



## EXTRA INNINGS NEWSLETTER

Game Designer: *Jack Kavanagh*

### FROM THE BENCH/Jack Kavanagh

Every six weeks or so Jerry Faulk sends a 9 x 12 envelope containing letters from table gamers asking questions about "EI". Jerry tries to flatter me into responding, cagily suggesting ideas offered might be worked into a future edition. Actually, he's loath to try to find answers to questions asked among the pages of fine print. Yet, much of the material which reaches me deserves more than just the reply it gets, it rates appreciation for some very useful ideas. A majority of the useful ideas fall into the "over-kill" area which we try to avoid. Before I share some of this material with you remember, for better or worse, we hold certain guide lines. These are: the game is designed to be played in a half hour or less so the table gamer can accomplish enough games to establish league stats of his own. We've nothing against more intricate games, whether they be "pitch-by-pitch" or trace the movement of the ball from bat to player to player, etc. Such games serve a devotee who is turned on by a closer simulation (in length of time spent playing a table version).

We resist utilization of stats which are not contained in MacMillan's "The Baseball Encyclopedia" or Neft's "The Sports Encyclopedia: BASEBALL." What's good for Catfish Hunter has to apply equally to Matty and Walter Johnson; stats measuring the effect of Johnny Bench's throwing arm must also be available to compare for Dickey, Cochrane and Kling.

Let's work our way thru the mail pile. Here's an easy one to incorporate into your games as it only requires your imagination to do so: Any batter rated an S is considered to have hit a home run inside the park when it is exactly the top of his hitting lines. Or, you could make that on any 1-1-1 (doesn't affect the chances and is easier to remember.) It also doesn't affect the outcome of the game but adds a dollop of realism. Additionally, I always seem to envision a tape measure job when one of the highly productive home run hitters tags one on a 1-1-1.

I'm going to give credit for that idea to Albert Romano of Uniontown, PA. He listed about 15 questions in his letter and, to simplify my answer, I returned his letter to him. If I've innocently plagiarized some kindly table gamer of his neat idea, let me know and we'll place kudos where they belong in the next issue.

Brad Biondo, Albany, N.Y. questions the fact the runners don't advance on infield hits. I think the problem here is that I've envisioned such hits as those which handcuff infielders, not topped roller. In the first instance a runner would probably not try to advance. Now that Brad has brought attention to the matter I can't see why the instructions "Effect On Base Runners" on page three of the "EI" text can't be applied to infield singles. You'd have to accept that a runner on first would move to second on the infield hit. Other than that, you've got a means to learn who has handled the ball (bottom of column one, page 4) and the logic of movement on ground outs seems just as appropriate.

Gregg Hanchett, Succasunna, N.J., speaks out boldly against having "EI" adopt individual playing cards. His perceptions are so like ours (tho' we didn't coach him in this) we'll quote from his letter: "...I feel that using individual playing cards for Extra Innings would be a mistake. It seems that every review of "EI" I have read says that the only flaw of the game is "the lack of individual playing cards." What the surveys fail to say is that you have one of the few games on the market that doesn't need them. The other games need the cards because the batters' codes are secret and every dice possibility must be shown.....'EI' team charts only have to be referred to maybe once every four or five dice rolls.....In other games the playing cards are referred to every roll of the dice.

Gregg goes on to detail more of the tedium involved with keeping track of the cards. Myself, I've also contended that those who began with a game which utilized cards, such as APBA or SOM, become accustomed to the presence of individual cards. For some whose imaginations are perhaps more rampant than most they become personalized and tangible.

There are a number of letters here which, one way or another, take up the problem of rating players in the subjective areas: base stealing, base advancing and defense, good, bad and limited. This keeps coming up and I guess we're going to have to try and do a definitive reply and have it appear as an article in TTS and then mail it as a reprint. That is something of a cop out and we try to reply to everyone personally . . . but there comes a point when you tire of explaining that fielding percentages are not the only way you measure defensive skills. If Jerry will provide the space . . . next issue of TTS.

Here's a new idea of my own which I've been using in my games and find quite gratifying. I've been bothered by the dearth of assists to outfielders and, as they've only occurred when a runner was out trying to stretch or trying, unsuccessfully, to advance after a fly ball, these have been garnered by outfielders randomly.

What I do now is have a runner attempting to advance thrown out by a T-1 outfielder, rather than inhibited, when the white dice is a six. If the Advancing On Singles and Doubles Chart advises a runner goes from first to third on a hit, but has an asterisk indicating the advance is limited to one base if a T-1 outfielder is in position, we have the runner out at third if the second (white) dice rolled is a six. This gives the T-1 outfielders the edge they deserve in this category, puts more "gamesmanship" into the play, and, in two handed play, provides another reason for the manager of the trailing team to "play safe." In that situation all runners are limited to one base advances and the chart isn't consulted.

Another alteration I've introduced (already yet, since the fifth edition) is applied when, after an error has been signaled on the first roll, the second roll produces a one on the white (second) dice on a ball hit to an SD rated fielder. When that happens the error is erased and play follows as though there'd been no error signaled. What this does is provide a logical advantage to the superior defensive fielder. As errors are now produced as a team statistic, the removal of some in this way compensates for the introduction of errors via the Stolen Base chart and the Sacrifice Bunt Chart.

### BUBBLE GUM CARDS WANTED

I'm afraid this is going to be read as a "put down" by many of my collector friends who are serious about their hobby of collecting baseball cards (football, hockey, basketball, etc., too).

However, at the Adeline LaPlante Memorial Center, a sheltered workshop for retarded teenagers and adults, we find they are very much enjoyed. My own son, Brian, mildly retarded and paraplegic, has made a major hobby from his cards. He sorts them by teams, positions, uniform numbers, etc. etc. At The Center we find these cards make great "rewards" for clients (many of whom are bussed each day from the State Institution for the Retarded and have no opportunity to acquire cards on their own). The thing has really caught hold and, despite checking flea markets and yard sales, I just can't bring in enough cards.

From time to time we find older cards and these we market if they have any real value to collectors. We put such "profits" into sports equipment. A shoe box of gum cards from the 1930s was turned into softball uniforms, including shoes.

So, if you've got an out grown collection or accumulation, we could use it...any vintage...any condition. Please send to: Jack Kavanagh, Executive Director, South County Chapter, R.I. Assn. for Retarded Citizens, P.O. Box 56, Peace Dale, Rhode Island 02833.