

JOE FINDS OUT WHY HOUSE OF DAVID DOESN'T DRAW

It's Because the Fellows Aren't on the Level and They Gladly Admit Guilt

Team Pays Certain Amount Annually Just for Right to Use The Name of House of David and There Have Been Five Teams Traveling at Once.

By JOE WILLIAMS
Times Special Writer

SEBRING, Fla., April 3.—The tent show evangelists and the hair pulling preachers try to pretty good houses in the dinky towns down this way but the House of David baseball club with its spiritual connotations isn't much of a draw.

A great many of the people who come to Florida in the winter, especially the grey heads, seem to have an urge for the spiritual and practically anybody with a coon shouter's bellows and an arm movement like a wild left-hander can mount the band stand in the town square and be sure of a respectful audience.

A year ago there was a preacher over in Tampa who used to let a snake bite him by way of demonstrating the power of faith and whenever he pitched his tent stand in the town square and be sure of a respectful audience.

The night I saw the act the preacher had to bat the snake justly on the snout to arouse his militancy and I found myself wondering if it wasn't one of those things like Jack Sharkey fighting Unknown Winston; but I noticed the good people were properly impressed and came away suffused in a befitting glow.

The spiritual ardor being what it is among the oldsters down here I was surprised when I went up the road a piece yesterday to see the House of Davids play the Torontos that there wasn't more than 60 bucks worth of trade in the joint.

Rebuke Was Reaction

My first reaction was that this was probably a rebuke to a bunch of clown ball players posing as missionaries but I couldn't perceive where this constituted a more shoddy travesty on the precepts of the Good Book than the old preacher who fed his pet snake on his own blood, or pretended to do so, at so high a peak, and then sent his girls through the crowd hawking his picture.

This lack of response plunged the manager of the Davids, a New York Irisher named Lew Murphy, into bitter melancholy and after the game he told me he wasn't going to bring his troupe of bearded artists back to Florida. "We ain't been drawing peanuts," he meandered. "I'm already a thousand smackers in the red."

It then came out that the fuzzy-faced gents are cheap imposters, that none of them belong to the House of David and that they grow whiskers to attract attention and excite the yokels. This may account for their lack of standing among the earnest fundamentalists and understandingly so.

The House of David itself is some sort of religious cult located up Michigan way and it must be pretty low class because anybody who wants the use of the name for a baseball team may get it by the simple process of sending \$1,000 to the boss man, whoever he is. "That's what it cost us," admits Mr. Murphy. "We send 'em a check every year for \$1,000 and that pays for our franchise."

Five Teams at Once

At one time there were five of these phony teams, but now the number has been reduced to two, due to no sudden seizure of shame on the part of the cult but to failure of promoters to put up franchise money. The Murphy outfit spends most of the summer in the East concentrating on New York state. "We go big up there," the manager says.

The outfit is made up mostly of semipro and washed-up minor leaguers and is about as distinguished as you might with reason expect such a bunch to be. They played 240 games last year so you can imagine what kind of baseball they play and what kind of teams.

They frequently play three games a day, that is, a double-header in the afternoon and a single at night. They carry their own lighting equipment, and travel from town to town in battered old cars, crowding in with the bat bags, the luggage and the electrical equipment. Once last year they rode all night and all day and then got out and played a night game at Mobile, Ala. . . . "At that we have it pretty soft," said Moose Swany, the team's only left-handed pitcher. "We never have to shave."

Moose Is Veteran

The Moose is one of the veterans of the outfit. He is crowding 50. He used to pitch for Seattle, Newark and Reading in organized baseball. Every year he comes to Meridian to start letting the spinach form on his noble pen, gets in a flivver and sets out for Florida to join the other "passion players" as he calls them.

Last year he pitched 60 ball games. . . . "I don't pitch as many as I used to," he apologized. "I'm getting a little old."

Alabamian Pitts

Sabin, ranked 17th nationally, upset Bobby Riggs, Los Angeles, in a professional clay court championship, 60-62, 6-2, to enter the final round.

While Grant was idle, Hunt defeated Russell Bobbitt, Atlanta, 6-4, 6-3.

In a holdover doubles match, Elwood Cooke, Portland, Ore., and Martin Buxby, Miami, defeated Bobbitt and Red Enloe, Atlanta, 6-2, 12-4, 6-3.

Both semifinal doubles matches were halted by darkness and will be played today.

Old Ball Player

Any old ball player can't drop any further than the House of Davids. This is absolutely zero in the profession. The whole setup is pretty smelly, the prostitution of the name, the burlesque comedian's whiskers and the grubby existence. But as the Moose philosophizes, "It's a living. And if you like to play ball—what the hell?"

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GEORGIA PEACH, WHO RETIRED IN 1928 AFTER 23 YEARS, LED AMERICAN LEAGUE BATTERS 12 TIMES—NINE IN A ROW, STOLE 96 BASES ONE YEAR AND LED LEAGUE IN BASE THEFTS—10 TIMES?

ATHERTON, Calif., April 3 (NEA)—It's hard to believe that Ty Cobb, despite his health and his wealth, is happy.

You see, it's been nine years since he's had a fight and in that time he hasn't spilt anybody or anything except maybe a scattered name here and there that he would return to baseball.

Since he retired at the end of the 1928 season, leaving behind him a brilliant trail of never-to-be-equalled records, the Georgia Peach has been leading the quiet life of a country squire on his Georgia estate here.

He doesn't have to work. He doesn't have to worry. He just lives comfortably with his wife and three of his five children. Everything is going along as smoothly as Walter Johnson pitching a week-day ball game against the Browns.

But Squire Cobb is so at peace with the world he must be miserable. And they do say that the fire-eating Georgian is thinking seriously of hiring a couple of umpires to come out and argue with him. Or maybe a second baseman or two that he can spike when he's in the mood.

Squire Cobb's chief diversion these days is playing golf. Like Cobb, he better than the best when he wants to. He shoots around in the low 80s, but the boys say that when he's in a head-to-head match with you he'll beat you, even if you are a normal in-the-70s shooter.

Dead Ball Better

Now that he's out of baseball, Ty doesn't seem to have much interest in the game. For one thing, he doesn't like the so-called rabbit ball.

"The days of the dead ball were better," says Ty. "They've lost a lot of the fine points of the game these days, even though it has made for a lot of spectacular home runs. The old game was better."

"There must be something wrong with baseball today. But, of course, it is so much in the game itself. You see, there are a lot more competing sports. In the old days we had few other sports and everyone played baseball."

"But now there's football, golf, swimming and all sorts of things to divide the interest of the sports fans. And another thing, the coaches in the schools and colleges aren't familiar enough with the fine points of baseball to interest the youngsters in the grand old game."

Squire Cobb's children themselves have very little interest in baseball. None of them have inherited his ability. One of his sons is a fine athlete, but he is a tennis enthusiast and coaches the University of Georgia team.

Greatest Competitor

There may be some question about Squire Cobb having been the greatest ball player of all time. But there can be no question but that he is the greatest competitor baseball—and perhaps any sport—has ever known. H. G. Salsinger, a Detroit sportswriter, once wrote that Cobb "could endure anything but defeat." No true words were uttered by a typewriter.

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Boyle Enters Three Cars in 500-Mile Race

Meyer, Cummings, Miller
To Drive for Chicago
Sportsman.

Mike Boyle, Chicago racing enthusiast is playing a pair of aces and a wild card for the high stakes in the 25th running of the annual 500-mile race here on May 31.

With characteristic bluntness the Windy City sportsman laid his cards on the table as the spring training season opened for the Silver Anniversary event at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and dared other car owners to match them.

His first ace is Louis Meyer, last year's victor and only three-time winner of the world's greatest automobile racing sweepstakes. Meyer won first in 1928, repeated in 1933 and made a spectacular drive to post his third victory last year—a task that may never be repeated in a generation.

Names Cummings

His other ace is not a bit weaker. He is Wild Bill Cummings, one of the most colorful drivers of modern times, who won for Boyle in 1934 and is conceded one of the most daring and most able drivers in the big time.

Boyle's wild card is Chet Miller, veteran driver, capable, courageous and always a serious threat.

The playing of this powerful hand will be left to the mechanic of champions, portly, affable Harry (Cotton) Henning, who, in his many years in the racing profession, prepared cars for Pete De Paul, Ray Keech, and other men of speed.

Boyle Stable Set Up

The Boyle stable already has been assembled here within the shadows of the big Hoosier speed oval. Cummings, local boy who made good in his home town, was, as usual, the first out of the 1½-mile speedway a few days ago, whipping his favorite charge about the new surface at speeds better than 117 miles per hour in "shake-down" tests.

It is unusual that such a formidable team be announced so early because it is the tradition of "Gasoline Alley" at the Speedway that much blustering go on before drivers and owners agree on mounts. But the brusk Irishman from the shores of Lake Michigan believes that he has picked the best and openly challenges anyone to match his showdown.

But the historians swear that he wasn't the greatest natural hitter, and yet he compiled a half-hundred hitting records, and he wasn't the fastest runner, yet he was the greatest base runner of all time.

They tell you that Cobb was only a fair hitter, a bad outfielder and a clumsy baserunner when he first broke into baseball in Augusta, Ga., back in 1904. Those who saw him bat, 402 in 1911 and steal 96 bases in 1915 and throw out three men at first base in one game in 1907 find such stories hard to swallow.

But the historians swear that the Augusta club thought it was getting a goodly sum when Detroit paid \$750 for Cobb. It seems that he wasn't born a ball player, but was, instead, a made one.

Well, anyway, there's no doubt he was a born fighter. His battles with Buck Herzog and Bill Evans, the "Irish twins," were the most famous in baseball and that goes for the Old Orioles, too.

Squire Cobb created about 90 different records for fielding, hitting, durability, base stealing, and what-not, by the time he finished his playing days.

Practically all of these records are still standing and probably will for all time. Who, for instance, will ever lead the league in batting nine straight times, like he did? Or steal 96 bases in one year? That's more than whole teams steal these days.

These two records give him his most satisfaction now as he sits back and thinks of the old days. But they, with all the rest, don't make up for the fact that there ain't nobody around to fight, dammit.

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LET'S GO FISHING

By G. H. D.

UNCERTAINTY puts the tang into fishing. If you caught a fish on every cast, hour after hour and day after day, you would be ready to take up knitting.

At least that's what we have been told by persons who have been fortunate enough to find such waters. And our own experience bears it out, for once, in the mountains of Idaho, miles from anywhere, we caught rainbows with every cast, with bait, flies, spinners and even the shiny, bare hook; until all the fun was gone from fishing.

For the rest of the two weeks we fished only twice, for food only. If those trout had been a little coy we would have been after them every day.

When a chemist pours a certain acid into a test tube with another acid, he knows what will happen. But when you cast a plug into an unpredictable stream, it's all a gamble.

Results depend on too many factors—the season, color of the water, position of the sun and moon, strength and speed of the current, the possibility of a wind, the weather and even (according to some fanatics) the tides and the color of the fisherman's socks.

The only sure thing about Indiana fishing is that anything might happen. Once a carp took a dry fly.

ARGUMENTS to the new taper in fly lines; called the "big head" and "torpedo head," are too convincing to laugh off.

We are conservative to the point of looking with suspicion on all innovations, including new flavors in ice cream, and we are not sure that the flying machine is here to stay, but we will have to admit that it looks like they have something in this new fly line.

Briefly, there are four shapes of fly lines; level, single taper, double taper and now the "big head."

As you know, it is the weight of the line that bends the rod and gives power for the cast. The first lines were level. They have two on long rods. On large rods they are apt to be so heavy that they frighten shy fish and that same weight often is too much for the rod to handle on long casts.

Then some smarties figured out the single taper, where the line is small at the end and increases in size up to the "belly," which gives the necessary weight. This cured the first objection but didn't help much on the second. And it added a new difficulty. The first tapers were too long, and with a long leader the fisherman might find that he was attempting to cast only leader and taper to the fish that rose within 25 feet. This wouldn't do, as you know if you have tried it. You haven't the weight of line that's needed.

BEFORE we forget it, the double taper was just developed so you could change ends when your line wore out or became waterlogged and wouldn't float.

Now comes the "big head" taper, and it seems to solve all the problems. It is small at the end, tapers quickly to the large section or "bel