

TABLE HOCKEY 1977!

BASEBALL SURVEY/John Swistak

THE MINI-GAMES

Two kinds of games are covered by this review. The first group is composed of the "Real Life" variety; i.e., there are rated players and various strategies employed. The second group is composed of games which simulate the game of baseball without reference to actual players. Although strategies fit into this second group well, the three games in this review employ them only to a slight extent.

CALCU-BALL: Mid-America Marketing, 63138 South Ave., Middleton, Wisc. 53562. Cost: \$4.00, Player ratings: \$1.50, (revised Play results List to accompany re-order), Contents: 6 scoresheets (12 games), 25 players per team in roster format (4 teams per sheet), Play Results List (3 pages), Instructions (3 pages), And a "dandy" plastic container for the whole game.

As the game is now played players on any one team have different ratings because identical ratings would give identical results in any given inning. Only a plus-minus change each inning in the pitcher rating prevents a batter from having the same results each time he's up against the same pitcher (unless the same batter-pitcher confrontation occurs in one inning, which doesn't seem to be good managerial policy).

The pitchers are rated by ERA and the batters are rated for BA with a homerun factor of 10 or more homeruns (whether 11 or 50) were hit.

To play you just subtract the batter rating from the pitcher rating, and add or subtract the inning effect. You then find the result on the "Play Results List." The game goes fast—15 to 20 minutes, but lacks detail of any sort. The only strategy options available are inserting pinch hitters and bringing in a reliever.

There's room to at least give more accurate homerun ratings, and a pair of dice (or even just one die) would increase the variables—resulting in a more pleasing game.

If you want a fast game which closely resembles real-life baseball and aren't too fanatical about accuracy (although the batting in the 24 games series I played was fairly good as far as BA) or you like to try your hand at improving games, you might want to try it; but if you want something inexpensive and accurate, this isn't the place to look.

SIMCO BASEBALL: Simulations Co., 4218 Wayne Trace, Ft. Wayne, Ind. 46806. Cost: \$3.00 (with a discount for 3 or more per order), Player ratings: \$2.00 (on cardboard), \$1.50 (on paper). Contents: 4 cardboard roster-type rating sheets, 1 paper injury chart (for season), 3 cardboard playing charts, 1 sheet instructions, 8 cardboard chips (to represent runners, and keep track of outs, runs, etc.), 1 cardboard playing field.

Batters are rated for average with a number in intervals of approximately .030, and for homeruns with a letter in intervals of about .0034 (homeruns-per-at bat), and there are three possible running ratings (the same rating being applied to stolen bases and to base running). Pitchers receive a plus or minus rating which affects the batters chance of getting a hit, and a "K" rating to convert groundballs into strikeouts. There are no fielding ratings, but before beginning a game the dice are rolled by both managers and one player from each team is deemed injured and unable to play that game.

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GAME SURVEY/Rick Teverbaugh

Before starting on a game-by game review of what's available in table top hockey games, let me first set some perspective on my hockey background. I came upon hockey seriously very lately, like in the last few years when the Indianapolis Racers were granted a hockey franchise. I used to watch the NHL playoff games, but other than a rather basic knowledge of the rules, I knew nothing of the intricacies of the sport. Since that time though I have approached hockey from a much more serious angle, even to covering the Racers for my paper and with that increase in interest for the real thing, my interest in the table top variety also increased.

Luckily for me the market about that time also began to develop with some good table top games for what long-time rink devotees tell me was an area sorely lacking before then.

What I will try to do in each of these singular reviews is to give the reader an idea of what it is like to play a particular game, the drawbacks and advantages of each game, the results of a three-game series between the Boston Bruins and the Chicago Blackhawks with each game, and an overall rating that will include some thought toward price per amount of enjoyment.

Lastly, and it is unfortunate not only for me but for the readers, there are two hockey games which I could not get copies of and didn't have any previous experience with.

The first such game was "The World's Greatest Hockey Game". I guess you'll just have to consult Al Simon's review in the very first issue of TTS for a view of that game. My contact with that company is very puzzling. They wrote a letter in reply to me saying that they were concerned about a previous review of mine, also in the first issue of TTS, where I took some exception to the fact that a basketball game didn't have a replay setup, but rather estimated rookie performances and made trades before sending out the game.

I wrote in response that while still opposed to that format, I wouldn't dwell on it, but would point it out to the readers so that those opposed to this idea could be forewarned. Since then, and one letter from me still unanswered later, I have not heard from them. They said in their first letter they weren't begging for a good review, but now I wonder.

The final hockey game that won't be represented here is the entry from BLM. They didn't seem to want to cooperate either.

FACE-OFF--(B+) The problem with Face Off is obvious after about one minute alone with the rule book and accompanying rule change sheet. Make no mistake about it, this game is by the most strenuous standards the game that can bring hockey excitement and statistical accuracy into the living rooms of anyone willing to pay the \$16.95 list price. But that rule book!

As if the regular rules aren't enough to tackle on a first setting, right after the rules have just been entered into your head a new set of corrections, telling the gamer to ignore certain things he has just learned, is put forth. It isn't even possible to play a couple of games with the old rules to get accustomed to the flow before easing into the new guidelines, because the player cards have been changed and some symbols mean new things while others aren't there anymore at all. Once a flow has been established for the game and the rules survived

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From the Editor

This issue marks the start of the third year of **TABLE TOP SPORTS**. Most of you are probably surprised that we have lasted this long. So am I. Considering the mortality of small hobby publications, I was not overconfident a couple of years ago when Volume 1, Number 1 was finally brought off the press and offered to the public. But we've stayed alive until now and, believe it or not, we're getting stronger and better with every issue. Things are looking so well for TTS, in fact, we've tentatively laid plans for going bimonthly. Don't start yelling "Yippee!" yet, though. Any increase in publication frequency is going to be done with careful planning and the change will not be made before this summer and probably not before next January. And don't forget I said "tentatively." I'm not making any promises. (Remember the League Directory?) But things are looking up.

Getting back to the matters at hand, I think this issue is proof enough we're betting better every quarter. Our headliner, of course, is Rick Teverbaugh's comprehensive hockey game survey. The article is not as complete as we would have liked because Rick was not able to obtain a couple of the major games. Nevertheless, we congratulate Rick on a thorough review and an excellently written piece. I was especially pleased with the way he played a three game series using the same two teams with each game. I think this is the best method short of a season replay for bringing out the inherent differences in each design. It leaves the reader with confidence that the reviewer knows what he is writing about and not just giving his impression after a cursory thumbing of the instructions.

Also on tap are those "prolifics", John Swistak and Julian Compton. These two guys are reason enough to go bimonthly—just to have room to publish their work. We had to omit an article by John this time on how to do the ratings for **GRAND SLAM** simply because we ran out of space. But we do have the new 1976 ratings for **GRAND SLAM** in this issue and we'll run the ratings article next quarter. In the meantime you can enjoy John's survey of the mini-baseball games and Julian's article on his pick of the ten top table sports games and his look at SOM College Football. Regular columnist Larry Green covered a couple of the mini-games also—which should just about exhaust the subject for a year or so when combined with John's piece—and Bill Rehrig laid aside his work on replays to give us some warnings on hobby addiction. The article by Steve Goldstein on **ROGERS BASK-ETBALL** was written last summer and delayed until now due to space limitations. However, we've checked and the price and address are still correct for the new edition.

Possibilities for the upcoming Spring issue include a discussion of **REPLAY BASEBALL**, another look at **BALLPARK BASEBALL**, a look back at the **APBA** Master Game after a year or so of existence, a review of **SIX POINTS** College Football, and a freebie game or two—maybe a new version of **GRAND SLAM**, or maybe a freebie tennis game, or maybe a freebie something else. We'll leave you in suspense.

Finally, we wish to welcome Robin Eads to the TTS staff. Our typesetter for the past five issues, Linda Byers, is no longer with us and we'll certainly miss her. She was one of the main reasons for the improved appearance of the magazine. However, Robin has started off very well in the typesetting/layout trade—thanks to my help, naturally. I showed her every trick of the trade that I knew. Essentially, this consisted of pointing to where the Varityper sat. After that she was on her own. Considering that she had never seen a typesetting machine before, I think she has done very well indeed. She had some troubles with margin widths on one of Julian's articles—thanks to a couple of dumb suggestions I made. But once I gathered up enough sense to get out of the typesetting room, things turned for the better. By next issue you'll probably think TTS is published by a multi-million dollar printing firm.

NOTICE

The date following your name on the address label indicates the LAST issue you will receive on your current subscription.

From the Readers

Dear Mr. Faulk: In response to Richard Berg's review of **Super Bowl Football** we would like to comment on the fact that his assumption that the team charts were designed only from the statistics compiled from each individual game is totally an error. The charts actually reflect a mesh of both the offensive and defensive yearly stats for the teams playing in each particular Super Bowl. By doing this, each game is reproduced in a very realistic manner, specialty teams included, without the hassles of a long "set up" time or numerous charts to consult. Our only regret at this particular time is that we were unable to provide more games in our current Super Bowl edition. Next year we plan to offer 16 to 20 great games. In closing we would like to say that we respect Mr. Berg's prerogative in being repelled by our particular approach to capturing great moments in pro football, but we also feel he should at least take the time to know what he's reviewing. Rick Parker, G.B. Games.

Dear TTS: I thank God that I am at college as I am writing this letter, as my parents would probably kill me. Yes, I am about to spend my 18th birthday money on an eighth simulation game. This time it's going to be football. Don't ask me why I'm buying another game. I know that the EI Greatest Teams replay I had planned will be put off. Maybe it's because I'm not satisfied with SI College or Pro football, or because Program IV makes me laugh. It could also be that there are few things more enjoyable than waiting for, receiving, and first opening a game. Whatever the reason, please rush that info before I spend the cash on something foolish, (a little irony there).

A little note about TTS. I believe that with a little advertising, (TSN, SI), it could develop quite a following. I'd like to see it get a bit bigger, especially in the area of gaming hints and tips. I'd also like to see more ink in the news letter sections. Maybe get a few more of the 'closet' table top gamers to write in about tips, replays, or even, (something that may sound corny), memorable moments in their games. People seem to think that people who play table top sports games are weird. Is it really any stranger than people who play cards constantly, (i.e. poker, bridge)? I'm getting pretty sick of some of my friends in the dorm coming in, seeing me playing EI, looking at me curiously, and asking "what the hell" I'm doing. I believe that many people stop table gaming because of peer pressure. I don't like the idea of society looking on table gamers as 'kids who never grew up' even though it may be true, I don't like it being implied. Enough of this babbling, this letter should be in the mail. Thanks much, Mike Robinson.

TABLE TOP SPORTS

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ANOTHER COLLEGE FOOTBALL GAME

Strat-O-Matic College Football, \$13.

Game Parts: 1 Game box, 1 game board (9½x19). 1 seventy card scrimmage deck (2x3), 1 twenty card split deck (5x3), 24 double-sided team play charts (9x9), 1 evenly matched team play chart (5½x17½), 1 double-sided instruction sheet (11x15), 1 solitaire version instruction sheet (5½x8½), 1 punch-out card with football etc., 1 roster and order form (8½x11).

It came out about Thanksgiving- its a real turkey. I'm not sure this is a level two game. A level two game simulates results which actually occurred. In football this involves team and individual statistics which can be acquired by research. This game has **no** individual ratings. It has only team ratings on 6 plays- 3 runs and 3 passes, for both offense and defense. It does not even have team ratings for kickoffs and returns, punts and returns, extra points, field goals, interception returns or fumbles. In other words all kickers in the country are the same. Limited information for the twenty-four teams is given- the record and the nickname, but no coach's name, individual player's names, number of running or passing plays, average points scored or allowed.

The game plays quickly by the offense selecting from 3 runs and 3 passes and the defense selecting run or pass. Each player then plays one of five scrimmage cards from his hand, with numbers from one to ten. The defensive number is subtracted from the offensive and the result read. The game substitutes the playing of known numbers on cards in the hand for the chance subtraction of numbers rolled on dice by the offense and defense as in Todd Lansing's level one football game, Pro Quarterback.

The game has a chart for playing two evenly matched unnamed teams and that is the only reason for this game's existence. As such, it would be a level one playability game and would compare favorably with Pro Quarterback, though it does not have the sophisticated play calling of PQ and is a shade below it in playability.

But this game purports to be a simulation game and when viewed as one, it is a joke. It is a toy not a game. Oh sure, its going to be on the shelves in Marboro Book Stores throughout the country and hundreds will buy it. But Harold Richman should be ashamed. I'm sure a lot of ink will be spilled in the Newell's Strat-O-Matic Review about what a great new creation this is, but any such words will originate from ignorance of the games available.

Now I'm sure some are thinking that I've got a grudge against SOM, the Review, H. Richman and the Newells. No, it's not that easy to dismiss this criticism. Let me remind you that I currently regard SOM's Baseball Game as the best level two (simulation) game on the market. Their Pro Football Game is creditable, though outclassed by THE, and to a lesser degree by TSG.

However, their basketball game is light years behind Fast Break, Statis Pro and Real/Life. Finally, this game should not be mentioned in the same context as the other college football games on the market. One subtle comparison: all of the items mentioned in paragraphs one and two as omitted in this game, are rated with exact detail in David Steele's Goal College Football Game. If you want to play football and not cards there is the place to go. It has more detail, more teams and includes three teams from the past. It doesn't come in a bright box labeled "Ages 11 to Adult" as SOM does, but then it is not for most eleven year olds as is SOM.

MOVING?

If you are planning a change of address, please notify Table Top Sports giving both your old address and your new address, as well as both your **OLD AND NEW ZIP CODES**. This will enable us to process the change more quickly and not interrupt your subscription. Please allow six weeks for change to become effective.

Level One

Pro Quarterback
Strat-O-Matic

Playability

A-
B+

Level Two

Strat-O-Matic
(24 teams, \$13)
Goal
(53 teams, \$5.95)
BLM
(25 teams, \$11.95)

Play (50%)	R&A (25%)	S/T (25%)	Total
B+(9)	D(2)	C(5)	C+(6.3)
B (8)	A(11)	B(8)	B+(8.8)
B-(7)	B+(9)	A(11)	B+/B(8.5)

Play- Playability

R&A- Realism and Accuracy

S/T- Strategy/Tactics

Table Top News

compiled by Larry Green and Jerry Faulk

Sports Mania has plans to introduce a football game next fall to complement their basketball and baseball games.

Strat-O-Matic will release six old-time pro football teams next summer, including 1958 Colts and 1962 Packers. In a break with SOM tradition, the two new expansion baseball teams will be offered along with the regular cards this spring, although at an extra cost.

APBA is publishing another complete season for baseball- this time 1941. The **APBA Journal** has dropped back to a bi-monthly publication, leaving the **SOM Review** as the only monthly gaming newsletter left.

Statis Pro has ambitious plans to issue all baseball seasons after 1936. Currently they are working on 1911, 1961, and 1967.

Ball Park Baseball has scheduled the issuing of the 1931 and 1932 seasons.

Gamecraft has gone into a second printing of Data Boxing, updating all ratings and adding approximately 100 boxers to the game. The brand new fifth edition of **EXTRA INNINGS** and a new tennis game **MATCH POINT** will be released March 1.

Vol. 1, No. 1 Jan. 1975. Game Reviews: "Face-Off," "World's Greatest Hockey Game," "Statis-Pro Football," "Fast Break," and a detailed summary of all the major baseball games. Plus "Extra Innings Newsletter" with "New Top 400," "Fourth Edition of El Now Ready," and "New Newsletter - New Title."

Vol. 1, No. 2 April 1975. Game Review: "Tabletop Football's Big Three - APBA, TSG, and T.H.E." "T.H.E. Newsletter," "TSG Newsletter," and "El Newsletter" with "1927 Yankees Set Pace for 40 Team Marathon" and "Resource Materials for Rating Past Players for El."

Vol. 1, No. 3 Summer 1975. "Table Baseball: 1975" (a survey of All of the table baseball games on the market); "Two New College Football Games," "Table Game Talk," "Review: The Lineup Guide," Possible Revision of **EXTRA INNINGS**, Defense in **TSG FOOTBALL**, TSG and T.H.E. season replays.

Vol. 1, No. 4 Fall 1975. "Sherco-II Baseball," "The Thoroughbred Racing Game," "21st Century Sports: Tennis, Boxing, and Track," "Aids for Extra Innings," "Ratings for Cadaco Baseball," "Solo Play in TSG Football," Book Review: "Guide to Baseball Literature," "Searching for Table Gamers," and "Revisions of Basketball Pro-Style."

Vol. 2, No. 1 Winter 1976. Ratings for all Major Sports Table Games; News from Around the Table Gaming World; Major League Rosters; Freebie game: College Basketball; Offense in TSG Pro Football; Future Additions to T.H.E. Pro Football; Short Replays for Extra Innings; Updated Ratings for BPs.

CALCU-BALL AND SIMCO BASEBALL

These two new entries in the baseball table game field are what I call "mini-games". I define a "mini-game" as one which uses generalized player ratings and which, due to its size, is highly portable. PROGRAM IV, PROTO-BASEBALL, and to a lesser extent, NEGAMCO, are examples of well-known mini-games. Neither CALCU-BALL nor SIMCO BASEBALL are designed to compete with the major table baseball games such as APBA, STRAT-O-MATIC, etc.

Let's now examine each of these two new games beginning with CALCU-BALL BASEBALL.

CALCU-BALL BASEBALL

This game is unique to table baseball because there is no activator. Since there are no dice, cards, or spinners to concern oneself with, CALCU-BALL can be easily played on a bus or train. This is ideal for the commuter. The game comes beautifully packaged in an 8½ by 11½ clear plastic envelope with a separate side pocket containing the instructions. The game includes six scoresheets (printed on both sides), player rating rosters for all 24 major league teams, a play results list, and game instructions.

Batters are rated for batting average and homeruns, and pitchers are rated for earned run average and strikeout and walk ratios. Each CALCU-BALL player has a distinctly different rating within his own team. Players who hit ten or more homers are considered power hitters and are given a special (HR) designation next to their batting rating.

To play the game, you record your line-up and ratings on the scoresheet. You are advised in the instructions to vary your lineups and batting orders, particularly when you are facing the same pitcher again. There is good reason for this, which I will explain later. To begin play, you subtract the batter's rating from the pitcher's rating and refer to the play results list. For example, Cecil Cooper (rated 78) is batting against Jim Palmer (rated 96). The difference of 18 is looked up on the play results list. Number 18 indicates a ground out to short-stop (6-3). Each batter is handled in the same manner. The results are varied because the pitcher's rating is reduced by one point for each inning (after the first inning) up to the fifth inning. From the sixth inning to the tenth inning the pitcher's rating is increased by one point each inning (from his rating in the previous inning). From the 11th inning on the pitcher's rating is reduced by one point for each inning pitched thereafter. Let's use Cooper and Palmer again for an example of how this works out. Cooper is facing Palmer again in the 4th inning. Palmer's rating is now 93 (96 minus 3 points) and Cooper's rating is still 78 for a difference of 15. 15 on the play results list indicates a fly out to centerfield. What Cooper does against Palmer is dependent upon which inning he faces him. If you have digested all this, you can readily see that if we use the same exact Redsox lineup and batting order against Palmer a second time, we will have the exact same results. That is why you must vary either the lineup or batting order against Palmer the next time around. There are certain play results numbers which indicate a homerun if a player has a (HR) rating, thus providing power hitters with more homers than the average ball player.

The 1977 edition of CALCU-BALL will be available in mid May and will include the new Toronto and Seattle franchises. I recommend that you give CALCU-BALL a try. I think you will find it unique and very enjoyable to play.

SIMCO BASEBALL

Many table gamers, at one time or another, have designed their own baseball game. Chances are that SIMCO BASEBALL resembles those games you have designed yourself. As a matter of fact, SIMCO BASEBALL is extremely similar to the GRAND SLAM game

developed by John Swistak.

The game is played with two dice (not included to keep the price down), four hard card stock charts, a player injury chart, and rosters of each of the major league teams (on hard card stock). Batters are rated for batting average, extra base hits, and running speed. Pitchers are rated on E.R.A. and strikeouts.

One begins play by recording lineups and ratings of the players on a scoresheet. You roll two dice, add them, and refer to the batting key chart. The batting key chart provides five basic play results: 1) error 2) walk 3) groundball 4) homerun or other hit 5) flyball or single. If a nine is rolled you refer to an extra base hit chart. For an example, let's take the Cincinnati Reds against the Phillies. Pete Rose (rated 6W) faces Steve Carlton (rated 0). The net rating is 6. The dice roll is 8, which is a fly ball to centerfield unless the batter's net rating is 5 or more. Against Carlton it is a single, but against reliever Hilgendorf (rated -2) it would have been a fly out to center. If the dice roll had been nine, an additional dice roll would be required. If the additional dice roll was a five, Rose would have gotten a double (by referring to the extra base chart using Rose's power rating of W). This is the general mode of play. The other charts include a sacrifice play, steal chart, ground ball result chart, sacrifice fly chart, hit and run play, and advancing on singles and doubles chart.

SIMCO BASEBALL'S plans for 1977 include making player rosters available for all past seasons since 1960 with first priority going to the 1961 season.

I would like to thank the makers of SIMCO BASEBALL and CALCU-BALL for providing games for review. For purchase or additional information you can contact these companies at these addresses: Simulation Company (SIMCO), 4218 Wayne Trace, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46806, and Mid-America Marketing (CALCU-BALL), 6318 South Avenue, Middleton, Wisconsin 53562.

GAME REVIEW/Steve Goldstein

ROGERS PRO BASKETBALL

Though certainly not without merit, ROGERS PRO BASKETBALL struck this author as a simple, rough-hewn basketball game.

The game requires no previous gaming expertise, and plays in a slow-paced ninety minutes. There are no strategic options, with rather slipshod provisions for rebounding, passing, defense, and game timing. All shooting is strictly by dice simulation of shot percentages, using the APBA-type two-dice system.

The product arrived so travel-beaten that I cannot be positive that all parts were intact (in fact, one team was missing). From what did arrive, I reviewed a game which enables the novice gamer to follow the "big names". Jabbar, White, Barry, and all the rest will score as they do on the courts. If however, you want to see Unseld or Thurmond block the lane, Steele and Frazier sparkle on "D", Porter and Archibald exhibit pinpoint passing, or Cowens and Hayes sweep the boards—you'd do best to look elsewhere.

All of this misses the point of the true objective of ROGERS BASKETBALL. The game is apparently designed for the younger table-gamer and priced at an affordable \$7.00. To those desiring more, the game is uninspired and mundane, but I cannot in good conscience dismiss this product at that. Though I look for a serious sport recreation, it must be stated that this is my personal criteria. Within the context of its objectives, ROGERS BASKETBALL is a success.

For information, Rogers Game Co. may be reached at P.O. Box 4361 in Santa Clara, CA 95054. RATING—C-.

NOTICE

If you order a game because of something you have read in TTS, please be sure to mention that fact in your order. This will help us to obtain more games for review in future issues.

Table Hockey cont'd.

(I still have the feeling with every game that there's something I'm forgetting to do or not doing right) this game goes into detail that I hadn't thought possible before. Ice hockey has a lot of meaningless (at least in the form of anything tangible) action that I thought table games would be unable to cope with. **Face-Off** copes very well.

Best of all, the numbers seem to come off very well. In the three test games, one was a high scoring battle, 7-4 in favor of the Bruins, the second was a Tony Esposito shutout for a 2-0 Hawk win and the other went to the Bruins, 4-2.

With some work on the rule book, excluding an additional rule change sheet, and better defining of what goes with the simple game and the advanced version, this game could get the "A" rating that I've still yet to give to a table top hockey game. The work has gone in and with minor corrections someone should profit from that work. Hockey table gamers will be first in line.

STATIS-PRO HOCKEY--(C) Like all Statis-Pro games that I've tried, this one leans toward easy play flow. Unlike other Statis-Pro games I've found, a new concept that adds even more to playability should have stayed on the drawing board a while longer. This game just does not have scoring power. A shutout is fine with me from time to time, but in this game each of my three test games had shutouts and only five goals total were scored during the nine periods of play.

Action was plenty, but too many shots were taken from too far out and the goalie actually had to save only a couple of shots a quarter. I would almost think that someone shorted me a half-deck of Fast Action Cards, but I used all they sent me. Boston again won two of the three contests, winning 1-0 and 2-0, before losing to Esposito again, 1-0.

Random line changes, shuffled into the Fast Action deck, adds a little risk and a little chance gambling to the game. I don't think it is much like real hockey in that respect but it adds a different dimension.

Penalties use up as little time as I've seen anywhere in gaming. Time is indeed a plus for this game. While Face-Off runs about 90 minutes for a game, Statis-Pro can be run off in a third that time.

Like Face-Off, the NHL is the only league included (Andy Brown where are you?). With the current problems of this hockey game, I think the lack of WHA personnel is the least of their present worries.

NEGAMCO--(C) A few years back I had some gaming experience with Negamco. I didn't get any further help from this time around so I can only tell you that while providing some excitement, much of the game time is bogged down with endless passing, intercepting, and penalties. Nothing has really been included in the game to make any of this very enjoyable.

Like most of the Negamco products, I'm not sure where the magical numbers come from, but I am sure that by one means or another the game has some statistical accuracy, if that rates on top of your list.

NHL STRATEGY--(C+) This game goes where no other hockey game has successfully gone before. It puts some visual elements into the movement of the puck on the ice and gives the coach the opportunity of how deep he tries to work the puck and how quick he lets fly with the shot. This is one of the only games on the market where it becomes easy to understand how a team can win by two goals or more, despite taking fewer shots. They simply successfully work for better shots.

Any game that gets into this phase of the game is bound to take up some extra time and this one does that, again rising to roughly the 90 minute area of Face-Off, depending on the players.

Players cards are colorful and much easier to separate than any of the rink competitors, but like most of the games only the NHL is included; maybe that is part of the deal in calling it NHL Strategy.

If you get stuck with someone who plays offense in this game as if it were chess you can be in for a long evening; this game can move a little more quickly than the above mentioned time otherwise.

I suppose another thing that this game has that others do not also appeals to me. That feature is defense. A table top coach can lessen the chance of success on a pass or shot by picking the area and time that the offense will make its move. That feature can alter a particular offensive strategy, forcing say a good skating team to stay outside some times and fire away without getting the penetration.

My three game series in this one went to Boston all three times, but different strategies showed a different effect. In the first game a free-wheeling shooting exhibition developed and the Bruins narrowly

escaped with a 6-5 win. Then the second contest Boston worked hard for its shots and won a 4-0 breather, with Chicago not getting nearly enough shots on goal because of the stick handling successes of the Bruins. The third contest mixed the two strategies and found Boston on top 5-4. In head to head play this game is probably the pick of the crop, but for solitaire or those with other things to do during an afternoon, it would be best look elsewhere.

POWER PLAY--(B+) This game combines some of the things I like best about all the other games and with some slight modifications can compete with the best that the hockey table game market has to offer.

Play Action Cards are used similar to those used by Statis-Pro. That part I like, but like another Gamecraft-produced game, **REAL/LIFE BASKETBALL**, the cards need more variety. I just don't like the idea that each player will get an almost identical number of shots per period. The hockey cards suffer less from that problem than do the basketball cards because of certain conditions for shots on the hockey cards and because of the substitutions that are made more freely in hockey.

Like most of the Gamecraft line, not a lot of money was spent on frills, but rather the price was kept in line by cutting corners here and there. Those cuts make this the best buy on the market, but it also makes for one of the bigger problems of the game. There aren't enough player cards printed on cardboard stock to run a team for even a complete game, at least the way I play it. The remainder of the cards are printed on paper. Additional cards are available to put these players on tougher stock, but I think those cards should be used for past teams and the WHA (yes Virginia, they do believe there is a WHA). Please send more players on heavy stock next time fellas.

A team defensive concept is much more to my liking than the complicated section defense employed by Face Off. That Face Off system by the way is not satisfactory at all on power plays. Visually the game has impact from the game board (another sheet of paper) which marks the areas of the rink so that a coach may see where his skaters are flinging the puck from.

Perhaps some additional Play Action Cards, that way they wouldn't all have to be used in a period, would make this game a top of the line effort. As it is now, statistical accuracy, flow of play and a playable time (45 minutes to an hour) keep this one near the top of the stack of games.

In my three test games Chicago won a big 5-1 matchup in the first encounter, with Esposito nearly getting his shutout. But the final two games belonged to Boston, 3-2 and 6-3.

PROTO HOCKEY-- Any hockey fan with just a passing interest in passing some free time playing a rink game (not the advanced table game), should try this entry from Carlson Games.

Game time here is down to a half hour and with practice it could be less. There is only a one-sheet set of instructions and three charts with which to play the game. It is a rate-them-yourself player setup. Teams are rated for penalty killing and given an offensive rating.

Individuals are rated on scoring ability, if one of the team's top four scorers, and on penalties assessed. There are no defensive ratings. Goalie's are rated into two categories by goals allowed per game.

It won't set any records for statistical accuracy, but for two bucks it's worth the price.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following companies furnished games for review in the preceding article: Statis-Pro Games, Box 484, Waterloo, IA 50704; Con-Pro, Inc. (FACE-OFF), Box 345, Bloomington, IL 61701; Tudor Games (NHL STRATEGY), retail stores; Carlson Games (PROTO HOCKEY), 941 Innes N.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49503; Gamecraft Co. (POWER PLAY), Box 1531, Vernon TX 76384.

The Mini Games cont'd

The game plays in under 30 minutes with smooth flowing simplicity. A roll of the dice (two dice, read 2-12) will tell you if the batter struck-out, walked, singled, grounded out (and to the position), flew out (to which position), got an extra base hit, or reached base on an error. If the player got an extra base hit, the dice are rolled again and the proper column of the "extra base result chart" is consulted for the type of hit. If a flyout occurs with a runner on third you may attempt to score. A groundball requires the roll of a single die; the proper base situation chart is then consulted for the final result.

There is a sacrifice chart, but no squeeze play; a steal chart which uses only one die; a hit-and-run play which is an alteration of normal play results; and a base advance chart for a runner taking an extra base on a hit—you use it every time as the runner either advances or holds, he is never out.

The player rosters are on heavy card stock (8 1/2 x 11) with six teams (one division) per sheet. The "Player Injury Chart" is an 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper, with the number of injurable players varying from 4 to 8. As examples: for Boston, Yastrzemski and Petrocelli cannot be injured; while Etchebarren of California will be the injured player 75% of the time.

Annual ratings will be available, either on cardstock or paper; and Simulations intends to produce ratings from 1960, all on cardstock, with injury charts, and with 1961 being first on the agenda.

REAL BASEBALL: David Urban 131 South 4th Ave., Manville, N.J. 08835, Cost: \$1.50, Player ratings: None supplied (you get the system) Contents: two 8 1/2 x 14 printed sheets (4pages), two pages give rating instructions, two pages give rules and charts.

To make your own player cards from scratch for a baseball game has probably appealed to many SOM and APBA (and recently Statis Pro) players. Now a game comes out that tells you how to rate the players and it only costs a buck and a half! How good can it be? Like any game, it depends on what you're looking for.

The instructions for the Running rating is rather vague; telling what statistics to use and giving two examples. The instructions for the Hit-and-Run and Sacrifice ratings simply state that you should use your own personal knowledge.

Blanks left on the player card are read directly from the out chart. In my own experience, not realizing this until the ratings were completed caused an excessive number of chances for errors by second-basemen; while there was no possibility of an error by the left-fielder. But this problem could be eliminated by putting more time into the ratings and keeping it in mind. By the way, I rated the 1975 Red Sox in just over one hour.

The batter card uses three dice totaled for 3-18, two of these numbers send you to the pitchers card which uses two dice totaled for 2-12.

Mr. Urban's method relates the 16 dice numbers on the batter card to 46 chances (the laws of probability say there are 216) so you tend to over-rate the batter in his good points, but with the elimination of hits to send the result to the pitcher card (also outs, in a theoretical 1:1 ratio) reduces the batter's inflated BA. Additionally, the batter's power will be at the extremes, where the difference between the 46 and 216 chances is lessened. So the accuracy of the game cannot be easily determined through applied probability theory, but only through an actual-season replay; which, unfortunately, time does not permit this writer. The creator related that he had played a few games with 1927 ratings with satisfactory results. Except for the previously mentioned problem with errors, I was satisfied with my 6 game series (although a Boston fan might want a rematch).

There are 4200 possible ways to make a 1927 Lou Gehrig card following the instructions in the game, the best of these would result in about a .391 BA (allowing .002 for sacrifice flies) and 51 homeruns, which is not bad, considering the time to find that particular version. So, I would say that the accuracy of the game is quite reasonable, if you want it to be.

As for the actual play of the game; the flow is basically offense oriented, as the pitcher only has an effect 25% of the time at the most—which might be enough to produce accurate statistics (SOM pitchers only affect the outcome about 25% of the time).

It looks good and plays well; but what you get out of this game will depend a great deal on what you put into it. It is not a rip-off.

UNNAMED GAME: Scott Chandler, N77702 Fox Pt. Dr. Spokane, WA 99208, Cost: \$2.00, Player ratings: none used, Contents: two 8 1/2 x 11 mimeographed sheets, result sheet and stolen base chart, hand drawn

playing field. Take a trip to your local library, pick out the **2nd Fireside Book of Baseball**, turn to the article titled "Dice Baseball", copy this three paged article. You save at least a \$1.25 and have a similar and, in my opinion, better game.

PLAYING CARD BASEBALL: Bell Productions, 36 Miller Heights Rd, Middletown, NY 10940, Cost: \$3.00, Player ratings: none used, Contents: (in a plastic report cover), two pages of rules, one page—"Baseball Scoreboard", 16 pages base situation result charts (2 of each).

A double deck of ordinary playing cards is the activator. The suit of the first card determines the column (pitch); while the suit and rank of the second determines the specific result in that column. When playing against an opponent, the defensive team will have one card of each suit, while the offense starts each inning with 9 cards. The defensive team will retain their 4 cards (as these equate to the chosen pitch), while the offense uses up their nine (you're entitled to draw nine new cards if you actually use up the 9 you start the inning with).

"Baseball Scoreboard" plays by referencing two cards in the same manner as the regular game, but gives inning by inning scoring results. "Baseball Scoreboard" makes it different. In other games of this variety if you wish to play a fantasy league, you have to play all the teams in your league for results. Here you only have to play one team through the season; while obtaining scores only for all the other teams. A forty game season can be completed in about 24 hours of earnest playing and statistical accumulation.

"Playing Card Baseball" plays well with realistic results. The game should average a BA of about .250, so a .400 hitter would be rare, but within the realm of probability (about as often as in the 100 year history of baseball). Most baseball plays are covered, except for the assignment of errors—which can easily be accomplished by setting up your own probability chart using dice or playing cards—or just borrow the one from Extra Innings.

There is a lack of strategy (not necessarily a fault to everyone, as strategy moves tend to slow the game and disrupt the pace,) and the minor lackings of error designation and any player differentiation (I don't like to see my teams best hitter on the mound, or my shortstop leading the league in homeruns).

Football, basketball, and hockey are also available along the same lines; and a summer olympics game is in the works.

SNAP BASEBALL: Tink Games of Michigan, Inc., Dansville, Mich., 48819, Cost: \$3.50, Player ratings: none used, Contents: 36x36 inch green felt playing field, 1 1/2" dia. plastic disc used as "ball", 1 1/2" dia. plastic disc used as "bat" and "umpire", 9x9 inch cardboard for batting base, 4 page rule book.

Snap baseball combines the skill of tiddly-winks with the events of baseball.

The playing field is a facsimile of a ball park with batters boxes, foul areas, etc. Infield areas are divided amongst the fielders for groundballs and hits between the fielders. There's even an area in front of the plate designated as the "bunt area", which uses the umpire to determine if the batter is safe or out. Just behind the infield are areas representing pop flies. In the outfield large areas represent flyouts, with smaller areas to represent hits (located in reasonable areas). The homerun area is a rim around the outfield. The undefined areas of the playing field represent balls. If the ball lands off the field or across a line, it's a strike and foul balls are foul balls.

The umpire serves various purposes. It is used to determine safe or out calls on stolen base attempts, bunts, double play attempts, and taking the extra base on a hit (giving all of these a 50/50 chance).

As in tiddly winks the larger disc is forced down on the smaller one causing it to flip onto the playing field. The results are more realistic than any pinball machine I've ever seen, I had scores of 5-1, 4-3, and 2-0 without a smattering of the skill which would obviously be a great asset to run scoring. The only defensive choice is whether or not to try for the double play, everything else is offense. You might want to ponder the different effects of different bats and/or balls on the outcome of the game.

With the reference to and illustrations of using baseball player cards as part of the game, it seems to be aimed at the pre-teener and for him (or her) it would be an excellent rainy day pastime, allowing a game of baseball without chasing after misjudged flies. Even the right-fielder who bats tenth can do well in this game.

PROGRAM IV: Harris Publications, Box 414, Collinsville, IL 62234,

Cost: \$2.00.

Program IV is one of the "rate-them-yourself" games and requires a minimum of statistics to accomplish this feat. The game is still in its formative stages, so improvement can be expected. Only the most infrequent of real-life plays are not reproduced here.

Batters are rated for average, homeruns, and stolen bases. Pitchers are rated for era (hence the IV) and a large number of walks or strikeouts. Although annual ratings are not available, they do offer rosters for 16 "all time all star" teams are in the offing.

The game plays in 20 to 35 minutes— for rapid enjoyment at low cost, this is it.

A single folded sheet of heavy paper is the entirety of Program IV— just basics, no dice or cards. A basic game which you can expand almost endlessly or accept as is.

Roll two dice (read 11 to 66) to determine if you consult hit or out chart. Roll again. If hit chart, read dice 11 to 66 to check for homerun. If no homerun, add dice and check proper base situation for result. If out, add dice and check proper for result. You call the steal; and there is a sacrifice chart.

PROTO-BALL: Carlson Games, 941 Innes N.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49501, Cost: \$3.60.

Proto-Ball is not as accurately detailed as most games— it's not meant to be. It's more a simulation than a re-creation. This game is probably the closest to J. Henry Waugh's "U.B.A." on the market. In fact, the instructions tell you how to start your own mythical league.

Batters are rated for average, homeruns, speed (stolen bases), fielding, and injury. Pitchers are rated for ERA, endurance, and either many walks, many strikeouts, or neither. The game comes with no rated players, but instructions are included to rate them yourself— it looks like Extra Innings started something!

The game is simple to play, requiring the 48- card deck and a single die (not included) for some occurrences. Adding more dice rolls might increase the accuracy, but would definitely ruin the simplicity. It's actually a lot of fun to play! Increasing the size of the deck to eliminate the constant shuffling should speed the game beyond its present thirty to thirty-five minutes. The sacrifice is a generalized play with results occurring in a corner of each card.

Of the deck of 48 cards, 19 require adding the batter rating to the die and subtracting the pitcher rating to determine the result. Two require crossing the batter's homerun rating with the die for the result.

My own personal ranking of these games is:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--|
| 1 | Program IV | covers most aspects well |
| 2t | Real Baseball | a strong base to build from |
| | Snap Baseball | a fun game to play |
| 4 | Simco Baseball | lacks a few items from being excellent |
| 5 | Proto-Ball | all rating aspects are in a 1 to 6 range |
| 6 | Playing Card Baseball | it fits here, all alone |
| 7 | Calcu-Ball | a long way to go, but a start |
| 8 | Unnamed Game | really little imagination |

From 1 to 5 is not a long jump, and 6 is a reasonable distance from 5, but well ahead of 7 and 8.

Vol. 2, No. 2 Spring 1976. Seventeen Game Survey "Table Basketball 1976!", Game Discussions: "Strat-o-matic Baseball," "Statis-Pro Baseball," "APBA Master Game." Plus "Replays: The Long and Short of It," and Freebie Game: "Grand Slam!" and usual newsletters.

Vol. 2, No. 3 Summer 1976. Game Design — "Theories of Table Top Player Ratings," "Fast Action Cards for Baseball Games," "Calculation of Starting and Relief ERA's," Game Reviews: "Ball Park Baseball," "Statis Pro College Football," short survey of baseball games, plus others.

Vol. 2, No. 4 Fall 1976. Available first week of November. Planned as of Sept. 76: Comprehensive Survey of All Table Football Games, reviews of Instant Action Baseball, Batter Up, Ball Park, Rogers Basketball; discussion articles on BLM Basketball and Teams of the Past for APBA and T.H.E. Football; plus article on keeping stats for replays; plus much more — tips and hints, newsletters, and even more.

COMMENTARY/Bill Rehrig

HOW'S YOUR "CONTROL" RATING??

There are many table-top sports games, covering every sport, with many individual differences, on the market today. One thing these all have in common is that they are designed to re-create, or create something that has happened, or could happen in real life. Unlike MONOPOLY, chess, checkers, or pinocle, these sports games do not focus attention directly on the player of the game, but rather on the results obtained in the playing of the game. A MONOPOLY player wins his games and says to himself: "I WON!", but the Extra Innings player says, "The Indians WON!"

The big difference, therefore, between these sports games, and other games is that they create a fantasy world of statistics and results which have many dimensions and facets to them. Any season, whether a replay, or a fictitious one, affords its player with an unlimited number of opportunities to control fate, as it were. As a result, table-top sports games are a fantastic way for a player to step back from his real world of tension, problems, loneliness, and fatigue, to temporarily exist in a situation where he is complete master. This is a much needed facet of anyone's life. Some of us choose to escape the hum-drum of everyday life through alcohol, drugs, club memberships, parties, hobbies, etc. So, the replaying of the 1966 season is not really some kind of weird behavior pattern; but it is rather your individual creative way of recharging your batteries for the next day's responsibilities.

There are, however, some very real problems which the table-gamer must face. As we saw above, these games allow us to escape into a world of fantasy. That's neat, but it becomes very UNneat when we allow this fantasy sports world to dominate our life-style. Robert Schmierer, in his book "40 Years of APBA" chronicles that business deals have been swung, marriages broken up, jobs lost and won, and lives literally ruined through a person's devotion to APBA. These are possibilities which are not solely available to APBA devotees. All of us must deal with these problems.

Moderation is the handiest yardstick by which you can judge yourself in regards to the time you spend at your hobby. If you find that you are taking off work, or missing a day of school to play that big series, you may be in trouble. If you find that you stay home to play your game, rather than going out socially with friends, you may be in trouble. If you find yourself worrying and thinking about your replay, rather than your realistic plans and problems, you may be in trouble.

Table top sports games can eventually dominate your life, if you let them. And when this happens, you are hooked just like your normal alcoholic, chain smoker, or jet setter. Fortunately, it is a whole lot easier to cure this problem than the chain smokers: simply put the game in the closet and don't allow yourself to use it until you can approach it sparingly, in terms of time.

Unfortunately, one more problem with the over-use of games exists: Usually, if you do ANYTHING to excess, this is a symptom of a much larger and more complex problem. This larger problem you have may only be cured after seeking the help of a professional counselor.

So, in summary, table-top sports games are fantastic hobbies, when approached in a mature and reasonable way. If, however, these games and your projects with them are dominating your waking hours, you'd better sit back and do some deep thinking about the way things are going for you, because it may be time for you to re-evaluate your goals and responsibilities.

The only way we can enjoy table-top sports games in a constructive way is to tightly maintain control over their use. When they control us, WE GOT PROBLEMS!

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THE TEN BEST GAMES IN THE/MY WORLD

COMMENTARY/Julian E. Compton

For some time I have been wanting to go beyond the typical reviews of individual games or the more comprehensive surveys of all games in an area and step up to the truly great games. There are a lot of things rattling around in my head which prompt this: the inflated sales of lesser games which are highly advertised, the comparative obscurity of some of the best games available, the advances that have been made in the analysis of sports statistics and in game methods by some creative game theorists, the reputation of various game companies which are hidden from prospective buyers, and the future of the sports game industry as I envision it.

In other words, a game is not just a game. It is a combination of a creator, a company, advertising, economics and a particular cultural milieu. If it is a sports game it participates in that area also. Ultimately a game must be judged in an historical perspective as if it were a work of art-- which the best games are. A game should be judged against some ideal model. The casual layman may say, "Go easy on the creator; he is doing his best." But that fallacy implies that games don't matter even though all of the rest of life matters. And, if I'm shelling out ten dollars or more, games do matter.

Even the most successful sports games have only been around about twenty-five years or so, but they're often defended as if they are creations greater than chess. I'm just wondering how things will be twenty-five years from now when we all have computer terminals in our homes and the primary activity will be strategy and tactics-- all the other problems having been solved. Which games will endure for a measly twenty-five more years? When game players want to play the '27 Yankees, the '62 Packers, the '72 Lakers, or Jack Dempsey, what games will they be using?

I'm trying to determine what games will be good in the future. I'm not concerned with those games which will not or should not endure. If a game is going to last, it will have to meet some fairly severe criteria.

Those of you who have read my "All Games Rating System," (Vol. 2, No. 1, Winter, 1976, Table Top Sports) know that I divide games into three levels: Level 1- Playability Games, Level 2- Simulation games, Level 3- Normalization Games. For purposes of this discussion, I am using the criteria set up for Normalization Games and I am applying them only to sports games for they are my major interest. (For those interested in Level 1 Games, my top-rated ones based on playability (i.e., having (1) a steady flow, and (2) a suitable unified method) are Krypto and Mora-- At; MasterMind, Triple Junction (Nine Men Morris), Cubic, Basket, Poker, Cube word games, Checkers, Craps-- all A.

My top-rated Level 2 Sports Games are Strat-O-Matic Baseball, Replay and Statis-Pro Baseball, THE Football, Statis-Pro and Fast Break Basketball, Data Boxing, Track Meet, APBA Baseball and Real Life Basketball, Level 2 Games are rated without regard for normalization procedures on playability (50%), realism and accuracy (25%) and strategy/tactics (25%).

However, I am primarily interested in Level 3 Sports Games, for they are the ones I believe I will be playing in the future. If they are not the ten best games in the world, they are at least the ten best in my world. As of right now, they are the games I think I will be playing in the future. They are the games which are least likely to be superseded by future game developments. None of these games is perfect. A perfect game would receive A on each of the criteria and none of them is close to that. So there is still much room for improvement. Even as I was preparing this article Real Life Basketball made a quantum leap forward, as is indicated

in the discussion. After playing some 200 games over the past 30 years, these are the ten games which impress me as the best bets for the/my future.

1 Real/Life Basketball (formerly Basketball Pro-Style) Gamecraft, \$9.95.

Hot off the presses is a revision of what was previously called Basketball Pro-Style. It has a new name because it now includes the 30 best college teams, as well as last year's ABA and NBA teams, the 12 best pro-teams of the past, and the 20 best pro players of all time-- all for one price. The game uses three decks of cards: two are tailored to the abilities of the two teams and a third is used by both teams to get the results. Although Statis-Pro plays somewhat faster, overall Real Life Baseball offers more quality features. The principal strength of this game is that the edition which has just been produced offers the most advanced normalization formulas of any game on the market. For the uninitiated, normalization is the process by which individuals and teams from different eras may be evaluated against a common standard and then rated in ways which will yield realistic results. RLB takes this one step further by normalizing college teams in relation to the pros. In the most daring advertising I have yet seen in sports games, RLB claims, "You can play the Phoenix Suns against the '52 Lakers, the '76 Indiana University NCAA champs or against the New York Nets." If the game could not deliver on this claim, it would be a flagrant case of false advertising-- but it does deliver. When you buy the game you can learn how it is done, for they give you all the formulas and charts for doing it yourself. Such games which reveal their formulas are making a significant contribution to game theory and demonstrating that they're interested in more than just taking your money. The normalization procedures are not perfect, but the game will provide food for thought for any serious game player. Game creators Larry Davenport and Jerry Faulk have secured their place in the game world by producing the best table sports game on the market.

2 Data Boxing, Gamecraft, \$9.95.

Most of you know that this game is my creation, and if you're put off by my evaluating my own game, then simply skip over this. In evaluating normalization games Data Boxing, along with Track Meet must be viewed in slightly different context. These games are based on statistics which are not easily accessible. Since Data Boxing is based on ten years of detailed research in uncharted terrain, I doubt that any boxing game will ever be as accurate, for no one will find the research worth the effort. And since normalization games must be founded on near-total information, other games will only be approximations. Since Data Boxing formulas require information which is not available, nothing would be gained by publishing the formulas.

3 T.H.E. Pro Football, Gamecraft, \$10.95.

This game duplicates on an 11" x 18" team board every player and every play for each NFL team of the previous year. Even freak plays such as downfield laterals can occur if they did occur. The game has one flaw-- it takes twenty minutes set-up time to calculate the fifteen passing match-ups and give line hole running ratings for the two teams. (I plan to make a suggestion for simplifying this.) However, once this is done, you have before you the most satisfying game of strategy and tactics in the sports world. But, if you do not want to call pro offenses and defenses, this game is not for you. T.H.E. has rated only two teams before the '70's, but Steve Keplinger's ratings seem consistent with good normalizing procedures. I'm hoping a lot of great teams of the past will be issued in the future and the final step in gamesmanship would be to publish the game formulas with the game.

4 Track Meet (formerly Decathlon) Sports Illustrated.

This game has seven of the great decathlon stars from Jim Thorpe through Bob Mathias, Rafer Johnson and Bill Toomey participating in the ten events of the decathlon. The participants are normalized by events against the record (I assume) for that event during their time of activity. So, as you play to find who was the greatest athlete of all time, Jim Thorpe, who competed in 1912, usually comes out the best. I think most researchers would agree. The game is an ed-

ucation in how the decathlon is scored. I would urge that game designer David Neft (according to Jack Kavanagh), increase the participants starting with Bruce Jenner and Nikolay Avilov and reveal the game formulâs. It is a diamond in the rough among Sports Illustrated's games.

5 Strat-O-Matic Baseball, \$13.50.

Whatever one says about this game, both sides will shoot at him, for some love it and some can't stand it. As I mentioned earlier S-O-M edges out several baseball games as the best level two sports game. I regard Harold Richman's introduction of the left-right ratings as a superior feature in table baseball which shows up lesser attempts. However, this feature is only available for the last few years. S-O-M offers 42 teams of the past which ring the cash registers for \$19.50. However, the roster sheet states: "The above teams have been computed to perform realistically and accurately against teams of their own league and period." This means they can't even play the other league for the same year and perform realistically. That amounts to a cop-out and a normalization failure for which I grade it as low as I go on normalization-- a C. In response to a question about the above statement, the editors of Strat-O-Matic Review recently replied, "...is there really any other accurate way of doing it?" Good grief! Will somebody please inform the Newells of the existence of Extra Innings. S-O-M results come from either the batter's or pitcher's card-- a method which is not as accurate as when the two are mixed. But the game is accurate enough on other ratings so that the method does not lower its accuracy rating much. It is the best of a mixed-bag of S-O-M games.

6 Extra Innings, Gamecraft, \$9.95.

The first big step from level one to level two of simulation sports games was made by APBA (in marketing, not creativity) in 1951. The second big step from level two to level three or normalization games began with Jack Kavanagh's Extra Innings in 1971. Kavanagh showed in his newsletter that he was not just a commercially-minded game producer but a serious student of the history of baseball. With the help of Jeff Sagarin and John Swistak he developed a system of formulas which would do justice to the whole history of the sport rather than merely to reproduce one season's results. Further, he dared to tell his customers how he did his ratings and how they could do them. He became the father of normalization and the whole sports game world is in his debt. Even if you don't play the game you should have it around just to make you think correctly.

I do not find that EI plays as quickly as several other games, due primarily to the two dice rolls per batter. I would like to see someone continue Kavanagh's method of mixing the batter and pitcher ratings, but to combine the two rolls into one, and use icosahedrons (20-sided dice) in a 1 to 100 or 1 to 1000 framework which would allow for easier adding and subtracting of the ratings. It would be a more playable application of the master's principles.

6 Statis-Pro Basketball, \$11.00

A few years ago in the Scoreboard game paper (now defunct) I suggested that oldtime flip cards would probably be the best method for basketball and hockey games. James Barnes and Statis-Pro brought back the method in basketball games, and although FastBreak and Real/Life Basketball have followed suit, S-P still has a slight edge in playability. However, S-P has no ratings for shot frequency or average time played, and its forced rest procedure, while moving the game quickly is totally unrealistic. When I play S-P it is in a version that I have completely overhauled. S-P has produced 5 total seasons from the past, but its lack of normalization procedures makes the '52 Lakers at least 20 points a game better than in Real/Life Basketball.

6 APBA American Saddle Horse Racing, \$12.95.

With the exception of this game and their golf game, APBA is a game company which has been surpassed by modern developments in game theory. Their baseball game is a top-seller, but horse racing is Richard Seitz's best game. The idea of playing with the best always thrills me, and here that means Man O' War, Citation, Native Dancer, and Secretariat. The game drags a little but has interesting lane strategy and a remarkable timing system. The game suffers by omitting individual race tracks. But its chief weakness is its lack of particularity in ratings for the best horses. On a fast track, at a mile and one-quarter and up, there are fourteen all-time great longdistance horses with virtually no difference in their ratings. I can conceive of this being superceded in the future by one improving on its weaknesses-- but it will require a monumental effort.

9 APBA Golf, \$8.25.

I don't play this game much, but when I do I find it very satisfying. The

basic game has eighteen assorted holes from various courses. The Masters and Merion courses and many current and past greats are available. The detail of big hitters and careful putters is not likely to be matched, but a quicker game is a possibility. With this game, Seitz becomes the only game creator to put two games in the top ten.

9 Goal College Football, Gamecraft, \$5.95.

Designed by David Steele, this is the only playable college football game which includes detailed ratings of all individual player performances. Since it includes only three past teams (USC '72, Notre Dame '73, Texas '68), its normalization procedures are not clearly established. With the rating of about 40 great teams from the past, this game could eliminate all the competition in its area.

Near Misses: Significant omissions in this list are Jim Mickey's Fast Break, a quality basketball game without normalization formulas; a superior hockey game (I regard the slow-moving Face-Off and Richard Dean's Power-Play which gives the buyers its formulas as the best.) and games which cover the all-time best teams in college football and basketball. Game creators get busy! Although Don Henricksen and Big League Game Company did not make this list they are one of the most open-minded and fan-centered companies in the business and continue to play a role in developing sports games.

Afterword

In selecting the top ten sports games I have in no way intended to put down hundreds of other games which give many game players a great amount of pleasure. I have simply chosen the games which seem to show the most promise for the future and which have made the most significant contributions to the world of sports games as it exists today. I did not sit down and list my ten favorite games. Rather, I tried to judge about one hundred of the best games, as objectively as possible, according to the criteria set up in my All Games Rating System. After the ratings were completed for each characteristic, I merely totalled the results, giving 12 for A+, 11 for A, 10 for A-, down to 1 for D-. And then, I worked out the appropriate totals. (See the rating chart.)

One conclusion which should emerge from this evaluation is that no single game creator or game company has a monopoly on the best games. Six different companies are represented and only one game creator has more than one game in the top ten. Gamecraft does have five games in the group, but they were done independently and are together primarily for marketing reasons. It appears that the best games come from independent game creators who master one sport and discover a suitable method for reproducing it. Game companies such as APBA, Strat-O-Matic, and Statis-Pro, which often tie themselves to one methodology, cannot be expected to keep pace with the more independent game theorists. May we have more of them! It can only improve the world of games.

The Top Ten Games

	Play (33%)	R&A (16%)	S/T (16%)	Norm. (33%)	Total
1 Real-Life Basketball	B+	A-	B	A	A-
2 Data Boxing	B	A	A-	B+	B+
3 T.H.E. Pro Football	B	A	A	B	B+
4 Track Meet	A	B	B-	B	B+
5 Strat-O-Matic Baseball	A-	A-	A-	C	B+
6 Extra Innings Baseball	C+	A-	B	A-	B
6 Statis-Pro Basketball	A	B	B	C+	B
6 APBA Horse Racing	B-	B+	A	B	B
9 APBA Golf	B	A	C	B	B
9 Goal College Football	B	A	B	B-	B

Games are graded on playability, realism and accuracy, strategy/tactics and normalization. Letter grades are converted to numbers, giving A+ 12, A 11, A- 10 down to D- 1, F 0 and totaled by the stated percentages.

1976 MAJOR LEAGUE ROSTERS AND GRAND SLAM RATINGS

These are the Major League rosters for 1976. All fielders are listed who played 25 or more games. All pitchers are listed who pitched 25 or more innings. Players that played for more than one team are listed with each team that they met the minimum requirements for as just stated. Also included are ratings for GRAND SLAM as published in Spring, 1976 TTS. For play, you will need that issue, of course. If you do not already own it, it's available for a buck.

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Baltimore

Singleton 9c1
Jackson 9g3
Belanger 8a3
Grich 8c2
L. May 8f1
Brumbry 7c3
Crowley 7a0
De Cinces 7d1
Harper 7b2
Muser 6a1
Mora 6e1
Robinson 5b1
Duncan 5b0
Blair 5a2
Dempsey 5a0
Hendricks 3c0
Nordbrook 6a1

Holdsworth 2-3
J. Martinez 3-2
Palmer 3-8
D. Martinez 3-7
Garland 3-7
Miller 3-2
R. May 5-7
Grimsley 5-5
Flanagan 5-5
Pagan 7-3
Cuellar 6-5
Alexander 4-6
Holtzman 3-8

Boston

Lynn 11b2
Burlison 9b2
Miller 9a2
Rice 9e2
Cooper 9d1
Dillard 9a2
Heise 8a0
Yastrzemski 8e1
Fisk 8e1
Doyle 7a1
Montgomery 7e1
Evans 7e1
Hobson 7e1
Petrocelli 6b0
Darwin 4f1
Griffin 4a0

Willoughby 3-2
Tiant 4-8
Cleveland 4-5
Jenkins 4-7

Jones 4-5

Wise 4-7
Kreuger 5-4
Murphy 4-3
House 5-2
Pole 5-4
Lee 6-4

California

Guerrero 9a0
Bonds 8d3
Collins 8b3
Remy 8a3
Solaita 8f1
Bochte 8a1
Humphrey 7a0
Jackson 6c1
Etchebarren 6a0
Chalk 6a0
Briggs 6a1
Jones 5f1
Melton 5c1
Torres 5d1
Rameriz 5a1
Stanton 5b1
Hermann 4g0
Davis 8b0
Garrett 2a0
LaHoud 4a0

Tanana 3-9
Hartzell 3-5
Ross 4-7
Scott 4-2
Monge 4-4
Ryan 4-8

Verhdeven 4-2
Drago 5-2
Kirkwood 6-6
Hassler 6-4

Chicago

L. Johnson 11b1
Garr 10b2
Orta 9c3
Stein 8a1
Downing 8a1
Kelly 8b2
Spencer 7d1
Brohamer 7c1
Bannister 7a2
Bell 7c1
Essian 7a1
Lemon 7a2
Dent 7a1
Hairston 6a1

Bradford 6d1
Coggins 3a1

Wood 2-9
Carroll 3-3
Brett 4-8
Hamilton 4-2
Gossage 5-8
Barrios 5-5
Forster 5-4
Vukovich 6-4
B. Johnson 6-7
Knapp 6-5
Krael 6-6
Odom 7-4
Jefferson 9-4

Cleveland

Carty 10c0
Fosse 10a0
Manning 10a2
Bell 9a1
Blanks 9b1
Pruitt 8a1
Hendrick 8f1
Kuiper 8a2
Smith 8b1
Gonzalez 7a1
Ashby 7b0
Spikes 7a1
Robinson 6f0
Powell 6e0
Duffy 5a2
Howard 5a0
Lowenstein 5b2

LaRoche 2-2
Thomas 2-3
Kern 3-3
Bibby 4-5
Eckersley 4-6
Dobson 4-7
Buskey 4-3
Waits 5-5
Brown 5-6
Hood 6-3
Peterson 6-6

Detroit

LeFlore 11a4
Staub 10c1
Oglivie 9f2
Freehan 8c0
Johnson 8b2
Kimm 8a1
Horton 8e0

Wagner 8a1
Stanley 8c1
Meyer 7a2
Rodriguez 7c1
Veryzer 7a1
Wockenfuss 6c0
Sorivener 6a1
Thompson 6f0
Garcia 5b1
Manuel 3a1
Sutherland 5a0

Fidrych 3-9
Hiller 3-3
Ruhle 5-7
Roberts 5-7
Laxton 5-4
Crawford 5-4
Bare 6-5
Grilli 6-2
Coleman 6-6
Lemanczyck 6-5
MacCormack 7-4

Kansas City

Brett 12a3
McRae 12b3
Poquette 10a1
Wathan 9a0
Otis 9d3
Cowens 8a3
Solaita 7a0
Stinson 8a1
Wohlford 7a3
Quirk 7a0
Rojas 7a1
Patek 7a4
D. Nelson 7a2
Mayberry 6c1
White 6a2
Martinez 6c0
Jones 6c0

Littell 2-2
Gura 2-4
Mingori 3-2
Pattin 3-4
Fitzmorris 4-7
Bird 4-6
Leonard 4-8
Hassler 3-6
Splittorff 5-7
Busby 5-6
Hall 5-1

Milwaukee

Lezcano 9b2
D. Thomas 9e1
Johnson 9a1
Scott 9d0
Joshua 8b1
Money 8d1
Yount 7a2
Hegan 7c0

Gantner 7a0
Sharp 7a0
Carbo 7c1
Aaron 6f0
Heidemann 6b0
Sutherland 6a0
Porter 5b1
G. Thomas 5f1
Moore 5b1
Darwin 7b0
Garcia 6b1

Frisella 3-2
Travers 3-8
Beare 4-7
Augustine 4-5
Slaton 4-8
Castro 4-2
Rodriguez 4-4
Colborn 4-8
Sadecki 5-2
Broberg 6-5

Minnesota

Carew 11b4
Bostock 11a2
Braun 9a2
Hisle 8c3
Randall 8a1
Ford 8e2
Brye 8a1
Wynegar 8c0
Kusick 8f1
Smalley 8a0
Cabbage 8a1
Terrell 7a2
Oliva 5a0
McKay 5a0
Gomez 5a0
Thompson 7a1

Burgmeier 3-3
Johnson 3-3
Campbell 4-3
Goltz 4-7
Redfern 4-6
Albury 4-3
Singer 5-7

Luebber 5-4
Hughes 6-5
Bane 6-5
Decker 6-5
Blyleven 4-8

New York

Rivers 11b3
Munson 10c2
Chambliss 10c1
White 9c3
Piniella 9a1
Randolph 8a3
Velez 8c0
May 9a1
Nettles 8g1
Healy 8a1
Alomar 7a2
Stanley 7a1
Gamble 6g1
Mason 4a1
Hendricks 6g0

Lyle 2-2
Jackson 1-3
Tidrow 3-2
Figueroa 4-8
Ellis 4-7
Alexander 4-8
Hunter 4-9
Holtzman 5-8
T. Martinez 2-3
May 4-7

Oakland

North 9a4
Rudi 8c1
Garner 8b3
Washington 8a3
Campaneris 8a4
Tenace 7g1
Baylor 7d4
Bando 7g2
Haney 6a0
McMullen 6d1
Williams 5e1
Sandt 5a0
Newman 5a0
Hosley 3d0
Alexander 0a2
Lintz 0a3
Tovar 4a1

Blue 3-9
Torrez 3-7

Fingers 3-2
Lindblad 4-2
Bahnsen 4-5
Todd 5-2
Bosman 5-5
P. Mitchell 5-6
Norris 6-4
Abbott 6-4

Texas

Hargrove 9b1
Clines 9a2
Harrah 8d1
Beniquez 8a2
Grieve 8e1
Howell 7b1
Fahey 7b1
Moates 7a2
Burroughs 7e0
Fregosi 6b1
Sundberg 6a0
Randle 6a3
Thompson 6a1
Lahoud 6b1
Smalley 6a1

Terpko 3-2
Blyleven 3-9
Umbarger 4-7
Perry 4-8
Briles 4-7
Foucault 4-2
Boggs 4-7
Hargan 4-4
Bacsik 5-3
Singer 4-7
Hoerner 6-1
Barr 6-4

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Atlanta

Montanez 11b0
Gaston 10d1
Paciorek 9b1
Office 9a1
Lacy 9b1
Henderson 8d1
Chaney 7a1
Gilbreath 7a1
Royster 7a3
Pocoroba 7a1
Correll 6d0
May 6b1
Wynn 5f2
Belloir 5a0
Evans 4a1
Perez 7b0
Williams 6g0

Leon 3-2
Messersmith 4-8
Devine 4-2
Niekro 4-8
Torrealba 4-2
DalCanton 4-2
Marshall 4-2
Morton 5-6
Ruthven 5-7
Beard 5-2
LaCorte 6-6
Moret 6-3
Sosa 6-2

Chicago

Madlock 12c2
Cardenal 10b3
Morales 9d1
Monday 9g1
Sperring 8a0
Wallis 8b1
Rosello 7a0
Trillo 7a2
Buttner 7a0
Swisher 7b1
Kelleher 6a0
Tyrone 6c0
LaCock 6e1
Mitterwald 6c1
Summers 5d1
Adams 2a0
Thorton 5d1

Sutter 3-2
Knowles 3-2
Burris 4-7
R. Reuschel 4-7
Renko 5-6
Stone 5-5
Coleman 5-3
Bonham 5-7
P. Reuschel 5-2
Garman 6-2
Zamora 6-2

Cincinnati

Griffey 12a3

Rose 11b1
Morgan 11f4
Gerónimo 10a3
Foster 10f2
Bailey 10f0
Armbrister 10c2
Flynn 9a1
Concepcion 9b3
Perez 8e2
Driessen 7e3
Bench 7e2
Lum 6c0
Youngblood 5a1

Sarmiento 2-2
Eastwick 2-2
Zacary 3-6
Gullett 4-6
Norman 4-6
Borbon 4-2
Nolan 4-8
Billingham 5-6
Alcala 5-5
McEnaney 6-2
Darcy 7-4

Houston

Watson 11c1
Cruz 10a3
Cedeno 10d4
DaVanon 9a0
Roberts 9d1
Gross 9a1
Cabell 9a3
Boswell 8a1
Andrews 8a1
Milbourne 7a1
Johnson 6e0
Howard 6a1
Metzger 5a1
Herrmann 5b0
Jutze 3a0

Forsch 2-2
Richard 3-8
Lemongello 3-8
McLaughlin 3-5
Pentz 3-2
Larson 4-8
Siebert 4-2
Niekro 4-4
Sambito 4-3
Andujar 4-7
Dierker 4-7
Cosgrove 6-5
Rondon 7-3
Griffin 7-3

Los Angeles

Garvey 11b2
Buckner 10a3
Mota 9a0
Cey 9f0
Russell 9a2
Lacy 8a1
Smith 9f1
Ferguson 6e1

Baker 7b1
Lopes 7a4
Sizemore 7a1
Burke 7a1
Goodson 6d0
Yeager 6e1
Rodriguez 6a0
Cruz 4g0
Hale 3a2
Auerbach 2a0

Hough 2-2
Rau 3-8
Rhoden 4-7
Sutton 4-8
John 4-7
Hooton 4-7
Wall 4-2
Downing 5-3
Sosa 4-2
Marshall 5-3

Montreal

Morales 11c0
Valentine 9c2
Rivera 9a1
Foli 8b1
Jorgenson 8c1
Frias 7a1
White 7a2
Foote 7c1
Parrish 6c1
Garrett 7b1
Unser 6e1
Williams 7f0
Mackanin 6c1
Roenicke 6d0
Carter 6c0
Cromartie 5b1
Thornton 5g1
Dwyer 4a0
Lyttle 8b0
Mangual 8b3

Rogers 4-7
Murphy 4-2
Fryman 4-7
Granger 4-2
Stanhouse 5-6
Kerrigan 5-2
Dunning 5-3
Lang 5-3
Carrithers 5-5
Taylor 5-2
Scherman 6-2
Warthen 6-4
Kirby 7-4

New York

Torre 10b1
Kranepool 10c1
Boisclair 9a2
Millan 9a1
Grote 9b1
Milner 8e0
Stearns 8c1

Phillips 8b1
Kingman 7h1
Mangual 4b3
Harrelson 7a2
Hodges 6d1
Staiger 6a1
Vail 6a1
Brown 6a1
Garrett 6c2
Unser 6c1

Seaver 3-8
Lockwood 3-2
Koosman 3-8
Apodaca 3-3
Sanders 3-2
Matlack 3-8
Lolich 4-7
Swan 4-6
Espinosa 4-4

Philadelphia

Maddox 11a3
Johnstone 11a1
Luzinski 10e1
Harmon 10a1
Cash 9a2
McCarver 9c1
Boone 8a1
Allen 8f2
Schmidt 8g2
Tolan 8c2
Taylor 8a0
Brown 8c1
Oates 8a0
Bowa 7a3
Martin 7b1
Hutton 5a1

Twitchell 2-3
Reed 3-3
McGraw 3-2
Garber 3-2
Schueler 3-2
Lonborg 4-7
Carlton 4-8
Kaat 4-7
Underwood 4-5
Christenson 4-6

Pittsburgh

Oliver 11c1
Parker 11c3
Ott 10a0
Robinson 10f1
Sanguillen 9a1
Zisk 9e1
Helms 9b0
Moreno 8b3
Taveras 8a4
Stargell 8f1
Stennett 8a2
Hebner 7c1
Kirkpatrick 7a1
Dyer 6c0
Robertson 6c0
Mendoza 4a0

Tekulve 3-2
Kison 4-7
Candelaria 4-7
Demery 4-5
Rooker 4-7
Medich 4-7
Reuss 4-7
Moose 4-2
Giusti 5-2
Hernandez 4-2

St. Louis

McBride 12a2
Crawford 10c1
Brock 10a4
Anderson 10a1
Simmons 10a0
Templeton 10a2
Hernandez 9b1
Tyson 9b1
Fairly 8a0
Mumphrey 8a3
Kessinger 7a1
Cruz 6d1
Harris 6a1
Ferguson 5d1
Richard 4a1
Rudolph 3a0
Smith 6g1

Denny 3-7
Falcone 4-7
Hrabosky 4-2
Rasmussen 4-4
McGlothen 5-7
Forsch 5-6
Wallace 5-2
Curtis 5-4
Solomon 6-2
Grief 5-2

San Diego

Ivie 10b1
Grubb 9b1
Winfield 9c3
W. Davis 8a2
Turner 8f2
Fuentes 8a1
Rader 8c1
Hernandez 8a2
Kendall 7a1
Kubiak 7a0
Rettenmund 6b1
Locklear 6a0
Melendez 6a1
R. Davis 5a0
McCovey 5f0
Torres 5c1

Sawyer 3-7
Jones 3-8
Tomlin 3-2
Metzger 3-2
Foster 4-4
Strom 4-6
Freisleben 4-6
Griffin 3-7

Spillner 6-4
Folkers 6-2
Johnson 6-2
Reynolds 7-2

San Francisco

Herndon 9a2
Matthews 9d2
Reitz 8a1
Joshua 8a1
Rader 8a1
Thomasson 8c1
Murcer 8f2
Perez 8a1
Adams 7a1
Thomas 6a2
Speier 6a1
Clark 6c2
Arnold 6a0
LeMaster 5a1
Evans 6f2
Sadek 5a0
Hill 4e0
Ontiveros 4a0
Montanez 10a1

Moffitt 2-2
Lavelle 3-2
Montefusco 3-7
Barr 3-7
Williams 3-2
Knepper 4-7
Halicki 4-6
Dressler 5-5
Heaverlo 5-2
Minton 6-3
Caldwell 6-3
D'Acquisto 6-4

T.H.E. PRO FOOTBALL NEWSLETTER

Game Designer: *Steve Keplinger*

CONFUSION CORNER/Steve Keplinger

Dear Sir, I have recently purchased your two football game sets—T.H.E. and TSG. A friend of mine and I get together to play with the T.H.E. game. The only complaint I have with the game is that the defense is limited, particularly in respect to the RUN and PASS Columns.

The only way I was able to "burn" him was to stay with the 4-4 FS BLITZ, and BUMP and RUN.

I had to guess exactly what play he was calling and he usually came up with good yardage. An example, we were playing the '75 Raiders against the '75 Steelers. I was able to shut off his running game with 4-4, SHORT YARDAGE, GOAL LINE defenses. However, when he threw slant-ins, square outs to Branch, there was no stopping him unless I was in PASS PUNT.

Are there any more improvements to the defense chart? Edward Glynn, West Haven, CT.

Dear Ed: You questioned the play variability chart, and the defense's ability to stop the offense. Of course, when you are playing against a team that can both run and pass well, you must be able to anticipate your opponent's call to stop him. There are no defenses that stop everything for obvious reasons. Any call you make could be trouble if you are wrong. If you want to insure that you will not get "burned", call pass and run defenses and stay away from pass prevents and goal lines. Any time you call a defense like goal line, you are really taking a chance. As you mentioned there are certain matchups that force you to over commit yourself on defense to really stop your opponent. However, when this is true, that is what that team was faced with in the actual season. Therefore, we feel the defensive calls are correctly representing football.

Dear Mr. Keplinger, I recently received your football game and it looks very good. In an effort to speed play, I have found it necessary to construct 2 play boards for each team—1 for the running game and 1 for the passing game—with all the offensive and defensive ratings on them for quick and easy referral and/or substitutions and hope to try a game shortly when two teams are committed to my playboards.

I have many questions also, which are enumerated below:

- 1) What does "5,15,35," mean under yards penalized for pass interference in the penalty list?
- 2) Your instructions refer to red print for unusual play access. I have spotted none. What is the access to unusual plays in the 1975 game?
- 3) Do you really refer to both punter and punt returner (I.D.) charts off the same dice roll?
- 4) Are all the instructions included in my copy? There are paragraphs B,C, and D on page 2—but not A on page 1.
- 5) Why do time-outs take 10 seconds? Wouldn't it be more accurate to subtract 10 seconds (or more) from the person's play time.
- 6) Does one disregard injuries to a specialty team member who is also a starter on offense (e.g. Cullen Bryant-1975.)
- 7) What effects do the defensive calls have on option passes and end-arounds?
- 8) Can either running back go long on either side?
- 9) Why not be consistent and use 3 dice on Ball Aggression

Index chart—in fact, include two sets of 3 dice (different colors) since many plays require 2 dice rolls. A transparent dice shaker could be recommended to your purchasers. George K. Fitch, Palmdale, CA.

Dear George: Your first question concerned the 5, 15, 35 reading on a pass interference penalty. This means that the penalty is 5 yards on a quick or delay pass, 15 yards on a short pass, and 35 yards on a long pass.

The original instruction booklets refer to red print for unusual plays. This was how they were marked on the 1972 charts. Since then, unusual plays have been marked by () surrounding the number.

Kickoffs are the only play where you refer to the same dice roll for both the kickoff and the kickoff returner. Punts should have separate rolls for both the punt and punt returner.

Your instruction booklet is correct. Page two starts with "B". "A" section is the first paragraph on page one marked "Preparation Before Play".

Timeouts themselves do not take 10 seconds. Timeouts are used to save time after a play. In other words, if you run the ball it would normally take 40 seconds. However if you run and call a timeout after the play, it only takes 10 seconds.

As the instructions explain, (page 7), you should disregard injuries to specialty team members since their injuries are computed into their card.

The defensive call has the normal effect on an option pass as it would on any other play. The defensive call has no effect on an end around unless the player is keyed. In this case of course, the result is 0 yards.

Either running back can run a long pass pattern on either side of the field.

The ball aggression chart lends itself to a two dice roll due to the number of chances involved. We feel using six dice would be rather cumbersome. However, this is a possibility and extra dice are available.

TABLE TOP SPORTS

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T.H.E. PRO FOOTBALL PLAYING AIDS**TIMING**

1. All change of possession plays are 10 seconds (i.e.: fumbles lost, interceptions, and 4th down plays which fail).
2. During the last 2 minutes of a half, running plays may be timed at 30 seconds if the offensive coach chooses (i.e.: hurry-up).

SPECIAL EVENTS

1. If replaying a season, limit each player to one injury of a game or more. If the player receives a second major injury during the season, count it as rest of game.
2. If replaying a season, limit each "unusual play" to one occurrence during the year (except those events which obviously occur more than once such as quarterbacks fumbling while attempting to pass). If an "unusual play" occurs for the second time during the season, ignore the result and/or roll again.

SOLITAIRE LIMITS

1. No runner may carry the ball on more than two consecutive plays.
2. No receiver can be the designated target on successive plays.
3. No line hole can be run on successive plays (i.e.: off-tackle left).

SOLITAIRE DEFENSIVE CHARTS

The following charts were designed to allow the solitaire player

FIRST DOWN: 10-19 YARDS TO GO

	NORMAL	RUN	PASS	POSSIBLE DOUBLE TEAM
2	FS Blitz	FS Blitz	FS Blitz	FS Double Team
3	Short Yardage	LB Drop	Pass Prevent	
4	LB Drop	Zone	LB Drop	FS Double Team
5	Zone	Pass	Zone	
6	Pass	Pass	Pass	FS Double Team
7	Run*	Run*	Pass	
8	Pass	4-4	Run*	FS Double Team
9	Run*	Run*	Run*	
10	4-4	Short Yardage	Pass	FS Double Team
11	4-4	Bump and Run	4-4	
12	Bump and Run	Goal Line	Short Yardage	

FIRST DOWN: 9 OR LESS YARDS TO GO

	NORMAL	RUN	PASS	POSSIBLE DOUBLE TEAM
2	Short Yardage	Short Yardage	FS Blitz	FS Double Team
3	FS Blitz	Bump and Run	LB Drop	
4	Zone	Pass	Zone	FS Double Team
5	Pass	Pass	Pass	
6	Run*	Run*	Run*	FS Double Team
7	Run*	4-4	Run*	
8	4-4	Run*	Pass	FS Double Team
9	Pass	Pass	Zone	
10	Zone	Pass	LB Drop	FS Double Team
11	Pass Prevent	Bump and Run	Pass Prevent	
12	Short Yardage	Goal Line	4-4	

ANY DOWN: 20 OR MORE YARDS TO GO

	NORMAL	RUN	PASS	POSSIBLE DOUBLE TEAM
2	Pass	Pass	Pass	FS Double Team
3	LB Drop	LB Drop	LB Drop	
4	Pass	Pass	Zone	FS Double Team
5	Zone	Zone	Zone	
6	Pass Prevent	Pass Prevent	Pass Prevent	FS Double Team
7	OS Pass Blitz	OS Pass Blitz	OS Pass Blitz	
8	Pass Prevent	Pass Prevent	Pass Prevent	FS Double Team
9	Pass Prevent	Zone	Pass Prevent	
10	Zone	Pass	Zone	FS Double Team
11	Zone	Run*	Pass Prevent	
12	FS Blitz	FS Blitz	FS Blitz	

SECOND DOWN: 11-19 YARDS TO GO

	NORMAL	RUN	PASS	POSSIBLE DOUBLE TEAM
2	Short Yardage	LB Drop	Run*	FS Double Team
3	4-4	Zone	Run*	
4	Run*	Pass	Pass Prevent	FS Double Team
5	LB Drop	4-4	LB Drop	
6	Zone	Run*	Zone	FS Double Team
7	Pass	Pass	Pass	
8	Zone	Run*	Zone	FS Double Team
9	Pass Prevent	4-4	LB Drop	
10	Run*	Pass	Pass Prevent	FS Double Team
11	4-4	Zone	Run*	
12	Bump and Run	LB Drop	FS Blitz	

more variability in the defenses than the game's solitaire charts currently provide. To utilize them, take the following steps:

1. Decide which chart to use (i.e.: FIRST DOWN: 10-19 YARDS TO GO). You are not obligated to choose the chart corresponding to the actual down and yardage situation but generally should do so.
2. Decide the defensive emphasis (i.e.: NORMAL, RUN, PASS). Note that NORMAL corresponds very closely to the T.H.E. charts while RUN and PASS alter the normal defense in those directions.
3. Decide whether the free safety might double team a receiver. Also decide which receiver should be doubleteamed. (This option is intended for use primarily against those teams which have only one high rated receiver).
4. Roll 2 dice for the defense and read the result. For example, assume a first and ten situation with a NORMAL defense. A dice roll of 5 is a "zone", a dice roll of 10 is a "4-4", while a roll of 6 is a "pass" unless the defense has announced an intention to double team, in which case the "FS Double Team" is in effect. Of course, the double team could be either right or wrong, depending on the offensive play. Essentially, FS DOUBLE TEAM takes place only when two conditions are met: the defense must announce its intention to attempt to double-team a player and the dice roll must correspond to a FS DOUBLE TEAM number.
5. Although this process may seem cumbersome at first, try it for a few games and you will find that it adds variation to the defensive charts without adding playing time or changing the statistical results.

SECOND DOWN: 7-10 YARDS TO GO

	NORMAL	RUN	PASS	POSSIBLE DOUBLE TEAM
2	Run*	LB Drop	FS Blitz	FS Double Team
3	Run*	Zone	LB Drop	
4	4-4	4-4	Run*	FS Double Team
5	Zone	Run*	Zone	
6	Pass	Pass	Pass	FS Double Team
7	Run*	Pass	Pass	
8	Pass	Run*	Pass	FS Double Team
9	Zone	Run*	Run*	
10	4-4	Run*	Run*	FS Double Team
11	Run*	Short Yardage	Run*	
12	Short Yardage	Bump and Run	4-4	

SECOND DOWN: 6 OR LESS YARDS TO GO

	NORMAL	RUN	PASS	POSSIBLE DOUBLE TEAM
2	LB Drop	Zone	LB Drop	FS Double Team
3	Zone	Zone	Zone	
4	OS Run Blitz	OS Run Blitz	OS Run Blitz	FS Double Team
5	4-4	Run*	Pass	
6	Short Yardage	4-4	Run*	FS Double Team
7	Pass	Pass	Run*	
8	Run*	4-4	Run*	FS Double Team
9	4-4	Run*	Pass	
10	OS Run Blitz	OS Run Blitz	OS Run Blitz	FS Double Team
11	Zone	Pass	Zone	
12	LB Drop	Bump and Run	LB Drop	

THIRD DOWN: 7-19 YARDS TO GO

	NORMAL	RUN	PASS	POSSIBLE DOUBLE TEAM
2	Run*	Run*	Run*	FS Double Team
3	Bump and Run	Zone	LB Drop	
4	Zone	Run*	Zone	FS Double Team
5	Pass	Pass	Pass	
6	Pass Prevent	Pass Prevent	Pass Prevent	FS Double Team
7	OS Pass Blitz	OS Pass Blitz	OS Pass Blitz	
8	Pass Prevent	Pass	Pass Prevent	FS Double Team
9	LB Drop	Run*	Zone	
10	Pass	Zone	LB Drop	FS Double Team
11	Pass	Bump and Run	Pass	
12	Run*	Run*	Run*	

THIRD DOWN: 4-6 YARDS TO GO

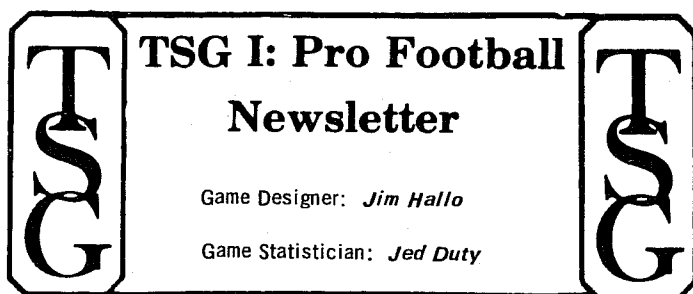
	NORMAL	RUN	PASS	POSSIBLE DOUBLE TEAM
2	Short Yardage	Short Yardage	Short Yardage	FS Double Team
3	Bump and Run	Bump and Run	Bump and Run	
4	Zone	Pass	Pass	FS Double Team
5	Pass	Run*	Zone	
6	Pass	Pass	Pass	FS Double Team
7	Bump and Run	Bump and Run	Bump and Run	
8	Run*	Run*	Run*	FS Double Team
9	Pass	Run*	Zone	
10	Run*	Zone	Pass	FS Double Team
11	4-4	4-4	4-4	
12	FS Blitz	FS Blitz	FS Blitz	

THIRD DOWN: 1-3 YARDS TO GO

2	OS Run Blitz	OS Run Blitz	OS Run Blitz	
3	Pass	Pass	Pass	FS Double Team
4	Goal Line	Run*	Goal Line	
5	Run*	Goal Line	Pass	
6	OS Run Blitz	OS Run Blitz	OS Run Blitz	
7	OS Pass Blitz	OS Pass Blitz	OS Pass Blitz	
8	Short Yardage	Short Yardage	Short Yardage	
9	Short Yardage	Short Yardage	Short Yardage	
10	Short Yardage	Short Yardage	Short Yardage	
11	Goal Line	Goal Line	Goal Line	
12	Bump and Run	Bump and Run	Bump and Run	

INSIDE THE TEN

2	Pass	Run*	Run*	
3	Short Yardage	Short Yardage	Zone	
4	4-4	4-4	4-4	
5	Pass	Pass	Pass	
6	Short Yardage	Short Yardage	Run*	
7	Goal Line	Goal Line	Goal Line	
8	Run*	Run*	Run*	
9	Pass	Pass	Pass	FS Double Team
10	Run*	4-4	Pass	
11	Short Yardage	Short Yardage	Zone	
12	Pass	Run*	Run*	



GUEST COLUMN/John T. Chandler

One of the major discussions among football table game aficionados concerns which game most accurately reflects pro-football as it really is. None is perfect, but many of us believe TSG:I comes closest. I shall demonstrate.

I played 22 games matching selected NFL teams using the 1975 edition (1974 season) of TSG. I projected the results of the 22 games into a composite result representing a 14 game season for a single team. These were matched up against the average results for the actual NFL teams of 1974. Here are those comparative results:

PASSING STATISTICS

	ATT	COMP	PCT	TOTAL YARDS	YDS TT-LOST	NET YDS
TSG	387.8	200.2	.516	2399.6	29-260.4	2133.6
NFL	369.6	193.9	.525	2399.7	32-254.2	2145.4

	INT	TD	LG	PCT. INT	PCT. TD	GAIN/COMP	AVE GAIN	GAIN/PASS
21	14	t99	.054	.034	11.97	6.18	5.13	
19.2	14.5	t89	.052	.039	12.38	6.49	5.35	

RUSHING STATISTICS

	NO	YDS	AVE	LG	TD
TSG	456.4	1786.4	3.92	50	7.0
NFL	481.0	1866.2	3.91	75	14.0

First, lets check ball control plays. Rounding off, TSG gave 873 and the NFL had 883 ball control plays. (Passes + sacks (TT) + rushes). TSG gave .71 fewer BCPs than did the NFL.

What about TD's? Well, TSG comes up short. It produced 21 TD's while the NFL had 28.5. However, most of my games were played by teams whose strengths were relatively matched so that there were few offensive runaways. You will notice that the percent of TD's by passing were within .005.

TSG was only .009 low in completion percentage, and only .002 high in percent of interceptions. These are incredibly accurate statistical correlations.

TSG was only .41 yard low in gain per completion. Again, when you have relatively evenly matched teams, including most of the better defensive teams in the league, this result is to be expected. Coaching selections played a part here, but with such a large sample I do not believe it totally explains the slight deviation which, in my opinion, is really negligible.

Average gain and gain per pass were only .31 and .22 yards low. These, too, were probably the results of evenly matched teams, including many of the best defensive teams.

Curiously, TSG produced QB sacks in 7% of its pass plays while the NFL had sacks in 8% of its pass plays. This is explainable due to coaching patterns in the running game.

Most of my opponents tend to always want to stop the run cold. Thus they call an inordinate number of short yardage defenses. This does stop the run and almost eliminates it completely near the goal line. Hence running TD's are few. However, many short passes and circle passes are called in short yardage situations when the defense has called the short yardage defense. Without a pass rush you get fewer sacks. If this does not explain it then TSG may have miscalculated in the sack department. Still, it's very close.

Now, looking at the running comparisons you will note very little difference. Touchdowns were low for the reasons above stated. However, I fear that the inherent design of TSG makes it very difficult to run inside the 13 yard line causing many players to disdain the run. This may not be the case. Perhaps a coaching quirk of my own makes it appear so. In any case, the average per carry was 3.92 for TSG and 3.91 for the NFL, virtually no difference at all. The long run was probably shorter because the likes of O.J. Simpson did not appear often in my more or less random sample.

What is clear is that this game is very, very realistic. The 1976 edition is even better. Jerry Faulk tells me that certain components are being revised to make it even better than it is now. I personally would like to see receiver's cards which correlate with the QB card to give passing yardage distances. Putting the whole distance on the card of the receiver would not be realistic since the QB plays a part here too, especially in the medium to long distances.

I would like to see your game and season statistics. Especially enlightening are season statistics for one team. If many of you would play a season for your favorite team and send the statistics I am sure the analysis that could be made would help the designer make the game better.



NEWSLETTER

Game Designers: *Jerry Faulk*
Larry Davenport

FROM THE DOCTOR/Jerry Faulk

I've had some really interesting cases this quarter so without any beating around the bush let's get down to my prescriptions:

Sirs: On the Detroit Pistons according to the fatigue rule it is impossible to keep two forwards in the whole game. There are 3 forwards a 6 fatigue, a 4 fatigue, and a 3 fatigue. And since George Trapp can't play forward because he has to play center, the fatigues are 13 which is 6½ quarters, but there has to be 8 quarters of playing time for 2 forwards What should I do? Stephen Sandhop, Baytown, TX.

Stephen: I think your problem arises from not using your fringe players and, to a lesser extent, from round-off error accumulation. First, let's free Trapp for some work at forward by using Williams at center. Williams had a fatigue of 2 and played in 46 games for a total of 92 half-quarters (2x46). Let's use him at center only. Similarly, Brown is entitled to 87 half-quarters for the season and let's use him in the post position also. Remembering that we need a total of 656 half-quarters of play at the center position (8x82), we find that Trapp is needed for 93

half-quarters at that position, leaving him free for 59 half-quarters at forward (since he had a total playing time of 152 h-q). Finally, let's assign Thomas to forward play for all 28 of his h-q. Totaling up, we end up with about 100 h-q short of the 1312 needed for both forward positions for a season of play. This is mainly because of round-off error accumulation. For example, Rowe's fatigue was actually 6.24 and was rounded off to 6. My suggestion to cure the forward h-q problem is to let all the forwards work slightly more h-q's than they are entitled to—way, let Rowe play an extra 40 h-q; Eberhard, an extra 30; and Porter, an extra 30.

In general, let's just make the rule that if you run short of h-q's for a specified position, merely increase by one the fatigue ratings of the players for that position. If you are engaged in a season of replay, keep the increase only long enough to completely fill the position for a season.

Dear RLB: Greetings from an impressed and satisfied table gamer! The corrections you made for this year's edition are excellent and cover the problems I used to have with the mechanics of the game.

The problem I have is that all the Great Teams of the Past have the maximum power rating possible; all those teams won playoffs, but not all of them had the best record for their respective regular seasons, so these are Playoff power ratings, right? Examples: the 1967/68 Celtics were third best in the regular season at 54-28; according to the new formula their power rating should be 80: 037/d43 for the regular season. The GoldenState Warriors were fourth best in 1974/75 at 48-34, but they "jelled" near the end of the regular season and through the playoffs were no fluke, which proved by the fact that they had the best won-lost record the following regular season (last year); so they certainly deserve an 84 for the 1974/75 Playoffs. In fact, the idea of Playoff power ratings is excellent, but, although I can do them myself, I think the regular season ratings should have been included, such as in last year's edition of BPS. Good luck, Phillip J. White, Lancaster, PA

Phillip: Yes, the Great Teams were rated on a Playoff basis. We reasoned that any matches between the teams would be conducted in a "playoff" atmosphere—hence, the ultimate rating of 84 would be justified. In addition, we knew that those that wanted to use the regular season ratings would have the means to re-rate the teams themselves, since we had provided all the instructions needed. Incidentally, the next edition of RLB will have team power ratings for both the regular season and the playoffs, although the individual player ratings will be based only upon regular season performances for the current teams (and playoff ratings for the Great Teams). Finally, Phillip I want to thank you for your kind words.

Gentlemen: I recently received my copy of **REAL-LIFE BASKETBALL**. I am very impressed with the game system, but I do have a few questions concerning it. 1) My deck of play action cards had only 3 optional play action cards for each position instead of 5—is this right? If so, what do you do for those players who require 4 or 5? 2) Shot Card: Shot good by home team if behind (shot missed by home team if ahead) who gets rebound in second instance? 3) Should any adjustment to ratings be made for playing players out of position? 4) Certain ratings are missing from teams printed in sheet form. A. No. of optional play action cards for ABA players ('75-'76 season) B. Quickness ratings for Great Teams of the Past. C. Quickness ratings for '75-'76 college teams. 5) Regarding college play, are there any provisions for implementing a stall/delay game? If so, what? Respectfully, James R. Peterson.

James: For those players that need more than three extra play action cards, do one of two things: either make up an extra card or two out of scrap cardstock or paper, or use a card from the opposite position (such as RF for LF) and lightly mark out the identifying letter in pencil replacing it with the new identification in pencil. In regards to question no. 2, in case the shot is missed by the home team when ahead the rebound goes to the defensive center. For those players playing out of their accustomed position, reduce each offensive and defensive rating by 1, subject to overrule by your own judgement. The absence of the ABA optional play action card numbers was an oversight by us. They should be as follows:

Chart on top of next column.

Denver
Thompson 3
Issel 3
Simpson 1
Gerard 2
Beck 1

Kentucky
Gilmore 2
Averitt 3
Lucas 2
Jones 1
Newmann 2

St. Louis
Barnes 3
Boone 2
Lewis 1
Malone 1

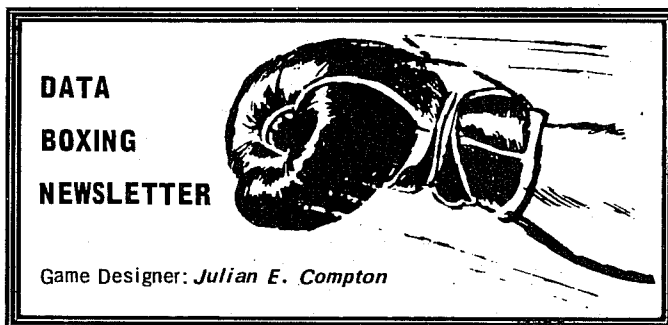
S.A.
Silas 2
Gervin 2
Kenon 2
Paultz 1

Indiana
Indiana
Knight 3
Lamar 3
Elmore 2
Hillman 1
Robisch 1

New York
Ervin 3
Taylor 1
Williamson 2
Jones 2

Virginia
Burden 3
Calvin 1
Green 2
Wise 2
Jackson 1
Benett 1
Nater 1

For rosters where there are no quickness ratings, use the team fast-break rating for determining the qualification for the fast-break; use the dribbling rating in place of the quickness rating on fast-break action cards for determining who takes the shot. We have no stall/delay tactics built into the game as of now, but anticipate having them by the next season, along with many other facets of play now missing, such as the press. Until then, James, thanks for your interest and for your nice introductory words.



FROM THE DESIGNER/Julian E. Compton

ALI-NORTON III AND DATA BOXING

I don't think anyone who plays DATA BOXING was surprised by the Ali-Norton bout. Anyone who had played out the bout before using the advanced strategy factors knew that Norton's strength was to box inside aggressive, (2 vs. Ali's -1) working the body, and to build up a lead to withstand Ali in the later rounds. The only surprise was to men like Jim Murray, Dick Young and Joe Frazier who don't know how to judge a bout and have no awareness of a mathematical analysis of sports.

Anytime I get a round-by-round scoring of a bout by anyone, I grade the scoring ability against scorers who already have a reputation as quality scorers. Those with earned reputations, by my system, were the three New York officials and Nat Loubet of **Ring** magazine. Those four officials scored ten of the rounds the same, giving Ali a six to four lead. They split the remaining rounds two to two with one even. (He lost rounds, two, three, five, six, eight, and twelve.) Grading against the consensus of the four, each judge or writer can then be rated as to how many rounds off he was. Judge Lederman, Joe Louis and Nat Loubet were best, each being off only one-half round by giving an even consensus round to one boxer. Five of CBS' panel were off three rounds or more and their opinion was worthless. This is the kind of analysis that goes into one item in DATA BOXING—

the hometown judge rating which some boxers receive. Judges round scores are never accepted at face value. They must earn their reputations.

As to the bout itself, when I watch a bout, I score every blow on a chart--and whether it scores or not. When the bout is over, I can analyze the data on a by-round basis. For example, Ali scored 231 of 360 lefts to the head (LH), 152 of 197 rights to the head (RH), no body blows; total 383 of 557 or 69%. Norton had 150 of 279 LH, 71 of 111 RH, 45 of 52 L body, 47 of 51 R body; total 313 of 493, or 63% I can then compare this data with their previous two bouts, with their other bouts with major opponents and with all other heavyweight champs. When you have the data you can discover subtle differences and I have the data.

One noticeable observation: in rounds one to eight 67 of 177 blows scored by Norton were to the body-- 38%. He led five to two, one even, on rounds. From then 25 of 136 were body blows-- 18%. He won only one round. Did Ali affect the change or did Norton blow it? It certainly shows that body blows were paying off.

In Data Boxing the per cent of head and body blows is figured in relation to the defense of the opponent's to those blows, and by an elaborate set of formulas, the strength on these on both offense and defense is compared with the average of all champs for their division when in their peaks. All of that data analysis yields the advanced strategy factors on which only some heavyweights are rated. Those four ratings take more time than all of the other ratings combined, but they are a significant contribution to understanding the match-up of styles of two boxers. The strategy factors revealed the best strategy for Norton to use against Ali and if you had studied them, you knew too. I wonder if Norton knew?

THE DATA BOXING WORLD

Data Boxing Ring No. 4: Ray Cappocchi, Burbank, CA. (When you send in results as described in the game, you will be given an official ring number.)

All 54 current heavies from DB vied for the title. In the semi-finals Foreman KO'd Frazier in 5 with 2 previous knockdowns and Norton TKO'd Young in 3 scoring 2 knockdowns. Foreman TKO'd Norton in 6 in the finals scoring 4 knockdowns. Jimmy Richards of Johannesburg ousted Ali in a close 12 rounder in the quarter finals to score the upset of the year.

Ray has an All-Time Heavyweights Greats Triple Elimination Tournament underway, featuring 26 champs since Sullivan, peaked plus 6 of the best current non-champs and the past-peak cards of Ali, Dempsey, Louis, and Baer. That's right, folks-- Dempsey or Ali could meet themselves in the final. He should be through about 1983! **LATE FLASH:** Ali beat Dempsey in finals. More later!

Regarding THE ALL-GAMES RATING SYSTEM

and Jack Kavanagh's letter:

Dear Jack: Gee whiz! You shouldn't take me so seriously. After all **THE ALL GAMES RATING SYSTEM** didn't come down by papal edict (knowing your background). But "Mythic cult", indeed, we're at least a sect, albeit a small one, in the body of gamedom.

Your point is well taken that playability- 50 per cent, realism and accuracy- 25 per cent, and strategy/tactics- 25 per cent, is not the only possible proportion to assign to a game evaluation. As was suggested in my review of basketball games (TTS, Vol. 2, No. 2) the system represents "the percentage of importance the author gives to each category. Depending on what you want in a game, refer to that category for the best rankings." It could be that realism and accuracy are more important for baseball games, strategy/tactics more important for football. I'm not concluding, I'm just suggesting alternatives.

What I tried to do in the **ALL GAMES RATING SYSTEM** was to propose a uniform standard for all games. Obviously games did not begin with the high-level sports and war games of the twentieth century. They partake of a long history which goes back to throwing sticks or dice, shooting marbles or moving around a Parchesi board. As games, they must be judged against high standards of

playability which have evolved over thousands of years. Since games are becoming more sophisticated, as indicated by the level two and level three classifications, playability is becoming less important at those levels.

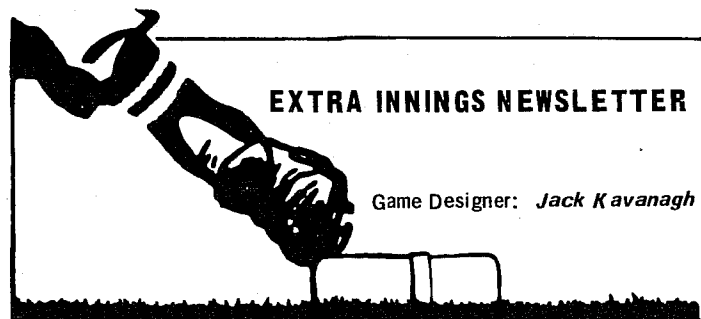
Regarding **EXTRA INNINGS**, though it may be rated lower than you like as a level two game, it certainly does all right at the more sophisticated third level of normalization games. It ought to, after all your game is the one that originated the concept. It certainly was the major influence on me as I developed **DATA BOXING**.

Concerning strategy/tactics, games which have more specific ratings on hit and run, sacrificing and catcher's arms and which provide for optional advancing on hits and holding runners on are rated slightly higher whereas APBA more recently was demoted in this category. I would regard 24 players as a sufficient squad for managing strategy.

As to your statement "There's no way to evaluate games of these kinds except for accuracy in reproducing statistics.", you do what you suspect me of doing, i.e., judging an artwork (sonnet or game) by computer. To judge a game solely by whether it reproduces statistics (as a computer would) is to fall into Hobbesian mechanism and forget that it is also a game (a creative work, art?) and shares in that heritage. We can't expurgate Platonic idealism, no matter how many computers we have.

When data retrieval systems are readily available to all of us, in the future, all games should be perfect in reproducing statistics, but they all won't be perfect as games and differences will still exist. (As to the future of games I'm commenting on that in writing about the ten best games elsewhere in **TABLE TOP SPORTS**.)

Jack, I would rather play than analyze games. But I analyze them to save people the wasted money and energy of getting stuck with a bad game-- which **EXTRA INNINGS** certainly is not. Sincerely yours, Julian E. Compton.



FROM THE BENCH/Jack Kavanagh

FIFTH EDITION OF EI

"Extra Innings" is now available in a new edition featuring changes which have evolved from the playing experiences of table gamers. "EI" was introduced in 1970 and has been upgraded for playability in successive editions. The 1977 edition is the fifth reprinting and each has brought improvements to the flow of the game.

The major change is with the game's Second Roll Chart. For those unfamiliar with "EI" it should be explained that the game obtains exceptional accuracy in offensive statistics by utilizing two dice rolls with three dice. The first roll deals with all the possible play actions including signaling errors to be made, double plays to be scored, runners picked off bases and all elements which can affect the batters faced by pitcher and at bats elements. The second roll deals with only hits and outs and, in so doing, narrows the results to the only items which are relevant to obtaining batting averages and power hitting factors.

Until this edition, the Second Roll Chart consisted of six columns, each presenting 36 combinations possible for each three dice set starting with the same digit on the first reading: 1-1-1 through 1-6-6 and continuing through to a total of 216 combinations. Put outs were assigned to each dice combination in proportion to the likelihood of put outs to each defensive position. While this produced realistic defensive statistics it is recognized that few table gamers actually compute fielding average and more of them are sensitive to the realism of the play

action. The new chart presents the play action in a more succinct form, ascribing any result to an identifying first digit so that all sequences beginning with 1-1-1 through 3-6-6 are read as flyouts to outfielders (when not converted to base hits); 4-1-1 through 4-6-6 are infield fly outs (or, line drives); 5-1-1 through 6-6-6 are ground ball outs when not converted to strikeouts. A variety of actions are provided on the basis of the "out" situation (no out, one out, two out) when the action by the batter takes place.

The third die is used to provide "direction" to the batted ball so that right handed batters pull the ball more often to left field or to the left side of the infield and left handed batters likewise to their pull side.

However, the major value to the table gamer is that the chart is much easier to memorize and reduces the frequency for referral to the chart.

The method of charging errors to defensive positions and affecting these by the rated capability for defense by a player at a given position has been completely replaced. Again, the utilization of a directional technique is the key. Errors are now charged, as is logical, to the player to whom the ball was batted according to the directions of the Second Roll Chart.

A number of minor changes have been made to such optional play situations as playing the infield in to head off a run at the plate.

An alteration of significant effect has been to adopt a new balance between a hitter's batting average against left or right handed pitching. This has been widened so that a batter has a more significant gain or loss when hitting against a pitcher who throws from the same side as which the batter hits, or the opposite.

Among the other elements which come with "Extra Innings" the selections among the Top 40 Historic Teams have been changed to eliminate teams from the 19th century and reduce those in the earlier years of the 20th century in favor of more representation of teams of more recent decades. A feature of the new rosters is inclusion of "games by position", pinch hit and stolen base totals for each player. These are valuable guides for table gamers creating full season replays. "Extra Innings" has also assigned separate running ratings for use either for stolen base attempts or advancing on base hits or put outs.

The "Hall of Fame" supplement has been brought up to date to include the 1977 election of Ernie Banks and some changes have been made in the makeup of the "Top 400 Players of All Time."

The new edition of "Extra Innings" does not obsolete earlier editions and rosters prepared for use with earlier editions are useable with the new edition. The statistical accuracy of "EI" has not been altered in the new edition. However, the techniques for game play have been simplified and related to play action more realistically. The new form of the game is the result of eight years of listening to criticism from table gamers and utilizing concepts which provide more gratifications for more varieties of table gamer's interests. "EI" realistically believes "you can't please all of the table gamers with any one game, but you can please more of them by listening to all of them."

FROM THE GRANDSTAND

Gentlemen: I am writing to say how much I am enjoying playing **EXTRA INNINGS!** I think it's the best table top baseball on the market.

I especially enjoy playing with the top 400. I am playing with two 8 team leagues. Each league has two divisions. Both leagues are playing with designated hitters and there is a small amount of interleague play.

Somewhat, the teams I am playing with aren't quite complete without the player's uniform numbers. I realize not all 400 had/have a uniform number. I would greatly appreciate a list of their numbers or any information that might help me in gaining this information.

I enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope. Thanking you in advance for your time and effort, I am Sincerely, Ron Schieffer, Omaha, NE
Ron: We don't have the uniform numbers but we would very much like to. If you or any of the other readers can come up with them, we would be very appreciative of receiving the information. Ed.

Dear Mr. Faulk: I have had my EI game for about eight months now and have been quite pleased. The one thing I did not like was the random number table. It seemed so artificial and unrealistic, even though I know that it is scientifically correct. So I got out three different pairs

of dice, and thus have two sets. I took out the ten pages containing the various charts and placed them in five clear plastic sheet protectors, and thus this game should last for many years. The local printer also Xeroxes the score sheets for \$3.75/100, so the cost of each game is minimal.

The only criticism I have is the way the rating formulas are spread out over so many pages. I took all the formulas and typed them onto one page for far easier reference. I also did not like the too subjective defensive ratings. Fielding averages could be used, and only supplemented by subjective ratings for speed and throwing ability. Except for this, other aspects of the game were okay.

Most of the games I have played were using teams from the past. I plan on playing most of the older classic teams against the 76 Reds, each in a 5 or 7 game series, to see how good each was, and is. Will you have available the 76 ratings, and the corresponding rosters? What will be the cost? And do you know of any organized leagues, tournaments, or conventions for EI and/or other baseball games.

Finally, I would like to say that Table Top Sports is a fine publication and very objective. But I will not subscribe since I have absolutely no interest in the other sports and games. I wish you still published an EI newsletter for baseball only. Robert C. Eckstein, Vacaville, CA.

Dear Sirs: I received your EI Game in the summer, and I can't say enough about the game. Really, guys, it's fabulous. I've had STRAT-O-Matic, SPORTS ILLUSTRATED, SHERCO, APBA; nothing matches your game for all the tea in China. I hope I'm not the only Canuck who has this correspondence with your organization. Do you have a list of your subscribers in Canada? Please rush me these games and the paper for the winter season.

I've got a league going at college here, with 8 teams in baseball, we took the 8 teams close to .500 to make it even, then a 6 man draft to bolster the rosters. So far, St. Louis and Texas with sickening draft-picks (Morgan, Brett, Palmer, Fridrych, Foster, Garvey, etc.) lead the league, I took Cleveland and stand at 24-25, having trouble with pitching, But R. Jackson, Eastwick, Koosman are a big help. Unfortunately the leaders are the Dean of Students and an assistant Registrar and they're fanatics with this game.

Thanks for the enjoyment, keep it up and keep in touch. Sincerely, M.G. Mitchell, London, Ontario.

Dear EI: I cannot thank you enough for turning a simple game into a hobby. Yes, three games later, and \$18.00 poorer I have finally found a game which satisfies my tastes in flow and accuracy. The logic of your two step system assures statistical accuracy in batting averages doubles, etc., etc. It is beyond me how other games have missed the boat in not separating hits from walks, hit batsmen, etc. Your idea for normalization turns me green, as for ten of my eighteen years I have been trying to invent games, and have never been able to hit upon the mark.

As of yet I have not embarked on any long replays, as I am a college student, and have little time for a season. However, I am now going to try a 10-team league using the historical Rosters. The league will feature the '27 Yankees, the '54 Indians, and both '75 World Series teams. The teams will play a 27 game schedule and all statistics will be multiplied by 6. If all goes well I will extend the season to 40 games, and multiply all stats by 4.05. This is going to be a time consuming project, but I think I can finish.

I have a friend who has Strat-O-Matic and thinks the world of it. Granted it may play a little faster than EI; it cannot compare for strategy and he is using a league of '66 and '68 players in a draft league. He finds this exciting, but I find it very boring to have to pay for teams that are at my fingertips.

I would like to exchange ideas and playing tips with any other EI gamers. One final question: On the "Top 400" players of all time- my game gives no info for rating teams for errors or double plays--help! Oh, well, enough writing, I've got to throw out the first pitch of my season. Much Gratitude, Mike Robinson, 22 Spruce, Westfield, MA 01085.

Dear EI: I have played Extra Innings for about six months and it is the best sports table game I have ever played. It has accuracy, flexibility to match one's gaming preferences, and it can easily be adapted to any style or era of baseball for which statistics are available. Now that I have EI game experience, I'm playing my own "Ultimate

World Series" involving the champions of eight different leagues: a National and American League for each of the four eras of baseball as set forth by **THE SPORTS ENCYCLOPEDIA: Baseball**. The National League pennant winner for 1961-1975 will meet the American League champion for 1961-1975. Seasons and best-of-15 series will also be played for the periods 1946-1960, 1920-1945, and 1901-1919. Each of the four champions will play eight games (four home four away) with each of the other three, and the team with the best record for this Ultimate 24-game series will be the All-Time Greatest Team.

My 154-game seasons for 1961-1975 are already under way.

NATIONAL

1962 San Francisco Giants
1963 Los Angeles Dodgers
1967 St. Louis Cardinals
1969 New York Mets
1969 Atlanta Braves
1971 Pittsburgh Pirates
1974 Los Angeles Dodgers
1975 Cincinnati Reds

AMERICAN

1961 New York Yankees
1961 Detroit Tigers
1965 Minnesota Twins
1967 Boston Red Sox
1968 Detroit Tigers
1969 Baltimore Orioles
1973 Oakland A's
1975 Boston Red Sox

If this format is used again in the future, the 1976 Phillies will probably replace the 1969 Braves, and the 1976 Yankees or Royals might replace one of the Red Sox teams. Throughout this competition,

teams of the same franchise in the same era must be at least six years apart (one exception: the 1927 and 1932 Yankees appear in 'AL: 1920-1945); this prevents most players, and most whole teams, from appearing more than once, although Orlando Cepeda was the regular first baseman for the 1962 Giants, 1967 Cardinals, and 1969 Braves. The only teams among EI's 40 Most Memorable which were excluded were the 1936 Yankees (AL: 1920-1945 already had the 1927, 1932, 1939 Yankees), the 1954 Giants (NL: 1946-1960 has the 1951 Giants), and the 1894 Orioles and 1897 Boston Nats; these pre-1901 teams will be included if I ever get around to devising a competition involving the period 1876-1900.

Some tendencies have emerged with my competition of outstanding teams; with also-rans out of the picture, good offense is matched against good defense. Batting averages, runs scored per game, extra-base hits, ERS's, strikeouts and walks per game are all close to actual league averages, but earned runs are less (and fielding averages higher) because of the presence of many SD fielders. Stolen Base success rates are slightly lower because I make an adjustment on the SB chart for SD/LD catchers; instead of one or two SD catchers and an occasional LD spread throughout an average 12-team league, there may be three or four SD's and only rarely an LD in an 8-team championship league. Furthermore, there is less variance in the final scores of games; that is, teams get shut out or score ten or more runs in a game much less often, although the average number of runs per game is about the same. However, the most important note I've made pertains to the fact that, even among high-quality teams, there must be winners and losers.

The top teams among these championship teams invariably have outstanding bullpens: At least one, usually two, occasionally as many as four oft-used relief pitchers who take several lines off the batters' hitting ranges. This seems to be the one ingredient that separates the great from mediocre among pennant winners.

After my Ultimate World Series is over, I have plans involving an All-Star League which utilizes the Top 400. As closely as possible, all players have been matched with their respective teams. The teams are the original eight for each

original eight for each league (Washington/Minnesota and St. Louis/Baltimore in the AL have been, for the most part, consolidated), and all player performances will be normalized. The outcome may be a "Subway Series"; with the designated hitter in effect, the Yankee batting order is: Combs RF, DiMaggio CF, Ruth LF, Gehrig 1B, Mantle DH, Lazzeri 2B, Dickey C, Rolfe 3B, Rizzuto SS, with Maris, Meusel, and Berra on the bench. The Giants have a 5-man starting rotation of Mathewson (-16 lines on the ERA chart), Hubbell (-14), Seaver (-14), Marichal (-10), and McGinnity (-10).

As I have gained experience playing EI, I have made adjustments and amplifications where I thought they were suitable. Since some of these might prove tiresome for some table-gamers, I'll mention only one point of amplification here. This concerns the fact that there are several batters each season who hit one triple or one homer in well over 216 at bats, yet they are always rated 1-1-1 in the category. For example, Bill North of the Oakland A's hit one homer in 524 at bats in 1975. If, in replay, he came to bat the same number of times with a 1-1-1 rating for homers, he would probably hit 2 or 3, maybe more. This is my solution: If a player hits one homer in between 324 and 432 at bats, rate him 1-1-1*. The asterisk signifies that he has no lines for homers against a pitcher with an ERA which takes batting lines away from the hitter, and one line in all other cases. If the player hit one homer in more than 432 at bats rate him ---*, which signifies that he has one line for homers only against pitchers who add lines to the hitter, and no lines in all other cases. Assuming the following breakdown of total innings pitched in a season: 50% by pitcher who deduct lines, 40% by pitchers who add lines, 10% by pitchers who neither deduct nor add lines to the hitter, a 1-1-1* rating will produce on an average ratio of 1/432, and a ---* will produce, on the average, 1/540.

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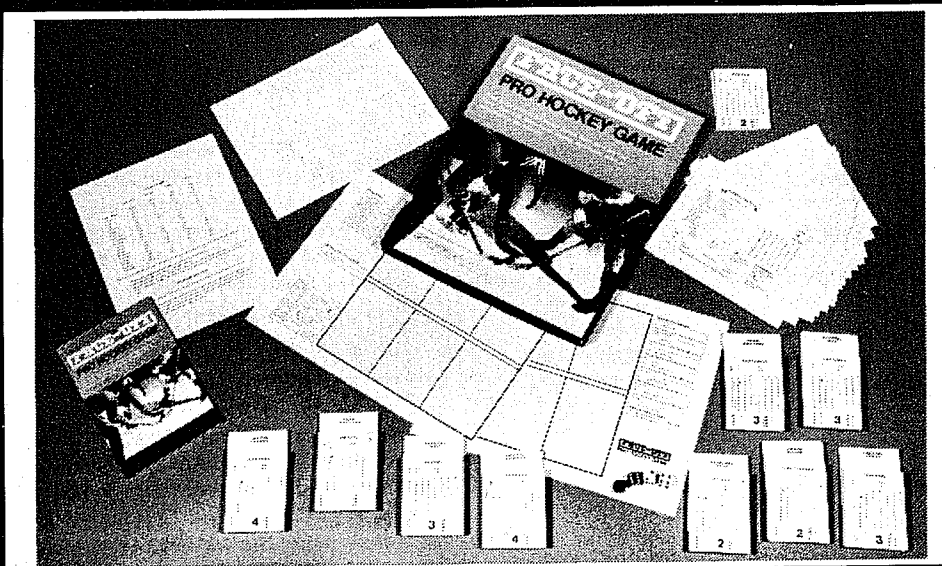
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