



## 1939 VICTORIAN MAJOR CHAMPIONS





# Metropolitan's Second Baseball Title

By ERN COWLEY

The Metropolitan Division won its second Victorian major baseball championship when Prahran defeated Carlton at Dandenong on Saturday. Once again the League batters succumbed to a pitcher who knew how to curve the ball. Prahran's pitcher, Jack Middleton, fooled the batters with slow outcurves and "gravity-drops," as did Charlie Scott in Brunswick's memorable victory over Fitzroy two years ago.

**B**ASEBALL fans who travelled to Dandenong for the State title match saw the unusual spectacle of a League premier team playing second fiddle in a band of Victoria's best baseballers. The Metropolitan premier's leader, Jack Ferguson, called the tune all day, wielding a deleterious baton to the entire discomfiture of the Blues.

Ferguson's catching, batting and general leadership were the outstanding features in a game that gave a minimum of latitude for mistakes. All the Blues' errors were costly, being fully capitalised by Prahran. The Middleton-Ferguson battery signals worked smoothly, keeping Carlton glued to the bases, and the Prahran pitcher's control of slow outcurves had batters guessing all day. There may be little in Middleton's pitching to deceive good batters, but at least he knows that an outcurve should be pitched "low and outside," and has the control to execute his desires.

Prahran base-runners displayed judgment in stealing, which was made ridiculously easy by an almost entire lack of battery signals between Freer and Gilbert. The former lacked sparkle in his delivery, pitching at about three-quarter pace and sending them down waist-high. Five batters registered at least two hits apiece off Freer—far too many in a championship series.

Excelling in battery work, batting, base-running and defence, the Metropolitan premiers thoroughly deserved their win, and really outplayed the League team. Carlton's defeat may be attributed mainly to ineffective batting, lack of battery signals, certain other infield weaknesses

and, maybe, taking the opposition too cheaply in the early stages.

There has been some excellent baseball in the B Grade this season, which augurs well for baseball in the immediate future. Collingwood B carried on from a magnificent premiership in their division by winning the Victorian minor championship. Malvern led in the early stages, but the Magpies scored five to nothing after the third frame, and won 8-0. With defence work fairly even, Collingwood's stronger batting and base-running won them the day.

Bill Harper this season completed his 25th year as scorer for Carlton. Bill is one of the best penholders in the game, and he knows what 3-EB or U3 means. His son, Keith, was one of Carlton's reserves on Saturday.

## BENEFIT DANCE

The Melbourne Baseball Club expect a bumper attendance at their dance at M.C.G. on Saturday, October 7, when the profits will be handed over to a fund to assist Lee Cheong, who has not yet recovered from the leg injury he received over 12 months ago at the Perth baseball carnival. The dance coincides with the visit of the Monterey, and some of its crew will attend the function.

With better weather and firmer turf the V.B.A. will now have an opportunity to run-off their baseball field games contest against the Combined Universities of California, which were postponed from the Australian carnival and several times since owing to the unusually wet season. It is likely that the events will be run off at the St. Kilda Cricket Ground within a fortnight, a tentative date being Thursday, October 10, at 5.15 p.m.

*Rustlers*