



PHOTOS PROVIDED

The Legends are one of the teams in the Englewood Senior Softball League's Bronze Division.



The Classics team plays in the Bronze Division of the Englewood Softball League.

Englewood softball II's 'Super Seniors'

Bronze Division truly 'Super Seniors'

By RUDY DAVIS
SENIOR SOFTBALL

ENGLEWOOD — Russ Evans had been playing baseball or softball nearly all his life, and for most of those years, it's been in the Englewood Senior Softball league.

As he approached 90 years of age, he found himself no longer able to compete in the Silver Division for those 67 and over. He thought his softball days were over.

This year, at 91, a new door opened for him and many others just like him. The league created a Bronze Division for players 77 and older. Now, Russ, along with 18 other "super seniors" are playing in the newly formed division, and having a

great time doing so.

"This has been a key goal for the league for the past two years," said Rich Entlich, league commissioner. "With the quality of talent in both the Gold and Silver divisions increasing, we saw more players having to leave the league that still wanted to play."

With the league's mission being to give every man over the age of 60 an opportunity to play recreational softball, putting together a division specifically for the "Old Timers," as they are affectionately called, was a straightforward decision.

"The league has no upper age limit," said Bill Rice, Silver Division coordinator and a major force

in bringing the Bronze division about. "And, as a source of exercise and comradery, it's a perfect setting."

As he went on to say, someday many of the 62-year-old "youngsters" may be 80, and still have the desire and capability to play the game they love.

There are two teams in the Bronze Division, the Legends and the Classics, though at present they have to borrow players from the Silver division to fill out two squads of 11 each.

"We could use another half-dozen or more players if anyone wants to come out. You'd be welcomed with open arms," said Entlich.

The league has enacted several rules specific to the Bronze Division to promote safety for players at this age, including playing on the smaller little league fields.

The league expects the Bronze Division to continue to grow, with

the goal now of fielding two full teams for the 2020 season as the word gets out.

"I really admire those guys," said Jake Marzucco, who plays in the Gold Division. "While thinking all the time that I am looking in the mirror

so to speak." It's a sentiment echoed by nearly all players in the Gold and Silver divisions.

If you're over 77, and interested in playing, or know someone who is, have them call Bill Rice at 941-416-0273, or visit www.EnglewoodSeniorSoftball.com.

englewoodseniorsoftball.weebly.com. Or, just come out to field number 8 at the Englewood Sports Complex on Tuesday or Thursday, 10:30 a.m. Tuesday or Thursday, sign up and you can say "put me in, coach, I'm ready to play!"

