

PAGE TEN

Marathon End In Ball Park?

Percentage of Gate Would Pay the Classic's Expenses

By BILL CUNNINGHAM

Because of its truly international flavor, today's 51st edition of the classic B.A.A. Marathon is certainly the most colorful, and it may prove to be the greatest, of all these annual shirttail parades. A practical improvement, many times discussed, would be to have the race finish with 10 laps inside whichever ball park is doing business that day, where a sizable crowd, kept duly advised of progress by radio, actually could see the finish. The Braves and Red Sox could, and probably would be glad to, underwrite the expenses on alternate years, and, if that weren't considered enough, they could contribute a percentage to the AAU treasury, or to something such as the Boston Children's Hospital, on a regular basis. . . .

The objection is that this would kill the lily white amateurism of the event by exposing it to the fatal blight of paid admission. But that's exactly what's done at all Olympic Games. The race is ended in that fashion inside the stadium each time with the public invited at fixed box office prices. The difference, of course, is that there the money goes to the Olympic Committee to help pay general expenses. In the ball yards it would be collected by the baseball companies, which means professional sports promoters, and processed in fashion to be agreed upon after that. The objections are obvious, but are they so serious? The finish of that classic could be built into quite a festival. As it is, few can really see it, and they have to stand for hours and then fight for the few seconds' privilege. . . .

What were we telling you about the Braves and the Phillies? After those first two innings yesterday, it looked as if they'd have to turn on the lights to get it finished by midnight. . . .

"MacFAIL," BUT IN NAME ONLY

Mr. Baker of the Monitor is a friend of this department and he occasionally calls in the effort to help straighten things out. He has just suggested that everybody's been spelling Mr. MacPhail's name wrongly. Naturally, this headquarters was about to explain that the man himself spells it "Mac" and not "Mc," but Mr. Baker said, No, that wasn't it, that the corrected version should now be "MacFail." . . . The principal objection to that is that up to here it doesn't fit. Instead of failing, the man's been doing anything else but. . . .

Young Mr. Torgeson—the boys call him "Frog Eyes" because of his huge spectacles—turned hero yesterday despite notices in the morning press to the effect that Mgr. Southworth had figured he wouldn't do. Maybe the astute Braves sachem was trying some football psychology. Rockne used to use that one occasionally, and once Maj. Cavanaugh benched a captain all week and even let him think he was to rate as a sub in the important game coming up. Cav even sent his team on the field for the kickoff of said important game, when it arrived, with the captain slumped in utter humiliation on the bench. Just before the kickoff, however, Cav halted the play and sent the captain racing in to his regular position. The captain starred. So did Torgeson. That's why I say it looks suspicious. . . .

Up to the hour of leaping to press, nothing has been heard from Chicago concerning the letter MacPhail sent American League headquarters urging that the Durocher and Dressen cases be reconsidered, presumably with the idea of easing the penalties. Likewise up to the hour of leaping to press, there was no evidence that Dressen wasn't dressin' as usual and proceeding to participate as usual, until the teams take the field. Dressen says that's what he's always done when under suspension and that, so far as he's ever understood, suspension only applies to the game itself. Some of the writers are now saying that the Dodgers are suckers not to have thought of the same thing for Durocher. If no objection is raised to the Dressen interpretation, some are even wondering if Durocher won't be back. . . .

ROBINSON MAY HAVE POSITION TROUBLE

Jackie Robinson will come into Braves Field Sunday with at least one home run to his credit. If he doesn't make good as the season goes along, the arguments as to whether he had a fair chance will probably be terrific, and it looks as if it could be argued from either side. On his International League play, he evidently is a fine second baseman, but the Brooklyns don't need a second baseman. They have one in Stinky Stanky. So they started trying to make a third baseman of the flashy Negro, although with Lavagetto and Vaughn, they didn't seem to need one of them very badly, either. But it was finally decided that they could really use a standout first baseman, so they moved him over there, and he's been doing his considerable best in a brand new place. Meanwhile, as a last minute move, they brought up a rookie named Jorgenson, stuck him on third and he's proceeded to star all over the place. It now seems to be first, or nowhere, for Robinson, and it may be nowhere, for the season is young. . . .

If it just so happens that he is relegated to the reserves, charges undoubtedly will be raised that he was pushed around and never given a real shot at even a reasonably natural position. Before this is done, however, anybody feeling moved by the spirit to assume the soap box might pause to examine the record. The same sort of fate has been visited upon numberless Caucasian athletes, the one coming quickest to mind being the case of little Eric McNair. Naturally a shortstop, and a corker, he was bought by the Red Sox, but he promptly crashed into a situation where the Red Sox manager, Joe Cronin, was in his position. This forced him to win some other, or simply sit around as a utility fill-in. He did well enough here and there, but he, no doubt, today, considers he never had a fair chance in Boston. One of the breaks in that particular business is to find the position you play open to play, not held by somebody you've no chance to move. . . .

His British handlers have rushed young Bruce Woodcock much too fast, and, at this point, they may have ruined him. Those in charge of the scarcely known American, Joe Baski, who gave the young Britisher a bad physical beating, breaking his jaw in the bargain, are smarter. Immediately offered a bout with Joe Louis, they have expressed no early enthusiasm. . . . If Britain's so broke, incidentally, how come enough people could pay from \$84 ringside down to constitute a \$200,000 gate for that particular classic? We couldn't do that in Boston. . . .

It looks as if the Braves really lost something they could use when the Giants got that young Hartung on the business office technicality of a few months ago. The young man's blazing with the Giants. You might watch him in the box scores, but don't hope to be happy. . . . The Red Sox can't win 'em all, but they've started as if they mean to. One valuable lesson they undoubtedly learned from last year is that it's silly to take any for granted, and that coasting's no good anywhere but in bob-sledding. . . .

This is the day when Paul Revere and young Mr. Dawes rode. Take time out somewhere to salute them in memory. If it hadn't been for them and those of their day, there'd be none of this that we so easily take for granted now. If we don't do our shares in turn where and as we can, there'll be none of this for those still to come. Have fun, but never forget how and why we're able to have it. A price has been paid. The rest is up to us. . . .