

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2017 SUMMER SEASON

*Baseball and softball, they say, are games of statistics. While the **Montgomery County Senior Softball League** does not keep individual statistics, we do, however, recognize the outstanding accomplishments and notable events that keep us all brimming with pride. Here are some of the things that have occurred or that have been accomplished by players and teams that make for fond memories in the season that has passed.*

## The 2017 Summer Season

- Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017 – *OPENING DAY*... It didn't take long for the first triple play of the season. In the first game between the Monarchs and the Magicians, the stellar infield of the Monarchs pulled off the classic 5-4-3 triple play – hot grounder to Joe Kelly who tagged third, flipped a perfect throw to Bruce Williams at second, who relayed a perfect throw to Bill Ambrulavage at first. It wasn't even close.
- Thursday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 – *Maniacs vs. Mystics*. The Maniacs recorded what might be a first in the MCSSL. The game went into an extra inning. A Maniacs runner occupied second base to start the inning in accordance with league rules. The first pitch thrown by pitcher Jimmy Flynn was popped up for the first out. Flynn's second pitch of the inning resulted in a hard line drive back to the mound. Jimmy snagged it, pivoted, and threw out the runner who had broken for third. It was an inning-ending double play. It was the first time anyone could recall a two-pitch/three-out inning.
- Tuesday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017 – *Field Maintenance Team vs. Mother Nature*. The drenching thunderstorms that raged through the Hatfield area overnight left little doubt that all games would be cancelled due to unplayable field conditions. By 7:30 a.m., however, everyone who called the *MCSSL Hotline* was stunned to hear Tommy Lane telling them that the field team was up before the crack of dawn working on the field and the games were on! To say the boys outdid themselves is an understatement. Here's how it went. Before 6:00 a.m., Tommy Lane, Jimmy Flynn, and Tommy Dougherty were already at

the field assessing the situation. They asked themselves, *What would Tommy Corcoran do?* And the answer was, *Play ball, baby!* The boys went to work. Now, a few weeks earlier in the season, Roger Rinker went to the sawmill and loaded up his pick-up with sawdust, brought it to the field, and along with Dan Brady, Tommy C. and Tommy D., they emptied the truck shovel by shovel and bagged up the whole truckload of sawdust for future use and stacked the small mountain of bags at the shed. Today was the day. The boys dragged bag after bag to the field. Some time prior to that, Jeff Jordan had taken some time to figure out the somewhat complicated method to operate the league's shop vac/water pump, and took some extra effort to train all the boys in how to effectively use it when the waters flooded the playing areas of the field. On this morning, thanks to Jeff's training, the boys squeegeed the standing water as they pumped it away. By 7:10 a.m., Tommy L. went to the *Hotline* to announce the games were on, then went immediately back to work. By 7:50 a.m. the field was starting to shape up, but the boys weren't sure it would actually be ready by nine o'clock. Around 8:00 a.m., Jimmy Flynn cranked up the reliable Howie Schwartz "Terminator" tractor and started to drag the field. The earth around the infield, however, was still much of a quagmire. But the boys weren't going to be deterred. As the tractor got stuck in the slop, Tommy L. and Tommy D. pushed it along through the mud while Jimmy steered it. Sometime shortly after 8:15 a.m., the boys were still lining the field and mopping up more water along the foul lines as the players started arriving. Tommy L. approached the two managers. He was very apologetic for not having the field ready by nine, and asked them if they would mind delaying the start-up of the game for another half hour. Tommy L. went back to the *Hotline* at 8:45 a.m. to announce the delay. The boys continued to work their butts off. The field was finally declared safe, it was *play ball, baby!* and the first game commenced around 9:30 a.m. All the players from that first game and the next two games were beside themselves that they were able to play at all. The field prep team pulled off yet another unanticipated miracle that day, even gave us some snippets to laugh along. But better yet, they gave us one spectacular season highlight to prove once again that it ain't only about playing softball. It's about the league's credo. Because this was the one day of the past summer season when not only did all six of the teams that played that day have fun, but all six teams that day won!

*(Note: Throughout the summer season, the field prep team out-performed themselves on several more occasions similar to the above described event. Each one was a highlight by itself. Hats off to our guys who did one tremendous job this summer making our field ready for play sometimes against all the odds!)*

- Wednesday, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 – A LEAGUE MILESTONE. It was a historical first for the MCSSL. There are only two remaining original league members who started way back in 1999, one of whom is Angelo Malizia. Before the Blue Division game started, both teams stopped, gathered around Angelo, and sang Happy Birthday. It seemed like only yesterday that Angelo jumped on the opportunity to play with a fledgling group of senior softballers just starting out to try to form a league. But here he was, almost twenty years later, still playing. He's the first MCSSL active player to reach the age of 90. Angelo celebrated his milestone achievement by banging out a hit in his first at-bat.
- Monday, August 21, 2017 – *The only event that could eclipse a summer game.* The Mazeroskis and the Mays RED Division teams were scheduled right around the time of the historic solar eclipse, the first one to occur in the U.S. in close to a century. The Mazeroskis' sagacious manager, Bob Weaver, was well prepared. Bob had ordered a requisite supply of special glasses for his players to view the event. Everyone was awaiting the start of the eclipse, anticipating that the day would turn into night. It didn't. The boys kept playing right through the event, no different than any other game under a cloudy sky. Bob's guys, however, commemorated the event by posing for a team photo wearing the protective glasses.
- Tuesday, September 5, 2017 – *Revenge of the Magicians... Another Classic Triple Play for the Record.* Missiles vs. Magicians. Back on opening day, the Magicians were victim to the season's first triple play. First two batters for the Missiles reach base safely. The Magicians' stellar infield turned the tables. Hot grounder to Rich Server who tagged third, fired a strike to Terry Leach at second, who completed the classic 5-4-3 triple play firing another strike to Tom Walsh.

- *The Long Ball* – Hats off to all our guys who managed to sock a home run over the fence during regular or travel team league play at the Hatfield School Road Park field or Sellersville Field. They are: Ted Hoffman of the Missiles (6); Ron Geib of the Missiles (5); Tom Levins of the Missiles (3); Joe Kelly of the Monarchs (1); Bob Miller of the Musketeers (6); Don Muir of Marauders (1).

### ***“It ain’t over ‘til it’s over!” – Yogi Berra***

*Here a few memorable games from our summer season that demonstrate why we have so much fun playing senior softball.*

- Thursday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017 – *The catch of the season...* The Mountaineers and the Missiles were engaged in a pretty typical senior softball game – a lot of hits, a lot of base runners, a few mis-played balls, and a few nifty plays in the field. The game had a sort of storybook ending. The home team Mountaineers went up 9 to 6 going into the top of the seventh. If only the Mountaineers could get by the bottom of the line-up and avoid the Missiles’ heavy hitters. But it wasn’t to be. Banging out key hits, the Missiles managed to score two runs while the Mountaineers managed to get two outs. Just like the classic poem about *Casey at the Bat*, if only the Missiles could get one of their “Sultan’s of Swat” up at the plate. It happened. They loaded the bases with two outs. Tying run on third, go-ahead run on second. Ted Hoffman blasted a towering shot to deep left that looked like a sure homer. The Mountaineers’ Tom Wiley backed up to the fence, braced himself, and timed his leap perfectly. Tom snagged the ball over the top of the fence, brought it back in clutched in his glove, robbing Ted of a grand slam home run and securing the Mountaineers’ one-run victory on what was certainly the best game-ending catch of the season.

**AND...**

*THE NUMBER ONE HIGHLIGHT OF THE SEASON* – Somewhere up there in the bleachers of heaven, Yogi Berra stills continues to watch the gang here in Hatfield. On opening day of the MCSL this year, Yogi brought along a few new friends to watch the games. One of them used to play right here at School Road Park.

- Monday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017 – The newly formed Blue Division kicked off the 2017 season with two bright and early games. In the second game, the Mavericks brought along a very sentimental piece of previously retired equipment to pay special tribute to a special guy who used to be one of their teammates. The piece was old, worn, discolored, much used but never abused, still un-shattered, and the grip around the handle was mostly ragged. Somehow it had survived a whole lot of years of constant use by its previous owner. It was placed along the home dugout fence, but unlike the stockpile of metal bats already standing there, this one was made of wood. Three Maverick teammates, when each of them came up to bat for the first time in the game, chose to use the old wooden bat instead of the league's standard metal lumber. Georgie Hart, Bill Bogel, and John McCann all banged out hits. Then the bat was retired for good. It was an appropriate tribute to the guy who probably had more than a thousand hits with that bat – Ben Modica.