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“The Women of Wrigley’s Dainty Baseball League”

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“The Women of Wrigley’s Dainty Baseball League”

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Figure 1.0¹

The Women of Wrigley's Dainty Baseball League

We all know there is “no crying in baseball,” but there was sexism, charm school, chaperones, “strawberries,” and homeruns. The All-American Girl's Professional Baseball League (AAGBL) was the substitution of America's favorite pastime made up entirely of women baseball players, as the men were off fighting in World War II. Though these women were a part of the league to play baseball, they were much more than just baseball players. They were groomed and trained into symbols of femineity and grace, evidence of this can clearly be seen in their scuffed knees from sliding into home. Their job was not merely to hit a homerun, but to help the morale of a country at war, while looking and acting like a lady on the field.

The process of becoming the pristine All-American Girls Professional Baseball Player did not happen overnight, and they had many hoops to jump through, or maybe bases to run is more fitting. As their careers in the league continued, the women were continuously compared to men baseball players, no matter how good these women were when they came up to bat. Despite all the issues these women faced, such as learning how talk properly at charm school, chaperones watching their every move, playing a vigorous baseball game in a dress, and being compared to their male counterparts, the women of the league just wanted to play some baseball, and they excelled at this job.

In the beginning, the All-American Girl's Baseball League was owned by Philip Wrigley, who owned the major league team the Chicago Cubs and Wrigley's Chewing Gum Company². The league ran from 1943-1954, even after World War II ended in 1945. With many men away fighting in the war, Wrigley thought someone should take their place on the field. He wanted to keep America's favorite past time alive to help the Americans at home. The whole purpose of the league was to improve the morale of wartime workers, create wholesome family entertainment,

and keep baseball stadiums filled with patrons. Those who made it into the league also helped veterans by playing in army camps or even hospitals³. With great anticipation for the league from its creators, Wrigley needed to create his perfect all girls league.

To start up the teams, Wrigley and his investors collected \$200,00 for the league's salaries, uniforms, spring training, publicity, programs, charter buses, hotel accommodations, and recruitment⁴. Being from the Midwest himself, Wrigley made sure the AAGBL's epicenter was the Midwest. The leagues peak reached in 1948 with the forming of ten teams from Chicago, Peoria, Rockford, Springfield Illinois; Grand Rapids, and Muskegon Michigan; Racine and Kenosha Wisconsin; South Bend and Fort Wayne; Indiana⁵. All teams competing against one another of hopes of being the top team in the end.

During the first ten seasons, almost 895,000 patrons paid to see "America's prettiest baseball players."⁶ Why would people come to these games that were being played in small towns? Because of the gas rationing for the war, games remained in a number of smaller Midwestern towns and cities where factory workers had money to spend but could not travel⁷. Now that Wrigley and his crew had a plan to help Americans, there needed to be tryouts to select the women who would help America by running some bases, or who would at least look the prettiest on the field.

Tryouts for the All-American Girl's League was if Miss America met Major League Baseball. During the Trustee Administration (1943-1944) of the league, players were selected on the basis of the Administration "recognized the professional sports principle of getting the very best obtainable players throughout the country."⁸ However, the 1943 *Time Magazine* debated how the first players were more chosen because of their physical appearance⁹. They needed to get women who could play the game, but women who could also get the men who had some

extra cash into the stands. This misogyny of needing women who were attractive became intertwined all throughout the league, in its recruiters, managers, and owner. Jim Hamilton, one of the league's managers, grew a reputation of turning down excellent players because they were either "uncouth, too hard-boiled, or too masculine," as they were looking at midwestern women who were farmer's daughters or wives¹⁰. Mr. Wrigley expected the only women he saw on his fields for tryouts were "All-American" girls¹¹. The ideal women for the team had to look like the highest of contemporary standards of femininity, but also be able to throw a wicked curve ball, overhand of course.

To unearth the best players who would fit the image they were looking for, thirty scouts were dispersed to uncover talented players throughout the US, Canada, and Cuba. First, recruiters looked to sign the best players from amateur softball leagues, which were growing in abundance. Most of the girls who came to try out were underage, overawed, homesick, and new to the big leagues¹². However, most of them were gifted in many different sports before they came to the league, so why did women come out to try and be a part of this league in particular? These women simply loved the game. They were ready to play their hardest on the field, while also serving their country.

The final round of tryouts took place at Wrigley Field. Out of the 300 potential players, 75 were assigned to a team¹³. The average age of the women was about 20 years old, and the average height accumulated to about 5'4"¹⁴. In 1946, on average 12 out of 144 women were married when they joined the league. As some got married during the baseball season, they would hang up their hat and start a family. One of the women who made the final cut, Margaret "Jurgie" Jurgensmeier said, when she tried out for the Rockford Peaches, she impressed the staff with her skill on the pitcher's mound. Jurgie said how "They chose me because I exhibited a

baseball mind.”¹⁵ Women who tried out for the league had the skill and knowledge to be a successful baseball player, but their purpose on the team resulted in a bigger duty than just hitting a homerun. Another woman how tried out for the league, Jane (Jeep) Stoll, from rural Pennsylvania, was a recent high school graduate. Jeep described her journey to try-outs as, “I had never ridden on a train. I sat up all night in a Pullman car because I didn’t understand how that seat was gonna be my bed.”¹⁶ Women came from all over to be a part of this historic league. After the first training camp, the 75 players, dwindled down to 60, and those who made it through camp, were spilt into four teams¹⁷. Despite these grueling try-outs, that already forced the women to adhere to certain absurd rules like only being able to pitch overhand, the women were buzzing with the excitement to play ball in the AAGBL.

After teams were picked, it was time for the women to practice. This meant they had to wake up at dawn, work out all day on the field, then sit through charm school. While practicing with their teammates, players wanted to act tough like men and answered to nicknames such as ‘Squirt,’ ‘Scounge,’ and ‘Ruhnke Dunk.’¹⁸ The men who managed the team were, more often than not, ex-baseball players. Except, most were known to be incapable of teaching baseball. Some managers were known to claim that, during practice, “It was easier to educate a skilled player in the elements of feminine charm, for show purposes, than to make an excellent ball player out of an unskilled but attractive woman.”¹⁹ Though some managers were enthusiastic about the job, others found the league as an insult to baseball. Chet Grant, a manager, became hesitant to be a manager in the first place because he “wouldn’t go around the corner to witness a hybrid travesty on the national pastime; that is, baseball professionally presented by short-skirted young women with [an] oversize[d] ball, undersize[d] diamond, softball pitch, and baseball lead-off base.”²⁰ Later on, some women grew into a manager’s position, but this was more common

during the middle or end of the season. They were qualified to be managers, as they knew what themselves and their teammates should be doing to accomplish a win for a game. The women of the league who looked “pretty enough” were also used as models to publicize games. Once making the team, despite having to deal with male managers who did not believe in them and being appreciated first for their physical appearance, the women persevered within the league. They were baseball players by day and models by night, but they would model only after the most important part of being a baseball player had finished: charm school.

Women who joined the league not only were compelled to be well-versed in their knowledge of the game, but they also were required to be well-behaved ladies on and off the field. As the league began to grow, it started to get a substantial amount of attention, as the women involved were pioneering women’s sports. As a result, the women were in the limelight all the time. The way they acted and appeared reflected the whole profession, while they inspired both youngsters and grownups of the time²¹. The persona they had to portray was a “socially acceptable athletic femininity.”²² Wrigley held players to the standards of the upper-class society, but Wrigley never called them “women.” No matter how old they might have been, everything ever written or talked about, regarding the players of the league, they were always referred to as “girls”. Here were these women, waking up every day bright and early to work on the field, going to charm school, and Wrigley never gave them the respect they deserved, despite what they were doing for the country and his league. Nonetheless, the women pushed past such restrictions and still played a good game for his league.

Wrigley had three rules that were enforced upon the women: his players would be girls, they were forbidden to wear slacks or skin-tight shorts, and they would have good old-fashioned team names, to contribute to the idea of them being “dainty.” For example, the first teams were

named “Chicks, Lassies, Belles, Peaches.”²³ Wrigley was very set on the type of image his girls would portray. “His league would have nothing to do with the kind of short-haired, mannishly dressed toughies then touring the country on several all-girl barnstorming teams.”²⁴ Wrigley’s obsession with his specific image would later go on to be an iconic style of baseball, and he went through great lengths to achieve this.

To make sure the women upheld their image, a guidebook was created: “Guide for All American Girls, How to Look Better, Feel Better, Be More Popular.”²⁵ In the manual that was devised for these women, there was a plethora of beauty techniques they had to supplement into their routine. Daily, the women had to wear “rouge medium, mild astringent, face powder for [a] brunette, hair remover, and cleansing cream lipstick.”²⁶ This manual also had detailed instructions to what their morning and post-game routine should look like. Though the manual had details for the women to follow regarding their appearance, they were also told not to “overdo it” with their makeup or their look. As women were told how to appear on and off the field, they followed suit, as it was just another part of the job that they were working remarkably hard for.

Along with following a detailed manual every day, the women were also enrolled in Helena Rubinstein’s charm school for ladylike etiquette, how to apply makeup, get out of a car, put on a coat, enunciate properly, and other things important to becoming the perfect All-American Lady transpired here. Most importantly, the women were taught how to charm a date. The procedure and dialogue of this “charming” included to “look right at him and say, ‘Oh my, what nice eyes you have.’”²⁷ In addition, the women did need to know how to enunciate properly due to how continuously they were in the public eye. They were resembled role models for all kinds of people; thus, has to act according. Rubistien wanted to make sure the public would feel

as if “you know she is a lady as soon as she opens her mouth.”²⁸ Rubistein was challenged with the job of transferring rural working girls to upper-class presentable ladies. And just like her girls, Rubistein and the women of the league both welcomed the formidable task at hand.



Figure 2- Member of the AAGBL getting ready for a game on the field³⁰

Not only were these standards set when the women wanted to go to the grocery store, but they had an abundance of physical requirements to follow on the field, as well. These standards included their skirt length of the dress, makeup requirements for the field, no drinking, nor smoking, fraternizing with the other team, and going to social events had to be approved²⁹. As the women were ready to present a game to crowds of people, they had to make sure they did not have lipstick on their teeth or a stray hair under their cap (Figure 2). President Roosevelt was even known to have said, “keep up with important war work by keeping lipsticks on the line,” as a way to keep women of the time feminine³¹. These kinds of requirements were recorded into the women’s contract and could not be broken. If one looked at a male’s contract from Major League Baseball owners during the 1940’s, such contracts say nothing about men having to uphold certain appearances or even charm school³². If these requirements laid out in the women’s contract were not met by the players of the AAGBL, they could have been fined or even suspended after repeated infractions³³. With the fear of punishments looming if a player did not follow such decrees, they obeyed in order to play with their teammates. After practice and charm school were completed, it was time for the women to hop on the road and play some ball.

The women of the league had to live out of a suitcase and staying in different hotels throughout the weeks of the season. The buses that transported the women were known to be stuffy and packed. Homesickness became abundantly common for some women, since they missed their kids and family back home. As a result, some players left the league to return home to be with them. There were many girls who were underage and the league watched them very carefully on and off the field³⁴. The person who obtained the job of watching the youngest members, as well as everyone else, would have been the team's chaperone that followed them everywhere.

Each team of the AAGBL were monitored by a chaperone. The women who accepted such role, dressed in a military suit with jacket, skirt, and cap³⁵. It did not matter if the chaperone knew anything about baseball. They were there to protect, or spy, not coach. Some chaperons were even known to put lipstick on players before they went to bat. Having a chaperone was the only reason some women were able to play in the first place. Some families did not like the idea of their daughter traveling the country, playing baseball, all by themselves. Betty (Moe) Trezza, from Brooklyn, recalled, "My Mother wouldn't let me play until I convinced her we'd be chaperoned."³⁶ On the other hand, some women hated having a chaperone watching their every move. Thelma (Tiby) Eisen had an admirer who followed her on the road, game to game. While in preparations to sneak out to his hotel room one night, within three minutes there was a knock at the door from the chaperone wanting to know what Tiby was planning³⁷. Though sometimes having a chaperone could have been pestering, they were necessary and watched out for their girls. Maddy English, from the Racine Belles, talked about how a sports writer would not leave her alone, so she told him, if he did not leave, she would jump into Lake Michigan to get away from him. She did. As a result, it was her chaperone who had to fish her out³⁸.

During the season, Maddy English was not the only member of the league to have some fun. The women would have some adventures now and then to help their own morale. They partake in tricks on their chaperones or managers, sneak beer into their hotel rooms, and sneak out of hotels entirely. Very few got into this sport to go to charm school, wear dresses, and be in the public eye. They were just trying to be young women. To them, this was a time to have fun with their teammates and play baseball. Dottie Collins of Fort Wayne Indiana said how “We were just kids having fun. Not until it was all over, did we look back and realize we had been pioneers.”³⁹

When game day arrived, the excitement and anticipation for the game could be felt all around the stands and the locker room. It would cost twenty-five cents for a ticket to be admitted into a game⁴⁰. Within the contract of the AAGBL, it discusses what they may encounter with the baseball fans that attended their games⁴¹. According to the contract, the league had “the customer is always right” type of attitude. It warned members that a patron “can talk to you without knowing you.”⁴² The baseball fans were allowed to shout at them from the stands if they so wished, and “After all, he is a customer and he feels you, as a player, and the team, belong to him.” The league spent all this time making sure the members of the league looked and acted like “girls,” but they did not care how the fans of the game treated them. However, the women did not let the fans distract them from the task at hand. They welcomed the atmosphere of the baseball game, because that is what they came to do: play ball.

Before the women could run onto the field, they had to prepare themselves behind the scenes. They had to look presentable, while also making sure they could play well. Their hair and makeup had to be just right, with nothing out of place. One way the women tried to achieve this was even scratching a bar of soap under their nails so they would not get dirt under their fingernails⁴³. After everything else was perfect, it was time to put on the iconic dress uniform.

There is much debate about the design of the uniform and where it came from (figure 3). Even though many softball teams were wearing a similar style of uniform, some women of the AAGBL loved the uniform, while others could not stand it. Jaqueline Mattson Baumgart expressed how she saw putting on that dress as a sign of success. “The first time I put that uniform on, I cried. Because what flooded in my mind was this little kid, at home, playing with the boys... I kind of stood there for a little bit after I was dressed, and I said, ‘Ah, this is it!’”⁴⁵ While Baumgart loved the uniform, others felt silly wearing a dress, as it was not a part of their normal wardrobe. “Since I grew up as a farm girl and was used to wearing blue jeans, when you put a skirt on that’s probably knee length, you feel like you’re undressed” described Katie Hortman⁴⁶. Nonetheless, the feminine dress was more acceptable for them to wear to play publicly, and stayed within the image that Wrigley so desired. Though the dress included the look that Wrigley desired, the women wearing a partially revealing uniform also brought people into the seats. “Fans were attracted by the skill of the women, not to mention their short skirts” mentioned a sports reporter of the time⁴⁷. The dress



Figure 3- Uniform from Grand Rapids Michigan⁴⁴

seemed more socially acceptable to some patrons, as feminine clothing was used to appease those who thought women should not be participating in the war effort.



Figure 4- Design for the league's patch⁴⁹

The construction of the dress included a full A-line skirt that reflected the ideal feminine silhouette of the time. There was a back yoke that slightly gathered sleeves, with buttons down the front that was similar to what the youth was wearing at the time. It had no pleats nor decorative fabrics as a way to preserve fabric for the war effort⁴⁸. There were two patches added to the sleeves to represent the league with a professionally branded image (figure 4) and a patch displaying their team name and city. The colors of the league were pastels that were accented with accessories in bold dark shades

of the same color⁵⁰. The team would alternate colors with a lighter pastel color or white dress at home games and a darker dress for away games. Though the dresses looked nice, they were not reliable to wear for competitive baseball games but the women were ready to take on such a challenge.

When advertising for the league, posters demonstrated how the dress would stay down while a player tried to leap and catch a ball (figure 5⁵¹). However, this was not reality as the dresses were known to accidentally flash audience members frequently, though players did wear shorts under the skirt⁵². The dress format was hard to work with, especially for pitchers. In a 1945 letter from the league to the Myers



Figure 5- Promotional poster for the Kenosha comets⁵¹

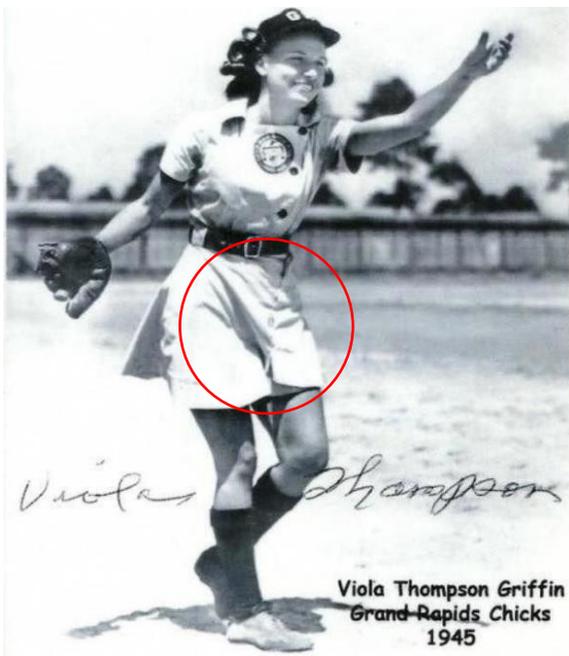


Figure 6- Baseball card of Viola Thompson Griffin⁵⁴

Company, one of the manufactures of the uniform: “the skirts . . . are satisfactory for every playing position with the exception of the pitcher, who must fold and pin the flare either from the right or left side, depending upon whether she is right or left-handed⁵³.” (figure 6).

As a result, from the start and end of the league, women started altering the uniform themselves. Since the skirt was so full, players would have to “fold over the sides of the skirt and pinning or sewing them in place.”⁵⁵

Players would create a pleat, which would help them lose six extra inches of fabric from the skirt. As a team, players

would discuss amongst themselves how to modify the uniform’s length, fullness, and decorative belt.

As the players were watched carefully on maintaining their makeup and hair, members of the league also were upheld to a high standard of maintaining their uniform. They had to keep the colors clean, though it would fade due to continuous washing after games. As the league began to lose money, they no longer could afford any professional laundering. Because of lapse in care, uniforms would start to show rips, tears, and be forced to mismatch buttons⁵⁶. The player’s uniforms had to undergo examinations, but though they were a struggle to wear, the uniform would not prevent them from still playing the game to the best of their ability. Even though they had to wear such a demeaning uniform in front of a crowd of hundreds of patrons, the women of the league took the challenge and devised it to fit their needs, so they could play to the best of their ability.

Now that players were prepared appearance wise, it was time to play ball. The leagues season consisted of 126 games that lasted from Memorial Day to Labor Day⁵⁷. The women engaged in six games a week and were paid between \$65 to \$125 a week⁵⁸. At the end of fifteen-week season, the women were paid anywhere from \$975- \$1875 a season, expenses of hotels and uniforms were included. However, the women were also expected to buy materials such as their own lipstick, blush, and anything else they needed to upkeep their hair and makeup. To compare how little this pay really was, in 1945 Lou Bourdreu was paid about \$25,000 a season⁵⁹. If an MLB player was not great like Bourdreu, on average the male major league baseball player was paid about \$11,197 a season⁶⁰. Nonetheless, to most these women it was not about the money, it was about playing a game they loved and could play just as well as any man. On top of that, this was the first time many women had seen a paycheck, in the first place.

Those who came to the game knew, “When the Girls of Summer played for pay, they proved women did not have to sacrifice their femineity to excel in a man’s world,” expressed Ken Sells, the AAGBL first president⁶¹. At the start, the women basically played modified softball, as the distance between the bases was a little longer, the ball was bigger, and teams had nine players on a side instead of the normal ten⁶². In addition, runners were able to take a lead off a base and steal⁶³. The Rockford Peaches were known for their stealing, and just like any baseball team, each team had their own personal hand signals. “[The audience] looked to [Dottie Ferguson] Key, famous for her base-stealing, to advance when Dorothy “Kammic” Kamenshek, steps up to bat. The two exchange signals. If Kameshek puts her hand on the end of the bat, it’s a hit, but if key slips her pigtail, she’s preparing to steal and Kamenshek will let the pitch pass” described a news reporter, as he watched the Rockford Peaches meticulously design their plays⁶⁴. With such a great system as this, the “Rockford’s lipstick leaguers” led with the highest

batting averages in 1949, 50, and 51⁶⁵. As time went on, the ball got smaller and base paths got longer, as the softball rules were a little too easy for the women of the league. Despite having dumbed down rules to start the league, the women performed in the game as in MLB men would. They were focused on the ball as soon as it slung from the pitcher's mound. Though they were women and in dresses, they were professional baseball players ready to play.

While taking part in a game, women had to play around the dress. Many women were focused on hitting a lot of home runs, so they would not have to slide on the dirt with their unprotected legs⁶⁶. As the women played well, injuries and fights were inevitable. The short skirt led to exposed legs. The injuries that were acquired were called a "strawberry" (Figure 7) As the women collected "strawberries," they were told to keep their attitude and body "pretty and polite," even though they were covered in blood, dirt, and pebbles. Taking such injuries during their games, would prove they were really playing the



*Figure 7- Chaperone attending to a "strawberry"*⁶⁷

game, along with being in a skirt like a lady. On top of the injuries from sliding, normal baseball collisions and fights occurred within the league regularly. Dolly Pearson Tesseine was the shortstop for the Daisies. During a game, the opposing pitcher came barreling in second base and spiked, or hit, her. "Next time you do that, I'm gonna jam the ball down your throat!" Tesseine threatened, which was not very lady-like of her. The pitcher then pushed Tesseine down when she came up to bat. Tesseine did not get hurt much that day, but in an exhibition, she later befell a hit right behind the ear by a pitcher⁶⁸. Players were not always safe on the field, but neither were the umpires. Pepper Paire Davis knocked down Lou Rymkus, a future professional football player, who was filling in as the umpire, during a slide to home⁶⁹. These women were not afraid

of some dirt nor a “strawberry” during the game. They welcomed such abrasions, since they came with the territory of being a good baseball player.

Though men attended games not expecting much from the women, they were pleasantly surprised by the drive women exhibited for the sport. “Maybe at first the men came out to see the legs, but they stuck around when they realized they were seeing a darn good brand of baseball” described the 1945 *Time* magazine⁷⁰. Oddly, people were stunned with how legitimately these women took the game, after all that was these women’s job. Just like any male, they loved the sport. A member of the Society for American Baseball Research watched some old film from games and described that “The way they were throwing the ball was unbelievable. It looked as though they were as good as men.”⁷¹ It must have been so incredibly frustrating that no matter what these women did or how good they were, they were always compared to men. Multiple managers had been known to say if only a player of the AAGBL was a man, they were so good they would have given them \$50,000 to play in the major leagues⁷². If only she was a man, she would have been shipped off to war and not be playing for them in the first place.

On top of having to play the game well, the women had to find a way to be entertaining. This was a way to get more people to attend their games. Pretty, June Peppas, of the Muskegon Lassies, would do a little shimmy when walking up to bat. This gimmick became known as “Peppa’s wiggle.”⁷³ Since the AAGBL was not just about baseball, but keeping people’s morale high, the women needed to find ways to keep people in seats, and achieved this with gimmicks and spectacle. Despite having to do such gimmicks, the women were told to ‘When you play ball, play hard and play for all you are worth,’ and that is just what they did⁷⁴.

After a game was done, the women still had a watchful eye on them as they walked off the field and later out of the locker room. Good sportsmanship was required on and off the field.

Their demeanor had to align with etiquette standards established. They were not allowed to be a poor loser, nor a boastful winner. If their team won, women were told to “control your emotions,” “win gracefully and modestly,” and to not show off⁷⁵. Though they were told not to boast, the women were told to show off their “strawberries,” dirt, and sweat after the game for better exposure of what happened on the field. However, when coming out of the locker room in their normal attire, women were encouraged to take the time after the game to be particularly cleaned up and have a ritual to complete. This was encouraged not only in their contract, but also the women’s manual. This post-game routine was to help their health and appearance. The steps they were told to do were take a shower well, soap the skin, apply makeup, and check cuts. They were advised to tell their coach about any big aches or pains post-game. Furthermore, those in charge of the women wanted them to “Guard your health and welfare.”⁷⁶ In spite of the league’s suggestions, the women were already putting their health and welfare on the line, by playing on the field everyday out of adoration for the sport. They risked getting heavily injured with the clothing they had to wear, but in the end, it was worth it each team member.

As years went by, the league began to decline. In 1944, Wrigley sold the franchise to Art Meyeroff, his Chicago advertising man⁷⁷. The 1950 management and operations transferred to local owners; thus, began the decline of the All-Americans Girl’s Professional Baseball League. When the war ended there was no more rationing of gas, therefore people could travel as they chose and even watch major league baseball games on the television. Since the league started to find it difficult to recruit women who could throw overhand, in 1954, only five teams of the league remained⁷⁸. Those, who lasted to the end never, got their last week’s pay check. Seeing that the war ended and their loved ones returned home, women put down their bats and gloves to move on to start families, even though most of them were still in their athletic prime⁷⁹.

As the league fizzled out, no one could forget the league's stars. Though there were some excellent athletes, the league only kept tabs on those who played ten games in a season, but even then, they did not keep a quality track of the record they did collect⁸⁰. A plethora of people were impressed with the women's vigor and skill. However, the women were still never taken as seriously because of their sex. Dorothy Kamenshek, the left-handed pitcher of the Rockford Peaches, was said to easily have made it to the Major Leagues, "if she was a man."⁸¹ Though some were held back because they were not a male athlete, some went on to achieve their separate goals outside of athletics. Dottie Ferguson Key, also a Rockford Peach, opened a donut shop in West Frankfort, Illinois called "Dixie Cream Donut Shop."⁸² Key described how "Without [the AAGBL], I could never have traveled and seen as much as I did. I met all kinds of people. Baseball made my life. Now, I've left part of me there for history."⁸³ Other members went on to receive their college education, start other athletic careers, teach at schools, and even emerge as a nun⁸⁴. At the end, these women were prepared to make their mark on history by intensely playing some baseball games, then hung up their bats.

These women came to work and they made that absolutely prevalent from day one. They came to play, and they did so while wearing lipstick. The women of the All-American Girl's Professional Baseball League were expected to play like the men but dress and act like ladies, with of course the help of the extra training from charm school. Their contracts contained crazy rules that the women had to abide by, unlike any MLB players of their time. Overall, the women were underpaid, compared to what the men of the MLB received. On top of that, the women had to play in a dress that was hard to move around, sewn like a youth style of the time, led to many injuries, and were hard to upkeep. They were under continuous surveillance, whether that be their chaperones, the league, or the country. The players were expected to win their games, while

also be entertaining to get people in seats. They had to adhere to such a high standard, on and off the field. The women were continuously compared to men, and were not taken as seriously because of this continuous comparison.

Nonetheless, the women of the All-American Girl's Professional Baseball League showed up and played the game to their best ability. They played hard for their team and their country. They performed to bring a smile to their patrons faces, no matter their age. They strived to take the game extremely seriously, and they were not afraid to get dirty or hurt in order to compete. At the end of the day, they did not care about their uniform, the lipstick they applied, or the scars they obtained. These women just wanted to play baseball, and they were darn good at doing so. Yes, "There is no crying in baseball," but there were very talented athletes who served their country.

Endnotes

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