

SENIOR SOFTBALL SNIPPETS... SO MUCH MORE IN 2021

Vic Zoldy implored us to have fun playing softball in this league. There is no better medicine in life than laughter. If we can't laugh at ourselves playing softball as if we were still kids, then it isn't fun. After a year-long interruption caused by the pandemic, here we are once again with some of our favorite lighter moments from the league's history that makes us all laugh.

506. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania proposes a legal revision to "... prohibition of cell phone usage while driving..."* White Division Marathons vs. Monarchs. Umpiring is the newest issue. Leave it to the MCSSL umpiring experiment to hit the news. Now, first of all, we've got to define what is meant by "driving." The State of PA is considering adding, "... umpiring in the MCSSL..." in their definition of "driving", since it is being considered that senior softball umpires "drive" the progression of senior gaming. Vinnie Torno was umpiring at first base when he was knocked out of the game, a first for the MCSSL. Vinnie was on the field near the fence adjacent to the first base bag minutes before the start-up of the game. Steve Shelly laced a batting practice line drive. Vinnie was on his cell phone not paying attention to "driving" when the ball struck him directly on the calf (OUCH!) Vinnie lasted one inning before having to be removed from the game. As Vinnie was leaving the field, Steve was heard to say, "I just don't like umpires who don't pay attention to the game! Stay off the damn cell phone!" A spokesperson for the Commonwealth advised the MCSSL it will get back to the league before the end of the 2025 season.

507. Senior Softball Snippet: *A glimpse into how the MCSSL farm system works...* Everyone on the White Division Musketeers knew that Bobby Zolad's assignment to their team during May was only temporary until Bobby could be named to a team permanent. His teammates all boo-hoo'ed when Bobby was called up to play for the Magicians. The Musketeer's Manager Scott Kowit consoled his team by saying, "Look, guys. You all knew that Bobby was the 'player to be maimed later'." Magicians Manager Wayne Bailey commented, "Bobby who?"

508. Senior Softball Snippet: *The new scoreboard causes a flap...* Seems that most players like the new double-scoreboards. Except that they seem to “flap” in the breeze. The retort pointed out that the old single-scoreboard (same size) also flapped in the breeze, but nobody ever complained. The re-retort was that it is now more difficult to try to watch two boards flapping in the breeze rather than one. The re-re-retort was that you only need to look at the one that is displaying the inning you’re in. The re-re-re-retort was that most players can’t remember which inning they’re in. And it goes on and on... All the more reason for the MCSSL to consider erecting a domed stadium for future play. Or an electronic center field scoreboard.

509. Senior Softball Snippet: *MCSSL Hall-of-Famer records another league first...* In the entire twenty-two-year history of the MCSSL, there has never been any record of a batter hit by a pitcher. That is, up until this year. Well, sort of. You decide. Hall-of-Famer Ray Forlano of the Musketeers had been performing exceptionally on the pitcher’s mound. Except this time, he was sitting on the Vic Zoldy bench watching another game. Bill Klementisz of the Mystics was batting, and lofted a foul ball up and over the backstop nearly hitting Ray. Thinking the umpire threw in the back-up ball, Bill dug in for the next pitch. Ray retrieved the foul ball and threw it over the backstop to return it to play. Bill readied himself for the next pitch. The next thing he knew, Bill was plunked by the ball thrown by Ray. It was the first time in MCSSL history that a batter in the box was hit by a ball from the hands of a pitcher. And a Hall-of-Famer no less.

510. Senior Softball Snippet: *The official list of MCSSL Senior Softball Excuses...* One of the most frequently asked questions by MCSSL managers is, “... how in the hell did you miss that ball?” Here is one of the classic exchanges between manager and player. This one was offered by Steve Czyzewicz of the Maniacs... without identifying the player, of course.

Player: “I was blinded by the bright light of the sun.”

Steve: “It’s a cloudy day. There’s no sun out.”

Player: “OMG! I’ve waited all my life to see a UFO and I missed it!”

Steve: “No. The only thing you missed was the ball.”

SPECIAL EDITION OF SNIPPETS

We finally got back on track in the summer of 2021 and began resuming the league activities that we all love and enjoy. One of the highlights of every year is the annual charity event with the Phillies Ball Girls. It's entertaining, that's for sure. If only the fans in the stands could overhear the comments that emanate from the ranks of the old-timers. It's our own brand of senior humor. Here's our special edition of snippets from this year's charity event.

511. Senior Softball Snippet: *The tortoise and the hare?* With a speedy Phillies Ball Girl on first base (BTW... they're ALL speedy!), shortstop Tom Lane fielded a hot grounder up the middle. Tommy spun around, instinct took over, and he raced toward the bag at second, narrowly tagging it before the runner arrived. It certainly was the highlight of Tom's day as he declared, "I finally beat a girl to second base!"

512. Senior Softball Snippet: *About as scary as a teddy bear at bedtime...* Lew Hoffman was on first base when the next batter ripped a hard grounder that was quickly fielded by the Phillies girl playing first base. Lew's instinct was to break up the double play... grandpop style. He gave out a big, scary yell at the fielders. Who, of course, were completely unfazed by the grumpy yelp and quickly completed the double play. "What are you doing, Lew?" the bench yelled. Lew replied, "I tried to scare her." Back came the reply, "You certainly did that. Scared her into turning a double play."

513. Senior Softball Snippet: *Tell it like it is, why don't we...* Paul Gibbons was observing the game from behind the backstop. "You know," Paul began to comment, "I've been playing in this event every year since the league started it. I really think these girls are getting younger and better and better every year." Which, of course, turned everyone's head until somebody finally pointed out that, "... no, we're just getting older and worser and worser every year."

514. Senior Softball Snippet: *As good a reason as any, we guess...* Ken Moyer was among this year's spectators instead of playing in the annual games as he has since the inception of the event. "How come you're not playing this year, Ken?" he was asked. Ken replied, "I didn't want to get more embarrassed than I was the last time."

515. Senior Softball Snippet: *I don't need no stinkin' closer...* The first game of the doubleheader was scheduled for nine innings. Through eight, Phillies Ball Girls' pitcher Hall-of-Famer Gordy Detweiler was asked if he needed any bullpen relief yet going into the ninth. "Hell no," Gordy replied. "But... I could use some oxygen."

516. Senior Softball Snippet: *Get 'em while you can...* It was the bottom of the ninth inning of the first game, and the old-timers were down quite a few runs. Manager Wayne Bailey encouraged his team to keep battling, reminding them that, "... we can score as many runs as we want, guys..." Somebody responded, "You mean... as many runs as we can, don't you?" They did. Wasn't enough.

517. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Phillies don't have a closer and neither do we...* The pitching rotation for the old-timers was worse than watching the real Phillies. Rich Cubbage took the mound on several occasions. After his third inning of pitching was finally over, Rich came into the dugout and commented, "My record is still intact. Five runs scored in every inning I've pitched."

518. Senior Softball Snippet: *Sure-handed as anybody...* That's Tom Levins. Drifting under a routine fly ball to left center field, Tom reached with his classic one-handed snag, which quickly bounced out of his glove to the ground. Don't see that too often. After the inning, manager Wayne Bailey asked Tom what happened on that fly ball. "I just wanted to give the kids a chance," Tom answered. Wayne replied, "Well, you did. We're down six runs. You just gave them a chance to see why they should use two hands to catch a ball."

519. Senior Softball Snippet: *According to the rules of baseball, the umpire is in play...* Just to illustrate how hard the Phillies Ball Girls were hitting the ball today, here's the best example. Gary Krause was the third base umpire for the event. Gary took his normal, routine, and safe position just inside the foul line beyond third base. In came the pitch... and out went the pitch... a line shot right at Gary. Who attempted to get out of the way, but because his senior reflexes aren't as acute as they used to be, almost got obliterated by the line drive. It's lucky Gary can still jump (albeit it was only a few inches, but high enough). The ball went right between his legs into the outfield. Still, down went Gary onto his back. Fortunately, the only thing hurt was his

ego. Now Gary, who normally wears a cup as a player, wasn't wearing a cup as an umpire. *Why bother?* he rationalized. Then again, this is the first time Gary has ever umpired against girls.

520. Senior Softball Snippet: *Getting close to that time of day...* It was deep into the second game of the doubleheader. The boys dragged themselves off the field and into the dugout. The ball girls finished their in-between innings warm-ups and set themselves to play ball. Nobody from the old-tymers bench walked up to the plate. As a matter of fact, nobody was on deck and nobody even had a bat in their hands. "YO! Let's go, let's go!" shouted umpire Ray Nyahay. "Let's get a batter up there!" Noting that the time was just after noon, someone in the stands yelled, "It's probably nap time for most of them!" Somebody finally dragged himself up to the plate. But most of the guys stayed in the dugout and just nodded and yawned.

... AND AFTER THAT THE PIZZA CAME