

Field Guide to Coronado History:

Coronado's Professional Baseball Team (Sort Of)

By Bruce Linder

A favorite trivia question in Coronado history has always been:
"What's the name of Coronado's only professional baseball team?"

The correct answer is: "The Coronado Arabs. Year, 1929"

The Coronado Arabs were a Class-D team of the California State League and played against teams from Bakersfield, Santa Monica, San Diego, San Bernardino, and the like.

They were also a franchise in financial difficulty. The team had started the 1929 season slated to play in Ventura, were then moved to Santa Ana, considered moving to Pomona (until finding out that the city didn't have a ball field), and were finally taken over by the League and moved to San Diego.

The team name "Arabs" didn't really fit a California team. Although officially used, reports were that the team name was more informal than official, indicative of "wandering nomads."

After playing several games "on the road," the team's first chance as a "home team" occurred on May 15, 1929 against San Bernardino. In 1929, the team compiled a 16-14 record under manager Jess Orndorf with several players hitting solidly over .300 and Ernie McCabe leading the team with 8 home runs.

The trouble was ... despite the obvious connection to the Crown City, the Arabs weren't really a "Coronado" team and never played here. The Arabs played all their home games at Navy Field in San Diego, a field they shared with the San Diego Aces, also of the California State League. Apparently, there was a stigma attached to any effort to have two teams playing in the same city and using the same city name, so when the league assigned the team to San Diego, the team chose "Coronado."

Even more intriguing, Coronado opened its own rather significant baseball park also in May 1929 – located at 3rd Street and Soledad Place and featuring sufficient seating and facilities to have been used in the California League. The home team there was the Coronado All Stars and they played against company, civic, and Service teams to, apparently, very appreciative and die-hard Coronado fans.

The Coronado Journal placed everything into stark perspective. Every week during the summer, page five or six of the newspaper contained articles on happenings in the Major Leagues from New York to Chicago and the Coronado All Stars frequently commanded front page headlines. The hapless Coronado Arabs were NEVER mentioned in the local newspaper ... not once!

The Arabs folded later in the summer of 1929 when a franchise buyer could not be found. Their last official game was held on June 17th.

Summary of the game:

San Bernardino					Coronado				
AB	H	O	A		AB	H	O	A	
Rosenberg, cf	5	3	1	1	Woodruff, lf	5	2	1	0
Hunnicut, lb	3	0	1	0	Kostell, ss	4	1	1	2
Keane, 3b	4	0	1	0	O'Kane, 2b	4	3	1	2
Berger, lf	4	1	1	0	McCabe, c	4	1	8	2
Hunt, rf	3	1	1	0	Hannan, cf	2	1	2	0
Theller, 2b	2	1	3	0	Buerkle, rf	2	1	1	0
Coscarart, ss	2	0	1	5	Villarino, 3b	4	0	0	2
McIsaac, c	2	1	6	0	B. Smith, lb	3	0	13	0
McDougal, p	3	0	0	4	Spurgeon, p	4	0	0	5
aRodgers	1	0	0	0					
bCaster	1	0	0	0					
Totals 32 7 24 13					Totals 33 9 27 13				

aBatted for McDougal in the ninth.
bBatted for Hunnicutt in the ninth.

Score by innings:
San Bernardino 300 100 000—4
Hits 310 100 002—7
Coronado 100 022 10x—6
Hits 299 032 20x—9

Runs — Rosenberg, Keane, Berger, Theller, Woodruff, Kostell, O'Kane 2.
Buerkle, B. Smith, Errors — Coscarart, McIsaac. Two-base hits—Berger, Woodruff, Theller, Kostell, O'Kane, Buerkle.
Run batted in—By Berger, Hunt 2, O'Kane 2, McCabe, Woodruff 2. Sacrifice hits — Hunnicutt, B. Smith, Coscarart.
First base on called balls—Off Spurgeon 5, off McDougal 3. Struck out — By Spurgeon 8, by McDougal 6. Hit by pitcher—By Spurgeon (McIsaac). Credit victory to Spurgeon. Charge defeat to McDougal. Left on base—San Bernar-

Box Score courtesy San Diego Union.

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