

The Boston Park League

by John Hinds

After 65 years of continuous existence, the Boston Park League has been many things to many people. The one thing that it remains for all those who have played and for the present players, is family.

Organized by the City of Boston Department of Parks and Recreation, the League was established to give top high school, college and older players the opportunity to hone their skills.

League play starts the third week in May and continues to the end of July. Playoffs follow regular season competition. In a unique format, the top four teams make the playoffs. The last-place team drops to the Yawkey League, and the winner of the Yawkey Division replaces the last-place team in the Senior Park League.

During the 1993 season, play was conducted on six fields in Boston: Dick Casey Field in Dorchester, Fallon Field in Roslindale, the field at Cleveland Circle, Rogers Field in Brighton, Kelley Field in Hyde Park and Noyes Field in East Boston.

ADSL, the Brighton Dodgers, Great Scott, the Larkin Club, Mass Envelope, Palmer Mobile, the Serra Club, Towne Club and the Triple D's have fought it out this season. Jim Mello, manager of defending league champion Mass Envelope calls it "the most competitive play in several years."

Although Boston has experienced tension in the inner city, the League has provided a wholesome environment for many players according to Josh Powell, co-director of the ADSL team in Dorchester.

"There is not much structure for players in the minority community after the age of 12. With all of the distractions it's easy for kids to go astray. The Park League not only gives kids a chance to participate and learn from skilled coaches, but it also provides them an opportunity that they might not get otherwise," said Powell. Powell has been a player and manager in the League since the mid '60s.

For John Kelliher, who has been involved with the League since its inception as a player, manager and official, "the intensity of play in the League" has provided it with the spirit that has kept it going. Kelliher is the general manager for the Mass Envelope team.

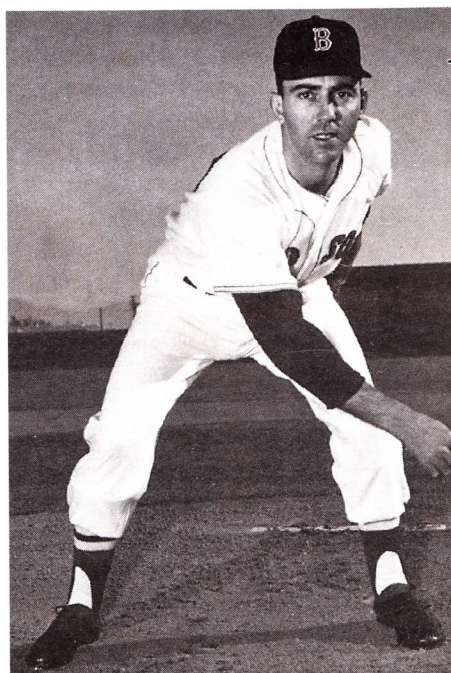
Although official records are not kept, the Baseball Hall of Fame recognizes that the Boston Park League is the oldest amateur league in continuous existence in baseball.

This rich history is acknowledged in the players who have gone on to play in the major leagues. They include Mike Fornieles who played for the Supreme Saints and the Red Sox; Vito Tamulis, the St. Augustine team and the Yankees; Johnny Broaca, the Yankees; Tom Earley, the Boston Braves; Joe Mulligan, the Casey Club and the Red Sox; Joe Callahan, the Boston Braves; Bob Giggie, the Boston Braves; Curt Fullerton, the Charlestown team and the Boston Braves.

Catchers who played in the League and the majors include Pete Varney, the White Sox and the McCormack Club; George Yankowski, the St. Paul team and the White Sox; and Jim Hegan, Mass Knitting and the Cleveland Indians. Infielders from the League who went on include first baseman Art McManus of the Supreme Saints and Kansas City; second baseman Andy Spognardi, the Roslindale Rosebuds and the Red Sox; shortstop Eddie Pellagrini, Mass Knitting and the Red Sox; and third baseman Richie Hebner, the Johnson Bombers and the Tigers.

Outfielders who played in the Park League and the majors include Si Rosenthal of the Casey Club and the Red Sox and Tyler LaForest of Lincoln and the Red Sox.

Former Red Sox pitcher and current broadcaster for Red Sox Spanish radio, Mike Fornieles, pitched for the Supreme Saints on his way to the majors.





The 1993 Boston Park League All-Stars at Fenway. Photo courtesy of Norman Reynolds.

Although they never made it to the big leagues, other notable alumni include former Boston Mayor Ray Flynn of the McCormack Club and currently at the Vatican; Bishop Joe Maguire of Springfield; Pat Harrington, the current Boston Park League Commissioner; Johnny McDonald of the St. Paul's Club; Art Nowell of the Supreme Saints; Bill Cleary of Harvard and the St. Paul's club. Still others who have contributed over the years are Avi Nelson of the ADSL club, Jack Concannon of the McCormack club, Steve DeOssie of Mass Envelope; Hughie Duffy of the Kennedy club; Roberto Feliz and Billy Brooks of ADSL and the Buffalo Bills.

Walt Mortimer secretary/ treasurer of the League and an active participant since 1954, says it was a tough go for the League to stay in existence when the City of Boston withdrew financing for its operations in 1982.

In stepped the Yawkey Foundation and Bill Gutfarb along with John Harrington and the Red Sox. "The League incurs about \$20,000 in

expenses, and most of that goes into equipment and umpires. We wouldn't be able to meet those expenses without the help of both the Red Sox and the Yawkey Foundation," said Mortimer.

Another shot in the arm came this season when League President Eddie Miller's dream was fulfilled, and the League's All-Star Game was played at Fenway Park.

"Eddie has allowed us to realize dreams that many of us never thought possible," said Mortimer.

"It's hard to describe what playing at Fenway Park meant to all of the people involved in the League. But it demonstrates the commitment that the Red Sox have to helping people throughout Boston

Park League alumnus and former Red Sox Coach Richie Hebner played 18 years in the majors. Photo courtesy of Boston Herald.

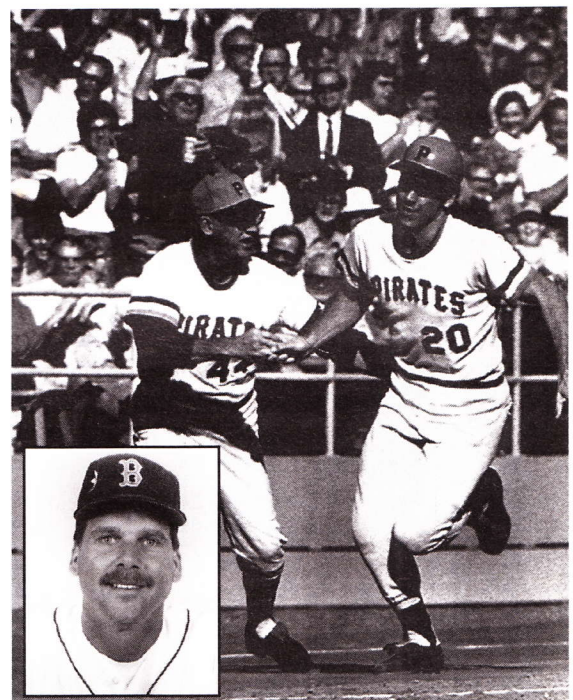
especially in the inner city," said Miller.

Above all, the All-Star Game will be one that Jim Mello, manager of the Mass Envelope team, will never forget. Mello inserted himself as a pinch hitter in the bottom of the eighth inning. There was one out, a runner on, and his team tied with the Intercity Star, five all.

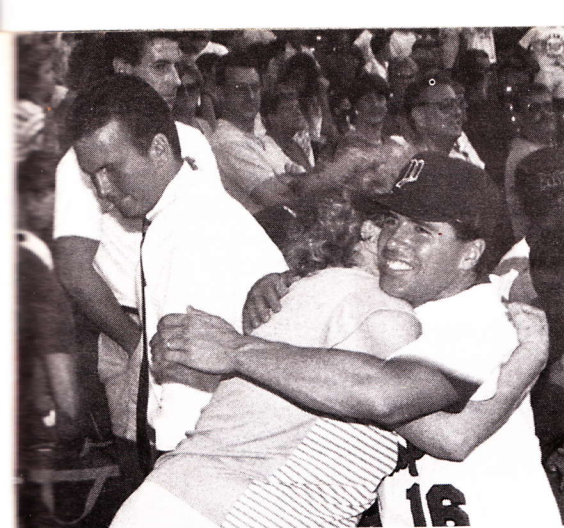
Mello had two strikes on him when he was thrown an inside fastball.

"I knew I hit it out the minute I made contact. I took a couple of steps down the first base line and watched as it went over the wall in left and landed by the light tower," said Mello.

Continued on Page 43



NEW
ENGLAND'S
FAVORITE



All-Star Game hero and Mass Envelope Manager Jim Mello receives a congratulatory hug from his mother following his explosive game-winning home run in the last of the eighth at Fenway July 12. Photo courtesy of Norman Reynolds.

Continued from Page 13

"It was a fantastic opportunity for the younger kids to play in Fenway Park," said Mello who travels from his home in Topsfield to work in Braintree every day and then plays in the League five nights a week. His schedule is not unusual for the players.

Top players in the League this year include Genaro Castro, Pablo Reyes, Kenny Pires, Kevin Bailey and Rosento Rentas, all of the ADSL team. Others include Mark Christiani and Mike Carista of the Serra Club, Matt Ferrullo, Jeff January and Neil Bisson of Mass Envelope, Budd Taylor and Jeff Toussant of the Towne club and Jim Mulry of Triple D's.

Most players work one if not two jobs and have families. The family environment is one that the League promotes. This is especially evident at the ADSL games. "A lot of our players and their families bring their different ethnic foods to the game and share with each other after the games," says Powell.

The Boston Park League broke the color barrier well before the major leagues. Men like Cannonball Jackman, and Lefty Matthews of the Colored Giants set the pace for the minority players.

"The thing that most people don't realize about this League is it isn't just fun and games. It's a very serious, emotional, competitive environment. With the talent in the League, you have to give 100 percent every night," said Powell.

For 65 years, a lot of men, women and children have been giving 100 percent 365 days a year.

YASTRZEMSKI REACHING BASE VIA A HIT OR WALK

	Total	Hits	BB	Years
Pete Rose	5,822	4,256	1,566	1963-86
Ty Cobb	5,440	4,191	1,249	1905-28
Carl Yastrzemski	5,264	3,419	1,845	1961-83
Stan Musial	5,229	3,630	1,599	1941-44, 46-63
Hank Aaron	5,173	3,771	1,402	1954-76
Babe Ruth	4,929	2,873	2,056	1914-35
Ted Williams	4,673	2,654	2,019	1939-42, 46-60

YASTRZEMSKI CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Named to Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, 1989.
- Along with Johnny Bench became the 18th and 19th players elected to Hall of Fame on 1st ballot.
- Received 94.6% of Hall of Fame voting, the 7th highest in the history of voting.
- 1st Little League player to be elected to Hall of Fame.
- Most Games, Lifetime, A.L., 3,308.
- Joe Cronin A.L. Award for Significant Achievement, 1979.
- Most Valuable Player, A.L., 1967.
- Sporting News A.L. Player of the Year, 1967.
- Sporting News No. 1 Major League Player, 1967.
- Gold Glove OF Selections, 1963-65-67-68-69-71-77.
- Led A.L. OF in assists, 1962-63-64-66-69-71-77.
- Led A.L. in Slugging Pct., 1965 (.536), '67 (.622), '70 (.592).
- Led A.L. in Total Bases, 1967 (360), '70 (335).
- Led A.L. in Sacrifice Flies, 1972 (9), '77 (11).
- Holds A.L. Record Int. Walks, Career, 190.
- Tied M.L. Record HR 2 Consecutive Games, 5, May 19-20, 1976.
- Tied M.L. Record OF Fielding Pct., 1.000, 1977.
- Holds M.L. Record, Most Years Leading League, OF Assists, 7.
- Won A.L. Triple Crown, 1967.
- Selected Outstanding Player of 1970 All-Star Game.
- Holds 7th Longest OF Consecutive Errorless Game Streak, A.L., 167 Games, 7/28/76 thru 4/7/78 (354 chances).
- First A.L. Player with 400 HR and 3,000 hits.
- Named Most Valuable Player Carolina League, 1959.
- Most Consecutive Years One M.L. Club, 23 (with B. Robinson).
- A.L. Record Most Consecutive Seasons 100 or More Games, 20.
- 2nd Player to get 100 Hits 22 Years (with Cobb) (Rose 3rd in 1984).
- Only Player to Get 100 Hits First 20 Years.
- 2nd Player to Play in 100 Games 22 Years, A.L. Record (Aaron also 22, Rose holds M.L. Record, 23).
- Holds A.L. Records, Most AB, 11,988 and Most Plate Apps., 13,990.

Everyday the Herald's sports staff delivers fresh insights and unique perspectives into the fascinating world of baseball.

They don't miss a play and neither will you!

BOSTON HERALD

