

I'LL KICK IT

Minnesota Twins' Zoilo Versalles slides across home plate with foot and arm in air to score run as Cleveland Indians' catcher Duke Sims reaches out with ball during 5th inning of America's League game in Twin Cities Tuesday. Twins' Casar-Tovar hit sacrifice fly to center field to score Versalles. Plate umpire Cal Drummond watches the action. Minnesota downed the Indians, 5-1. (AP Wirephoto)

Last Season Before NHL Expands To 12 Clubs

By AL McNEIL
MONTREAL (CP) — The National Hockey League opens its 50th season Oct. 19 but when the final game is played on April 2, 1967, a lot of things will have changed.

The 1966-67 season will be the last 70-game schedule. It will also mark the last year for the NHL as a six-team league.

Teams from Los Angeles, San Francisco - Oakland, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and Minneapolis - St. Paul will join the hard-core six for the 1967-68 year.

For them, as well as the clubs in Montreal, Toronto, Boston, New York, Detroit and Chicago, next year will mark the beginning of the 74-game season.

Brian O'Neill, NHL director of administration, says the league will be better balanced this year as the teams prepare for the changes that expansion will bring.

He predicts Boston Bruins and New York Rangers - lately the doormats of the six-team loop - will do better; Boston because of the development of its young players, and New York as a result of off-season deals.

FIGHT FOR JOBS

"Also, there won't be as many players protected in next year's draft and therefore more of the established players will find themselves fighting to remain with their present clubs rather than being dealt off to a new one," he says.

The NHL hasn't settled on a formula for stocking the new clubs, although part of the \$2,000,000 entry fee each paid was for rights to 20 players each.

Both Boston and New York are making moves now to improve their lot.

New York, in a move to improve on their last-place finish last year, coaxed Bernie Geoffrion back over the boards as a player after he had coached Quebec Aces of the American League for two successful seasons. Geoffrion, former right winger with Montreal Canadiens has a 371-goal NHL record.

Rangers have also picked up utility forwards Red Berenson and Orland Kurtenbach from Canadiens and Leafs and defenseman Al MacNeil from Chicago.

ONE NEW COACH

The Bruins have the only new coach on the circuit, 33-year-old Harry Sinden who moves up from their farm club in the Central Professional League.

He will break in rookie defenseman Bobby Orr, who, at 18, has been taped as Canada's top amateur and who signed a two-year contract for a sum reported as high as \$50,000.

O'Neill says the league has received no word yet on a proposed United States television deal which he described as "still pending and not dead."

Scotty Morrison, appointed last year as referee-in-chief, will have Frank Udvari as supervisor of officials. Udvari, 15 years in the big league, will help Morrison supervise his far-flung officials and be on the lookout to recruit new personnel necessary to staff the new rinks coming in.

"This year, we've taken on the Western League, which means the NHL provides referees for all four pro leagues," O'Neill said.

John Ashley, Vern Buftoy, Art Skov, Bill Friday and newcomer Bruce Hood will handle the majority of NHL refereeing assignments, with former linesman John D'Amico moving in as head official in minor league games.

RULES CHANGED

Brynt Casselman of Clarkson, Ont., and Pat Shetler of Alliston, Ont., will add new blood to the linesmen corp, joining Neil Armstrong and Matt Pavlich. Brian Sopp, Montrealer hired last season, has returned to university.

O'Neill explained two major rule changes fans will notice this year.

The first allows immediate substitution where players from both teams are sent off on major penalties. If minors are also involved, however, the substitution cannot be made until the minor has expired.

"This eliminates a long period of play with teams working short-handed," O'Neill says.

"There is no point to both teams playing short-handed because it just cuts down on spectator enjoyment."

However, if only one player draws a major penalty, his team is short-handed for the full five minutes.

The other ruling governs the width of players' sticks, limiting them to not less than 2½ inches and not more than three.

Maritime Finals Open Saturday

SUMMERSIDE — The Maritime Juvenile Baseball Finals open here Saturday afternoon when the Summerside Boys Club hosts Halifax Royals in a best-of-three series.

Summerside manager, Rick Ozon, said yesterday that the series would be for the Maritime championship, as no indication has been given that any New Brunswick teams are entered in juvenile play this season.

The first game of the set which will be played in its entirety on the Island begins Saturday afternoon at 12:30 p.m., with the second contest due for a 3:30 p.m. start, both games at the Queen Elizabeth Park field.

If a third game is necessary, it will be played Sunday, but a site has yet to be chosen. Sunday ball is not played in the town, and the Air Force diamond will be tied up with N.S.P.E.I. Intermediate "A" finals.

The uproar over the age limit has been resolved but to the expense of the Summerside squad, who lost Allan Gaudet, Doug MacDonald, Brian MacNeill, Dennis Rushton, and Paul MacWilliams, all within the Island age limit; but outside the age limit for the other two provinces.

Manager Ozon, however, has much confidence, even though the age confusion has caused him to drop two of his key pitchers. They will be replaced by Alvin Hackett of Tignish and Ken Bailem of Charlottetown. Another addition is Ron Carmichael, also from Charlottetown.

Doug MacDonald, who was reported as "John" through the wire service, pitched for the Juniors in their loss to Fredericton last weekend, and he, along with Paul MacWilliams, would have given the pitching corps much strength.

Jon Down is expected to get the starting assignment in the first game Saturday, with Stu Muttart doing the second game, and both are expected to fill the big gap created by the MABA ruling.

Gay Allen will start behind the plate, replacing catcher-pitcher Paul MacWilliams. Stu

Basketball

Men interested in forming a team to represent P.E.I. Province at the First Canadian Winter Games to be held in Quebec City from Feb. 11th to the 19th are requested to attend a meeting to be held at the B.R.C. Wednesday night at 8 p.m. Anyone that cannot attend this meeting and would like to take part in the formation of a team, are asked to contact Jack Ready at B.R.C.

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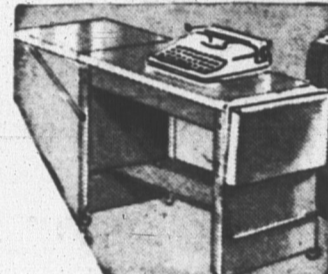


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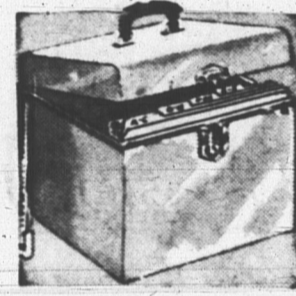


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