

College Boys In Professional Base-Ball

Wilson Club Has Monopoly Of Rah-Rah Clouters

by R. G. HAWKINS

greatest all-around athletic star the Philippines has developed who has played ball in fast company for over ten years; Domingo Cepeda, lanky third sacker for the Wilson club who joined the professional ranks when he bolted the U. P. Varsity nine following a mixup with his coach; Juan Acuña, who preferred to pursue a ball-playing career to a college education, and who is now being groomed to replace "Old Man" Regis as a first sacker on the Wilson team; Ramon Echem, pitcher and mainstay of the Ateneo nine whose graduation last March induced him to join the professional League. Up to two or three years ago one Machan, converted in the outfield for one of the professional teams. A lawyer by profession, a college coach by avocation, he played baseball in between his law practice and his coaching for the love of the game.

Lefty Santos former U. P. slab artist and Olympic star finished college and although graduated in Dentistry is playing for the Wilson nine. His performance has been fair to date.

For the most part these college men have ta-



Domingo Cepeda

Graduating usually spells the death knell for the athletic career of most college trained huskies of the diamond. After the varsity star leaves the college campus behind, little chance is afforded him to continue his ball-playing career. No inducements have been offered by the local professional league teams to entice a college man from the practice of his chosen vocation and thus he ends his athletic career when he dons his cap and gown.

Of recent years, however, several college baseball players have found their way to the professional ranks and indications are that in the future more and more of the rah-rah boys will seek to continue their prowess on the baseball diamond by joining some pro club.

At present there are no less than five Filipino College men playing in the local "Big Leagues" There are Juan Taduran, the



V. Santos

ken to the professional ranks because of the love which they have for the crack of the bat and the swish of a ball. There is little, if any financial inducements which draws them to the pro ranks Under existing terms the players on most of the teams in the Philippine Baseball League, the Big League circuit of the Philippines get seven pesos per game if the team wins or four pesos if the team comes out on the losing end.

Yet playing in the professional league is not all fun as the college men now playing in it can attest. Taduran, of course, played in fast company way before that hectic period when a distinct line was drawn between professional and amateur baseball players by the Philippine Amateur Athletic Federation. He was already a diamond star in 1921 when he was catcher for the Calamba Sugar Estate team. Then he per-



J. K. Taduran

formed for Fort Mills three or four seasons. He has been ground in the ways of the pro league.

But to the youngsters who have just been recruited into the league, Cepeda Acuña Santos and Echem the going has not been entirely rosy. Cepeda, for instance has had off days at the third base position of the Wilson team and the unmerciful razzing from the bleachers which are far more cutting than college razzing has rankled his nature. Cepeda went into the Big Leagues with an enviable reputation as a hitter and as a dependable third baseman. When he left the U. P. team it went on the rocks and he stood out among the shining performers at the last Olympic Games. Yet, he confides playing in the P. B. L. is "different". Some of that high spirit of elation which comes over a youngster which has been catapulted into fame and near-fame by early success and accomplishment has been taken out of him and he is now a more conscientious ball player than he ever was before.

Acuña, who earned a reputation in college as one who never got ruffled, who always kept his head and his temper, has likewise found playing in the professional league "different".

"I tell you, although I can't understand why, playing in the P. B. L. isn't like playing in the amateur leagues. It looks as easy from the grandstand or bleachers but believe me I have found out what that term "fast company" means"

Acuña, was being groomed by his mother and father to be an up and coming abogado but this good-natured youngster stayed in college only two and a half-years just long enough to develop into a first class first baseman. From the U. P. he went to the bureau of customs where he had the opportunity to improve his playing, which he did. Once Bobby Robinson's scouts got a sight of the left handed first sacker and signed him up. Acuña is being kept in reserve for the time—which old ball fans think will come soon—when "Old Man" Regis will crack under the strain of over twenty years of ball playing. Acuña has been given several chances in the outfield and has acquitted



Ramon Echem

himself creditably.

Echem, the colorful and flashy athletic hero of Ateneo, has not fared as well in the pro ranks as either Cepeda or Acuña. In his first game in the league his sharp batting

eyes deceived him and this speedy little ball player struck out three times in a row—the same young feller who was one of the surest batters in collegiate baseball circles.

No sir, playing in the local big leagues is not easy. Yet these college boys like it and they're going to stick until they get kicked out. And it will not be an exaggeration to predict that in the future two or three times more college men will be seen wearing professional uniforms even within the next three or four years. Because even if the professional league offers no great financial inducements the love of the game is strong and the call of the diamond is too enticing to go unheeded by many of the present day youngsters in whose hands lay the future of local baseball.

FERNANDEZ MAKES

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cern to the personal welfare of his boys. As an example, Fernandez cites the fact that, Churchill never worries on the outcome of a fight where one of his boys is

concerned and never takes the trouble of looking him up after a bout. Fernandez stated, however, that upon his return to the States, he will have to submit himself to his old contract with his managers, as the agreement ties him for another year.

Asked to narrate his defeat at the hands of Battling Battalino and Kid Chocolate, Fernandez was all of a sudden in an uproar and the best way to describe it are his own words: "When a man is threatened with a .45 'pop-gun', with gansters behind it, and a proposed 'nice ride', unless he agrees to lie down, there is no alternative but to take the safest way out of the mudhole. And this is what happened in my Battalino fight for the featherweight title of the world. In my bout with Chocolate, I was suffering from tonsilitis and one of my blood vessels started to trouble me during the fight. I was later taken to the hospital because of blood poisoning." When pressed for his opinion as to the better boy between Chocolate and Battalino, Fernandez unhesitatingly pronounced himself in favor of the Cuban wonder, and further stated that if they meet on the level, Battalino would not have a show against the "keed".

Fernandez' last fight in the U. S. was against Battling Siki whom he knocked out in the 5th round.

Fernandez, returns a full fledged lightweight, and states he cannot make the featherweight limit any more. In a short workout at the Olympic Stadium's Gym, Fernandez showed wonderful speed, and a terrific kick in each mitt. He looks a very much improved boy and showed some real class in his workout.

Enrique Sto. Tomas Cortes, a local engineer, and a brother of Fernandez' manager in the States, is handling the boxer's affairs in the Philippines.

As to Fernandez' first opponent in Philippine soil nothing is yet known. Efforts are being made by Bebeng Gutierrez, manager and match maker of the Olympic Stadium, to import some good boy from either the U. S. or Australia. Offers have been made to Kid Chocolate and Al Singer, but so far no reply has been received.

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