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Town teams once drew crowds



A picture of the Rosedale Club baseball team of 1938 shows the game was one for all ages -- even with female "bat boys."

(Editor's note: This is the 16th in a series of "then and now" articles on places and things of interest in Kansas City, Kan., compiled by area historian Margaret Landis in observance of the 100th birthday of KCK in 1986. Much of the information has appeared in past editions of The Kansan.) (Transcriptions are presented without changes except to improve readability.)

It used to be that any town of any size boasted a so-called semi-pro baseball team made up of the town's finest-young and old.

The teams were sponsored by the merchants and, if they were lucky, by a soft drink or beer company that furnished the uniforms and equipment.

Some of the players on those teams were pretty darn good and later went on to the minor leagues, or even the majors. By and large, however, most of the players never gained that stature and continued to play town team ball for the sheer fun of it.

But for one reason or another because a lack of sponsors or because of the diminishing popularity of the sport for both players and fans or both the town team is of a dying breed. But many of the old-timers who were idolized by their fans can still recall those glory years.

Thumbing back through the files of The Kansan to October 1938, we ran across one such team, The Rosedale Club baseball team. Looking at a photo of the team it reaffirmed baseball was for all ages; that one of the popular beers of the time was Schlitz; and the popular bat of the day was the "Lou Gehrig Slugger" (we looked at the original picture with a magnifying glass to determine that.)

The Rosedale Club baseball team, piloted by Casey Jones, climaxed its regular season with a 20-6 record by winning the Sattrwood Park tournament. The season finale came when it met an All-Star team composed of outstanding players of other teams which competed in the tournament.

An accounting of the All-Star game on the back of the team's picture is as follows:

"The close of the local baseball season was no less brilliant and exciting for Rosedale than it was for the Yanks and the Cubs. It was a glorious finish with B.A. Richmond's great Rosedale ball club triumphing over the best players and most wiley managers in the eastern tournament.

"In the final game last Sunday the Rosedale team beat the All-Stars by the convincing margin of 15 runs to only three."

During the tournament, Rosedale had to down the good sluggers of Olathe, Klammer, Lenexa, Starrwood and others that were entered in this league.

"...Lud Renner, the star southpaw, hurled a six-hit game for his Rosedale pals, his curves and speed mowing 'em down striking out all six All-Stars. The Rosedale team centered a vicious attack on the All-Star twirlers, Harry Green, Charly Grindinger and Bob Kahler all three getting homers.

"The victory brings a lot of praise to the sponsor, B.A. Richmond, who backed his club with spirit and enthusiasm supplying uniforms and all needs for the 1938 season. Surely, it is a grand idea to have this good American sport backed up with a businesslike manner, which is to Richmond's glory.

"No less deserving of praise is Casey Jones who managed the club in its playing schedule. Casey is a general in the field, a semi-pro manager that had led a good team to prominence for Rosedale. He gave his best efforts to the business of ball playing and his triumph at the finish is mighty gratifying to his friends and to every member of the 1938 club.

According to an article in the Oct. 10, 1938 Kansan, the score was Rosedale 15, All Stars 3.