

Baseball raised money, made headlines in 1921

"ROTARY CLUB WINS BASEBALL GAME" was the headline on a front-page story in the June 17, 1921, edition of the *Bloomington Evening World*. Readers of the newspaper may not have been waiting breathlessly for the outcome of the contest, but it apparently generated a lot of enthusiasm among the members of the Rotary and Kiwanis clubs.

The game was played on Jordan Field, which is now a parking lot next to the Indiana Memorial Union building on the Indiana University campus. The first order of business when the teams were assembled was to decide which one went to bat first. The referee was a Sergeant Gibson of the IU Military Department.

According to the *Evening World* reporter, "The two teams were fairly well matched with Jess Fields, N.O. Pittinger and Wood Wiles for the Rotary club opposing Glen McDaniel, Charlie Springer and Orville Fuller for the Kiwanis."



LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

It was Will Sears for the Rotary Club who hit the only home run of the game. The newspaper described the action.

"The ball made a bee-line for right field, and Louis Becovitz who was playing in that position ducked and escaped injury, but the ball went so far that Sears circled all the bases.

"When he finally landed on the side lines he was pretty well winded, sounded like a Ford car in need of a new muffler."

Was the reporter suggesting that the players — or Sears, at least — were out of shape? Perhaps the huffing and puffing were just indications that athletic endeavor was not the players' main occupation.

The reporter solicited some opinions after the game. "Walter Woodburn and Charley Springer, the only left handed batters on the field, attribute the lopsided score in favor of the Rotarians to the fact." Others disputed that claim, "... since Springer stopped to argue with the umpire while running bases and made a double out."

The teams had coaches. They were W.H. Levis and Cotton Berndt, who also doubled as pitchers for their respective teams.

Apparently Umpire Gibson had some problems, "keeping the bases from crowding and the players from piling up on the field." When asked by the reporter why he knocked so many foul balls into the Jordan River, Wiles claimed it was a strategy on his part to give John Sutphin and Fred Seward a breathing spell.

The article about the game included the inning-by-inning score. There were only seven innings. The *Evening World* explained all that: "... it was found that all the ice had

melted in the drinking water and since it was almost time to eat, a truce was called and hostilities suspended."

The article made it clear that the two teams weren't just playing for fun. It was a fund-raiser. Explained the newspaper, "About a thousand or more tickets were sold for the game. The proceeds will go to the Recreational movement here" (whatever that was).

If the Bloomington public had not had enough baseball for awhile, on June 18 the *Evening World* announced:

"Tomorrow afternoon at 3 o'clock the Monon Athletic Association baseball team will meet the Showers Special team on the Monon diamonds on S. Walnut Street for the second time this season.

"The first game resulted in the Monon team winning by a score of 8 to 5. The Showers team has added new players and asked for the game tomorrow."

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