

Brief History of the Bronze League (by Greg Brezicki)

Playing in the 60's and 70's league was fun but not like playing in the 80's. When the guys come into the 80's league there comes a different kind of attitude. It seems that there is that same spirit to win but in a friendlier way. What I found was guys that wanted to play for playing sake. When you are batting you meet guys that you have been playing with for years and they too are just happy to be out there. Being a senior and still being able to play a boys' game is what it's all about! For us, it's a game we love to play.

Here is a little history of how our 80's League got started. It took the foresight of three men to get this league off the ground. We need to thank Bill Rice, Rich Entlich and Randy Harrold.

Their goal was to have a league where guys that still wanted to play but were losing some of their skills, because age was catching up with them could play. Up to then you likely might say this was going to be my last year and you would hang up your bat, spikes and glove.

With more and more guys wanting to play in the silver league, the silver division started pushing a number of men out, so the solution was to start a league for men who wanted to keep playing that turned 80 or older.

So, the Bronze League was created with an environment in which guys would succeed and they could still play, get some exercise, and enjoy the camaraderie of guys just like themselves.

For the first two years the League struggled because the guys in the silver still did not want to move on. It started with two teams and once it expanded to four the League took off like gang busters. The biggest promotion for the Leagues expansion has been through word of mouth of the players. The guys, love playing in the Bronze and because they only have good things to say about it the men in the Silver started to hear about how much fun it was. What you always hear from the guys is what a blessing it is to keep playing. We love the guys we play with and there is no pressure, and it is so much fun to be able to still be playing a kid game.

The Bronze division plays on a smaller field, with shorter bases and shorter fences. The League also accommodates players with handicaps. There are special rules: the batter can be called safe if he reaches a line drawn about two thirds of the way to first before the first baseman catches the ball. There are other rules designed for maximum fun, safe and balanced play.

The big thing you notice is that the guys still really play hard, and while the point of the division is fun, and exercise, the men still have the competitive spirit to want to win.

So, once again we want to thank Bill, Rich, Randy, and league commissioner Mark Johnson for all their support and hard work on behalf of our League.

We lost the league's first commissioner Randy this year and we thank him for his vision, hard work, dedication and all he did to keep the dream of a league going for all us senior guys. Go Bronze! By far we have the nicest men around!

Now that I'm in the Bronze league, the league for the 80's softball players. Let me tell you how I have to get ready just to walk on to the field, just to play.

To prepare for the game it all starts at home. I have a whole lot of things to do. I first put two ankle braces to protect them. Years ago, I broke my ankle. Next, I put two knee braces. I'm using one called a copper brace. They say that copper braces can relieve stiffness in the joints. Next, I slide and pull a very tight - what I call rubber pants suit on. It's so tight that I have everything in my power to zipper the thing up. Then it's the stretch pants and my black shorts. I need to put the belt on very tight for fear that my shorts will fall off because the stretch pants are so slippery. That happened once in a game! So that I don't fall over, I either have to sit on the bed, or I have to brace myself against the bed. Then there's the white team shirt. I bet I've added five extra pounds of stuff.

Still not finished, I put long white socks and struggle to get my cleats that will provide additional traction on the soft field. But I am careful not to lift my foot without using my hands for fear of pulling a muscle.

Since I am playing third base, I have decided to wear a face mask, so a ball won't hit me in the face. When I get to the field, I make sure that I have my knee pads because I've been hit so many times on the shins.

Another safety we use in the league for our pitchers is they make their deliveries from behind a protective screen. This is to prevent them from being struck by line - drives back through the box.

What ever happened to the time as a kid I just got dressed and ran down to the field and just played.

Keep hitting them!

Greg Brezicki – April 2023