

The Fearless Spectator

By

Charles McCabe, Esquire



They don't play baseball good in Kansas City. So they do something else. They play non-baseball, a game at which insurance tycoon Charles O. Finley is a master.

The result is one of those epic business struggles between the owner, who tries to see how much he can get away with in merchandising a lousy product, and the sucker, who wonders how much he can take.

The Clay-Liston pavane, and professional rasslin' are classic examples of this kind of struggle. In each case, the sucker took plenty; and show biz, in all its purity, triumphed over the sport it supplanted.

It's not been easy for brother Finley. Last year his club finished seventh in ability in the American League, and seventh also in attendance, with 762,364 paid all year.

To take the fan's mind off his club's ineptitude brother Finley last year provided his tigers with kinda surrealist uniforms, in colors he called Kelly Green and Finley Gold.

He hanged a sports writer in effigy. He came out for orange-colored baseballs. He insisted that the World Series should be played at night.

Attendance still flagged, and Charlie got sore. He alienated the City Council and the whole of Kansas City by proposing that his team be moved to Louisville, or Dallas, or Oakland, or anywhere.

As a result he has sold only 1,900 season tickets this year. So the merchandising is on with a vengeance. Baseball has seen nothing like it since Bill Veeck and his midget.

First, Finley flouted the household gods of baseball—"Czar" Ford Frick and American League president Joe Cronin—by changing his right field fence at the K. C. stadium to match the 296-foot fence at Yankee Stadium. He built what he called, with chilling irony, a "pennant fence."

Finley told the household gods, "I want to see the Yankees brought in line for the first time in 40 years. I'm trying to help baseball. Yankee domination could reach the point of no return."

Cronin and Frick made him put back the old fence, under a ruling passed in 1958, 25 years after the Yanks built their tricky stadium.

(The 1958 law was passed because the Dodgers had built an even trickier stadium in the Los Angeles Coliseum. All this done under the old legal principle that the best way to get rid of an obscenity is to bring on a greater obscenity.)

Undaunted, Finley continued to soup-up the slugish image of his club. He installed in the park 60 whirling colored lights and three huge horns that can smother a foghorn, to be used when one of his lads hits a homer.

But his master stroke, thus far, is one apparently addressed to the ladies. With some reason, Finley may have given up on his male fans.

He announced the other day that he has had a new uniform designed for his players.

In their home opener against the Cleveland Indians, the Athletics took to the field in colors described by their breathless owner as Misty Green and Wedding Gown White.

If anything is needed to express the desuetude into which baseball has fallen in the American League it's this odd miscegenation of the Nat'l Pastime with the argot of the high fashion ateliers of Paris.

Wretched, is it not? The Yanks and their damned right-field fence are in back of it all. That, and giving the broads the vote in the first place.

I can hardly wait for the first female second baseman in the majors. Of the Kansas City Athletics, of course.

El Segundo Set For CIF Game

Unstoppable El Segundo High will initiate its bid for the CIF class "A" baseball championship Tuesday afternoon by hosting Crespi at 3.

El Segundo, winner of the Pioneer League championship, will be favored over its Camino Real League foe. Crespi earned a playoff spot by going through its league campaign undefeated.

Unbeaten Sophomore hurler

City Colt League Will Open Season

Torrance Colt League baseball teams will open their season today at 1 p.m. on the North High diamond.

Opening the year will be an exhibition between Bob White's Giants and the Angels of Lloyd Langus. The contest will be played at 1 p.m.

At 3:45 p.m., the Twins will tangle with the Braves. The Twins are managed by Dave Woodward and the Braves by L. G. Wood.

Kem Brett will open on the mound for El Segundo. Brett wound up with a 6-0 circuit mark as he led the Eagles to 12 straight wins and a 13-1 record.

'Gundo will have some high stepping to do if it matches the performance of last year's Pioneer League champion. Aviation wound up with the Pioneer crown last season and then grabbed the CIF "AA" championship.

ACE AVIATION hurler Jim Lloyd, who played for El Camino College the past season, was named the CIF's Most Valuable Player as a result of his playoff performance.

El Segundo was toughest in the clutch the past year as the Eagles came up with wins in seven one-run games. The Eagles upended West High, the second-place Pioneer finisher, three times during the course of the circuit campaign. Only a loss to Lennox in the first league game of the year spoiled a perfect record for El Segundo.

Two City Junior Varsity Nines Capture Circuit Championships

Junior varsity baseball teams from North and Torrance high schools have gone their varsity teammates a step better—they have won league championships.

A powerful slugging attack, with seven men at or over the .300 mark, propelled North to the Sky League junior varsity crown. Pitching and tight defensive play was the major factor in Torrance's Pioneer League title.

None of the four varsity teams in Torrance came up with a league crown West High came the closest, with a second-place Pioneer loop. Both North and South finished in the middle of the varsity pack.

North High compiled a 13-2 league record in gaining the junior varsity pennant. The Saxons were handy winners over second place Morningside and its 5-4 mark. North also wound up with the City J. V. title after whipping Torrance, South and West.

First-year J.V. coach Ed Bierley pointed to a slugging outfield to explain his club's success. Mike Tuffley, Dave Buffington, Bill Thomas and Toki Katsuki roamed the outfield for the Saxons.

Buffington led the North hitters with a .421

average while Tuffley hit .414, Katsuki slugged at a .381 clip and Thomas collected a .316 percentage.

Team co-captain Gary Zayakosky was the leading infielder with a .405 average. Zayakosky, a second sacker, was named North's Most Valuable Player.

Catcher Mike Barnes (.300) and first baseman Steve Sibley (.333) also wielded heavy sticks for the Saxons. Third baseman Gregg Shearer (.292) and shortstop Henry Lopez (.222) rounded out the infield. Lopez was also a co-captain.

Third baseman Charlie Richardson and catcher Kent Mayor also saw considerable action for North.

Junior chucker Ron Windell, Bruce Wade and Steve Schmitz held down the mound chores for the Sky champs. Windell wound up with a 5-0 mark while Wade was 3-1 and Schmitz finished 1-1.

North earned a 13-2 overall record including practice games.

Pitchers Steve Kealey and Bob Sharp were the key figures in Torrance's title. Kealey finished with an 8-0 record while Sharp wound up at 5-2. The two were named Co-Most Outstanding Players.

Torrance compiled a 13-2 league record to edge El Segundo (12-3) for the pennant. The Tartars

closed with a 16-3 overall mark. It was coach Will Boerger's second league championship in his six years as Torrance J.V. coach. Boerger also picked up a loop crown in 1962.

Bart Johnson, a 6 ft. 3 in. freshman first sacker, was named the club's Most Valuable Player after leading the team in hitting with a .380 average.

Rounding out the Tartar infield were Bob Cano, second base; Mike McKenzie, shortstop; and Chris Smith, third base McKenzie was the Tartar captain.

In the outfield, Boerger went with either Kealey or Sharp in left field, Al Dwarthe in center field, and John Randall in right field. Dwarthe was the most improved player, according to Boerger.

Jon Chaykowski, Sam Intermill and Ray Vidal split the catching duties for Torrance.

Smith backed up Johnson in the hitting department with a .320 average, while Dwarthe and Randall both hit at an above .300 clip.

Boerger characterized the club as a "good, hustling team; the youngest championship squad I've ever had." The Tartar mentor also called Kealey and Sharp the "two finest junior varsity pitchers I've ever had."

Hot Rods Run Today At Ascot

A trio of top drivers will be favored to grab the checkered flag this afternoon in the 25-lap main event of a California Jalopy Assn. Hot Rod program at Ascot Park in Gardena.

Jim Greenhill, Art Hayes and Chuck Conrad will be favorites to cap the afternoon with a win in the main event.

Conrad is currently heading the flathead division point race that will lead to the 1964 driver's championship. Greenhill won a narrow decision over Hayes two weeks ago in the last hot rod main attraction. Both Greenhill and Hayes are shooting for the top spot in their division.

PHIL BOWERS trails Conrad in the flathead point totals with Ray Volden holding down the third spot.

Also on today's eight-race card will be a 15-lap claiming feature, which will provide competition for a field of the CJA's novice racing drivers.

The first race on the Ascot dirt oval is slated for 2 p.m. with qualifying scheduled for 1 p.m.

LAST WEEK, it was Jim Cook or Norwalk who pulled down the checkered flag in the CJA's 27-lap main event at Ascot Cook, who just returned to local racing from the NASCAR Grand National stock car circuit, barely edged Cliff Garner for the top spot. Another victory bid, by favorite Clem Proctor, ended when he dropped out on the 10th lap.

In the modified division, point leader Vallie Engelauf continued his domination with his second victory in two weeks. Engelauf, a slim winner over Preacher Rogers and Benny Phillips in the main event, also edged Phillips and Jim Roesser for first place in a three-lap trophy dash.

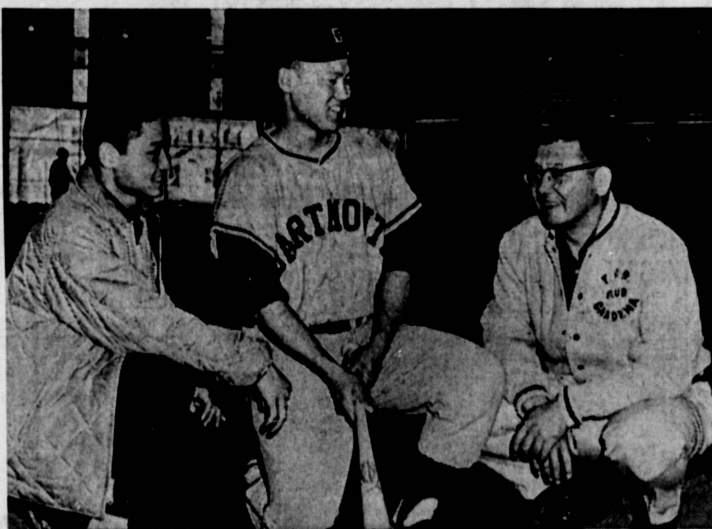
DUKE PARSONS won a five-lap heat race as did Tink Elenburg.

In the stock car division, Proctor won the four-lap trophy dash over Garner with Jim Blomgren third. Ray McKinley, Al Self and Proctor each came up with heat wins before the 1,570 customers.

The modifieds and stock cars alternate Sunday afternoons at Ascot Park with the hot rods. The hot rods will run today with the modifieds and stockers scheduled to return next Sunday.



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FAMILY ACT . . . Francis Ota (left), 18, and his brother, Henry (center), 21, discuss baseball strategy with their father, Harry. The Ota brothers currently are playing for Dartmouth College. Francis is freshman team captain while Henry leads the varsity. The two brothers formerly played for Gardena High. The Ota family lives at 1632 W. 208th St. in Torrance.

RARE COMBINATION

Torrance Brothers Captain Dartmouth Baseball Teams

The only brother-captain team in college baseball circles was recently furnished Dartmouth College by Torrance.

It is rare for two brothers to compete in athletics at the same college and even rarer for brothers to each captain a team at the same institution.

The odd combination came about recently at Dartmouth when Francis Ota was elected captain of the college's freshman baseball team. Earlier, Henry Ota, a senior, was named captain of the varsity nine.

Francis, 18, is currently a third baseman with the Big Green varsity. Henry, 21, is now a star second sacker. But it was not too long ago Henry was not even a freshman letterman at Dartmouth.

When Henry was a sophomore, three

years ago, he was just another sore-armed pitcher and did not win his freshman numerals. Since then, he has been converted to a second baseman.

Harry Ota, the boy's father, is a methods technician for the city of Los Angeles. He started the boys in baseball at an early age and now spends his annual vacation on Dartmouth's southern training trip in March.

Both boys are infielders and play together in a Nisei summer league in Los Angeles.

Henry and Francis both played on Gardena High nines which won Marine League championships. And again, both served as co-captains.

Both boys are 5 ft. 9 in. tall but Henry is 20 pounds heavier at 174. Henry was a star quarterback for Gardena while Francis also starred in basketball for the Mohicans.

Indy Will Honor 2 Area Drivers

Two Torrance drivers who have led the Indianapolis 500 mile race for one lap or more will receive special recognition for their accomplishment at a special Speedway dinner on Tuesday.

Don Freeland, 23503 Susana Ave., and Parnelli Jones,

1410 216th St., will join an elite group of 44 living drivers who have led the "500."

Membership eligibility in the Pacemaker Club is certified by official Speedway records covering the 47 races since Johnny Aitken led the pack on the first lap of the first race in 1911.

The slow growth rate of membership is indicated by the fact that fewer than two drivers a race have been new to the front each year since 1946 and there are only 102 drivers in all who have led the race for one lap or more.

On the basis of individual performance, the late Rex Mays still heads the list of drivers who have led the most races. Mays has led in nine races while Ralph DePalma, also deceased, led for 613 laps in six races for the highest lap total.

Of the active drivers, Jim Rathmann has led in six races, giving him a two-race edge over Rodger Ward and Troy Ruttman. Parnelli has led the most laps of the active drivers with 314 in three races, followed by Rodger Ward with 261 in four races. Of the 46 living members, Bill Arnold is the leading Pacemaker with 410 laps in three races.

Parnelli is currently going through practice runs at the Brickyard as he prepares an attempt to become the first man in history ever to gain the pole position three consecutive years.

Jones, despite an unofficial lap average of over 156 miles per hour, is having tough competition from Bob Marshall, who has exceeded 157 m.p.h.

Racing Becomes 'Family-Centered'

Brotherly love does not exist in Figure Eight racing.

Four pairs of brothers will battle tonight at Ascot Park in Gardena for the checkered flag in the weekly Automobile Racing Assn. Figure Eight competition.

Heading PRA point standings is Jerry Meisenzahl, whose brother Dennis is also currently in the thick of matters. Dick Semlinger, who won two weeks ago, has his brother Milt breathing down his wheels.

Al and Harold Coe and Richard and Robert Dixon join in the "forget he's your brother" club.

A SPLIT partnership also adds to the action at Ascot. Bob Hobbs, now in second place in the point standings, and last year's champ, Ben Steele, are former partners who have gone their separate ways. Steele, third in the point totals, had nearly 2,000 more points last year than his closest rival.

Last year was the first for the Figure-Eight racers. Cars race around a figure-8 oval and cross each other's paths in front of the grandstands.

Inter-family competition is

kept up by the ARA speed queens, who are almost all wives of racers. One exception is Karline Robinson, single and only 19, who heads the women's point standings.

Trailing in the digit battle are Charlene Turner, Myrna Queener, Eileen Noble and Betty Steele. All are married to Figure-Eight drivers.

A new racer, Mary Malm, the wife of a motorcycle racer, is used to frantic action. In her first race, her car crashed, turned over and blazed. But, she will race today.

Qualifying trials begin at 7 p.m. with the first event set for 8 p.m.

Drag Greats To Continue Spring Meet

Many of the nation's hottest dragsters will convene at Lions Drag Strip in Long Beach today in the second and final day of the Spring Championships.

The strip will open at 9 a.m. today with eliminations set from 1 to 5:30 p.m. Over 400 cars in eight categories are a part of the United Drag Racers Assn. sponsored meet.

Little League Sets Jubilee Drawing

Free-Way Little League will celebrate the 25th anniversary of Little League with a jubilee drawing.

The grand prize for the event will be a Polaroid Camera. The drawing will take place on Harvey Field, located at 186th St. and Western Avenue, on Sunday, June 14, at 1 p.m.

Tickets may be obtained from Little League players for 25 cents each or five for \$1.

Recreation Results

FRIDAY LEAGUE SLO-PITCH
Hollywood Riviera Sportmen 8, Ramblers 5, 9, Rolling Hills Covenant Church 1, Torrance Orthopedics 11, South Bay Engineers 3.

FRIDAY CHURCH LEAGUE SLO-PITCH
Resurrection Lutheran Church 9, North Redondo Chapel 4, Lawndale Church of Christ 13, Torrance First Baptist 4, Torrance First Lutheran 15, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd 4.

OPEN LEAGUE SOFTBALL
Douglas Bombers 2, Aerona 0, Frederick's Reality 9, Glenview Homes 3, Torrance Bears 5, Glenview Homes 0, Talons 6, King's Furniture and Hardware 1, Douglas Bombers 2, Laven Insur-

EL NIDO LEAGUE SLO-PITCH
South Bay Church of God 18, North High Faculty 0, Time Out 10, Torrance Police Officers Assn. 2, Tigers 8, Eagles 3.

PRE-SEASON SLO-PITCH
St. Lawrence 5, Kiwanis 0, South Torrance Lion's Club 4, Torrance Lion's 0, Redondo Angels 9, Throwaways 7.

TUESDAY LEAGUE SLO-PITCH
Morris Union 76 8, Mobil # 14, Touchables 4, Torrance Elementary School Principals Assn. 1, Warriors 13, Firefighters "C" 2.



CHARGING HORSES . . . Two of the nation's quickest dragsters, the Chizler (forward) of Chicago and the Greer-Black-Prudhomme rail of South Gate, will compete in the Spring Championships today at Lions Drag Strip in Long Beach. Chris Karam-sines (left inset) will drive the Chizler while Don Prudhomme will pilot the rail which bears his name.