

Chain Store Baseball Marks 42 Anniversary

By HAROLD RATLIFF
Associated Press Writer
Forty-two years ago (July 3, 1922), in a smoke-filled room at the Goldman Hotel in Fort Smith, Ark., chain store baseball was born. It was known as "the farm system" by its creators but it was

tagged "chain store" by the press because it became a chain of minor league clubs controlled by the majors.

The St. Louis Cardinals, under Branch Rickey, started it. The Cardinals would move into a town, pay a few thousand to a financially

distressed club and get three players in return.

The system spread from Class D to the other classifications of baseball. Houston of the then Class A Texas League was one of the first clubs for the Cardinals to gain control. Eventually they owned it.

The other big league clubs got into the swim. Soon the minors were dominated by the majors.

Harry Wanderling, who was in baseball for many years, recalls that meeting in Fort Smith when the first club in the Cardinal chain was obtained.

Ricky, vice-president of the Cardinals; Charles Barrett, his chief scout who Wanderling thinks had the original idea; Blake Harper, part owner of the Western Smith Club in the Class D Western As-

sociation; Wanderling, owner of McAlester, Okla., who had his club in town for a July 4 double-header, and a newspaperman nobody seems to recall, were at the meeting.

Wanderling did not take part in creating chain store baseball; he was present only because he had been invited to sit in. But he formed some definite ideas on what the farm system might do to the minors.

Many baseball men, and that includes Fred Ankenman, who was business manager of Houston at the time Rickey bought into it, says that the farm system was what saved the minor leagues. They argue that many clubs in those days were finding independent operation a burden and that they had to have help or close up.

But Wanderling has other ideas. He owned four clubs in his day and he organized the Class D leagues in the late twenties and thirties. He lost money on all except one of his clubs but he says minor league baseball didn't actually need the help of the majors—it just took the easy route.

"A baseball club owner always could get financial help without selling out," he says. "Take me, I used to get help from fellows like Charley Comiskey, owner of the White Sox, without strings attached."

Wanderling says minor league baseball is in the shape it is today because of the farm system. "It took away home ownership and killed the local interest," he ex-

plains. "Had we never had the farm system, minor league baseball today would be twice as big."

Now minor league ball has to depend almost wholly on the majors. The Texas League, for instance, is subsidized by the majors.


Back when minor league baseball was doing well under the farm system—and it did very well for 25 years under it—there was one thing that always was causing controversy and hurting the local interest. The big league club often would reach down and take a star player in the midst of a hot pennant race.

This has been the basis of great complaint over the years and there have been instances where the minor league club claimed it had lost the championship as a result.


This situation still prevails. Dallas of the Pacific Coast League is a fair example. It is controlled by the Kansas City Athletics. Kansas City has been taking its players in a steady stream and it may never get a club together that might win a few.

Presumably the farm system will have to continue at least until all the minors are gone. No one would attempt local ownership and operate independently. In the first place, they couldn't get the players. That would come only if the majors pulled completely away from the minors.

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Full Name of Candidate: Brooks, Weston Terrell
Candidate for Degree of Doctor of Education in Industrial Education
Title of Dissertation: "An Experimental Analysis of the Effectiveness of Overhead Transparencies on Learning and Retention (in Selected Units) in Beginning Woodworking"
Time of Examination: July 3, 1964 at 2:00 p. m.
Place of Examination: Room 104 A in Mechanical Engineering Shops Building
Wayne C. Hall
Dean of Graduate Studies 5611

THE GRADUATE COLLEGE
Announcement of Final Examination for the Doctoral Degree
(Defense of the Dissertation)
Full Name of Candidate: Bertrand, Clint Albert
Candidate for Degree of Doctor of Education in Industrial Education
Title of Dissertation: "An Experimental Development of Programmed Instructional Material for the Vocational Education Department of the Texas Department of Corrections"
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WHEREAS, The City Planning and Zoning Commission has recommended that that land described herein be rezoned as District No. 3, Apartment House District. It is hereby ordered that a public hearing shall be held in the city hall at 7:00 p. m. on July 27, 1964, on rezoning certain areas within the city limits, more particularly described as follows:

Lots 1, 2, southwest 15 feet of 3 and a strip of land 7 1/2 feet by 115 feet along southeast end of said Lots 1, 2 and 15 feet of 3, Block 1, College Park Addition, presently zoned as District No. 1, First Dwelling House District to District No. 3, Apartment House District.

Notice of said hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the City of College Station at least fifteen days prior to date of hearing.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 15th day of June, 1964.

APPROVED:
S/Ernest Langford
Mayor

ATTEST:
S/K. A. Manning
City Secretary

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