

SENIOR SOFTBALL SNIPPETS... MORE YET IN 2018

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. Here we go again with some of our favorite lighter moments from the league's history that makes us all laugh as we move forward into Calendar Year 2018.

326. Senior Softball Snippet: *Pitchers ain't expected to hit, anyway...* John Packel of the Orange Shirt Team is known for his legendary pitching expertise, but maybe not so much for his batting proficiency. One of John's winter teammates, it seems, pointed out that he had hit into quite a few double plays last summer. John responded back that he had also grounded into a triple play near the end of the summer season. John just wanted his winter teammates to know that, regardless of what they thought, he didn't always hit into double plays.

327. Senior Softball Snippet: *If you think lemmings follow their leader...* It was the bottom of the sixth inning. The visiting Gold Shirt Team was holding onto a three-run lead behind the pitching of none other than Hall-of-Famer Gordy Detweiler. The first Red Shirt batter grounded out. The second batter singled to right. The third batter hit a hard grounder to the shortstop, who flipped to second for the force out. "That's three!" exclaimed Gordy. "Let's get a couple more runs," Gordy added, as he started to trot off the field. Like lemmings headed for the cliff, the whole Gold Shirt Team started the trot to the bench following their fearless leader. The Red Shirt runner alertly took second base. "Wait a minute!" Red Shirt manager Georgie Schreuder yelled, walking out toward the mound. "That's only two outs!" Gordy shot back, "No it's not. That's three." Georgie shot back, "How can it be three if we've only had three batters and one of them is on second base?" The startled Gold Shirt lemmings stopped in their tracks. Well... for the next several minutes a "spirited discussion" took place about how many outs there actually were. Gordy finally conceded there were only two outs. "All right," Gordy addressed the lemmings. "Let's get the third out." The lemmings followed their leader back onto the field. "Runner goes back to first," Gordy motioned. "Wait a minute!" Georgie yelled again. "The runner stays on second. Just because you guys had a mass senior moment doesn't mean WE did!" Well... for the

next several minutes another “spirited discussion” took place about whether the runner should stay on second or return to first. Justifiably, it was finally agreed that the runner would stay on second and the inning resumed. One pitch later the inning was over. Just goes to show that senior softballers, just like lemmings, blindly go over cliffs and let their leader do the thinking.

328. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Corcoran Excuse...* The field improvement project at School Road Park, right after the end of the summer season, uncovered a surprising revelation. Field Operations Director Tommy Lane and a few of the boys from the field maintenance team were on hand during the renovation to learn more about field grooming. During the work it was discovered that the distance between third base and home plate was actually 66 feet instead of the standard 65 feet like all the other bases. The rest of the diamond was perfectly aligned. Now, Tommy Lane, understanding that this slightest of measurement was really no concern of the senior league, decided that it wasn't worth the additional expense to the league to dig up third base and reposition it. Everybody agreed to leave it as it was. That is, except Tommy Corcoran, who claimed, “... that's obviously the only reason why I was ever thrown out at home plate!”

329. Senior Softball Snippet: *Conservation of Energy... a basic tenet of physics and senior softball...* We all learned about it back in high school, although most of us have forgotten it by now. Anyway... Bryan Wood of the Red Shirt Team was in an awful batting slump. The first three at bats resulted in three consecutive third-strike foul balls into the net and ceiling. Bryan returned to the bench with that all-familiar indelible smile. “Well,” he said to his teammates. “On the bright side, I certainly didn't tire myself out running the bases today.”

330. Senior Softball Snippet: *Just a little short yet again...* Mike Destefano, hard-hitting manager of the Orange Shirt Team, whacked yet another long line drive that was caught by an outfielder yet again... and making another out... yet again. A frustrated Mike came back to the bench shaking his head. “I can't buy a hit.” One of his teammates said, “Keep that swing, Mike. You can't hit it any better than that.” Mike replied, “I used to get those over the fence. Now all I have is warning track power.”

331. Senior Softball Snippet: *We ain't as young as we think we used to be...* Ray Forlano was enjoying his twentieth season as one of the league's original members. Ray was managing the Maroon Shirt Team, which had been playing well until now. The team wasn't doing so good at the moment, as a sequence of errors just took away a comfortable lead after Ray's pitching had held them in check. Ray was heard mumbling as he stomped back to the mound, "You know, it looks like next year I'm going to have to draft a younger team." One of his teammates replied, "If you're talking about yourself, Ray, that shouldn't be much of a problem at all."

332. Senior Softball Snippet: *But he can't hear as good as he once could...* Speaking of Ray Forlano, he still amazes a lot of guys with his playing prowess. Ray was turning in another fine fielding performance for the Maroon Shirt Team, and when he came up to bat, the Purple Shirt gang yelled, "Here comes the All Star!" Ray stepped out of the box and yelled back, "Who are you calling an 'Old Star'?" Do we need to say more?

333. Senior Softball Snippet: *Nyuk, Nyuk, Nyuk... ambi-dexteros he ain't...* The Gold Shirt Team sent the venerable Gordy Detweiler to the mound once again. Gordy strutted out and started the next inning. Four pitches later, the lead-off batter was on first base with a walk. Lucky for the Gold Shirts, the league rule allows only one walk per inning. The second batter of the inning watched as Gordy missed the strike zone on the next eight consecutive pitches. Third baseman Gary Krause finally yelled over to Gordy, "Did'ya ever consider that you might be left-handed?" The wily Gordy replied, "No, I'm not. Why?" It must have gotten Gordy's attention. He threw the next pitch right down the middle for a strike. Gordy turned to Gary. "See? I told you so."

334. Senior Softball Snippet: *A new rule proposal for the MCSSL...* Among the most of notables this winter season so far has been the lack of run production by the league in general. There have been a lot of low scoring, one run games. Mark Rosen of the Maroon Shirt Team came up with an idea for a new rule proposal. Under the current rules, only one walk per inning is allowed. Mark asked, "What happens to that potential walk if it isn't collected?" Mark

rationalized, “There’s an easy solution to the run scoring deficiency. Make the un-collected walks cumulative. If nobody walks in the first inning, then you’re allowed two walks in the second inning. If none again in the second, then three in the third. Etcetera. A team could end up accumulating seven walks by the last inning.” Now whether that proposal is going to increase run production remains to be seen. But Mark is going to submit it anyway and call it the “Rosen Walk-Banking Rule.” Mark hopes to make a name for himself in the annals of winter play.

335. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Hubble Telescope would probably help, too...* One of the ongoing problems in the winter league is the scoreboard. Not that it doesn’t work. It’s just that it is so hard to see from the field. Many a discussion is overheard regarding what inning it is. The other day the Black Shirt Team infielders were observed all squinting to read the scoreboard. “It’s the fifth, right?” someone asked. “No. It’s the sixth. Can’t you see that?” came the reply. “It looks like a five to me,” came the response. “You need to get your glasses changed,” it was recommended. “What I need is binoculars, not new glasses.” What we need is a new scoreboard. You know, one with big numbers like those senior cell phones. Wonder if they make scoreboards for seniors?

Stick around. These guys have only started. There’ll be more for sure...

336. Senior Softball Snippet: *Speaking of lemmings and senior brain farts...* It was a typical winter’s morning game at nine a.m. Mike DeStefano and Georgie Schreder, respective managers of the Orange Shirt Team (“F” on the schedule) and the Red Shirt Team (“I” on the schedule), were ready to do battle. The schedule read... “FI” ... (*home team listed first*). The field was all set up by 8:30 a.m. and the players started warming up. Georgie reached into his bag for his glove. There on top was a cellophaned ball. A game ball. *We must be home team*, Georgie thought. He put the ball on the bench, advising his pitcher that the game ball was ready to go. Mike saw Georgie put out the game ball on the bench. *Ah-h-h... they must be the home team*, Mike thought, never questioning. The game commenced with the Red Shirts taking the field and the Orange Shirts coming up to bat to start the game. An hour and a half later, the game

was over and another score went into the books. It wasn't until the following morning that both Mike and Georgie realized the mistake. Both senior fellows admitted the blunder. The comedy of it all was that, in addition to Mike and Georgie, there were twenty other players who never picked up on the boo-boo. Talk about lemmings and senior brain farts.

337. Senior Softball Snippet: *Modesty will get you everywhere...* The Maroon Shirt Team put on the big shift to the right defending against the batter who was known only to pull the ball to the right side. Third baseman Joe Laskowski shifted position into the shortstop's area, not expecting any business, as the batter had never hit a ball in that direction that anyone could ever remember. But hey, this is softball. Anything can happen. There were two outs, so Joe relaxed. In came the pitch. A line drive came screaming into the gap vacated by Joe, catching everyone by surprise, most of all Joe. He recovered quickly, stretching out his glove to make a spectacular backhand snag of the ball ala snow cone style right before it hit the glass. His teammates erupted. A modest Joe was overheard saying, "I *had* to catch that ball. I wasn't ready to make a throw."

338. Senior Softball Snippet: *Redemption...* Some say it was a brain fart, but Stan Walters of the Maroon Shirt Team said it was a tweaked hamstring. With runners on first and second and nobody out, Stan came up to the plate (although later, someone said Stan was overheard saying he thought there was one out). Stan hit a hard grounder to third, and the Black Shirt Team commenced to pull off a triple play. Stan was noticed to be running at half speed down to first base. When the inning ended, Stan announced to his teammates that he thought he might have tweaked a hamstring, and that was why he trotted down to first. His teammates weren't buying it. They suggested he might not have only tweaked the muscle in his leg, but also the muscle between his ears. Stan redeemed himself, though. He drove in the winning run later in the game, and all was forgiven.

339. Senior Softball Snippet: *Can you hear me now? Or why I'm now singing soprano...* Tommy Corcoran of the Gold Shirt Team is back in the snippet news again. Seems Tommy was playing shortstop when a laser-guided ground ball was unexpectedly and inappropriately caught

in the place where you hope a ground ball is not placed when the place is not the pocket of your glove. Despite seeing fireworks and all sorts of star spangled banners flashing as the grounder brought Tommy to his knees, he managed to squeeze the ball between his legs and recover it, throwing the runner out at second base before that all too familiar pain registered in his brain reminding him why some ball players routinely use that crouch-shaped seldom utilized sports equipment device designed principally to preserve the precious family jewels (all these thoughts went instantly through his head). But on the brighter side, a miracle happened. It was said that Tommy, in addition to contemplating asking the choir master at church to move him over to the ladies' soprano section, suddenly had an unexpected revelation. When he yelped, he actually heard himself.

340. Senior Softball Snippet: *Only Gordy could get away with it...* The game had just ended, and Georgie Schreader gathered up his gear and exited the indoor court. As he sat on the bench to pack up, it seems that Gordy Detweiler, Jim Binsberger, and a few other “patriarchs” of the winter league were engaged in a serious discussion about aging. Gordy must have been holding counsel, because the “chiefs” all nodded in agreement each time Gordy puffed on the peace pipe and invoked the great spirit in the sky. As Georgie was changing, Gordy turned and asked, “By the way, George. How old are you?” Georgie smiled. “I’ll be seventy this year,” Georgie reverently replied. Gordy nodded approval. “You’re really getting up there in age, aren’t you?” How could Georgie respond to that?

341. Senior Softball Snippet: *Only the Pyramids last forever...* Gordy Detweiler is not very well known for his trend-setting fashion-style acumen (although some day future archeologists who dig up his paint truck might herald it as a find equal to the pyramids). Anyway, Gordy showed up for a game all set to play, decked out in his gold-shirted uniform and signature winter shorts that highlighted his signature knobby knees. Now, Gordy is by no means a fashion expert, but he was wearing a paint-stained, frayed, tattered and torn painter’s jacket that the kids in South Beach would probably kill for to wear. A real relic! Knowing it’s potential fashion value, Gordy was reluctant to take it off and leave it on the spectators’ bench like all the other guys who left their jackets. “Do you think somebody might steal this?” Gordy asked the whole gang, most

of whom were all waiting to play the next game. Down at the other end of the facility was a herd of toddlers playing kick-the-ball while all the mommies watched. “Don’t worry, Gordy,” the boys advised. “We’ll keep an eye on your jacket in case one of those little thieves tries to steal it!” Gordy felt a whole lot better knowing he could depend upon the boys to watch his precious jacket. It worked. After the game, Gordy’s jacket was still there, safe on the bench. Imagine that...

AND HERE ARE A FEW FROM THE KICKOFF MEETING...

342. Senior Softball Snippet: *Murphy’s Law MCSSL style...* At the annual kickoff meeting, Joe Kelly and Georgie Schreder were all set up to start their power point presentations. Murphy’s Law, of course, was a part of the morning’s agenda. Everything had been set up with the computer and the projector, just waiting for the button to be pushed. They pushed it. It didn’t work. Right away it begged the question, *How many MCSSL senior softballers does it take to figure out how to turn on the machines?* The answer: *Nobody knows, since about a hundred and fifty of us technically-challenged seniors were at a loss as to why it wouldn’t start.* Oh, well. Thank goodness there was a youngster at the church who got it started. (Yeah, but we bet he couldn’t play softball as good as us!)

343. Senior Softball Snippet: *Move over John McCann...* Speaking of Joe and Georgie, the kickoff meeting made a little history. It was the first time in the recent saga of the MCSSL that John McCann, the league’s all-time windiest orator, did not take the podium to deliver a diatribe. (Not that the audience was saddened, mind you.) But the boys in the listening audience weren’t about to be disappointed. Joe and Georgie both picked up the slack presenting their own brands of oratory by delivering poignant messages on the wonderfulness of being senior softballers and their history. Both Joe and Georgie are awaiting the results as to who will inherit John’s windy mantle.

344. Senior Softball Snippet: *As good as any excuse can get...* Speaking of John McCann, he was finally apprised of the fundamental reason why he has been such a lousy pitcher all these years in the MCSSL. After learning the details of the field renovation project at the kickoff meeting, as presented by Tommy Lane, John announced that he was vindicated. All his pitches of the past were “undirected” because home plate was not properly lined up with the pitcher's mound, which was not lined up with second base, which was not lined up with center field. John was quoted after the meeting, "How could *anyone* expect me to pitch well under these outrageous circumstances? I KNEW it wasn't my fault!"

345. Senior Softball Snippet: *As good as any excuse can get...* It was announced at the kickoff meeting by Tommy Lane that Jeff Jordan will no longer be a member of the Field Maintenance Team due to his re-locating to West Chester. When Tommy made the announcement, you could have heard a pin drop. There was pure panic in the eyes of the rest of the field team members. Jeff was the only one who was capable of operating the very complicated shop-vac water-sucking-up machine, and now one of them was going to have to take on that tremendous responsibility. Tommy was able to assuage their fears, though. He assured his team that with the new renovations to the field, that the machine would probably never need to be used again, and that the renovation project was one of the reasons Jeff waited until they were completed before moving out of the area. A great sigh of relief was heard reverberating in the halls of Calvary Church, the converts singing their praise that all was going to be well at School Road Park for the upcoming 2018 season. Everyone is standing by...

... *STICK AROUND, THE SUMMER AIN'T EVEN STARTED YET...*