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MINOR LEAGUE RESEARCH NEWSLETTER

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The Empire State League, a professional league, but not a member of the National Association, was led in hitting by Cliff Carter at .397.

The four team league played its initial season at Hofstra University on Long Island. Chris Keeshock had 12 home runs and Dion Williams, 52 RBIs. George Scott, who managed the Diggers, saw his son named the league's Most Valuable Player.

A league official indicated that each team kept a score book, but it was up to each individual manager whether statistics were kept.

Anyone who can provide more information concerning final statistics, a matrix for the standings, or any other data and information would be helpful.

A Press Kit provided the following: Sanford Schlesinger, President; and four Board of Directors: Edward J. Acton, Eric Margenau, Fraser Scott, and Gardner Spungin.

John Pardon

Phil Lowry is interested in finding any minor league game ending after 1 A.M., or extending 26 innings or longer. Also, was the first minor league night game between Grand Rapids and Zanesville on July 8, 1909, at Grand Rapids or Zanesville? What was the park's name and the

attendance? What were the teams' nicknames?

Oneal M. Hobbs, a long time promoter of baseball in Pueblo, Colorado, died October, 7, 1987. Oneal helped operate the Pueblo Rollers in the 1941 Western League. Rex Stucker, owner of the Sioux Falls Canaries in the 1941 Western League, died during the first part of October in Sacramento, California.

Hoping to get back in the complete good graces of Vern Luse we have included the standings which were inadvertently left off Vern's piece on the Red River Valley League.

Red River Valley League Team Standings, First Season, May 26 through July 31, 1897.

<u>Team</u>	W	- L	Pct.	<u>Mo</u>	<u>GR</u>	<u>Fa</u>	<u>W-B</u>
<u>Manager</u>							
Moorhead	27	14	.659	---	12	5	10
J. Bodkin							
Grand Forks	19	21	.475	4	--	10	5
A. Gordon							
Fargo	18	23	.439	5	6	--	7
L. Roberts(6/9), Ad. Leech,(6/11-12), G. Challis							
Wap/Breck	16	22	.421	5	3	8	--
E. Corbett							

Team Nicknames:

Fargo Divorcees; Grand Forks Senators;
Moorhead Barmaids, Maroons; Wahpeton/
Breckenridge Twins, Methodists

1987 Minor League Departmental Leaders

Batting Average: .415 Orlando Sanchez
(Puebla, Mexican)

At Bats: 562 Mike Devereaux (San Antonio,
Texas)

Runs: 120 Greg Vaughn (Beloit, Midwest)

Hits: 208 Lavell Freeman (El Paso, Texas)

Doubles: 48 Gregg Jefferies (Jackson, Texas)

Triples: 14 Louie Meadows (Tucson, Pacific
Coast)

Home Runs: 42 Nelson Barrera (M.C. Reds)

Runs Batted In: 134 Nelson Barrera (M.C. Reds)

Stolen Bases: 80 Geronimo Pena
(Savannah, South Atlantic)
79 Ced Landrum (Winston-
Salem, Car.)

PITCHING

Winning Pct. (15 decisions) : 90.47 (19-2) Bob
Faron (Springfield, Midwest)

Wins: 19 Bob Faron (Springfield, Midwest)

Loses: 17 Scott Kannenberg (Quad City,
Midwest)

*Earned Run Average: 1.55 (122 innings)
Doug Lenton (Myrtle Beach, South Atlantic)

Games: 75 Todd Simmons (Las Vegas, Pacific
Coast)

Inning Pitched: 206 Blaine Beatty (Charlotte, South
(Hagerstown, Car.)

Saves: 41 Mike Perez (Springfield,
Midwest)

Hits: 229 Scott Kannenberg (Quad City, Midwest)

Walks: 138 Park Pittman (Visalia, California)

Strikeouts: 209 Paul McClellan
(Clinton, Midwest)

*Rule 10.23(b) Minor League: Minimum inning
pitched must equal 80% of scheduled games.

A look at the Mexican League averages for 1987 supplied by Bill Weiss indicated that several veterans have finally come to the end of their careers. Ramon Arano, fifth in career minor league wins with 333, did not play (although his son appeared in 9 games), Alfredo Ortiz pitched 3 games with no decisions and a 14.56 ERA (After entering the 1985 season with 287 career wins Ortiz won only 3 games in his last 3 seasons), Miguel Suarez hit .143 in 8 games (Suarez had nearly 2600 hits before his 32nd birthday; and appeared to have a chance to set a career minor league record for hits but his career has apparently ended before he reached 2750). One player still going strong is Jack Pierce whose 24 homers raised his career total to 395 - - 7th on the all time minor league list.

Orlando Sanchez hit .415 to lead the league in batting--the 4th consecutive season a Mexican Leaguer has led all the minors.

The 1902 Charlotte Hornets

Jim Sumner

The recent record setting 29 game winning streak of the Salt Lake City Trappers of the Pioneer League has focused attention on other long minor league winning streaks. The Trappers broke the previous organized ball record of 27 consecu-

tive wins held by the 1902 Corsicana (Texas League), and the 1921 Baltimore (International League) teams. Corsicana was not the only minor league team in 1902 to compile an impressive winning streak, however. That same year the Charlotte Hornets of the North Carolina State League ran off 25 wins in a row in an early season Blitz that devastated their competition.

The State League, as it was generally known, was in its only year of operation in 1902. Founded on the ashes of the 1901 Virginia-North Carolina League, which folded in mid-season, The Stater League was a charter member of the National Association. The league had teams in six North Carolina cities: Charlotte, Durham, Greensboro, New Bern, Raleigh, and Wilmington. Although the league was a Class D league, which was ostensibly limited to novice players, many of the Hornets had prior organized ball experience. The most notable of these was manager and right fielder Ed Ashenback, who was well known in minor league circles. Ashenback had either played or managed in the Tri-State League, the Pennsylvania State League, the Southern League, the Texas League, the Inter-State League, the Virginia League, and the Virginia-North Carolina League, among others. Pitcher Frank Queen, outfielder Buck Weaver (not the Black Sox Buck Weaver), pitcher Eddie Person, second baseman Frank Templeman, and shortstop Claude Osteen were also experienced professionals.

Despite this experience the season began inauspiciously for the Hornets. They split their first six games, falling a quick two games behind the first place Raleigh Red Birds. The winning streak began on May 12 with a 9-1 thumping of Wilming-

ton on the road. Two days later the same teams played to a 9 inning 5-5 tie, when Charlotte was forced to catch a train. The game was never completed or replayed and thus does not figure in the streak. On May 15 Charlotte returned home for a crucial three game series with first place Raleigh. The hornets won the first two games by scores of 2-0 and 7-1, Closing to within a half game of the lead. On May 17 the two teams squared off in what was considered the finest game played in North Carolina to that point. Charlotte won in an 18 inning epic 1-0, taking over first place. The delighted Charlotte cranks passed the hat, raising \$10 each for pitcher Long John Bishop and catcher Duff Lehman, both of whom lasted all 18 innings, and \$1.50 apiece for the rest of the team.

This victory inspired the Hornets to new heights, as they continued their winning streak through the end of May and into June.

Although many of the wins were fairly comfortable the streak was in danger several times. On May 20 Charlotte entered the ninth trailing Wilmington 3-2 but pulled out the win with single runs in the ninth and tenth. The next day Charlotte broke a 3-3 tie with a 3 run eighth en route to a 6-3 victory over the Sea Gulls. At the end of May Charlotte visited Greensboro for a three game series that convinced Charlotte rooters that their team had a touch of magic. On May 29 Charlotte trailed the Patriots 4-0 after six before winning 5-4. The next day Greensboro led 4-2 before an eight inning grand slam by Weaver gave the visitors a 6-4 win. On May 31 Charlotte overcame a 3-0 deficit to win 4-3.

By this time Charlotte had broken the pennant race wide open. At the end of May Charlotte's winning streak was at 17. Their 20-3 record had them 6 1/2 games ahead of second place Raleigh. They were

in hot pursuit of what they considered the organized ball record, a 22 game streak compiled by the 1895 Dallas team of the Texas League, a team captained ironically enough by Ed Ashenback. The Hornets equalled the record at home on June 6, with a 7-3 triumph over Durham. They defeated the Bulls the next day 5-4 in ten innings, scoring the winning run on a wild pitch, and claimed the record.

Their joy was somewhat tempered by a New York Sun's criticism that reminded Charlotte that the 1869 Cincinnati Red-legs had a winning streak won in well in excess of 22 games. The Charlotte Daily Observer's response tells much about how sophisticated turn-of-the century fans thought their sport had become: "Who cares anything about the games of '69? They played town-ball and bullpen in those days and made scores of half a hundred or more. Why the Red Stockings wouldn't have known a curve ball from a jaybird and even a team of Wilmington's class would have made their pristine redness look sickly green. Out on such ancient history! Since baseball has been a scientific contest the record made here.... must stand as a smasher." To fully gauge the depth of the insult paid to the Reds it should be pointed out that Wilmington's record at that time was 3-26.

The Charlotte streak reached 25 before coming to an end on June 11 in Durham. After winning the first two games of the series handily by scores of 8-2 and 10-1, manager Ashenback, presumably on a lark, decided to take the mound for the finale. Predictably he was pounded, giving up 11 hits, 4 walks, and hitting a batter. Durham, managed by former Major League pitcher Otis Stockdale, won by a 13-8 margin.

Several things stand out about the streak. Although all of the Hornets played well pitcher Bishop and outfielder Weaver were dominant figures. Bishop won nine of the 25 games, one in relief, and allowed only 10 earned runs in 85 innings (1.06 E.R.A). Weaver batted .369 over the streak, including the one tie, with 7 doubles, 5 triples, and 3 home runs. Third baseman Jake Brouthers and shortstop Osteen were almost as impressive. Charlotte did have to withstand some adversity. Several games were pulled out in the late innings, while Ashenback and Osteen were among several Hornets to miss games with either injury or illness. Finally, the streak, as impressive as it was, seriously undermined the stability of the league. The other teams accused the Hornets of violating the salary limit, fans of the other teams became increasingly disinterested, and Charlotte fans were heard to mumble that more balance might improve the mix. The league's hierarchy, which included 27 year old William G. Bramham of Durham, declared a split season in an attempt to revive enthusiasm. The first half ended on June 29 with Charlotte 39-8. Second place Raleigh was 27 -21, 12 1/2 games out of first while last place Wilmington was 109-37, a staggering 29 games out of first. The reorganization was unsuccessful, however.

The league suffered from other problems familiar to students of minor league ball during this period, such as poor umpiring and uncertain finances and collapsed in mid July. It would be 1908 before a minor league completed a successful season in the Tar Heel state. Still the Charlotte cranks of 1902 would doubtless be proud to know that the Hornets' winning streak is still one of the longest in the history of organized ball.