

NATIONAL NEWS

National Little League—70 years of memories

Taken from an article in the Daily Colonist
May 1953

The happiness of a birthday party... the pride of a pair of long pants... The nervousness of the first day of school. That was Sunday May 17th 1953, for the lucky tadpoles who make up the four little league baseball teams.

Sunday was opening day for the kids and there was a crowd of almost 1500 people at the little league park on Hillside Ave. Mom and Dad were there of course, but there were a lot of people who came just to see how much baseball these kids could play, and the youngsters performed nobly.

Sure the kids were proud and happy. You could see it in the way they looked at their spanking new uniforms, wondering whether it was really true, and you could see them trying to hide the proud smiles that snuck out on their faces the first time they heard their names announced on the public address system.

Nervous? Well in one game there was a run down between third base and home plate. The catcher grabbed the ball and applied the tag to the back of the opposition uniform in front of him. The fact that the opposition uniform in front of him was worn by the Bat Boy did not diminish the catcher's enthusiasm one bit. After all they tell the story about New York Yankee's Yogi Berra tagging an umpire under the same circumstances.

Just as proud, happy and nervous as the kids were, so were the members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce who have done a terrific job and rendered the city a great service in bringing Little League baseball to Victoria.



Construction of Jaycee National Little League in 1953

Opening day—a start of things to come

Jaycee National Little League opened on Sunday May 17th 1953 with four teams consisting of 14 players per team. There was a waiting list of approximately 160 kids who were disappointed that they couldn't crack the lineups of these four teams. There was no minor league at that time, so the kids would wait by the phone hoping to get a call up to the majors. On that opening day in 1953 there was a double header with Gyros defeating North Kiwanis 16-7 and in the second game Oddfellows blanking Rotary 7-0. Almost 1500 fans at the park with many of them being journalists and cameramen.

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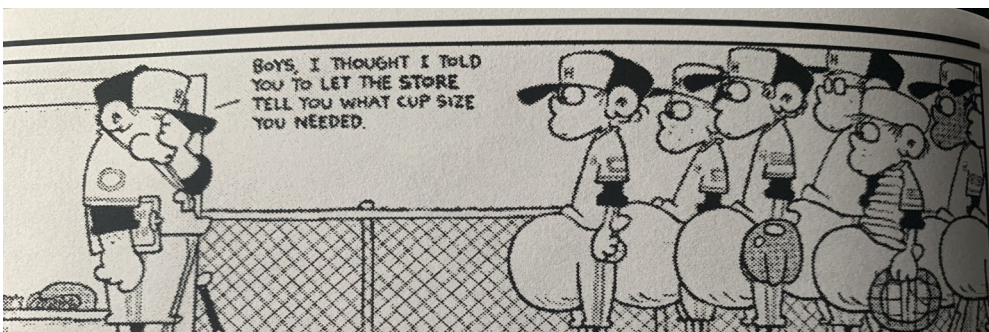
Registration is now open
nationallittleleague.org

Thank you

To our sponsors who make it possible for us to continue running a program for our players.

Tip of the month

Coming to a practice or a game, a player has to be prepared. Don't depend on mom or dad to remember your equipment. Have a bag ready to go with everything you need. Your glove, proper shoes, hat, jock, helmet, bat and water. Come 5 or 10 minutes early to a practice, so you can start at the designated time. Be prepared to learn, work hard and most importantly, have fun. Win or lose, you will have an amazing season.



JUST A LITTLE BOY

He stands at the plate
with heart pounding fast
The bases are loaded
The die has been cast

Mom & dad can not help him
He stands all alone
A hit at this moment
Would send the team home

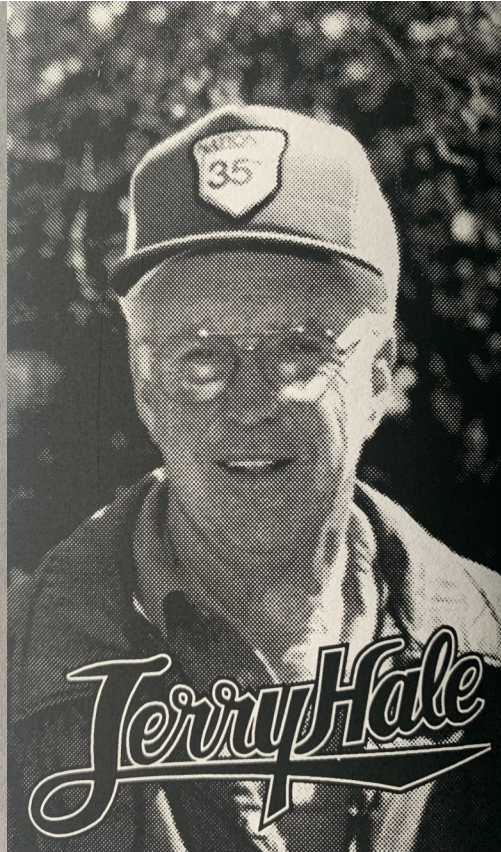
The ball reached the plate
He swings and he misses
There's a groan from the crowd
With some boos and some hisses

A thoughtless voice cries
Strike out the bum
Tears fill his eyes
The game's no longer fun

So open your heart
And give him a break
For it's moments like this
A man you can make

Keep this in mind
When you hear someone forget
He's just a little boy
And not a man yet.

Anonymous



Jerry Hale, our parks namesake was Mr. Baseball and was a volunteer from 1959 until his passing in 1994. The above poem was his favorite and we honor him by having a player read it at our opening ceremonies.

Player Profile

Beau deLeur is graduating from National this season.. He has been playing for only 3 years and he has already transformed into an all star. Beau accomplished this by rarely missing a game or practice and attending every winter clinic that was offered. He chose Baseball over other sports because there is less contact. His favorite moment was hitting a home run last spring at National. Beau's favorite position is pitching because " I'm good at it" He even has advice for any upcoming pitchers. "When you are behind in the count. Take your time, keep your balance, focus and don't try to throw too hard." Thanks Beau, Best wishes this season



Let's hear it for the boys in blue

Umpires, love them or hate them. They are an integral part of the game.. National little league has the largest group of junior umpires in the city. This amazing group . Some as young as ten years old , are led by our incomparable Umpire in Chief Jimmy McLean. We, as parents should support these fine young men and women. These juniors will make mistakes , but they will learn from them and become better at their craft. Parents must have patience and remember that these are just kids. Thirty five years ago , I had a player who refused to play if his mom was in the stands, because , she would berate the umpires, coaches and even the opposing players. What you yell in the midst of all this excitement, could have a profound effect on, not only the umpires, but the players as well, including your own son and daughter. The fans are there to be entertained, therefore they should cheer on any hit, catch or play that these kids make. Because this is the time to make memories that will truly last a lifetime, and I'm sure that these players will remember these cheers, maybe just until bedtime, but more often than not, these memories will last forever.

Little league Trivia

Girls were barred from playing little league until 1974 when softball was introduced and the little league softball world series was also introduced that year. In 1950 a girl cut her hair short and played on her team as a boy. She finally came clean and the team supported her and kept her secret.

Winter Camps— a hit

Who knew that baseball was a year round sport, I thought that this distinction belonged to soccer. Twenty years ago baseball started in April and finished in June. If you were skilled enough to play on an all star team you might make it to July or even August.. Back to the present day we at National Little League have camps three days a week. Minor prospects on Tuesday night, Majors prospects on Wednesday night, Majors and minors prospects on Sunday morning, Rookie minor/ minor players of which we have room for more kids, on Sunday morning. Although not affiliated with little league, there is also a program called the Breakers who target kids that are aging out and want practice playing on a bigger field, to prepare for playing the following year. They accept players from age 11–15. If you want to join any of these camps, Contact Coach Don at

coachdon@nationallittleleague.org

All of these camps go till the end of March