.

If the game system were slightly modified, to afford the defense a chance to speed-up, slow-down it would be a **bit** more interesting. This is the strongest complaint I can find to make. The game is exceptionally rewarding as it is.

I hope that Universal will apply this system to some other sports. It is suited to the full range of continuous-action team sports, from lacrosse to polo. I anxiously await a day when the **NASL** design is used as the basis for a hockey or basketball game.

I recommend the game. I've had much fun with my copy and it plays as well solitaire as head-to-head.

NASL Soccer is available from Universal Games, Box 45141, Westlake, Ohio 44145. Price is $9.95. The currently available edition is based on the 1976 NASL season. The next will be published as data for last season becomes available (blame the NASL). The people at Universal are very nice and helpful, if a bit slow in their correspondence; but who isn't?



FROM THE BENCH/Jack Kavanagh

Among the several points which keep turning up for reaction via correspondence is the problem some table gamers have with our relying on earned run averages to measure the abilities of pitchers. Here's the point as expressed by Rick Derks, Jefferson City, MO, together with his solution and our reply.

"...I am not satisfied with the pitchers part in the game. It seems kind of useless to bring a relief pitcher in when his ERA is higher than the starter, even tho the starter has given up 6 runs. Here is my solution: I adjust the ERA of the pitcher during the game. For every run allowed the ERA goes up .05, for every **no hit** inning pitched the ERA goes down .05. When you go to the adjustment chart sometimes it makes a change and at times it doesn't. The change should only affect the singles ratings. This works out real well for me. Let me know what you thing."

O.K. – here's the response we find ourselves making, particularly to draft league players which Rick is (participating via Bill Campbell's Global League which converted to **EI** and his own **AGDL** - Any Game Draft League.)

Extra Innings was conceived in terms of replaying actual seasons of the past. My original intention was to recreate the 1941 National League season. When my primitive version of **EI** (1970) concluded the full season it had achieved the effect of all teams finishing in exact order as originally except the Cincinnati Reds were down several notches. The strength of the Reds of that era was in pitching and defense. This led to my making defensive action a team matter primarily and that also has been a problem to draft leagues. We moved in the direction of dealing with that by proposing a technique of rating teams defensively according to the grading for SD and LD of the individuals in the game at the time. For draft leagues - such as might be assembled from the Top 400 section of **EI** where such a defensive rating is given at the start of the section - this seems to handle that problem.

The probelm Rick describes is only a problem when it is considered to be one. My perception of extended action is that I am pledged to use each player only for the number of games played at each position, times at bat, and innings pitched, both as a starter (games started being particularly limited) and reliever. This brings a whole **different** kind of strategy to the competition. It's not necessarily **better**, just another way to go.

So, when I'm engaged in a contest and a starting pitcher has given up six runs I regard this as a signal to pull him. Now, I'm faced with a bull pen which contains relievers of various potential abilities. If the six runs yielded have put the game virtually out of reach, I'll bring in one of the lesser lights and use up some of the RIps he represents. If the game is still close, I'll bring in a better reliever, knowing I'm dipping into his reserve store of relief innings pitched.

That's why we provide such data for our rosters as games started and, where possible, not only innings pitched but relief innings pitched and separate ERAs for starting and relieving roles. This always supports the principle of using whole teams intact and adhering to actual stats.

This can be carried forward to draft leagues provided the players selected on the basis of a given season are limited to appearances as they were made in that season. Of course, if you are drafting on a virtually unlimited basis you could well have a squad without any weak statistics to use up. I like it my way but keep reminding that **EI** serves as a basis for **your** way.

EXPIRATION DATE

The date listed after your address label is your expiration date. This date represents the last issue you will receive on your subscription.

TSG I: Pro Football Newsletter

Game Designer: *Jim Hallo*

Game Statistician: *Jed Duty*

GUEST COLUMNIST/John T. Chandler

TSG: I is better this year than ever before. One further consideration might be made whether the goal line defense ought to be re-included as a defense, perhaps limited to use within the five yard line.

One area that definitely needs improving is the rules concerning the three-four defense. The first problem that occurs when utilizing TSG format for this defense is that the noseguard (or nosetackle, or whatever) is designated as a middle guard (MG) rather than as a nosetackle or noseguard (NT or NG). Thus, when one chooses a draft league some players choose to use the four-three defense, however, they choose to play a player such as Curley Culp at MG because he has a five rating there. Culp, however, is a huge defensive tackle who plays the middle of Houston's front three. He is not a MG of the linebacker variety. To remedy this problem I suggest that henceforth nose guards/tackles be designated as NT or NG on their player position rosters. Since I am one of those who follows football closely I have already begun enforcing this rule against my less football-knowledgeable friends.

Further, I suggest that inside linebackers and outside linebackers be so designated when applicable. (That is, they should be designated as ILB and OLB where applicable.) As it is now, the ILB's have only the chance of a downed lineman for intercepting a pass. This should be corrected in the rules. Also, a downed MG in a three-four defense has the same chance of intercepting a pass as a MG who is a linebacker. This needs correcting.

Effect of the three-four on the running and passing phases: Inside linebackers, I suggest should have their running defense ratings modified by giving them one-half their normal run defense rating (rounded upward) and then totaling the rounded numbers to achieve the normal MG effect. Assume the following three-four defense: DLE-4 NT-4 DRE-3; LLB-5/4 ILLB-(3)2/4 IRLB-(2)2 RLB-4; FS-4. The pass defense total would equal 24, the sum of the ratings the three downed lineman, two inside linebackers, and the FS.

However, the run would be handled as follows: Get the run defense total by adding the run defense ratings of the three downed lineman (11), the two outside linebackers (9), and the sum of the non-parenthetical ratings of the two inside linebackers [2 plus 2 equals 4], which gives a total of 24. To determine which column to use you would utilize the combined total of the two parenthetical ratings, i.e., (3) plus (2) equals 5, and use this total as if it were the effect of a single MG. This system assumes that the two ILB's still are the key individuals affecting the run.

Another way of creating more continuity between the 3-4 and 4-3 defense rules is to merely treat the rating of one inside linebacker as that of a defensive tackle and denominate the other inside linebacker to have the effect of the MG in the normal 4-3 defensive effect rules.

However, retaining the NT as the dominate defensive player against the run is still fairly consistent if the player is denominated as a NT rather than as a MG. This, at least, avoids the problem in draft leagues of having someone use Curley Culp defensively as a MG, which he definitely is not.

Suggestion: M and ER ratings should also be placed on individual offensive player cards whenever possible. Also, kicking teams, when kickers or ball holders have such ratings, they should also be placed on the kick cards, since it is when referring to these particular cards that this information becomes most relevant. Constant referral to the specialty player card to determine who has an ER or M rating is a nuisance.

Question: Since page 4 of the rulebook now so provides, can a WR now receive a screen pass. He could not under the old rules.

Suggestion: The present system of having one asterisk for running backs indicate that the back can catch a zig-out and two asterisks signifying that he can receive a fly pass and then have a single asterisk indicate that a TE can receive a fly is overly complicated for the initiate or infrequent players of TSG. I suggest that henceforth that when a TE can catch a fly that he, too, should be given two asterisks so that two asterisks mean simply that any player having one (i.e. any RB or TE) can receive a fly.

Suggestion: Because some backs are limited to playing HB or FB and some can play either (RB) these positions should be placed on the individual player cards so that initiates and infrequent players do not have to constantly refer to platoon cards when they change backs.

Suggestion: Enclosed are two forms which I think players of both TSG and T.H.E. football could use. Actually, any football game player could use the Team Statistics form. Only TSG players would have much use for Draft Roster form. Perhaps you would like to print them in TTS so that the readers could photocopy them.

The draft roster allows the player to list his starting team and reserves and has necessary data so that offensive lineman, defensive lineman, and special team members may be listed. This is merely an overall roster. The actual team platoon sheets provided with the TSG game still must be utilized. Note, also, that there still has not been devised (by me anyway) a form for listing the play numbers of kickers and kick returners, although this can easily be done on another sheet. Admittedly, this form is still rather crude

The team statistics form is an excellent tool for keeping team statistics after every game. It is to be used in addition to any form utilized to keep individual game statistics. (I use the T.H.E. game sheet for totaling my individual game statistics even when playing TSG, which I play almost exclusivley.) The form is self-explanatory. It allows the gamer to keep totals on almost every relevant team statistic in the NFL.

I hope your TTS readers, especially those who play TSG, will be able to increase their enjoyment of tabletop football by utilizing these forms - or by improving upon them. Perhaps you could print some of these forms for sale after some polishing (which is most needed on the draft roster.)

MOVING?

If you are planning a change of address, please notify Table Top Sports giving both your old address and your new address, as well as both your **OLD AND NEW ZIP CODES.**

TEAM STATISTICS

	TEAMS		
1	SCORE		
2	TOTAL FIRST DOWNS		
3	FIRST DOWNS RUSHING		
4	FIRST DOWNS PASSING		
5	FIRST DOWNS PENALTY		
6	RUSHES		
7	YARDS GAINED RUSHING(net)		
8	AVERAGE YARDS PER RUSH		
9	PASSES ATTEMPTED		
10	PASSES COMPLETED		
11	HAD INTERCEPTED		
12	TOTAL YARDS GAINED PASSING		
13	TIMES TACKLED ATTEMPTING TO PASS		
14	YARDS LOST ATTEMPTING TO PASS		
15	YARDS GAINED PASSING(net)(12 - 14)		
16	AVERAGE GAIN PER PASS ATTEMPT		
17	AVERAGE GAIN PER PASS COMPLETION		
18	AVERAGE GAIN PER PASS PLAY		
19	TOTAL NET YARDAGE GAINED (7 + 15)		
20	PUNTS		
21	TOTAL PUNTING YARDAGE		
22	PUNTS HAD BLOCKED		
23	AVERAGE YARDS PER PUNT		
24	PUNT RETURNS		
25	PUNT RETURN YARDAGE		
26	FAIR CAUGHT		
27	KICKOFF RETURNS		
28	KICKOFF RETURN YARDAGE		
29	INTERCEPTIONS		
30	INTERCEPTION RETURN YARDAGE		
31	FUMBLES		
32	FUMBLES LOST		
33	FUMBLES RECOVERED		
34	FUMBLE RETURN YARDAGE		
35	TOTAL RETURN YARDAGE (25 + 28 + 30 + 34)		
36	PENALTIES		
37	YARDS PENALIZED		
38	TOTAL TURNOVERS (11 + 32)		
39	THIRD DOWN CONVERSIONS		
40	THIRD DOWN SITUATIONS		
41	FIELD GOALS MADE		
42	FIELD GOALS ATTEMPTED		
43	FIELD GOALS HAD BLOCKED		
44	FIELD GOAL YARDAGE MADE(and/or ave. yd.)		
45	FIELD GOAL YARDAGE ATTEMPTED(and/or ave.)		
46	FIELD GOAL YARDAGE MISSED(and/or ave.)		
47	EXTRA POINTS		
48	EXTRA POINTS ATTEMPTED		
49	TOTAL OFFENSIVE PLAYS (6 + 9 + 13)		
50	AVERAGE GAIN PER OFFENSIVE PLAY		

D R A F T R O S T E R

OFFENSE	RUN	PASS	PCR	R	INJ	OTHER POS	RESERVES	RUN	PASS	PCR	R	INJ	OTHER POS
C -			##										
LG-			##										
RG-			##										
LT-			##										
RT-			##										
QB-	##		##										
LH-	##	##											
FB-	##	##											
TE-		##											
WR-	##	##											
WR-	##	##											
TOTAL													

DEFENSE	RUN	PASS		R	INJ	OTHER POS	RESERVES	RUN	PASS		R	INJ	OTHER POS
LE-													
RE-													
LT-													
RT-													
MG-	[ ]												
LLB		( )											
RLB		( )											
FS-	##												
TS-	##	( )											
LCB	##	( )											
RCB	##	( )											
TOTAL													

SPECIAL TEAMS	RUN	PASS	PCR	R	INJ	OTHER POS	OTHER POS

THEY'RE OFF!

NEWSLETTER

Game Designer:
Patrick M. Premo

Trotters and pacers have been part of our American Heritage since the early 1800's and many top horses have left their mark. Who could ever forget Goldsmith Maid's amazing feat of winning 350 of 426 heats - or Dan Patch who won 54 of 56 heats - or Single G, "The Horse That Time Forgot," who won 262 of 434 heats? And what about more current champions: Nevele Pride, Bret Hanover (each Harness Horse of the Year for 3 consecutive years), or the mighty Albatross? Then there was the almost legendary "Grey Ghost," Greyhound, who set 25 world records during his long career? Who were the best harness racers of all-time? Many have been hesitant to list such a renowned group, but Mr. Stan Bergstein finally took the plunge and listed ten top standardbreds of all-time in the December 1977/Januarry 1978 issue of **Classic Magazine** in an article entitled "The Best Ever in Harness":

	YEAR FOALED	HORSE		DRIVER	HEAT/RACE RECORD
1.	1857	*GOLDSMITH MAID	T	Budd Doble	426 = 350 - ? - ? - ?
2.	1896	DAN PATCH	P	Harry Hersey	56 = 54 - 1 - 0 - 1
3.	1910	SINGLE G	P	Pop Geers	434 = 262 -88 -37 -47
4.	1932	GREYHOUND	T	Sep Palin	82 = 71 - 5 - 2 - 4
5.	1946	GOOD TIME	P	#Joe O'Brien	110 = 78 -14 -11 - 7
6.	1956	CARDIGAN BAY	P	#Bill Haughton	154 = 80 -25 -22 -27
7.	1962	BRET HANOVER	P	Frank Ervin	68 = 62 - 5 - 1 - 0
8.	1963	*FRESH YANKEE	T	Sanders Russell	189 = 88 -44 -24 -33
9.	1965	NEVELE PRIDE	T	Stanley Dancer	67 = 57 - 4 - 3 - 3
10.	1968	ALBATROSS	P	#Herve Filion	71 = 59 - 8 - 3 - 1

*:designates filly or mare T: indicates trotter
#:designated driver P: indicates pacer

Mr. Bergstein hinted that he thought **Bret Hanover** was probably the best of the best, but no one will ever know for sure. But we can do the next best thing - we can simulate a race among these ten greats using **They're Off!** Since most harness races are one mile in length, with the winner oftentimes being the first horse to win **two** one mile heats, that is what I proposed to do. Select the horse you think you will win this All American Free-For-All Trot/Pace Championship. The horses are rapidly approaching the moving mobile starting gate, and **...They're Off!!!**

Heat I: Joe O'Brien took **Good Time** to the front quickly with **Cardigan Bay** and **Single G** staying close; **Albatross, Fresh Yankee,** and **Goldsmith Maid** dropped back and were content to stay there most of the race. At the 3/8ths, **Single G** made a strong move to take leadfrom **Good Time** while **Nevele Pride, Bret Hanover, Cardigan Bay,** and **Dan Patch** stayed close. At the ½, Stanley Dancer went to the whip and took **Nevele Pride** to the front as **Single G** began to fade along with **Good Time. Dan Patch** came right out behand **Nevele Pride** as **Bret Hanover** and **Greyhound** began to close ground. **Albatross, Fresh Yankee,** and **Goldsmith Maid** moved past the tiring **Cardigan Bay,** but still had not posed a threat. In the turn for home, **Nevele Pride** had a three length lead over **Dan Patch; Greyhound** and **Bret Hanover** were desperately trying to close the gap; **Good Time** was also through. In the stretch, **Nevele Pride** moves relentlessly toward the finish; **Dan Patch, Greyhound, Bret Hanover, Fresh Yankee,** and **Goldsmith Maid** could not improve their positions, but **Albatross** was flying down the outside of the track in a mad rush to overhaul the leader. He flew by **Single G, Bret Hanover, Greyhound,** and **Dan Patch** as he bore down on **Nevele Pride** who was in an all-out drive - but failed by a long neck to catch him at the wire!

Nevele Pride wins the first heat, followed in order by Albatross, Dan Patch, Greyhound, Bret Hanover, Single G, Fresh Yankee, Goldsmith Maid, Good Time, and Cardigan Bay. The pressure is now on for the second heat; should Nevele Pride win, the race is over; the others are going to be out to see that that doesn't happen.

Heat II: Dan Patch literally flew into the lead as **Albatross, Good Time, Nevele Pride, Greyhound,** and **Cardigan Bay** followed; again, **Goldsmith Maid** and **Fresh Yankee** dropped back early. **Bret Hanover** also stayed well back. **Dan Patch** refused to be passed as first **Good Time** and then **Albatross** came at him. **Cardigan Bay** and **Single G** could not find any racing room. At the 3/4, **Dan Patch** had opened up a four length lead and **Greyhound** was trying to run him down, followed by **Albatross** and **Nevele Pride. Bret Hanover** was beginning to make his move and had closed to fifth in challenging position. Into the stretch and **Dan Patch's** lead was now five lengths as Harry Hersey urged his champion on. On the rail was **Greyhound** with **Albatross, Bret Hanover,** and **Nevele Pride** fanned out next to him as they tried to catch **Dan Patch** who seemed to have

an insurmountable lead. The rest of the field had no chance. But **Dan Patch** held on to win by two lengths as Hersey eased up a little on him at the finish.

Dan Patch easily wins heat two, followed in order by Bret Hanover, Albatross, Greyhound, Nevele Pride, Good Time, Cardigan Bay, Single G, Fresh Yankee, and Goldsmith Maid. The last five horses failed to make the first five positions in either of the first two heats so they were "ruled out" of any remaining heats. Nevele Pride and Dan Patch are now in the driver's seat; if another horse should win, then only the three winners would go to a fourth and deciding heat. The pressure is really on Bret Hanover, Albatross, and Greyhound.

Heat III: Stanley Dancer took **Nevele Pride** to the top and **Bret Hanover, Albatross, Greyhound,** and **Dan Patch** trailed out behind him. No one made a move until the ½ mile when Frank Ervin came out with **Bret Hanover** to grab the lead. **Albatross** also made an early move to go by **Nevele Pride** who could not hold him off. **Bret Hanover** gave way to **Albatross** who surged into a two length lead in the final turn as **Dan Patch** was now in a furious drive from far back. **Nevele Pride** was fading as first **Greyhound** and then **Dan Patch** drove by him. In the stretch, **Albatross's** lead dwindled as **Dan Patch** came on. Stanley Dancer got one more surge out of **Nevele Pride,** and **Bret Hanover** and **Greyhound** also tried to move at the leader. In a desperate stretch drive, **Nevele Pride** folded while **Greyhound** could not get by **Bret Hanover; Albatross** and **Dan Patch** pulled away from the others. As the wire approached, **Dan Patch** suddenly surged forward and **Albatross** was done; he seemed to give up and barely held off **Bret Hanover** for second. **Dan Patch** flashed under the wire a two length winner of the heat and the winner of the race!!

Dan Patch was followed in order by Albatross, Bret Hanover, Greyhound, and Nevele Pride. Dan Patch is the greatest harness horse of all-time(at least according to this race)! Run your own championship heats and let us know who your all-time champ is.

The upcoming **They're Off** Supplement is nearing completion and will feature, among other things, a unique timing system so you can time all your races and not only try to guide your favorite to victory, but also see if you can break the world record! Watch this column for further information on the Supplement.

Errata on Harness Horses in Original Game: For each of the horses listed below, change the ability factors to read as indicated (blank means no change):

TROTTERS	SPEED	DRIVE	ENDUR.
Lady Suffolk	3	4	
Flora Temple	4	4	
Goldmith Maid	4		
Dexter	5		
Nancy Hanks	4		
Cresceus	4		
Peter Manning	5	5	5
Proximity	4	5	5
Pronto Don		5	
Su Mac Lad	5	5	
Noble Victory	4		
Fresh Yankee	5	5	
Dayan	4		
Delmonica Hanover	5		

PACERS	SPEED	DRIVE	ENDUR.
Pocahontas	4	4	5
Sleepy Tom	4	5	5
Robert J	4		5
Billy Direct			5
Good Time	5		
Torpid	4	4	
Adios Butler	5	5	
Henry T. Adios	4		
Fulla Napoleon	4		
Steady Star	5		
Sir Dalrae	3	3	
Armbro Nesbit	4		

Classified Ads

($.05 per word)

WANTED: ASG Baseball, Championship Baseball, Be A Manager Baseball and Solo Ball. Write stating price and year. Bill Beck, 12 Sandy Lane, Morristown, NJ 07960.

WANTED: 3M Regatta & 3M Original Golf (18 top holes), will TRADE Kegler Kings, Roman Chariot Racing, Sorcerer, and/or 1977 Statis Pro College Football. Pat Premo, RD No. 1, Allegany, NY 14706.

LEAGUE FORMING: For Pontiac, MI area f-t-f league. Any game. Gary Kirby, 18 Swallows Ct., Pontiac, MI 48055. Phone: 373-0155.

NEW HOCKEY LEAGUE FORMING: Using PTG Hockey (NHC & WHA cards) for information write: Charlie Marshall, 116–27 237th St., Elmont, NY 11003 or phone: (516-285–7370.)

LEAGUE WANTED: Would like to join Face-Off hockey league, mail or f-t-t. Contact Dave Seidler, 210 St. Lawrence Dr., Silver Springs, MD 20901.

OPPONENTS WANTED: For face-to-face play in the San Jose area. Intermediate player. Doug Richardson 190 Rose Ct. No. 1, Campbell, CA 95008. (408) 378-4388.

OPPONENTS WANTED: For any Gamecraft game (except THE,TSG). Would prefer by mail, but will play face-to-face locally. Advanced experience (7 years). Mike McClure, 3032 Cactus Road, Willow Park, TX 76086.

OPPONENTS WANTED: I have the baseball game and my address is Chuck Dizenfeld, 4916 Althea Dr., Annandale, VA 22003 (978-9145). I would like to play face-to-face and by mail. I rate myself an advanced player.

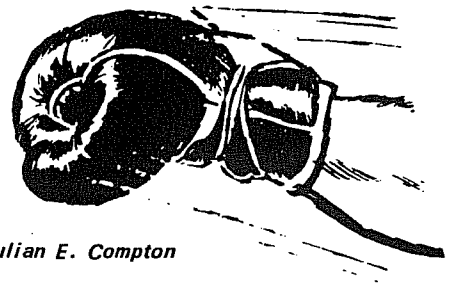
MANAGERS WANTED: Early notice-Draft League using APBA football. Write for free newsletter and league information, now. Richard Calderon, 1950 Hutchinson, River Parkway, Bronx, NY 10461.

MANAGERS WANTED: Ralph Rossini and I are starting a draft baseball league using REPLAY baseball. For further info please write to Dennis Bialaszewski, 35 McDonough St., Dunkirk, NY 14048.

ALTERNATE DESIRED: The NFBA basketball league is completing its first season. FASTBREAK is used, Dennis Bialaszewski, 35 McDonough St., Dunkirk, NY 14048.

Cont'd. p. 13

DATA BOXING NEWSLETTER



Game Designer: *Julian E. Compton*

Corrections: (1) In Data Boxing II, on the Rounds Cards, change one 16 to an 18, in the top right corner of one card. (2) The 1 at the top center of one Rounds Card should be an 11. (3) Ali of 1978 should have a 75 Points Rating.

Coming Up: Along with all new ratings of current boxers, the new edition of Data Boxing I will have Zora Folley, Doug Jones, Karl Mildenberger, Hurricane Jackson, Sam McVey, Buddy Baer, Battling Jim Johnson, Nino Valdes, welter Fritzie Zivic, 6 lightweights including Carlos Ortiz, and several others. You will be automatically notified when the game is ready.

How do you rate a boxer?

The major questions I've been receiving the last few months, relate to how boxers are rated. For a detailed explanation see my article, "Data Boxing: A Means of Ranking the All-Time Greats", in the December, **Boxing Illustrated.** To summarize a rating implies an evaluation which includes (1) data-total information when available by research, (2) interpretation of the data, (3) a replay structure, and (4) a significant statistical sample. For the fan, lack of information is the chief difficulty. For the boxing writer, inconsistency of interpretation is the chief weakness. Criteria are applied unevenly to different boxers. To be consistent, once the data is gathered, a set of mathematical formulas must be developed to handle all the data. The formulas are tested and changed until they prove to be accurate. Once the formulas are set, they are the final arbiters, and one simply feeds in the data, not opinions- as one of our competitors depends on completely.

Data Boxing evaluates past champs within their peaks, with regard to the quality of their opposition at the time they were faced. No boxer is perfect. A boxer may be undefeated, i.e. perfect on results, but far from perfect on KOs, TKOs, knockdowns, cuts, injuries, points, and controls and particularly when rated on each of these both offensively and defensively, and with regard to each of his opponent's abilities on these as determined by how he has done on each, against all those other opponents as well. The best boxer becomes so, against quality opposition. Undefeated boxers usually met weaker competition; boxers who met stiff competition usually have losses on their record.

Data Boxing rates boxers on their performances not on their potential. Louis, Armstrong, or Robinson may have had the "potential" to beat everyone in their divisions, but their "performances" indicate they did not. Arguments based on what a boxer "could do" allows anyone or any game to evaluate in any way he or it wishes. Arguments based on what a boxer actually "did" can be solved by using the Data Boxing ratings, when they are properly understood. Generally speaking, the more our players learn about boxing, the more they appreciate the game.

Remember, however, that each card, peak or otherwise, represents an average of that boxer's ability over a period of time. As such the game cannot duplicate every historical result. Such a game **could** be produced, but it would require two individual cards for every bout. However, if you know the circumstances of a particular bout, and make adjustments for them, you can usually achieve the same or similar results. (David Minch has even shown how to throw a bout.) Even if you do not know the circumstances you will probably get similar results about 80% of the time. Similar accuracy should follow in dream matchups as well.

Final Notes: (1) No rating should be considered final until the boxer and all his major opponents have completed that part of their career. (2) Current boxers will be rated only after they have amassed some data against some current top ten boxers for their division.

Data Boxing Matchup Tourney Continues

Still unplayed against the heavy champs are Carnera, Burns, Fitzsimmons, Schmeling, Charles, Louis, Dempsey, and Frazier. Consult the Fall, 1977 Newsletter for details and send a SASE if interested. Several 10 bout, round-robins below the top 10, also need players.

THE DATA BOXING WORLD

No. 21 Brian Olewnick, NY,NY. The following single elim. tourneys with 15 round bouts. 143 heavies, Dempsey W15 Ali PP in finals, peak Ali-third. 46LH O'Brien W15 Gibbons, Burns third. 60M Ketchel W15 Smith, Gibbons & Wells to semis. 39W Napoles W15 Napoles, Muniz 3rd. 54L Leonard W15 Britt, Ambers & Nelson to semis. 26F Pep K3 Kilbane, Corbett & Armstrong. 27B Moore W15 Escobar, Coulon & Olivares. 23Fly Wilde W15 Villa, Perez 3rd.

No. 27 David DeWees, Grove City, OH. 24 Flys in a double elim. tourney, 12 rds. until the semis, results Villa 6-0, Perez 5-2, Genaro 5-2.

No. 34 Amir Tahan, Fairfax, VA. 30 heavies, 12 rds. double elim., Dempsey 5-0, Ali 5-2, Marciano 4-2.

No. 35 Henry Hopkins III, USAF Academy, CO. Played Walcott vs. the 24 heavy champs, going 10 wins & 14 losses.

No. 36 Steven C. Losch, Woodside Queens, NY. 34 heavies in a Post World War II Double Elim. Tourney. Pairings were seeded, with the double elim. cutting the field to six who then played round-robin. The top six seeds were the final six, with these results: Ali 10-1, Frazier 9-2, Norton 8-2, Liston 6-4, Marciano 5-5, Foreman 5-5. Ali T11 Frazier in finals. Steve made a real project of it, sending 29 pages of description, 11 pages explaining the play procedures, which sought to be fair, statistically meaningful, and non-duplicative. Kudos!

Classified Ads Cont'd.

FOR SALE: El Baseball game, in excellent condition, with 1976 and new 1977 teams. Also includes old timers, Hall of Famers, etc. All for only $7.50 - Norm Ginsparg, 6130 N. Mozart, Chicago, Illinois 60659.

FOR SALE OR TRADE: 1972 APBA Baseball, 65–66, 71–72 (complete) Basketball, 1969 BLM Football, RLB 76–77, 73–74 NHL, 74–75 WHA PTG Hockey. Want '55 Replay. Terry A. Baxter, 1309 Whitney Ln., Rolla, MO 65401.

WANTED: 71 SOM Baseball and Sports Action CFL Football, any TSG or the PBM Leagues. Contact Robert Hannigan, 165 Sterling Ave., Jersey City, NJ 07305.

T.H.E. PRO FOOTBALL NEWSLETTER

Game Designer: *Steve Keplinger*

GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR PLAYERS

Without realizing it, some tabletop players do not use all of their players to fullest potential. There is a little more involved than meets the eye initially. For example, just because a running back is a plus 3 running around one end, and a 0 or less everywhere else, it is very possible he is a better runner in one of the lesser columns.

Most game players with a little experience, or anyone with a probability background, know what numbers come up most often. A little comparison of the PP, OT, and ER columns of your runners will probably point up some interesting thins. You should be able to tell after a while what column is best in what situation. As a general rule, you are less likely to lose yardage on a power play than you are an off tackle or an end run. An end run is usually more of a wide open play with a greater chance to lose yardage, and also to gain more yardage. There are good and bad times to use each, regardless of the plus or minus rating. Many players are rated much higher in one column than another. An example would be Larry Csonka. If in a particular game New York is in the plus 2 column running to the right and a 0 running up the middle, chances are you will usually still be better off running a power play with Mr. Csonka. (Of course, you also have to take into consideration your opponent knows this.)

Some players like to avoid fumbles at all costs. This is fine if you realize that in most cases you are taking away that player's most explosive gains. Don't expect your players to run or catch for their average if this is your philosophy.

A word or two about pass receiving; Remember, most teams throw more short passes than they do long or quick-delay. As a rule, if you throw more quick passes, your percentage will go up, and your averages per catch will go down. If you throw more long passes, your averages per catch will go up and your percentage complete will go down (You will also throw more interceptions). Most NFL teams have found that the short pass (S column in T.H.E.) is the most effective way to score **in the long run.** You might want to keep this in mind when you're pulling your hair out trying to think of your next call.

Also remember the little things. End runs go out of bounds more than off tackles and power plays. Use your best chances for out of bounds plays when you need to save time. (Not just at the 2:00 minute warning, but anytime you want to slow up the clock.) Remember you can let a punt roll anytime you want. You might not want to take a chance returning late in the game with a close score. Bring in two tight ends for blocking on third and short. Check all your substitutes carefully. You may have a linebacker better against the run than your starter, or a split end who has a big average per catch. Check all the angles. An extra yard here, or an extra ten seconds there, may just win you a game.

From the Readers Cont'd.

Home runs - stolen bases: Take only the tens digit (20 and 29 are both 2) and subtract 1. Minus 1 is unrated, and 0 is HR or F. 1 would be HK1 or F1. For example: Mike Schmidt had 38 HRs and 14 SBs in 1976. His HR rating would be 3-1 or HR2, and his SB rating would be 1-1 or F.

ERA: Multiply ERA by 10 and round off. Subtract from 120. **Note: This is only an improvised system! It will work in Calcu-Ball though.** For example: Mark Fidrych's 1976 ERA was 2.34. His rating would be 120-23 or 97.

Team Defense: Use your own judgement. I would give 4 2s and 4 3s, and make the rest 1s or 4s. The best way to equal their system is to use fielding averages.

Bell Productions' Sports Games

BP's games are among the best of the "mini-games." They each come in a clear plastic report cover and cost $3.50. Here are reviews of each:

Baseball - Two decks of playing cards are used. In solitaire, two cards are crossed to give the result. Results are accurate and concise. Two-handed involves crossing the suit for the defense with the offense's card, and getting the result from that. Scoreboard (included in all BP games) crosses two cards for half-inning results.

Football - Also two decks. Solitaire simply crosses two cards off the top of the deck. However, in two-handed play, there are only 2 offensive and 3 defensive plays. This can be a limiting factor. The game **is** good solitaire, though.

Hockey - This game uses the "use-up-the deck" timing method- not a favorable thought. It also has a complicated zone system. Playing Card Hockey Solitaire is very boring-just so many flips of the deck. The game also has unrealistic scoring.

Basketball - This is their best. Basketball comes with college and 3 different Pro styles. Two-handed is a bit complicated, but works out well. Solitaire can be done in two ways - quick and easy or the full game. This has all of the styles and options of regular play.

	My Rating System			
	Baseball	Football	Basketball	Hockey
1.	B	B	B	B
2.	C	D	A	D(2-handed)
3.	B	C	B	C
4.	D	C	B	B
5.	C	A	C	D
6.	C	B	A	D
7.	A	B	A	B(combined)
8.	C	C	D	D
9.	A	A	A	B
10.	D	C	C	D
11.	A	A	B	B
12.	B	C	A	C
Avg.	B-	B-	B	C

Kerry followed up the above letter with this next offering:

Calcu-Ball - A Second Opinion

Well, I did it. Everyone knows it, too. I spent most of my summer saying what a great game I thought Calcu-Ball was.

It is **still** a very playable, enjoyable game. But, statistically, it stinks. I replayed the 1977 Tigers' schedule (using 1976 ratings, then updating them at midyear) and this is what I got:

Ron LeFlore	.358	10	54	w/26s.b.
Tito Fuentes	.264	1	46	
Rusty Staub	.191	11	54	
Steve Kemp	.205	14	89	
Jason Thompson	.264	24	90	
Ben Oglivie	.226	20	72	

Cont'd. p. 16

"TABLE TOP SPORTS"

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Vol. 1, No. 2 April 1975. Game Review: "Tabletop Football's Big Three– APBA, TSG, and T.H.E." "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."

Vol. 1, No. 3 Summer 1975. SOLD OUT

Vol. 1, No. 4 Fall 1975. "Sherco-II Baseball," "The Thoroughbred Racing Game," "21st Century Sports: Tennis, Boxing, and Track," "Aids for Extra Innings," "Ratings for Cadaco Baseball," "Solo Play in TSG Football," Book Review: "Guide to Baseball Literature," "Searching for Table Gamers," and "Revisions of Basketball Pro-Style."

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Vol. 2, No. 2 Spring 1976. Seventeen Game Survey "Table Basketball 1976!" Game Discussions: "Strat-O-Matic Baseball," "Statis-Pro Baseball," "APBA Master Game," Plus "Replays: The Long and Short of it," and Freebie Game: "Grand Slam!" and usual newsletters.

Vol.2. No. 3 Summer 1976. Game Design: Theories of Table Top Player Ratings," "Fast Action Cards for Baseball Games," "Calculation of Starting and Relief ERA's," Game Reviews: "Ball Park Baseball," "Statis Pro College Football," short survey of baseball games, plus others.

Vol. 2, No. 4 Fall 1976. "Table Football 1976!", a comprehensive survey of all table football games; Review of "Batter Up," Review of "Instant Action Baseball," "Statistics: The Backbone of a Replay," Freebie Game: "Playing Card Football," "Football Normalization," Recent advances in TSG, Best Pound for Pound Boxer of All Time.

Vol. 3, No. 1 Winter 1977. "Table Hockey 1977!" a comprehensive survey of the major table hockey games; "The Mini Games of Baseball," a survey of inexpensive games such as Calcu-Ball and Simco; "Table Game Addiction," "The Ten Best Games in the World," New Freebie Ratings for Grand Slam, Reviews of SOM College Football and Rogers Basketball.

Vol. 3, No. 2 Spring 1977. "Table Basketball 1977", "Replay Baseball", Survey of Boxing Games, "Ball Park Baseball", "Theory of Game Activators", and "Sports Action Canadian Pro Football".

Vol. 3, No. 3 Summer 1977. A Trip through Design Land, Baseball Normalization, Shot Selection for Statis Pro Basketball, A Grand Conceit - The World's Greatest Baseball Game, Calcu-Ball, Playoff Basketball.

Vol. 3, No. 4 Fall 1977. Reviews: Track Meet, Summer Olympics, Batter Up!, World Cup Soccer. Other articles: Waat Baseball Normalization is Not; You Can Make Friends by Mail League Play; Baseball Abstract; Alice Through the Activator; Organizing a League; Pitching Systems; WFL Draft League Handbook.

Vol. 4, No. 1 Jan-Feb 1978. Reviews: Competitive Optional Way baseball, Face Off hockey, and Longball. Other articles: How to Fix a Fight in Data Boxing, Running a League, Table Basketball Survey Update, The Use of Players in Statis Pro Basketball.

Vol. 4, No. 2 Mar-Apr 1978. Reviews: BLM Basketball II; Win, Place, and Show horseracing, and Professional Wrestling. Other articles: When the Chips Are Down (game design), and Table Basketball Survey Update.

BASEBALL SURVEY

Larry Green is conducting a survey of the popularity of the various baseball games on the market. Please list the baseball games that you are personally familiar with on a separate sheet of paper and rate them according to the rating chart given below.

Larry Green
16 Monrovia St.
Springfield, MA 01104

10 A SUPERB game. One of the 1 or 2 best table sports games for any field, period.
9 Between 10 and 8.
8 An EXCELLENT game. One of the very top games for its particular sports field.
7 Between 8 and 6.
6 A GOOD game. I don't like it as much as I do some others, but I'm still glad I bought it. A lot of good features.
5 Between 6 and 4.
4 A FAIR game. I've played some better, some worse. It's just sort of mediocre.
3 Between 4 and 2.
2 A POOR game. Quite a few design faults. So many in fact, that I wish I hadn't wasted my money on this clunker.
1 Between 2 and 0.
0 A TERRIBLE game. One of the very worst examples of a table sports game that I've ever come across.

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From the Readers Cont'd.

Milt May	.212 -	5 -	33	
Aurelia Rodriguez	.178 -	7 -	23	w/.907 f.a.
Tom Veryzer	.102 -	2 -	14	
Phil Mankowski	.316 -	6 -	35	
TEAM	.233 -	111 -	583	
Dave Roberts	9 -	8	5.07	
Steve Foucault	3 -	2	2.47	2 saves
John Hiller	6 -	7	2.02	4 saves
Dave Rozema	18 -	10	2.02	10 shutouts
Mark Fidrych	6 -	4	1.88	
Fernando Arroya	9 -	14	4.28	w/no hitter
Bob Sykes	6 -	9	4.09	
Milt Wilcox	7 -	4	2.60	10 c.g.
TEAM	80 -	82	3.84	86 c.g. 10 saves

These statistics are ridiculous! Other oddities included John Wockenfuss' and Mickey Stanley's home runs (4 and 3, respectively, instead of 9 and 8), Jim Crawford's 6.78 ERA, Grilli's 7.65, and the BB's (283) and Ks (591, both in 1460 innings).

All in all, I think that Calcu-Ball should be reworked somewhat. I think part of the distortion came from my keeping my batting orders relatively intact.

However, in a game that is supposedly a simulation, that **should improve** the statistics. Calcu.Ball has potential, but needs help.

Ratings

1 B	7 A
2 D	8 C
3 C	9 A
4 C	10 D
5 B	11 B
6 D	12 C
	Avg B-

The Ultimate Baseball Tournament

In flipping through the Sports Encyclopedia: Baseball recently, the idea struck me: a tournament involving **every baseball team in history!**

Of course, I mean the AL and NL. Trying to play games between the myriad teams of the AA, the UA, and the PL, etc. would be impossible.

The system for this would be simple. All one would have to do would be to rate all the teams in the league for each particular season, play a tournament of some type between them (probably single-elimination) and then play a tournament between the 179 winners (102 NL and 77 AL).

I played one once by dice throw (adding points to the better teams) and the 8 finalists were:

1887 Tigers	1941 Dodgers
1906 Cubs	1954 Indians
1927 Yankees	1968 Tigers
1934 Cardinals	1976 Reds

Without handicapping any of the teams, the results were:

'87 Tigers 6, '76 Reds 4
'06 Cubs 4, '41 Dodgers 1
'27 Yankees 3, '34 Cardinals 2 (2 throw)
'68 Tigers 6, '54 Indians 5
'68 Tigers 4, '87 Tigers 3
'27 Yankees 2, '06 Cubs 1
'27 Yankees 5, '68 Tigers 3

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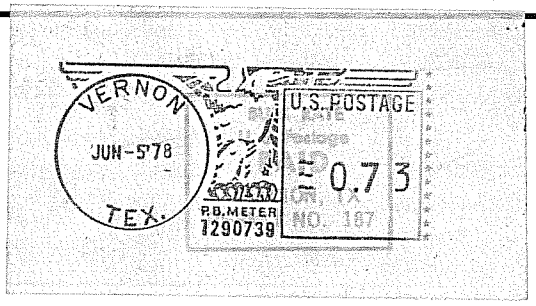

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