

## Early Elks Baseball

**PLAY BALL!** Umpires called 616 Elks to the baseball diamond for the first time on a bright Saturday in 1903. It was a day to savor after an on-off beginning to the location, League organization, and Elk participation.

Sept. 5, 1902: Lorrin Andrews (ER 1914-15), A. Moore, and A. E. Murphy (ER 1912-1913) were appointed the 616 baseball team committee.

### **Who would play?**

Dec. 1902: Baseball season planning began before football season ended. 616's bid to join the Baseball League ran headlong into a debate on how many teams should play how many games a month. One group declared "there cannot be too many clubs" and favored 2 games a day. Limiting the number of players in a club would force good players to seek other teams. Others demanded only 4 teams so that all teams played regularly, but not exhaustively. The Elks baseball 'nine' would not be admitted under this plan.

Eventually the League settled on an expanded 6-team League including the Elks. Did the election of Elk Lorrin Andrews as League secretary-treasurer influence the decision? Perhaps as the *Hawaiian Star* newspaper reported, "the fact that in every other city in America where the antlered players have a nine, they were admitted into the local league," overcame objections.

### **Where would the teams play?**

The Boys' Brigade plot near Nuuanu Stream vied with the McKinley Park field in Pawaa<sup>1</sup> to host the League. Both competing locations hoped to share in the 'gate' to the assistance of their groups.

### **Who would lead the League?**

Would Deputy Sheriff Chillingworth<sup>2</sup> accept re-election as League president? He was a favorite with good reason. The Advertiser reported: "When the game was in the dumps he made it possible, at personal outlay, to start the game once more..."

### **Who would make up the teams?**

As the season loomed, some teams were reported to be doing "some tall hustling" for good players. 616 had their 'nine' in only a week. Players did not need to be members of the sponsoring group and some of 616's team players were hired. The election of Albert Richard "Sonny" Cunha (Tiler 1901) as Elk team captain was surely expected. His baseball reputation began at Oahu College (Punahou) and culminated at Yale.

Team manager Francis M. Brooks carried his ER (1902-03) leadership onto the baseball diamond. Brooks and others spent \$600 for purple and white team uniforms, bats, and other equipment, only \$400 eventually being reimbursed from proceeds of the Lodge's first fundraiser.

Captain Cunha arranged a series of season-preparing practice games. The Elk team consisted of catcher Cunha, pitcher Kaal, first base Brown; second base Moore, third base Gorman, shortstop Smith, center field F. H. Loucks, right field E. E. Hartman, left field Bennett.

### **Opening day, May 16, 1903:**

A large, crowd filed onto the Oahu College (Punahou) field as the gates opened at 1:00 p.m. The Territorial Band<sup>3</sup> played for the enjoyment of those waiting for the season opener - the Honolulu Athletic Club vs. the Punahous. Babbitt pitched for Punahou and Joy for HAC. Despite a homerun by Joy, the "Punahous" took the game 13 to 3.

3:30 p.m.: The Elks vs. the Kamehamehas. The Elks lineup retained Brown, Cunha, Kaal, Gorman, and Moore. New were King, Meyer, pitcher Perrine (said to be highly paid), and Taylor. Kamehameha's catcher D. Kekuewa worked with pitcher Lemon (he hit the game's only home run). Pitchers Perrine and Lemon were evenly matched, each striking out 7 players. As a sentinel Lemon failed. Almost every Elk stole a base, with Moore and Gorman each snatching two. Although the crowd dished out some "heavy joshing" at Perrine's pitching style, the Elks got the last laugh. They won 12 to 3, taking 6 runs in the third inning. The Kamehamehas never recovered.

The 'antlered nine' was off to a glorious start. In 1904 they would 'retire' Perrine as too expensive. The *Evening Bulletin* reported the Elks would "bring in two men from the coast...good, but less costly." Bob White switched his services from the Mailes to the Elks. They faced stiff competition. Noted the *Bulletin*: "Hardy, a Kamehameha grad, would pitch for the Punahous. Kamehameha pitching stock seldom falls below par." Look out Elks!

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#### References:

*Evening Bulletin* 11 Dec 1902, 7 Apr 1904

*Hawaiian Star* 10 Dec 1902, 16 & 18 May 1903

*Pac Com Advertiser* 6 & 8 Dec 1902

*Minutes*, BPOE 616, 5 Sept 1902, 12 Dec 1902

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<sup>1</sup> Pawaa was in the general area near today's Washington Intermediate School on Beretania St. This means McKinley Field was not at McKinley High School. Pawaa Lane survives as a street name. Real estate advertisements bragged that Pawaa had "No Breakbone," a Dengue fever nickname. Perhaps the League thought it made a healthy spot to play baseball? *Hawaiian Star* 4 May 1903, p2.

<sup>2</sup> Chillingworth frequently made headlines as he busted up Oahu stills and arrested moonshiners.

<sup>3</sup> The Territorial Band was the renamed "Royal Hawaiian Band" in that post-Monarchy, post-Republic period.