

Student Work

---

5-1-1982

## Omaha softball: The early leagues, 1930-1950

Richard A. Behrens  
*University of Nebraska at Omaha*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork>  
Please take our feedback survey at: [https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE](https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE)

---

### Recommended Citation

Behrens, Richard A., "Omaha softball: The early leagues, 1930-1950" (1982). *Student Work*. 853.  
<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork/853>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Work by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact [unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu](mailto:unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu).

OMAHA SOFTBALL: THE EARLY LEAGUES 1930-1950

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of History

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Richard A. Behrens

May, 1982

UMI Number: EP73293

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI EP73293

Published by ProQuest LLC (2015). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code



ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the faculty of the Graduate College, University of  
Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Arts, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Committee

Harold A. Palstrom History  
Name Department

Charles R. Wilder Geography - Geology

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

ROD A. O'Connell  
Chairman

21 April 1982  
Date

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people have helped with the production of this thesis and the work would be incomplete without acknowledging them.

Many thanks to Carl Kelley, Omaha's "Mr. Softball," for his information and assistance early in the project. Floyd Hayes was exceptionally helpful and willingly shared his vast knowledge of Omaha softball during the Falstaff Park era. His scrapbooks and personal files, which he graciously offered, are as extensive and complete as one could hope to find.

Thanks, also, to the many former players and managers who brought back their special memories, some now a half century old. A very special thanks to Ben Crain, Joe Theiler, Ed Dolan, George Stoney, Frank Fochek, Father Harold McAuliffe, and Harold Becker for their patience and enthusiasm during the many hours they answered questions and offered new information.

An appreciative thanks to Dr. Richard Overfield, thesis adviser, for his time and expertise. It has been a pleasure working with such a patient and knowledgeable man. Many thanks to Dr. Harl Dalstrom and Dr. Charles Gildersleeve, members of the thesis committee, whose observations and suggestions were extremely helpful.

Most importantly, thanks to Connie, my wife, for all her love and support during the project.

And to my sons, Eric and Ryan, whose cooperation and support varied from day to day, but whose love was constant, nevertheless.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . . .	ii
ILLUSTRATIONS . . . . .	iv
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
CHAPTER	
I. Softball: Its Birth and Evolution . . . . .	3
II. Omaha's First Organized Leagues . . . . .	21
III. Softball and the A.S.A.: Creation of the Modern Game . . . . .	59
IV. Golden Years at Falstaff Park: 1936-1940 . . . . .	95
V. The War Years: World War II 1941-1945 . . . . .	136
VI. The Post-war Years 1946-1950 . . . . .	152
VII. The Omaha Softball Association . . . . .	165
APPENDIX	
I. Omaha Softball Officials 1934-1982 . . . . .	169
II. Omaha City Softball Champions 1931-1950 . . . . .	170
III. Nebraska State Softball Champions 1931-1950 . . . . .	171
Mid-Central (Western) Regional Champions 1942-1950	
IV. National Softball Champions 1931-1950 . . . . .	172
V. Omaha's Leagues and Teams 1930-1950 . . . . .	173
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	214

ILLUSTRATIONS

<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
Softball Diamonds 1920-1929 . . . . .	19
New Softball Diamonds 1930 . . . . .	25
New Softball Diamonds 1931 . . . . .	43
New Softball Diamonds 1932 . . . . .	49
New Softball Diamonds 1933 . . . . .	57
New Softball Diamonds 1934 . . . . .	74
New Softball Diamonds 1935 . . . . .	83
New Softball Diamonds 1936 . . . . .	99
New Softball Diamonds 1937 . . . . .	110
New Softball Diamonds 1938 . . . . .	118
New Softball Diamonds 1939 . . . . .	125
New Softball Diamonds 1940 . . . . .	131
New Softball Diamonds 1941-1945 . . . . .	151
New Softball Diamonds 1946-1950 . . . . .	164

## INTRODUCTION

Twenty-eight million Americans played organized softball in 1981. One out of every ten Americans belonged to some team, in some league, at some level; from California to New York, from Michigan to Florida. The Amateur Softball Association of America promotes softball as the most popularly played team sport in the United States. But softball's popularity is not limited to this nation. Since World War II countries of every size and from every hemisphere have played softball for sport and recreation.

The importance of any activity depends upon the amount of time, money, and effort those who participate exert. The game of softball, since the days of the Great Depression, has been many things to many people. Softball has been a recreation to most, a highly competitive sport to others, a business to a few, a livelihood to fewer still. Since softball is such a simple game, and requires little space or equipment, millions have been able to enjoy it for dozens of years. In most areas where the game is played there are teams who practice and train hard to be the best. This has been the case since the game was first played. Over the years, some business proprietors have constructed stadiums and offered softball entertainment to paying customers. Since the 1930s, there have been those players not only talented, but also lucky enough to be living in the right place at the right time, who earned a fair living from their softball play.

During the 1980s, softball may discard its reputation as a simple, local game, and develop into an international event. At the 1981 World Games in Santa Clara, California, softball was one of fourteen sports offered to teams from nearly forty countries. One day softball may become an Olympic Games event, pitting one national team against another. "Ping



pong diplomacy" helped open the door for United States-Chinese exchanges in the early 1970s. "Softball diplomacy" may offer a similar opportunity in 1982. The 1982 World Softball Tournament is scheduled for Taiwan. A team from the People's Republic of China is expected to be there. It may be an insignificant event, or it may lead to an important development in international affairs. Whatever the result, softball made it happen.

This, though, is the story of softball in Omaha. While offering a review of the development of softball during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this account specifically details the decades of the 1930s and 1940s in Omaha. A summarization of the events since 1950 concludes this work. To most softball enthusiasts of the 1980s, the softball era of the Depression and World War II years is an unknown part of the Omaha softball story. But it is important. In 1981, over twenty-five thousand players participated in Omaha softball leagues. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent on softball and softball activities. Without the softball success of this earlier era, the softball success of the modern era could not have followed.

## CHAPTER ONE

### SOFTBALL: ITS BIRTH AND EVOLUTION

soft ball (soft'bol') n. 1. game very similar to baseball but played on a smaller field with a larger and softer ball that must be tossed underhand. 1

On a wet and chilly Thanksgiving Day nearly a century ago, a group of men gathered at the Farragut Boat Club in Chicago, waiting to hear the score of a college football game. It was 1887. Yale played Harvard that afternoon and even as far west as Chicago great interest was felt for the game, especially by the members of this social-athletic club. Alumni of the battling powers soon enlisted rooting allies. Neither Harvard nor Yale wanted for backers.

At last the news arrived—Yale 17, Harvard 8. The victorious supporters rejoiced, and celebrated the losers' defeat. One Yale man, George Hancock, a reporter for the Chicago Board of Trade, playfully tossed an old boxing glove at a Harvard grad, who, in a less joyful response, batted it back with a broom. As Hancock retrieved the glove he thought of another game; not football, but baseball. Novembers around Lake Michigan drove baseball enthusiasts out of action until the arrival of spring. Hancock considered a solution to that problem—indoor baseball. Could baseball played indoors offer the same action, excitement, and enjoyment that the outdoor game did?

Hancock cleared an area in the Boat Club and chalked off a scaled-down version of a baseball diamond, twenty-seven feet square. This was the

---

<sup>1</sup>The McMillan Dictionary, (New York: McMillan Publishing Company, 1973), p. 947.

playing field. He tied the laces tightly around the old boxing glove. Hancock now had a ball. He then removed the bristled head from the broomstick. This became the bat. Ten club members joined Hancock to play the first "softball" game. Because of the short distances, the pitcher was limited to an underhand toss. It was a hitters' paradise. The historic first score was 41-40. Inside the Farragut Boat Club on that damp and dark Thanksgiving Day, the first form of softball was born.<sup>2</sup>

Hancock's "indoor baseball," as it was called, became so popular during the winter months at the Boat Club and other gymnasiums that when spring arrived the game moved outdoors. The first mild days of 1888 saw the cramped indoor diamond of twenty-seven feet square now expanded to distances of thirty, thirty-five, even forty-five feet. Players in Chicago called it "indoor-outdoor."<sup>3</sup>

The popularity of baseball during the late 1880s almost guaranteed the popular acceptance of this modified version. Baseball, in one form or another, had been played and enjoyed for nearly fifty years when Hancock introduced his "broomstick and boxing glove" version. In 1887, the first professional major league baseball league, the National League, had been around a dozen years. Baseball was a firmly established American sport.

Softball is nothing more than modified baseball; baseball with a smaller field, a larger ball, and a different pitching style. Hancock's hunch was correct. "Indoor baseball" did offer the same action, strategy,

---

<sup>2</sup>"Softball: From Kittenball to the Hall of Fame," Amateur Softball Association 1979 Hall of Fame Calendar, (Oklahoma City: Amateur Softball Association, 1979), pp. 2-3.

<sup>3</sup>Morris Bealle, Softball Story, (Washington, D.C.: Columbia Publishing Company, 1957), p. 29.

and excitement of regular baseball. So did its summertime companion, "indoor-outdoor." While baseball occupied the spacious fields of rural America, "indoor-outdoor" allowed those in the growing cities to enjoy this fast-paced game which could be played in the limited spaces of vacant lots, crowded playgrounds, and small parks. Influenced by extensive play in the Midwest and East, the American Sports Publishing Company of New York issued an official Indoor Baseball Guide in 1897 to explain the rules of the game.<sup>4</sup> This guide was useful to many players in the East where most copies were distributed.

In 1895, Lieutenant Lewis Rober of the Minneapolis, Minnesota, fire department wanted to find an outdoor game that could be played around the firehouse and still keep the men active between calls during their twenty-four hour shifts. Using a miniature medicine ball and a cylinder of wood shaped like a bat, the men of Fire Company No. 19 began to play a somewhat different version of the "indoor-outdoor" game.<sup>5</sup>

Rober met every request made by the players for standard rules. He reduced the regulation baseball field measurements by half, making the ninety foot base paths forty-five feet. The pitching distance became thirty-five feet, slightly more than half the normal sixty feet. The bat was two inches thick. Rober restricted its length to thirty-four inches. He soon replaced the miniature medicine ball with balls he stitched by hand.

The men at Rober's station played the game at every opportunity and

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> "Softball: From Kittenball to the Hall of Fame," p. 2.

soon, they felt, mastered the game. Men from other stations in Minneapolis heard about the new activity at the Oak Street and University Avenue station and began to play it themselves. Challenges soon arrived at the Rober station. Fiercely competitive games were played. Because he envisioned the game's potential for widespread participation, Rober became the first to establish Chicago's "indoor-outdoor" game on an organized basis.<sup>6</sup> Rober's men called their team the "Kittens." The game in Minneapolis became "kittenball."<sup>7</sup> Because many of the rules and regulations that Rober developed are still used in the game today,<sup>8</sup> some softball historians consider Lieutenant Rober the true creator of the modern softball game.<sup>9</sup>

In 1900 the first kittenball league began in Minneapolis. Strong competition developed in this league made up of city fire fighters. During the next decade the game outgrew the fire station leagues. Soon the Minneapolis playground department began to organize the various leagues. When other playground and recreation departments in Midwestern cities borrowed the game, they called it "playground ball."

Meanwhile, in the East, the first national organization ever to promote and administer softball was formed in 1909. The National Amateur Playground Ball Association of the United States promoted the game in the

---

<sup>6</sup> Area Guide and Rule Book, (Omaha: Omaha Softball Association, 1977), p.14.

<sup>7</sup> Some writers in the 1930s claimed that because the ball was fairly soft and appeared to be the size of a kitten, the game was called "kittenball." Literary Digest 124 (11 September 1934), p. 32.

<sup>8</sup> For example, softball bats still closely follow Rober's specifications in diameter and length. Today, bats can be no more than two and one half inches thick and thirty-four inches long.

<sup>9</sup> The short history in the Omaha Softball Association Area Guide gives Rober credit for inventing the game.

large urban areas of New York, Brooklyn, Boston, Philadelphia, and even Chicago. This association administered a game directed by the city park and playground instructors. It was usually played in public athletic fields. Due to the turn-of-the-century emphasis on the development of playgrounds and parks in many cities, early softball players found more and more places to play. To meet a growing demand for regulation, the association published a rule book in 1909 which presented the objectives and purposes of the organization.

This rule book, called the Official Handbook of the National Amateur Playground Ball Association, listed the most commonly used rules of the day. The ball was twelve to fourteen inches in diameter. The bases were only thirty-five feet apart. The most unusual rule was one allowing the first batter of the inning to run either to first base or to third base on a hit ball. Should he run to third base, he then had to score by going to second base, to first base, and then home. All succeeding batters that inning had to follow the path taken by the initial batter.

Participation in playground ball increased in the East where dense populations provided little space to play the regular baseball game. By 1924 the Playground Ball Association registered 967 leagues, 6,982 teams, and 74,249 players in the organization. The association claimed that one and a half million spectators attended the games. One year later the figures increased to 1,243 leagues, 8,399 teams, and 103,538 players, with more than two million fans watching the games. These statistics were among the first ever recorded for softball. They indicated that in Chicago and cities to the east, many people played and watched this early form of organized softball in the first three decades of the century. <sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Scrapbook, 1935, Floyd Hayes Collection, 3118 South Forty-fourth Street, Omaha, Nebraska, Clipping from the Spaulding Athletic Library, 1935.

An early Midwest effort to organize softball on an interstate scale began in Minnesota in 1916. The Minneapolis Park Board asked assistant recreation director Harold A. Johnson to select a game that nearly everyone in the city could play. Johnson soon decided that Lieutenant Rober's popular "kittenball" met all the Board's requirements. He made a four month study of the rules for kittenball, indoor baseball, playground ball, and even regulation baseball. Out of this study he chose the "best" rules and offered his special version to the city.

Johnson published a book of rules and designed equipment that was manufactured by the Goldsmith Sporting Goods Company of Cincinnati, Ohio. Selling the game to commercial sponsors was difficult at first. Most wanted to back more traditional sports. Determined the game would succeed, Johnson formed four teams, all sponsored and equipped by Minneapolis merchants. Area newspapers held a city-wide contest to find a new name for the game. Johnson and the Park Board selected the name "diamond ball."

With its twenty-year tradition of kittenball and playground ball, it took Minneapolis only a short time to adopt diamond ball as a favorite pastime. Since there were only minor variations in the rules of kittenball, playground ball, and diamond ball, the players easily learned the new version. Except for a slight decline in play during World War I, this game steadily grew. In the early Twenties the Minneapolis Park Board expanded its sports program. The Board converted seven baseball diamonds at a huge recreation center called the "Parade Ground" into twenty-four diamond ball fields. St. Paul also established a diamond ball program which was also quite successful. Other cities made inquiries regarding the rules of the

game and the organization of leagues.<sup>11</sup> Many Midwestern recreation officials borrowed the game for their own programs.<sup>12</sup> With the growing popularity of diamond ball in the upper Midwest, it became possible in 1925 to form the National Diamond Ball Association.

One problem playground officials encountered while organizing and teaching the Minneapolis diamond ball game was that in many parts of the country the game was played informally with various rules and non-standard equipment. Base lines differed in length from thirty-five to sixty feet. Pitching distances varied from thirty to forty feet. Teams played nine to a side in some places, ten to a side in others. The balls differed in size and hardness. Baseball bats were used in some places, smaller kittenball bats in others. Some teams played nine-inning games, others played seven-inning contests. As local teams sought more competition, they often played teams from other cities or states. Interstate games or regional tournaments usually created disputes as to which rules the teams should follow.

These differences could be identified by studying the various titles used to name the sport. Before the term "softball" became widely accepted, many names were given to the sport in different parts of the country. Since George Hancock invented "indoor baseball" in 1887, ~~variations of the game were called "indoor-outdoor," "kittenball," "playground ball," "recreation ball," and "diamond ball."~~ But as the twentieth century passed into its second and third decade, other descriptions were made.

When late afternoon games became regular events, the players called it

---

<sup>11</sup> Bealle, Softball Story, pp. 35-36.

<sup>12</sup> Area Guide and Rule Book, p. 14.



"twilight ball." When floodlights were installed in some parks to allow the games to be played at night, the teams played "night ball." Some men first played this game during their military years in World War I. When they returned home and taught the game to others, they called it "army ball." Because the smaller diamond induced much quicker action than did the regular baseball game, players and spectators called it "lightning ball" or "fast ball" (the latter favored by Canadian players who eagerly adopted the sport during World War I). Others used descriptions of the ball to identify the sport they enjoyed. The twelve to sixteen inch ball encouraged names like "big ball" and "pumpkin ball." The soft appearance and sometimes dilapidated condition of the ball inspired titles like "mush ball," "pug ball," and "rag ball."<sup>13</sup>

Responding to requests by serious softball enthusiasts for uniform rules and equipment, the National Recreation Association held a convention for public playground officials and other interested administrators in Springfield, Illinois, in 1923. Joseph Lee, president of the association, appointed a committee to study the issue and report to the entire convention. This committee became the Playground Baseball Committee, later called the Joint Rules Committee on Softball. By 1927 this Joint Rules Committee was one of the regular committees of the National Recreation Association. It consisted of representatives from the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the American Physical Education Association, the Y.M.C.A., and the host National Recreation Association. The committee's official function was

to secure general acceptance, publication, and wide circulation of a standard set of rules; to study the game in order to recommend changes in rules that would

---

<sup>13</sup> Bealle, Softball Story, p. 29.

benefit the largest number of players; and, last but not of least importance, to work with the manufacturers of sporting goods to secure standard and satisfactory equipment. 14

The committee also hoped to keep the game a neighborhood event, primarily a recreation for amateur players. 15

The National Recreation Association failed, however, to standardize the game on a nation-wide basis. They influenced those areas in the East where the association was strongest. According to Omaha softball players from the mid-1920s, though, most states west of the Mississippi River played the Minneapolis version of kittenball and diamond ball, while most states east of the Mississippi played variations of the "indoor-outdoor" game from Chicago. 16 The eastern-based recreation organizations only rarely included areas west of Chicago.

During the busy sports years of the Twenties, softball in the Midwest became highly competitive in many areas. Town, city, and even state rivalries developed in the upper Midwest. Diamond ball spread to Wisconsin, North and South Dakota, parts of northern Iowa, and even Winnipeg, Canada. After the National Diamond Ball Association was organized in Minneapolis in 1925, it expanded the successful Minnesota State Tournament and included entries from surrounding states. In doing this, the association standardized rules and regulations governing play and equipment. Slowly, the National Diamond Ball Association developed uniform play in many of the states of the

---

<sup>14</sup> Arthur T. Noren, "Softball—The New American Fever," Recreation 34 (March 1941): 735-6, 745.

<sup>15</sup> Dr. John Brown, Jr., "Softball Problems—Hearings on Present Situation," Recreation 28 (December 1934): 445-6.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Ben Crain, Omaha, Nebraska, 28 September 1981.

of the upper Midwest.

As the National Diamond Ball Association increased its influence during the mid-1920s, the National Recreation Association also began to expand and included some western sections of the country. In 1926 a representative from Denver, Colorado, won membership on the Playground Baseball Committee at the annual National Recreation Congress. He was Walter C. Hakanson, director of Denver's Y.M.C.A. Again the goal of the Congress was to further standardize the game so that rules, equipment, and playground diamonds would become consistent and uniform throughout the United States. Hakanson contended that if one name replaced the dozen or more still used around the country, most differences could more easily be solved. Hakanson suggested that the National Recreation Association promote the title "softball." Nearly a decade passed before the name was accepted coast to coast, but George Hancock's modified baseball game had at last found a name for its future. <sup>17</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Omaha discovered softball much later than most midwestern cities. The players here first played the Minneapolis versions of the game. While cities like Denver promoted softball through the Y.M.C.A., Omaha offered no such program. As diamond ball moved south and west from Minneapolis, the Omaha players learned of it in a variety of ways.

Sometimes visitors from other cities taught the game to friends in Omaha. Ben Crain, whose pitching and playing career here later earned him an honored spot in the National Softball Hall of Fame, participated in a

---

<sup>17</sup> "Softball: From Kittenball to the Hall of Fame," p. 2.

recreation program in Sioux City, Iowa, where diamond ball was taught and promoted. Former employees from the Minneapolis playground department were recruited to direct this program in Sioux City. When Crain and others later came to the Omaha area, they taught the game to a new population of enthusiastic players.<sup>18</sup>

Omaha residents also visited other communities, discovered some version of the game, and taught it to friends when they returned. Children and young people especially enjoyed these new games. Frank Fochek, long-time Omaha resident and an early organizer of city softball, remembers playing "ragball" in Omaha schoolyards and vacant lots as early as 1921 and 1922. Using whatever equipment they could muster, they played a game that combined the various rules from baseball, kittenball, diamond ball, and playground ball with whatever neighborhood revisions became necessary. The ball, which varied in size and shape from week to week, was often bound together with rags. It sometimes consisted totally of rags—thus the name "ragball."<sup>19</sup>

Schoolyard ball became popular in parts of Omaha during the 1920s. The young players used kittenball or diamond ball equipment if they had it. An official diamond ball or kittenball bat was smaller than a baseball bat and still conformed to Lewis Rober's dimensions. The more common baseball bat was also often used. Balls varied in diameter, being anywhere from twelve to sixteen inches. The ball usually had a soft, leathery, gray exterior with an outseam stitch. This stitch was much like a heavy, leather bootlace attached to the ball over the regular seam. This seam allowed the

---

<sup>18</sup> Ben Crain interview.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Frank Fochek, Omaha, Nebraska, 9 September 1981.

players, especially pitchers, to grip the ball much better when they threw it. This outseam ball adhered to the original design of the game—it did not go far when hit.

Walt Dinkel, an early Omaha softball participant and organizer, recalls playing playground ball as a youngster with equipment such as this. Often the baselines had to be adjusted according to the shape of the playing field they used that day. Some baselines were much shorter or longer than the others.<sup>20</sup> Joe Theiler, another Omaha pioneer in organized softball, often used the diamond ball equipment in a game called "fly takes place." Two, three, or four batters would take turns batting while the remaining youngsters played the field. When an out was made, the batter making the out would take the right field position. Each defensive player would rotate one position closer to the batter, from right field to center field to left field, from shortstop to third base to second base to first base to pitcher. The pitcher became the next batter. If, however, the batter hit a fly ball that was caught by any fielder, the two exchanged places. Children in later years played this game with baseball equipment and called the game "work-up." "Fly takes place," however, taught many young players the fundamentals of the soon-to-be-popular softball game.<sup>21</sup>

While softball in Omaha occupied mainly schoolyard children during the 1920s, other towns in Iowa and Nebraska began to organize teams and form leagues. Some, like Sioux City, Iowa, organized youth softball as one part of an overall recreation program. Other Iowa communities, like Fort Dodge and Dennison, organized adult leagues for diamond ball and kittenball players.

---

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Walt Dinkel, Omaha, Nebraska, 24 September 1981.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Joe Theiler, Omaha, Nebraska, 15 September 1981.

In 1930 a Fort Dodge team won the National Northwest Diamond Ball Tournament in Minneapolis.<sup>22</sup> Omaha newspapers first mentioned softball during the spring of 1928 with the formation of the women's league in Dennison.<sup>23</sup> Nebraskans slowly became aware of this game and its growing popularity.

Lincoln, one writer claimed, was the birthplace of softball in Nebraska.<sup>24</sup> The Maser Grocery team in the capital city dominated play there in the late Twenties and early Thirties, and even played in national tournaments in Wisconsin and Illinois. Influenced by student softball at Midland College, Fremont also organized leagues for the game they called "pugball."<sup>25</sup>

The first version of softball to be organized into league play in Omaha was not the popular kittenball game, or even the diamond ball game being enjoyed throughout the Midwest. Omaha's first organized league turned back nearly half a century to the first game ever played, the game in the Farragut Boat Club. Omaha's first "softball" league was an indoor baseball league. The Jewish Community Center, an active athletic organization committed to new and enjoyable activities for its members, sponsored this league in their gymnasium on the corner of Twentieth and Dodge Streets. League play began March 3, 1928, and continued until the end of May that year. This league had six teams: the Psi Mu Juniors, the B'nai Abrahams, the Bobcats, the Olympians, the B'nai Ami, and the Boy Scouts. These were the first organized "softball" teams of any league in Omaha. They played three games each Monday evening

---

<sup>22</sup> Bealle, Softball Story, p. 37.

<sup>23</sup> The Omaha Bee-News, 2 April 1928, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Bealle, Softball Story, p. 123.

<sup>25</sup> Bee-News, 30 April 1929, p. 12.

in the center's gymnasium. Each game lasted five innings.<sup>26</sup> The teams followed the traditional rules of indoor baseball. The Jewish Community Center continued to organize indoor baseball leagues, for men and women, well into the 1930s.

More active even than the Jewish Community Center was the Union Pacific Athletic Club in Omaha. During the late Twenties and through most of the Thirties, the Union Pacific Railroad offered a number of athletic and recreational opportunities for its employees. The company's system-wide organization was so extensive that they paid four company commissioners to administer the athletic regions from Omaha to Los Angeles. Employees could enter a regional track meet and qualify for the national Union Pacific Track Meet in Los Angeles each year. These regional competitions were offered in other sports, too. In the large towns, the railroad hired men to play baseball for the U.P. team in the local community league. For the regular employees, the company's athletic department sought to provide a variety of activities that could easily be organized and played. Money was usually available to support popular sports. One popular offering in 1928 was kittenball.<sup>27</sup>

During the spring of 1928, Union Pacific employees played kittenball during their lunch break around the engine shops in the Omaha yard. The popularity of these midday contests grew after just a few weeks. Soon the players wanted more than just a piece of equipment and a place to play. They wanted an organized league.<sup>28</sup> Three months after the Jewish Community

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 3 March 1928, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> Frank Fochek interview.

<sup>28</sup> Scrapbook, 1935, Hayes Collection, Personal account.

Center began its indoor baseball program, the Union Pacific organized the first kittenball league in Omaha. This was the first outdoor softball league in Omaha, and the rules were very similar to those of the game today. During the summer of 1928 the teams continued to play around the U.P. shops, but they also used the available parks in the city. In 1929 the Union Pacific kittenball league expanded to two divisions. When organizers formed the first city kittenball leagues in Omaha in 1930, nearly half of the players were Union Pacific employees.<sup>29</sup> The Union Pacific Athletic Club greatly influenced the development of Omaha's first softball leagues.

Although the Jewish Community Center and the Union Pacific Athletic Club organized the first two "softball" leagues in Omaha, these were "closed" leagues, unavailable to nonmembers or nonemployees. Other people also began playing kittenball and diamond ball in Omaha. In 1928 one or two neighborhood groups tried to organize teams. The following year at least four teams were formed, each playing dozens of games. Since they had no league affiliation, they were considered "independent" teams, playing whoever they could.

Four neighborhoods produced the strongest and most active teams. At Thirty-fourth and Cuming Street George "Dode" Stoney and Harold "Mac" McAuliffe organized the Bemis Park team. These men played behind the tennis courts at the park, using the wire tennis fence as the backstop for their games. Calling themselves the Bemis Park Athletic Club, they played more than one hundred games in 1929. Starting in early May, they played until late September. Often during the summer they played four nights a week.

---

<sup>29</sup> Frank Fochek interview.



They played double-headers once or twice a week. On Sundays they might play four games in the afternoon. By season's end, Stoney and the Bemis Park Athletic Club, by their tally, had won ninety-six games and lost twenty-five.<sup>30</sup> Having played the other Omaha teams many times, the Bemis Park team claimed the "unofficial" kittenball championship for 1929.<sup>31</sup>

South Omaha's kittenball team played on the Vinton Public Schoolyard at Twenty-first and Vinton Street. Joe Theiler organized the team with his brothers, some neighborhood companions, and one or two youngsters from St. Joseph's Church. Hank Stenner loaned his name and a few dollars to the group, and they became the Stenner Fruit Company team.<sup>32</sup> A short distance north and a few blocks east, Ed Dolan, Chuck Sebron, and their teammates competed as Sebron's All Stars at Train School on Fifth and Hickory Street.<sup>33</sup> Much farther north, at Kountze Park on Twentieth and Evans Street, James Kenney and Walt Dinkel also organized kittenball in 1929.<sup>34</sup> As the map on the following page indicates, most of the neighborhood teams in 1929 were located east of Twenty-fourth Street. Only one team, the Bemis Park team, played west of Twenty-fourth Street. These teams could visit each other for games without expending too much time for travel.

The games played during the summer of 1929 were enthusiastic but unpolished. The players fielded without gloves, used the soft outseam ball,

---

<sup>30</sup> Bee-News, 7 June 1931, Section B, p. 1.

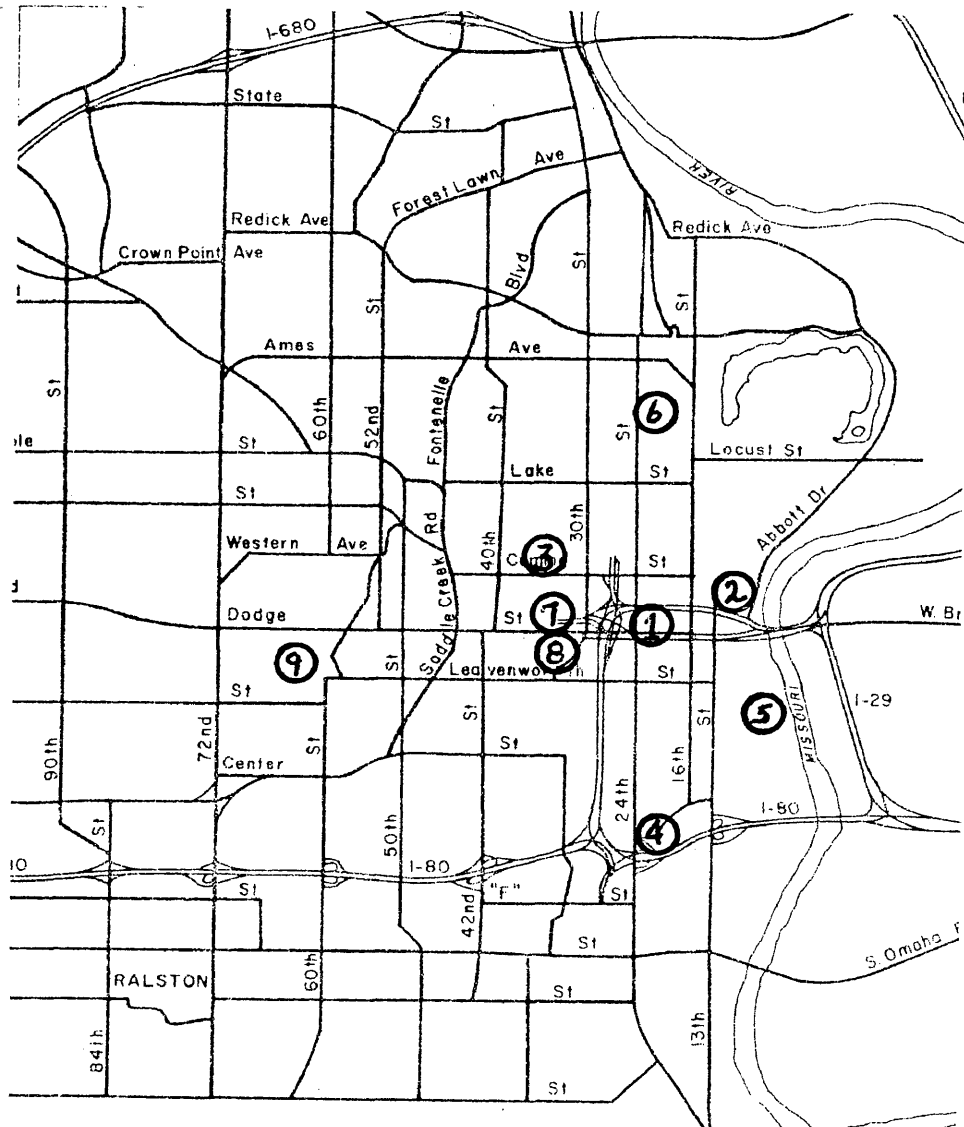
<sup>31</sup> Interview with George Stoney, Omaha, Nebraska, 24 September 1981.

<sup>32</sup> Joe Theiler interview.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Ed Dolan, Omaha, Nebraska, 15 September 1981.

<sup>34</sup> Walt Dinkel interview.

**Softball Diamonds 1920-1929**



1. Jewish Community Center, Twentieth and Dodge Street (inside gym)
2. Union Pacific Railroad yards, Tenth and California Street
3. Bemis Park, Thirty-fourth and Cuming Street
4. Vinton School, Twenty-first and Vinton Street
5. Train School, Fifth and Hickory Street
6. Kountze Park, Twentieth and Evans Street
7. Gifford Park, Thirty-third and Cass Street
8. Dewey Park, Thirty-second and Dewey Street
9. Elmwood Park, Sixty-second and Leavenworth

and swung any available bat. Playing fields were usually quite rough. Most trying of all, perhaps, was having to ask one of the spectators at the game to umpire the contest. After explaining the rules to the volunteer, the teams began the game. Often the games were marred by poor calls and incorrect decisions.

In spite of this, the teams played again and again that summer, not only at Bemis and Kountze Parks, and Train and Vinton Schools, but also at Gifford Park, Thirty-third and Cass Street, at Dewey Park, Thirty-second and Dewey Street, and farther west at Elmwood Park, Sixty-second and Leavenworth Street (see the map on the previous page for these locations). New players tried the game, and more new players after them. By late September many of Omaha's softball players began to plan for an organized, improved game for 1930.

## CHAPTER TWO

### OMAHA'S FIRST ORGANIZED LEAGUES

During the winter of 1929-1930 interested kittenball players in Omaha began to discuss the formation of an organized kittenball league. These players did not have far to look to find a successful model. Since 1906 an excellent amateur baseball league had flourished in Omaha, administered by able officials and backed by dependable sponsors. The Municipal Amateur Baseball Association, as this organization was called in 1930, was the most publicized amateur athletic association in Omaha. However, Omaha also had leagues in bowling, basketball, and volleyball—for both men and women.<sup>1</sup> Many of the city's kittenball players participated in these winter leagues.

By February of 1930 enough support surfaced to begin the formation of a city kittenball league. On March 5, in a meeting held at city hall, the first Omaha softball-type league was organized. Joseph C. Wolfe, secretary of the Municipal Baseball Association, was elected president of this first public league. "Indoor baseball" was the name most Omaha players began to call this early form of softball in 1930. Omaha's first league became the Omaha Indoor Baseball League. League members elected George Stoney the first secretary of the organization and Ed Dolan the first treasurer.<sup>2</sup> Nine teams applied for membership in the league, the first ever to enter an Omaha indoor league. These teams were the West Ames Athletics, Dolan's All Stars, the St. Joseph Giants, Stockyard National Bank, the Eagles, C.B.&Q. Freights,

---

<sup>1</sup> The Omaha Bee-News, 1 January to 30 March 1930.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 6 March 1930, p. 15.

Kountze Park, Bemis Park, and the North Omaha Stars.<sup>3</sup>

By March 16 five other teams had also asked to enter the league. President Joe Wolfe, experienced in community sports organization, would not consider any team who could not guarantee an entry fee, player contract fees, and forfeit fees. Even the original nine teams who applied during the first meeting at city hall had to meet these three requirements. By the end of March, eight teams had obtained "franchises," as the players called it, enough for one complete league. Wolfe held a second meeting at city hall on April 1. At this meeting these eight teams officially entered the Omaha Indoor Baseball League. The managers agreed to begin play on Monday, April 28, and continue until September 19. Each team would play six rounds. During the week the games were scheduled on Monday and Friday evenings.<sup>4</sup>

The Omaha Bee-News, the Hearst daily that provided extensive sports coverage in Omaha during the late Twenties and early Thirties, published the kittenball and indoor baseball news in the same column with the other Municipal Amateur Baseball news. This happened often that first season and the new league's reputation and stability did not suffer from this connection.<sup>5</sup> The city's other major newspaper, the Omaha World-Herald, provided much less coverage of the new sport and its organization.

Teams recruited players, found sponsors, and prepared for the opening games on April 28. Some players were backed by the same sponsors they had

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 16 March 1930, Section B, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 2 April 1930, p. 13.

represented in the winter bowling and basketball leagues. Others had to "sell" their teams to new sponsors. George Stoney, manager of the Bemis Park team, exemplified the effort some people made. He went to each of the merchants in the Bemis Park area, up and down both sides of Cuming Street from Thirtieth Street to Fortieth Street, searching for a sponsor. Feeling the effects of the economic events of 1929, none of these small businessmen alone could afford the fees required by the Omaha Indoor Baseball League. But together some of them could provide it. Using a system of multiple sponsors, Stoney's team became the Bemis Park Merchants.<sup>6</sup> Many teams throughout the city used this arrangement to obtain sponsors. The South Omaha Merchants, the Kountze Park Merchants, the Sixth Street Merchants, and the North Twenty-fourth Street Merchants were all proof of the popularity of this method.

The Omaha Indoor Baseball League created so much interest that soon other players and managers tried to enter teams, even after the first eight teams had been accepted and scheduled to play. Omaha Indoor League President Joe Wolfe would not allow the league to expand beyond eight teams. This number worked best for scheduling a twice-a-week, six-round league. These players then tried to organize a second indoor baseball league.

In the Wednesday morning edition of the April 23 Bee-News, organizers announced a meeting for anyone interested in a second indoor league. The meeting, scheduled for Friday, April 25, came three days before the opening games of the Omaha Indoor Baseball League. That Friday night a second league was organized—the City Indoor Baseball League. League members elected Charles Givens president of this league and John Hall the secretary-treasurer. Five teams applied to join the league during the first meeting.

---

<sup>6</sup> Interview with George Stoney, Omaha, Nebraska, 24 September 1981.

They were Morton Garage, Union Pacific Athletic Club, Hirs Bakery, Arbor Athletic Club, and Film Industries.<sup>7</sup>

While the City Indoor Baseball League hurried to organize, the city's first league, the Omaha Indoor Baseball League, began the 1930 season on Monday evening, April 28. This was the opening day schedule: the Kountze Park Merchants versus the Bemis Park Merchants at Gifford Park, Thirty-third and Cass Street, C.B.&Q. Aristocrats versus the Eagles No. 38 at Douglass Soccer Field, Thirtieth and Sprague Street, the Marchio Tams versus the Gehrman Penn Mutuals at Twenty-fourth and Martha Street, and Russell Sports versus Van Avery Sports at Vinton School, Twenty-first and Vinton Street.<sup>8</sup> The Omaha map on the following page shows the location of these opening games.

Appropriately enough, it rained in Omaha during the weekend and the Monday games were played on muddy grounds. All games began at 6:30 P.M. in this pre-Daylight Savings era. On Monday morning the Bee-News announced the opening of the Omaha Indoor Baseball League.

KITTENBALLERS TO SWING INTO ACTION TODAY

---

Indoor Baseball League Is Slated for  
Opening Games With Four Contests on Bill

---

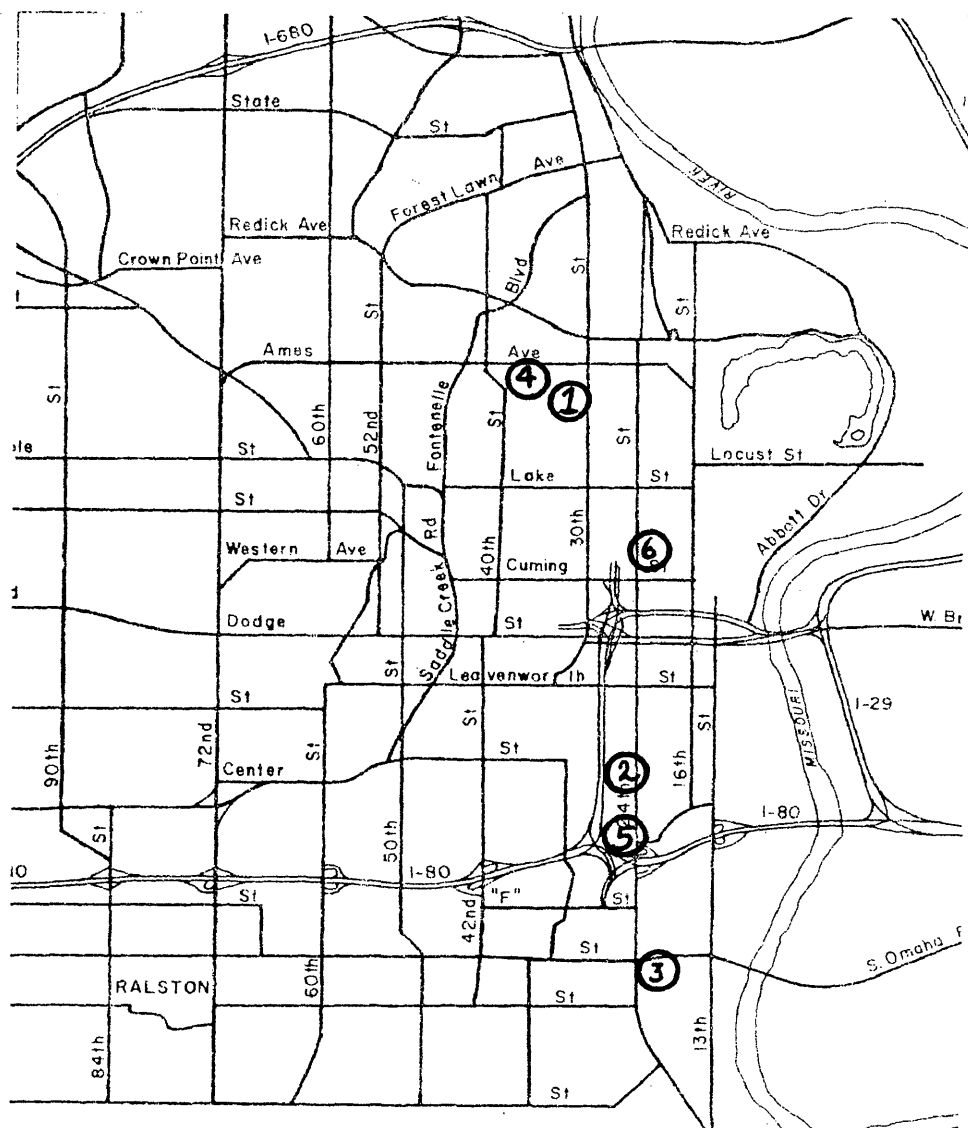
Weather permitting the first indoor baseball or kittenball league will get under way Monday with games at the above mentioned diamonds. [A Monday night schedule had been printed beneath the headlines].

---

<sup>7</sup> Bee-News, 23 April 1930, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 26 April 1930, p. 13.

### New Softball Diamonds 1930



1. Douglas Soccer Field, Thirtieth and Sprague Street
2. Twenty-fourth and Martha
3. Athletic Park, Twenty-second and "L" Street
4. North High School, Thirty-sixth and Ames Avenue
5. Twenty-fifth and Vinton Street
6. Twenty-second and Paul Street



The eight teams have all been organized for the past three weeks and four fast and snappy games are anticipated.

George R. Stoney, secretary of the league, announced Sunday that he will apply for permission to affiliate with the Municipal Baseball Association. Joe C. Wolfe, boss of the sandlotters and secretary of the Baseball Association is president of the circuit and promised to pitch the first ball in the Van Avery-Russell Sports game at Vinton school grounds.

Plenty of interest has been created in this branch of sports this season, and it is expected that large crowds will turn out to witness the games. 9

Mud or no mud, drizzle or no drizzle, the games were played, most to the full nine innings. The results of the first league games made the Tuesday morning edition.

#### INDOOR LEAGUE GETS UNDERWAY IN MUDDY PARKS

---

Plenty of Errors Are Chalked Up Against  
Kittenballers as Teams Begin '30 Campaign

---

Marchio Tams 7, G.P. Mutuals 5  
Kountze Park 9, Bemis Park 4  
Russell Sports 9, Van Avery Sports 5  
C.B.&Q. 13, Eagles 9 [game called in the 8th]

---

Plenty of errors were chalked up by the teams in opening games of the 1930 season in the kittenball league Monday. All eight teams got underway despite the fact that the diamonds were muddy and the contests were played in drizzling rain. 10

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 28 April 1930, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 29 April 1930, p. 14.

The reporter counted forty-two errors for the four games, slightly more than five per team.<sup>11</sup> For opening games played in mud and rain, this does not seem to be an excessive number.

On Wednesday night, April 30, the second indoor league completed its organization. The City Indoor Baseball League voted to allow baseball players from teams in the Municipal Baseball Association to play in their league. Both the City Indoor Baseball League and the Omaha Indoor Baseball League joined the Municipal Amateur Baseball Association in 1930.<sup>12</sup> This association administered fifteen baseball leagues this season, two of which were actually softball-type leagues.<sup>13</sup> Omaha sportswriters shortened the title "Indoor Baseball League" to just "Indoor League," but the newspapers gave the Omaha and City Indoor Leagues the same type of coverage they customarily gave the other baseball organizations.

The City Indoor League soon added three teams to the original five. On May 1 these eight teams constituted the new city league: Douglas Drugs, the Nicholas Street Athletic Club, Aleph Zakik Aleph No. 1 (A.Z.A. No. 1), the Sixth Street Merchants, Hirs Bakery, Arbor Athletic Club, the Union Pacific Athletic Club, and Garlow's Recreation Parlor. The City Indoor League scheduled games for Tuesday and Thursday evenings, so not to compete with the Omaha League for the few softball-type fields in town.<sup>14</sup>

The Omaha League had already completed one round of its schedule when

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 1 May 1930, p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 4 May 1930, Section B, p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 1 May 1930, p. 16.

the City Indoor League opened its season on Tuesday, May 13. After completing the regular season, the City League planned to match its champion with the champion of the Omaha League in a three game series for the city indoor baseball title.<sup>15</sup> Like the Omaha League, the City Indoor League played its games at 6:30 P.M. and scheduled nine-inning contests. The City League opened its first season with these games: Union Pacific Athletic Club versus the Arbor Athletic Club, Nicholas Athletic Club versus the Sixth Street Merchants, Garlow's Bowling Alley versus A.Z.A. No. 1, and the Twenty-fourth Street Boosters versus Western Electric.<sup>16</sup>

In some respects the league games of 1930 differed little from the independent games of 1929. Although the number of spectators at these games increased, the teams still selected umpires from those onlookers on hand. The game itself was much the same. Teams continued to use the outseam ball and a variety of bats. Fielding gloves, however, still were not used. Players often disputed pitching and baserunning rules. The Omaha leagues had yet to agree upon a book of published rules. League administrators provided a schedule and recorded the results of that schedule. Few other services were provided that first season.

With the formation of two indoor leagues in Omaha, the number of teams quadrupled from 1929 to 1930. Teams which had not been able to get into one of the two leagues played an independent schedule with other non-league teams around the city. Because of this increase in teams, the number of playing fields also had to increase in 1930. Teams in both leagues again used

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 13 May 1930, p. 17.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

the diamond at Gifford Park in central Omaha, as well as the field at Kountze Park, in that North Twentieth Street neighborhood. In South Omaha, the Vinton school grounds remained a popular location for these indoor games. Just south of downtown Omaha, near the Missouri River, players continued to use Train school for some of the games.

Players secured new diamonds for the 1930 season. Forty-five blocks north of Dodge Street, at Thirty-sixth and Ames Avenue, the athletic field at North High School was regularly used by the indoor baseball leagues. Less than a half mile south of North High School, teams used a lot at Thirtieth and Sprague Street called the Douglas Soccer Field. The leagues also scheduled games at a field on Twenty-second and Paul Street, a park less than a mile north of Dodge Street. In the southern half of Omaha a new field was used at Twenty-fourth and Martha Street. Just east of the Omaha stockyards teams played at Athletic Park, Twenty-second and "L" Street. (See the map on page 25 for these locations). Rarely did a summer evening pass that season when these ten diamonds were without activity.

In some ways the 1930 season exceeded many players' expectations. Two leagues, both affiliated with the successful Municipal Amateur Baseball Association, kept sixteen teams and nearly two hundred players busy from May to September. Although on one occasion the Bee-News referred to the game as "softball," the players still were not quite sure whether they were playing "indoor baseball" or "kittenball."<sup>17</sup> Whatever the name, the game's popularity increased with the passing of each summer month. When the Municipal Baseball Association announced in May that Omaha baseball players in the Sunday leagues, the top baseball leagues in the city, could not play

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 5 May 1930, p. 14.

in the city's Twilight Leagues, the weekday evening industrial leagues reserved for the less talented players, some of these Sunday players tried the softball-type game.<sup>18</sup> While some scoffed at this "sissy" game, those who tried it were often surprised at the challenge they encountered.

As established as the new indoor leagues tried to be, some events besides inclement weather could postpone scheduled games. When Jack Sharkey met Max Schmeling in a much-publicized heavyweight fight on June 12, both indoor leagues postponed all games that evening, for many players planned to listen to the bout on the radio that night.<sup>19</sup> When the giant Italian, Primo Carnera, came to League Park at Fifteenth and Vinton Street to fight Omaha boxer "Bearcat" Wright, all the games were once again postponed. Boxing was quite popular in Omaha in the early 1930s. Indoor league players in the middle of a forty-game schedule did not mind missing one game for a major boxing event.

While some players felt that playing forty games was too long a season, others wanted to play more than twice a week. They remembered playing one hundred or more games the previous summer. Seeking more opponents, teams like Russell Sports traveled to Lincoln some Sundays to play challengers there.<sup>20</sup> Late in August, however, league officials, most of whom were managers and players, decided that playing until September 19 created too long a schedule. George Stoney, secretary of the Omaha Indoor Baseball League, announced that after Labor Day teams would play three times a week

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 12 May 1930, p. 11.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 12 June 1930, p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 9 August 1930, p. 16.

instead of two in order to complete the season earlier.<sup>21</sup> The Bemis Park Merchants, self-proclaimed champions of the 1929 season, were the first winners of the Omaha Indoor Baseball League. Early interest in a city championship series between the Omaha and City Indoor leagues subsided in August and no city tournament was held. After six months of discussion, planning, and organization, the first complete softball-type season in Omaha was history.

\* \* \* \* \*

While 1930 was the first season for organized softball-type leagues in Omaha, the 1931 season became a season of many other "firsts." Omaha's first league, the Omaha Indoor League, met March 4 to organize for the coming season.<sup>22</sup> It soon became apparent that enough teams existed for at least two leagues, maybe more. Thirteen teams asked to join the Omaha Indoor League in March. League officials had to decide which eight teams to accept. Faced with this sticky problem, they diplomatically solved it. They drew teams from a hat. Each team was assigned a number and each number was placed in a hat. Eight numbers were pulled out and these eight teams made up the 1931 Omaha Indoor League. They were the Bemis Park Merchants, the Union Pacific Athletic Club, the Twenty-fourth and Vinton Boosters, C.B.&Q., Van Avery Sports, South Omaha Merchants, Russell Sports, and Hodge Electric.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 27 August 1930, p. 16.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 1 March 1931, Section B, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> Scrapbook, 1931, Floyd Hayes Collection, 3118 South Forty-fourth Street, Omaha, Nebraska, Unidentified newspaper clipping.

Five teams, however, lost in their bid to become members of the Omaha Indoor League when their numbers remained in the hat. These five teams hoped to make up the second league, the City Indoor League.<sup>24</sup> Most of these teams soon made up the Gate City League, as the City League was officially called in 1931. The eight teams in the Gate City League this season were Rudy Anthony's Market, the Ambassador Cafe, Thallas Hatters, Knowles Van and Storage, Goldenbergs, A.Z.A. No. 1, White Eagle Oil, and Sanitary Towels.

Two leagues may have been enough to satisfy all the players in 1930, but two leagues could not meet the demand in 1931. Six more leagues were organized by May. Two other leagues emerged during the summer. In addition to the Omaha Indoor League and the Gate City Indoor League, officials organized the National Indoor League, two Union Pacific leagues, the first Church league, the Grain Exchange League, and the Fontenelle League.<sup>25</sup> Later that summer the Sinclair Stations formed a league for their employees in Omaha and Council Bluffs.

From four teams and no leagues in 1929, Omaha indoor baseball expanded to sixteen teams and two leagues in 1930. In 1931 there were sixty registered teams and eight leagues. Nearly seven hundred players participated this year. The Union Pacific alone accounted for two leagues and almost two hundred players. Local indoor leagues gained players and teams this year while the local baseball leagues lost teams. One reason was the nation's economy.

---

<sup>24</sup> Bee-News, 20 May 1931, p. 14.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 5 June 1931, p. 18.

By the summer of 1931 the economic depression had touched nearly every part of the country. Merchants could no longer afford to support baseball teams, whose costs for equipment, uniforms, and fees sometimes approached eight hundred dollars or more in a summer. An indoor baseball team in 1931 could be sponsored for less than one hundred dollars. Many sponsors, aware of the game's popularity and its newly acquired newspaper exposure, switched their advertising dollars from baseball to indoor baseball, the softball-type teams, when given an opportunity to do so. As one reporter discovered, many merchants were eager to become involved with the new game. "This is a big year for the game," Harold McAuliffe wrote in his weekly Bee-News column, "and in spite of the fact that this is said to be a year of financial depression most teams secured liberal backing." <sup>26</sup>

Eight leagues, sixty teams, and hundreds of players created one immediate need—equipment and uniforms. Omaha's sporting goods stores hurriedly ordered these items. Russell Sports and Van Avery Sports, two major sporting goods stores in Omaha at this time, were among the first to sponsor teams in the Omaha indoor baseball leagues. Their return more than paid for their investment. "The sporting goods stores in Omaha report that business is good," McAuliffe reported in June. "The reason? Eight diamond ball leagues." <sup>27</sup>

Although this great increase in players, teams, and leagues kept the cash registers ringing in the sporting goods stores, it also presented new problems to the administrators of these leagues. The Municipal Amateur Baseball Association, which the indoor league players were so happy to be

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 31 May 1931, Section 8, p. 7.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 28 June 1931, Section 8, p. 6.



a part of in 1930 and early 1931, could not operate a separate eight-league indoor baseball program. By the second week of the 1931 season, indoor league officials realized they needed a new organization, an organization for indoor ball only. The Omaha Bee-News reported the plans the league officials made.

The great increase in the number of teams playing indoor or playground baseball this year had led George Pilley, secretary of the National Indoor league; Joe Wolf, secretary of the many baseball association, and C.O. Keester, physical director of the "Y", to call together the representatives of the different leagues to form a City Playground Ball association. The meeting will be held Wednesday [3 June 1931] at 8 p.m. at the "Y".

At that time different sets of rules will be discussed and city championships and matches with the Lincoln and Fremont champions arranged. It is expected that the National, Gate City, Omaha, Grain Exchange, North Side Church, Union Pacific and Fontanelle leagues will be represented. 28

Few, if any, of the representatives of the eight leagues who met at the Omaha YMCA that Wednesday night ever thought that in fifty years the organization they were about to propose would become, after a very slow start and many ups and downs, one of the strongest softball organizations in the world. That would happen in Omaha by 1981. These men, however, were concerned with supervising the game during the 1931 season. On June 3, these representatives met, deliberated, and debated. The result was the first Omaha softball-type association. The Bee-News preserved the facts of this first meeting.

With eight representatives of Omaha's organized indoor or kittenball leagues attending the first meeting at the Y.M.C.A. Wednesday night, the Municipal Diamond Ball Association was officially launched.

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 31 May 1931, Section B, p. 4.

Election of officers was deferred until June 24, when the committee which was appointed to draw up the constitution and bylaws will report.

During the past season kittenball or diamond ball has increased from two leagues of eight teams to eight leagues, consisting of 52 teams.

Games are played on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Fridays and at least 600 players are under contract. 29

The problems facing the various softball-type leagues Wednesday did not vanish on Thursday after the initial meeting of the Municipal Diamond Ball Association. The meeting clearly indicated the influence that the National Diamond Ball Association generated in Omaha in 1931. Players and reporters now used the term "diamond ball" as much as they did "indoor baseball" or "kittenball." Nevertheless, the Omaha leagues looked to their city association for immediate help with interpretation of rules and the settlement of disputes. Many players and officials hoped the Municipal Diamond Ball Association could quickly take charge with these problems. Harold McAuliffe expressed these hopes in his Sunday indoor baseball column.

With the formation of a Municipal Indoor Baseball association, the sport achieves a dignified, business-like air and the players and leagues will have an authority to settle disputes. The meeting Wednesday was the first step in the organization of such an association. Eight loops were represented. 30

The idea of a new association pleased many players and fans, but as the summer progressed the Municipal Diamond Ball Association did not succeed

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 5 June 1931, p. 18.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 7 June 1931, Section B, p. 6.

as well as they had hoped. By August the new association's record left many early supporters disappointed. Columnist McAuliffe explained.

Most of the players really interested in diamond ball are looking forward to the formation of a compact business unit and administrative force to handle the various problems coincident with a season of this sport. Of course, the newly organized association is a step in the right direction, but so far there seems to be but little enthusiasm behind it. There's not enough push yet to make things hum.

In many cities a board of governors is appointed to act on protests, and often protest cases are submitted to the National Diamond Ball association for a review and further interpretation of rules. 31

One of the first things the Municipal Diamond Ball Association hoped to do was to standardize the game so that all eight leagues played by the same set of rules. Although rule differences seemed insignificant to some, conflicts sometimes occurred over which rule to use. There were still differences in the lengths of base lines, the size of bats, pitching styles, the number of players allowed, the length of games, base running rules, and more. Earlier players encountered these problems in Chicago, in Minneapolis, and in New York since the turn of the century. It now became Omaha's turn to debate them.

As in earlier years, the name the players gave their game usually indicated which set of rules they followed. Columnist McAuliffe explained this, but tried to minimize the differences. "Playground ball," he wrote, "is known by a host of other names, such as indoor baseball, pugball, diamond ball, kitten ball, soft ball, and outdoor recreation ball. There is very little difference in the playing rules of each." 32

---

31 Ibid., 26 July 1931, Section 8, p. 6.

32 Ibid., 7 June 1931, Section 8, p. 6.

Omaha officials choose the name Municipal Diamond Ball Association, indicating they backed the diamond ball game from Minneapolis. Diamond ball was the strongest and most stable Midwestern softball-type organization in 1931 and offered the most opportunity for out-of-state play. But members of Omaha's pioneer league, the Omaha Indoor League, wanted to continue playing by the rules that they had established. This independence by Omaha's oldest league hindered the progress of the Municipal Diamond Ball Association. The Bee-News reported this story.

Opposition from the Omaha Indoor Baseball league, the first to organize in Omaha, is expected if the contemplated association of indoor baseball leagues or kittenball leagues accepts the rules and regulations of the official game—diamond ball. The official rules require the use of the lightweight indoor baseball bats and prohibit a leadoff on the part of the base runner; and there are other little points with which the league differs.

At present some of the leagues use regulation baseball bats and have concocted a system of rules that is the embodiment of baseball requirements and, at the same time, of indoor baseball statutes. But other leagues make use of the regulation indoor baseball bat and are governed almost entirely by the official diamond ball or indoor baseball rulings. The association will undoubtedly experience difficulty when it attempts to swing all loops into line on the different methods of play and to make everything uniform. 33

Unable to solve this conflict, the Omaha Indoor League, since it was two months into its schedule, decided rather than to change its rules in mid-season they would remain independent of the Municipal Diamond Ball Association in 1931. By following their "outlaw" rules, as they called them, they maintained consistency, but damaged the chances for a strong, city

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 14 June 1931, Section 8, p. 6.

association.<sup>34</sup> Teams in the other leagues noted the absence of Omaha's top league in the city association and began to take it less seriously. Nevertheless, the Municipal Diamond Ball Association established a precedent as the first city softball-type association in Omaha.

For the players, of course, the games themselves provided the excitement during the season. The 1931 season began on Monday, April 20. The Omaha Indoor League opened the season with four games that evening. Officials scheduled only five rounds in 1931.<sup>35</sup> Both Union Pacific leagues opened the week of April 27. One U.P. league played on Mondays, the other on Fridays.<sup>36</sup> The remaining five leagues began play in May.

Players discovered changes in diamond ball equipment and rules not only from 1930 to 1931, but even found some changes taking place during the 1931 season. The Omaha Indoor League allowed catchers and first basemen to wear baseball gloves in the field.<sup>37</sup> The other leagues followed this practice. Bases remained sixty feet apart until the National Diamond Ball Association changed the distance to forty-five feet. The outseam ball was the only "soft ball" available at the sporting goods stores and all the Omaha leagues had to use it. Teams usually used regular baseball bats for hitting, although the smaller diamond ball bats were seen more frequently this year.

More players wore spiked baseball shoes in 1931, especially when an

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 22 June 1931, p. 8.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 12 April 1931, Section 8, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 24 April 1931, p. 18.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 28 March 1931, p. 12.

increased number of Omaha baseball players tried the game for the first time.<sup>38</sup> Other players still played in tennis shoes, as most had during the 1930 season. Softball-type games inspired players to wear bright and colorful uniforms. Teams in 1931 choose colors that made the more traditional baseball garb pale by comparison. Diamond ball uniforms in 1931 consisted of long-sleeved sweaters and white duck pants, which looked like modern-day dress slacks. The baseball-style uniform became popular a few years later. Not all pants were white, however, and not all sweaters dull. Teams outfitted themselves in bright combinations of orange and black, of royal blue and gold, and of crimson and white.<sup>39</sup> The creative designs on some uniforms were nearly as striking as the colors.

A great many players enjoyed diamond ball in Omaha this year, and the game's popularity produced a number of "firsts" for Omaha softball-type organizations. On Tuesday, July 28, 1931, the first softball-type game ever to be played under the lights was held at Western League Park on Fifteenth and Vinton Street. League Park, which for many years had hosted professional, semi-professional, and amateur baseball, offered its diamond for a public exhibition of diamond ball. At 8 P.M., following an amateur league baseball game, Van Avery Sports and Hodge Electric of the Omaha Indoor League staged a four-inning exhibition for the entertainment and enlightenment of many curious baseball fans. Hodges won the forty minute contest 8-5. On Thursday, July 30, the Bee-News printed the first complete box score of any softball-type game in Omaha along with its report of this game.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 14 June 1931, Section 8. p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 31 May 1931, Section 8, p. 7.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 30 July 1931, p. 13.

Other "firsts" for Omaha softball-type games occurred this year. The first Church league in Omaha, the North Side Church League, began play in 1931. Church league softball developed a strong tradition in Omaha, and in many other communities throughout the country. The Church leagues remained consistently strong even after World War II, when other leagues no longer continued.

Omaha's first black softball-type team, the Bacchanites, also originated in 1931.<sup>41</sup> No black team played in the city diamond ball leagues in Omaha this year, and would not for many years. While Omaha had a "colored baseball league" in operation, there were not enough black diamond ball teams at this time to form a league. Nevertheless, this "colored diamond ball team" beat most of the teams they played in Omaha and eastern Nebraska.<sup>42</sup> In the first Omaha "Open" Diamond Ball Tournament, the Bacchanites beat Russell Sports, the top team from the Omaha leagues. The Bacchanites eventually lost to the Capesius Markets of Fremont in the final game after four runs were scored against them in the top of the ninth inning.<sup>43</sup> Known, on occasion, as the Tuxedos, this black team proved itself one of the best teams in Nebraska with its strong showing in Fremont's State Pugball Tournament, where the quality of play bettered that of the Omaha leagues in 1931.

On the darker side of the record, another "first" occurred in 1931 when one George Bernstein, third baseman for Dave's Clothes Shop, was "indefinitely suspended by the officers of the National Diamond Ball league" on July 9, 1931,

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 16 August 1931, Section B. p. 6.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 13 August 1931, p. 13.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 9 September 1931, p. 13.

for a fight with a spectator and an umpire.<sup>44</sup> Softball games have often produced excitement, tension, and frequent rowdiness. League suspension committees have yet to miss a season of work in the fifty years since this first suspension.

At the end of the season Harold McAuliffe selected the first Omaha All Star team for softball-type leagues in his Bee-News column.<sup>45</sup> McAuliffe choose his team from players in the eight city leagues. Led by pitchers Joe Theiler of Russell Sports and Frank Barr of Haskins Boosters, the team included one utility infielder and one utility outfielder in addition to the regular nine positions. Russell Sports placed three players on the first team, more than any other diamond ball team in the city.<sup>46</sup>

In August league officials scheduled the first city diamond ball tournament. Borrowing proven procedures from the Omaha baseball, basketball, and bowling leagues, the Municipal Diamond Ball Association brought the league winners together for a tournament to crown a city champion. This champion would get the Dreshler Brothers Trophy, "an 18-inch silver and gold loving cup suitably engraved," and an invitation from the National Diamond Ball Association to participate in the national tournament in Minneapolis early in September.<sup>47</sup>

The city tournament was played the weekend of August 28-30 at Dewey Park, Thirty-second and Dewey Street. Officials charged admission for the

---

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 11 July 1931, p. 13

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 23 August 1931, Section 8, p. 8.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 16 August 1931, Section 8, p. 7.



three-day event, hoping to raise enough money to send the city champion to the national tournament the next week. While crowds of five and six hundred attended the first two days, nearly a thousand saw the Sunday afternoon final when Russell Sports won the city championship by defeating Dave's Clothing Shop 10-1.<sup>48</sup>

Due to the sudden, extraordinary interest in diamond ball tournaments, Omaha officials also planned an "Open" Tournament in September. Any team in the Midwest could enter the "Open" Tournament which was scheduled for the Labor Day weekend. Entries came from various sources; from teams in the Omaha diamond ball leagues which did not qualify for the City Tournament, from pugball teams in Fremont, and from the independent teams around Omaha.<sup>49</sup> Tournament officials sent an invitation to the Olson Jewelry team of Fort Dodge, Iowa, the 1930 National Diamond Ball Champion, but they did not attend.<sup>50</sup> City champion Russell Sports, however, decided not to participate in the National Diamond Ball Tournament and entered the Omaha "Open" Tournament instead.

First round games in the Omaha Open Tournament began on Saturday, September 5, again at Dewey Park. The original structure scheduled the finals for Monday, September 7, but the number of teams exceeded all expectations, and the tournament did not end until Wednesday, September 9. In the semi-final game that evening the black Bacchanite team broke a fourteen-game Russell Sports winning streak when they defeated the City

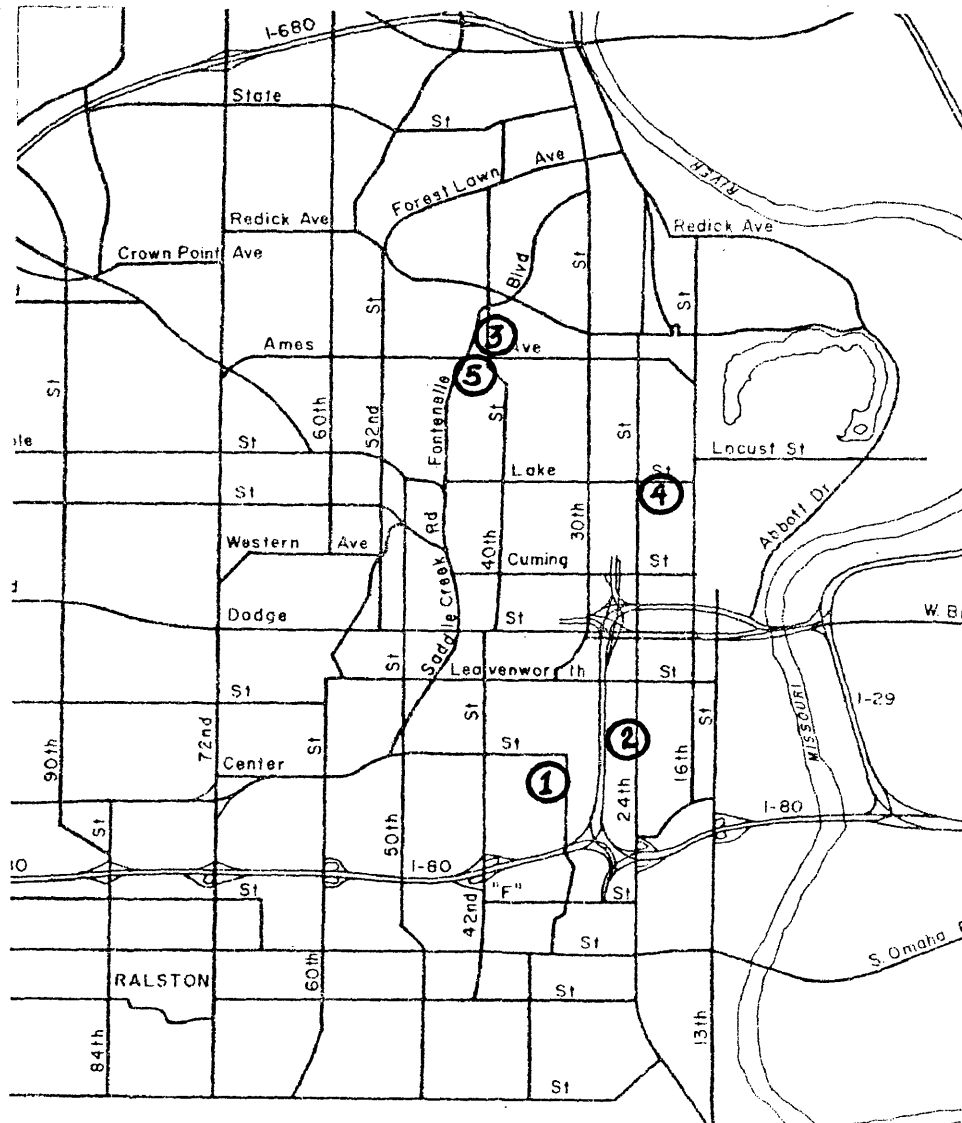
---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 30 August 1931, Section B, p. 8.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 3 September 1931, p. 11.

**New Softball Diamonds 1931**



1. Thirty-fifth and Martha Street
2. Twenty-fourth and Hickory Street
3. Central Park School, Forty-second and Larimore Street
4. Lake School, Twentieth and Lake Street
5. Fontenelle Park, Forty-second and Ames Avenue

Champions 11-5. In the second game, the Fremont Capesius Markets scored four runs in the top of the ninth inning to beat the Bacchanites 5-4 for the "Open" Championship.<sup>51</sup>

Although no Nebraska State Diamond Ball Tournament was held in 1931, Fremont sponsored a State Puggball Tournament. Murphy's All Stars of Fremont defeated the Omaha Tuxedos (Bacchanites) in the finals of this tournament. None of the tournament champions in Nebraska participated in the National Diamond Ball Tournament in Minneapolis. The season ended in September for Nebraska's diamond ball players. Omaha players were pleased with the 1931 season. Because so many traditions of the game originated this year, 1931 remains one of the most important years in Omaha softball history.

\* \* \* \* \*

Early in March of 1932, diamond ball managers began the process of recruiting players and signing them to contracts, while at the same time securing sponsors and paying all the fees required to enter the Omaha leagues. Again this spring some different rules were discussed and debated. The National Diamond Ball Association had not been able to standardize the game so that it was played uniformly throughout the Midwest. It never would. Many players in Omaha felt the National Diamond Ball Association's forty-five foot diamond created too small an infield; they preferred to play with the sixty-foot base paths. In April the major diamond ball leagues in Omaha decided to continue with the sixty-foot diamond.<sup>52</sup> Having settled this question, the leagues began to prepare their 1932 schedules.

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 9 September 1931, p. 13.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 10 April 1932, Section B, p. 8.

After the success of the 1931 season, many players believed the 1932 season would be better than ever. The Bee-News reported results of practice games as early as March 19.<sup>53</sup> One team, the Twenty-fourth Street Boosters, while seeking pre-season opponents, placed a newspaper challenge for a game with any team ". . . wishing to try its luck at this indoor, outdoor baseball business."<sup>54</sup> Teams advertised for games regularly during the spring.

As in previous years, the Omaha Diamond Ball League was the first league to organize in 1932, now entering its third season. The Gate City League also began its third year. The National Diamond Ball League, the Protestant Church Leagues, the Grain Exchange League, and the Union Pacific Leagues all reorganized for a second season.

Many new leagues originated in 1932 as well. The Omaha Bankers Diamond Ball League offered a league to employees of banks in the Omaha area. Western Union also formed a league for its employees, organizing teams from their different departments. The Jewish Community Center, the originator of indoor baseball in Omaha, moved their teams outside the gymnasium and scheduled a diamond ball season.<sup>55</sup> The Sinclair Oil Company, impressed by the recreational opportunities offered to Union Pacific and Western Union employees, organized a league for its workers.<sup>56</sup> The Holy Name Athletic Club started a league at Forty-fifth and Maple Street.<sup>57</sup> By the

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 19 March 1932, p. 18.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 6 April 1932, p. 17.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 29 May 1932, Section 8, p. 8.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 3 April 1932, Section 8, p. 8.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 24 July 1932, Section 8, p. 7.

end of the summer the first league strictly for teen-agers, the Southwestern Playground League, was formed,<sup>58</sup> as was a "Colored Diamond Ball League" in North Omaha.<sup>59</sup>

Omaha lost an active diamond ball promoter early in March when player-manager-newspaper columnist Harold "Mac" McAuliffe left the city for Florissant, Missouri, to study for the Jesuit priesthood.<sup>60</sup> A teammate, Harold Becker, recalled that McAuliffe broke his leg playing diamond ball during the 1931 season and while bedridden and recovering decided to join this religious order.<sup>61</sup> McAuliffe's diamond ball column in the Omaha Bee-News, "Indoor Ball Chatter," was replaced by "Diamond Ball Notes," written by teammate and friend George "Dode" Stoney. Father McAuliffe, after serving away from Omaha for more than thirty years, returned in the early 1960s and was assigned to the staff at Creighton University—just a few blocks away from the parks he so often visited to play diamond ball many years before.

By 1932 the quality of play had risen so much that pitching and fielding now dominated the game. Hitting, once an easy task with the easy deliveries of the earlier years, was now more difficult, against some pitchers, that hitting a baseball in the local hardball leagues. The short pitching distance, the variety of pitching styles, and the outseam ball all contributed to this gradual domination by the city's best pitchers. The 1931 City Tournament champions, Russell Sports, did not have one .300 hitter on the team. Pitching,

---

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 20 May 1932, p. 19.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 24 July 1932, Section B, p. 10.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 20 March 1932, Section B, p. 6.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Harold Becker, Omaha, Nebraska, 6 October 1981.

better all-round defense, and the use of gloves by first basemen and catchers all contributed to this development. <sup>62</sup>

Although the overall quality of the games improved in just a short time, the mediocre umpiring of the games in 1930 and 1932 forced officials to find a solution in 1932. Some players wanted to hire umpires from the Municipal Baseball Association, but the leagues found a different solution. <sup>63</sup> Each league selected five or six men, usually players and managers in the league, who were quite knowledgeable about diamond ball, to become city umpires. Other leagues then hired these men for fifty cents a game to umpire their contests. <sup>64</sup> This system considerably raised the level of umpiring in the Omaha diamond ball leagues.

After working out all of these issues, the Omaha leagues finally opened the season May 2, a week later than usual. <sup>65</sup> The Omaha Diamond Ball League began play this night, while the rest of the leagues started during the next two weeks. Each league soon developed a character of its own, and late in May a Y.M.C.A. bulletin identified the various leagues with these observations: ". . . the Church loop is the largest with 10 teams, the Omaha loop is the fastest with the National a close second, and the Grain Exchange and Western Union loops are in a deadlock for the ranking as the noisiest league." <sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> Bee-News, 28 March 1932, p. 9.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 3 April 1932, p. 9.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 1 May 1932, Section B, p. 8.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 29 May 1932, Section B, p. 8.

Omaha teams also exchanged visits with Lincoln and Fremont teams for weekend games. Teams from these three cities dominated Nebraska diamond ball in the early 1930s. During the summer of 1932 other Nebraska communities organized diamond ball teams, usually for both men and women. The Omaha newspapers reported the results of games sent in from Alliance, North Platte, Columbus, and Lyons. These towns also hosted summer tournaments which the Omaha teams often attended.<sup>67</sup> In August one Omaha team, Annie's All Stars, traveled to Springfield, Nebraska, to play the men's baseball team in a game of "kittenball." Springfield won the game 19-1. The young women and girls on Annie's All Star team lost badly that day, but this tough competition helped them improve their skills. Being one of the first women's diamond ball teams in Omaha, Annie's All Stars played many men's teams this year.<sup>68</sup>

In August league officials planned the second annual City Diamond Ball Tournament. Once again only league champions could enter the tournament, this year a one-day affair scheduled for Sunday, August 28, at Dewey Park. Hodge Electric, winners of the Omaha Diamond Ball League, became the second team from that league to win the City Tournament when they defeated the Union Pacific Machine Shops 12-2 in the final game late that afternoon.<sup>69</sup> Omaha's second "Open" Tournament, scheduled for the following weekend, was cancelled when promoters discovered a conflict with the Omaha Municipal

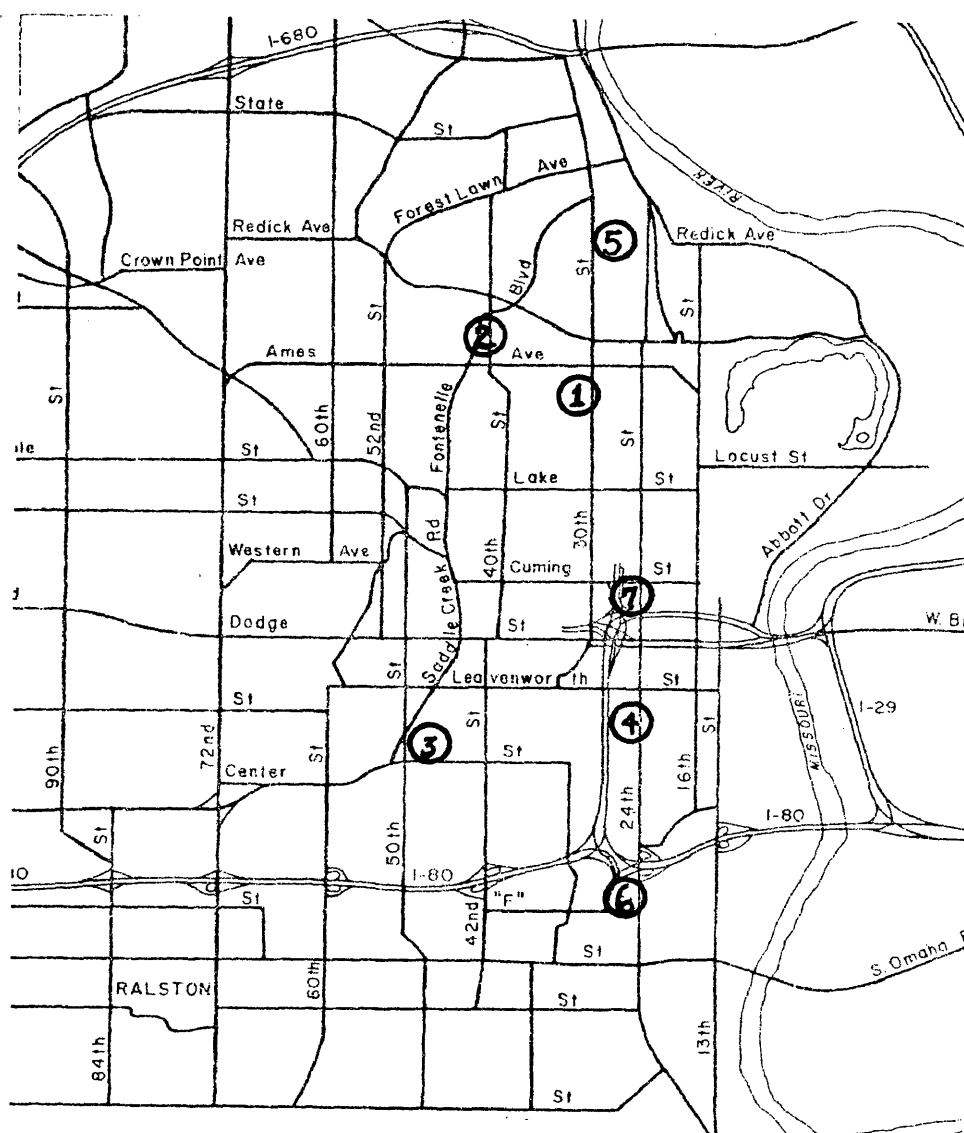
---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 1 May 1932 to 14 June 1932.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 10 August 1932, p. 12.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 30 August 1932, p. 9.

### New Softball Diamonds 1932



1. Douglas School Park, Thirtieth and Laird Street
2. Forty-second and Grand Street Park
3. Beals School, Forty-eighth and Center Street
4. Mason School, Twenty-fourth and Mason Street
5. Miller Park, Twenty-fourth and Kansas Street
6. South Lincoln School, Twenty-sixth and "F" Street
7. Creighton University Stadium, Twenty-sixth and Burt Street



Baseball Tournament and a State Diamond Ball Tournament planned for Lincoln.<sup>70</sup>

Due to the state-wide interest in diamond ball this year, Lincoln hosted the first State Tournament during the Labor Day weekend, September 4-5. Played at Lincoln's Landis Field, the tournament attracted teams from Beatrice, Palmyra, Havelock, Medina, Nebraska City, and Fremont, as well as Lincoln and Omaha. Hodge Electric and Union Pacific, the top two finishers in the Omaha City Tournament both entered, as did the Omaha All Stars and the South Omaha Stockyards.<sup>71</sup>

The Maser Grocery team of Lincoln won this state tournament, and with it the right to attend a National Diamond Ball Championship tournament in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.<sup>72</sup> In this national tournament, where twenty-four of the forty entries were from Wisconsin, teams from that state captured the first four places, with the Lake Mills Wemcoes taking first. Lincoln's Maser Grocery team fared little better back home, where late in September they lost the final of the Cook (Nebraska) Tournament to the Omaha Bacchanites.<sup>73</sup> This late season Bacchanite victory helped Omaha regain some pride after losing earlier to the capital city teams. A competitive Omaha-Lincoln rivalry developed each year during these state tournaments and continued for a number of years.

\* \* \* \* \*

The 1933 season was one of contradictions. The game became more popular

---

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 11 September 1932, Section B, p. 6.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 31 August 1932, p. 9.

<sup>72</sup> The Lincoln Star, 6 September 1932.

<sup>73</sup> Bee-News, 16 September 1932, p. 20.

than ever. Additional teams were organized, some in Omaha, but many more throughout Nebraska and Iowa. This Midwestern popularity did little, however, to strengthen Omaha's organized leagues. While in 1932 fourteen Omaha leagues offered diamond activities, only seven leagues reorganized for the 1933 season. Fifty teams joined these seven leagues this season, but more than one hundred teams competed without a league structure. After two successful years of league activity, finances influenced part of this reluctance to join a city league.

With the increase in the number of teams in eastern Nebraska, many Omaha teams would not be tied to a twice-a-week league which might limit their "barnstorming" activities. In these depression years, some games could be played for cash, and these were of great interest to many players. Former softball official Floyd Hayes recalled how these games usually came about.

In the early days of softball, when the game was referred to as Kittenball or Diamondball, [some teams] covered many miles with their barnstorming. [The only] guarantee to play was sometimes a ten dollar bill. That was a lot of money in those days. Each team usually had two balls, one for practice and one for the game; and if you had six bats you had a real burlap sack full of war clubs. Sometimes these games were played in connection with a picnic or a fair. It wasn't unusual to line up a game with a small town team and when you got there find out you were batting against a top pitcher from Omaha. Ben Crain, Frank Barr, Lyle Whiteing, and Joe Rak loved these contests. 74

Promoters printed handbills and distributed them throughout the community. Customers often paid a ten cent admission to view the action. Omaha teams could make money, though sometimes just a little, from these games. No profit could be made by winning the championship of any Omaha league. In

---

74 Scrapbook, 1933, Hayes Collection, Personal account.

1933 it made a difference to some of the players.

While some teams, like the South Omaha Merchants, played in the Omaha Diamond Ball League during the week and did their "barnstorming" on weekends, other teams rejected the leagues entirely. By doing this they saved themselves entry fees, player contract fees, forfeit fees, umpire fees, and maybe the need for a sponsor. The opportunity to make money from these exhibition games outweighed the excitement of playing in a top Omaha league. Out-state communities sometimes hired talented pitchers and other proven players from the Omaha leagues to play in these exhibition games. As "amateur" and semi-pro baseball players earlier discovered, popular, entertaining ball games could produce money for the opportunistic. Diamond ball players now explored the financial possibilities.

Some Omaha leagues, however, continued to operate during this fourth diamond ball season. A few provided stronger competition than ever before. The Omaha Diamond Ball League continued to maintain its position as the oldest and strongest league in the city. Only six teams played in the Omaha league this year, though. The City Diamond Ball League, re-named the Gate City League in 1931 and 1932, became the All-City Diamond Ball League in 1933. It, too, had six teams. A new league, the American Diamond Ball League, organized for the first time in 1933. The Protestant Church League offered a strong program once again, but ten of the Lutheran churches in Omaha formed their own league, the American Lutheran Conference Kittenball Association. Other Omaha leagues, keeping their distance from the National Diamond Ball Association, also used the name "kittenball" for their organizations. The Omaha Banks Kittenball League returned in 1933 with four teams. A six-team People's Forum Kittenball League developed around the Brown Park neighborhood in South Omaha. The Southwestern Playground Ball

League again offered the younger players competition at the Social Settlement playground at Thirty-first and "Q" Street.

On Monday, April 19, the Omaha Diamond Ball League opened the 1933 season. Though there were fewer leagues in 1933, some teams were better than ever. The South Omaha Merchants, who won the All-City Diamond Ball League in 1933, boasted many good players, especially at the pitching position. South Omaha resident and softball historian Floyd Hayes offered this opinion.

Many good Omaha pitchers played with the South Omaha Merchants and if you lived in South Omaha and made that team it was like signing a big league contract today. Joe Rak, Jim Tynski and Joe Rezak pitched with this team at one time or another. 75

Diamond ball in the Omaha leagues still excited some players and fans. The public paid less attention to the leagues, however, because fewer teams played this year and the Omaha newspapers emphasized non-league games and out-state contests as much as they did the local organizations.

The influence of the National Diamond Ball Association weakened in Nebraska in 1933. Throughout the summer the Omaha papers published the daily and weekly accounts of kittenball games, as they were often called, from all over Nebraska and Iowa. Syracuse, Alliance, Ravenna, Kearney, Tekamah, Nebraska City, McCook, Columbus, Dodge, and Walthill all received coverage of their teams and leagues that summer. Fremont and Lincoln continued to promote their programs. Fremont demonstrated that community's support when it bought, at a cost of \$600, the first floodlights for a Nebraska diamond ball field. On June 1, 1933, workers installed these

---

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

lights and the state's first night games began.<sup>76</sup> Three weeks later, Kearney followed Fremont's example and became the second Nebraska town to light its diamond ball field.<sup>77</sup>

In Omaha, no lighted fields were built. The diamond ball organizations weakened during the course of the season. The 1933 Omaha tournament schedule exemplified this more than anything else. The City Diamond Ball Association offered no city tournaments in 1933. The association, in effect, had ceased to exist. The Holy Name Athletic Club scheduled the only city diamond ball tournament in 1933. This tournament began the weekend of September 9-10 and continued until September 17. Top teams from the Omaha leagues as well as numerous independent teams paid the three dollar entry fee, hoping to win the prize money offered the two finalists. Russell Sports, winner of the Omaha Diamond Ball League in 1933, won the Holy Name City Tournament at the Fontanelle Boulevard and Maple Street playground. A women's tournament, the first in Omaha history, was also played that week, and though the winner was not announced in the local press, the Bowery Maidens and St. Wenceslaus played in the finals of that first-ever event.<sup>78</sup>

Lincoln promoters staged their second annual State Diamond Ball Tournament on August 12-14 at Landis Field.<sup>79</sup> The first Nebraska women's State Diamond Ball Tournament was also held that week. Teams from all over

---

<sup>76</sup> Bee-News, 2 June 1933, p. 9.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 22 June 1933, p. 9.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 17 September 1933, p. 9.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 8 August 1933, p. 9.

the state entered these tournaments.<sup>80</sup> The Maser Grocery Store of Lincoln again won the men's title and with it a trip to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for a "softball championship of the world" tournament.<sup>81</sup>

This "Kittenball World Series," as the tournament in Milwaukee was also billed, was like most "national" tournaments in the early 1930s in that it gathered many teams from the host state to play against a handful of entries from other areas. When Nebraska's 1933 champion, the Lincoln Masers, journeyed to Milwaukee for this tournament, they encountered more excitement on the trip to the "beer capital" than from anything the city's ball fields could offer. The Associated Press explained why.

#### LINCOLN PLAYERS HELD AS SUSPECTS

Freeport, Ill. Aug. 24 (AP)—Members of a Lincoln [Neb.] kittenball team, on route to a tournament in Milwaukee, ran into some unexpected and off-the-diamond opposition Thursday.

When they drove into Freeport early in the morning, college pennants fluttering from their automobiles, police met them at that point with machine guns and escorted them to the city jail.

They acted on information from Dubuque [Ia.] officials, who told them to be on the lookout for a bandit group which held up and robbed Nick Ferris, restaurant proprietor of that city, of \$57.

The bandit car was described as decorated with college pennants. The baseball players were held for several hours until Dubuque authorities arrived with Ferris. He was unable to identify any of them as his assailants.

Consequently, the players, managed by John Maser of Lincoln, were sent on their way with a few words of encouragement. Everyone was good natured about the affair.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> The Nebraska State Journal, 24 August 1933.

<sup>81</sup> Bee-News, 25 August 1933, p. 13.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 25 August 1933, p. 13.

Having survived that ordeal, the Lincoln Masers proceeded to Milwaukee and witnessed the Wisconsin teams capture six of the first eight places in the tournament, including the championship and runnerup.

In spite of the weakness of the Omaha leagues, developments occurred in 1933 which produced real changes in the game soon to be known as "softball." Once again players asked the governing bodies to standardize the rules to this fast-paced game. While this request had often been made in the game's first three or four decades, it usually originated in one or two areas, either in Chicago or Minneapolis. Now this demand came from many parts of the country. Syndicated sports columnist Damon Runyon wrote two columns about the popularity of this game he called softball.<sup>83</sup> This exposure familiarized softball to millions not previously exposed to it.

Another important event occurred, this one being a change in a piece of diamond ball equipment. Sporting goods manufacturers began making and selling a new ball in 1932 and 1933 which they called a softball. It was a twelve-inch ball, made like a baseball. The outseam or raised seam ball soon disappeared. By replacing the soft outseam ball with a hard, twelve-inch baseball, the games of kittenball, diamond ball, playground ball, and indoor baseball were suddenly replaced by a newer game; a game named by Walter Hakanson back in 1928. This game was softball.<sup>84</sup>

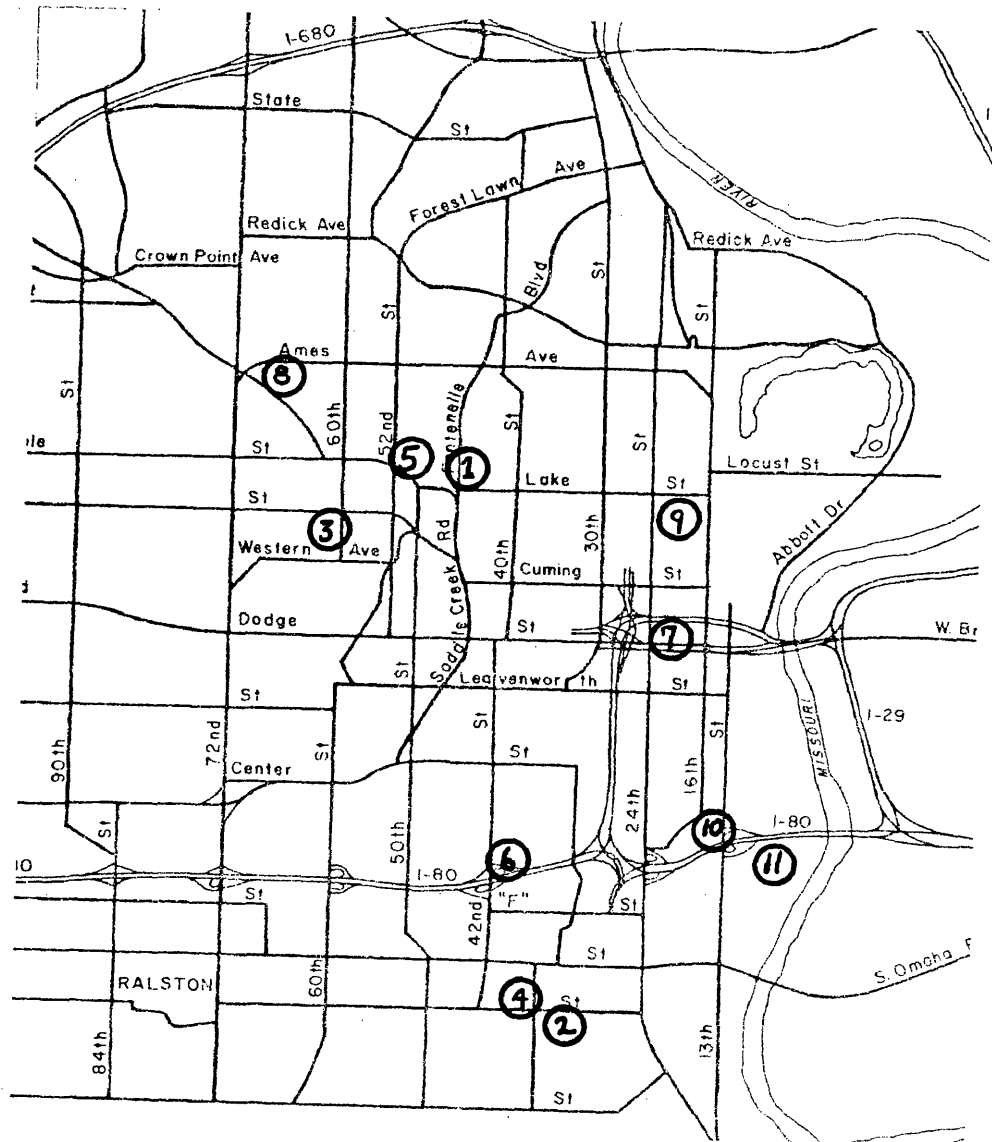
Perhaps the most important development of all occurred when Chicago sportswriter Leo H. Fischer and former Minneapolis diamond baller Mike Pauley formed the Amateur Softball Association of America (A.S.A.) late

---

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 28 September to 30 September 1933.

<sup>84</sup> Scrapbook, 1932, Hayes Collection, Personal account.

New Softball Diamonds 1933



1. Holy Name Field, Fontenelle Boulevard and Maple Street
2. Social Settlement Park, Thirty-first and "Q" Street
3. Sixty-first and Franklin Street
4. Christie Heights Park, Thirty-sixth and "Q" Street
5. Benson High School, Fifty-second and Maple Street
6. Pulaski Park, Forty-first and Grover Street
7. Central High School, Twenty-second and Dodge Street
8. Benson Park, Sixty-sixth and Ames Avenue
9. Twentieth and Burdette Street
10. Western League Park, Fifteenth and Vinton Street
11. Riverview Park, Fifth and Grover Street



in 1933. This organization was destined to be the one to finally standardize this pastime on a national basis. In 1934, the A.S.A. pushed the game of softball throughout the United States with one of the greatest promotions the sport had ever seen.

## CHAPTER THREE

### SOFTBALL AND THE A.S.A.: CREATION OF THE MODERN GAME

When Leo Fischer and Micheal J. Pauley first considered promoting a large softball tournament in Chicago in 1933, they merely proposed what earlier promoters in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois had done for a number of years. Fischer, the assistant sports editor for the Chicago American newspaper, and Pauley, a salesman for the Vim Sporting Goods Company, were impressed by the fact that during the summer nearly every vacant lot in Chicago was filled with people playing softball.<sup>1</sup> Urban unemployment during the early 1930s produced thousands of jobless men, many who wandered the neighborhoods and watched the young people play this game of softball at city playgrounds. Since the game demanded little equipment, and was adaptable to city spaces, many of these men filled some of the empty hours by playing this popular game. After a few of the men began to return to work, they wanted to continue this leisure-time activity. Merchants who could not afford to sponsor complete baseball teams discovered they could finance a less-expensive softball team. Industrial and commercial teams formed at a rapid rate.

Fischer and Pauley decided to provide these hundreds of Chicago teams a city tournament early in the 1930s. Fischer convinced his employer, the Chicago American newspaper, to sponsor the event. In 1933, nine hundred teams entered the tournament. There were divisions for men and women; for boys and girls; for commercial, industrial, and fraternal teams; for

---

<sup>1</sup> Scrapbook, 1934, Floyd Hayes Collection, 3118 South Forty-fourth Street, Omaha, Nebraska, Clipping from Balls and Strikes magazine, Article by Leo Fischer.

fast-pitch and slow-pitch teams; and for teams using the twelve-inch softball, the fourteen-inch softball, and the sixteen-inch softball.<sup>2</sup>

These tournaments were so successful that later in 1933 Fischer persuaded the American to sponsor a "World's Championship Tournament" for the best teams throughout the United States and Canada. Fischer and Pauley convinced officials of the 1933 Chicago's World's Fair, called the "Exposition of Progress," to co-sponsor the event. "Exposition" officials built a field with a grandstand on the lakefront fairgrounds and promoted the tournament as another of its sports attractions. Other major events inaugurated with this "World's Fair" in Chicago were the Major League baseball All-Star game, played at Comisky Park, and the College All-Star football game at Soldier Field.<sup>3</sup>

Cognizant of the need to provide top-level softball competition, Fischer and Pauley began to contact teams outside of Chicago, hoping their "World Tournament" would not be just another local affair. The Chicago American, co-sponsor of the tournament, was owned by William Randolph Hearst and was part of his American newspaper chain. The Hearst International News Service wired announcements about the tournament to many papers throughout the nation. Omaha's Hearst newspaper, the Omaha Bee-News, ran the press release on Wednesday, August 16, 1933.

Hey, Kittenballers ! Big World's Series

Chicago, Aug. 15 (INS)—Softball, known also by the pseudonyms of diamond ball, kitten ball and playground ball, has been added to the sports program of "A Century of Progress."

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

A "world's championship tournament," open to both men and women teams, is to be staged at the fair early in September, it was announced today by Secretary M.J. Pauley of the National Softball league. 4

In spite of the advance publicity, the sponsorship by the Chicago American, and promotion by the Chicago "World's Fair," many teams considered it just another of the "world championship tournaments" scheduled in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan that year. Some teams, like the Nebraska state champions, the Masers of Lincoln, went to Milwaukee late in August for a "Kittenball World Series" there. Many of these teams traveled south to Chicago after the Milwaukee event to play one more tournament before heading home. Even in Chicago, the Fischer-Pauley tournament was not the only softball tournament offered that summer. A rival group claiming to be part of the World's Fair program sponsored an "International Championship" and crowned a champion. That champion happened to be the Council Bluffs Barnsdall Ramblers, whose pitching ace, Ben Crain, would later excel as a player in Omaha for nearly two decades. 5

The importance of the Chicago American tournament lay not in the fact that it was the single-most prestigious tournament in the world in 1933. This tournament, like the tournaments in New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, had as many local teams from the Chicago area as non-local teams. The importance of this tournament, however, increased with each passing year. This was the first major tournament that offered three separate divisions; one for men's fast-pitch, one for women's fast-pitch, and one for men's slow-pitch teams using the sixteen-inch ball.

---

<sup>4</sup> The Omaha Bee-News, 16 August 1933, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Scrapbook, 1933, Hayes Collection, Poster advertising Council Bluffs Barnsdall Rambler softball team.

Furthermore, the organizers of this tournament, Leo Fischer and Mike Pauley, organized the Amateur Softball Association of America later that year. The A.S.A. became the leading softball organization in the world. Since the A.S.A. prepares and distributes most of the softball information in the United States today, this tournament is recorded by that organization as the first true national tournament in softball history. There have been forty-eight consecutive national championship tournaments sponsored by the A.S.A. since 1933. This "Century of Progress" tournament is considered the "first" in a very long line of successful events.

In the tournament itself, forty-five teams entered the three divisions. The men's fast-pitch division attracted thirty teams and included Nebraska's Maser Grocery team of Lincoln. Fifteen women's fast-pitch teams competed. Ten slow-pitch teams played, most from the Chicago area.<sup>6</sup> The city of Chicago assigned 121 policemen to handle the seventy thousand fans attending the first round.<sup>7</sup> Chicago's J.L. Friedman Boosters, also called the J.J. Gills, won the men's fast pitch division and became the first A.S.A. national tournament champion. The Great Northern Laundryettes, also of Chicago, won the women's title, the first women's national softball title on record.<sup>8</sup>

Fischer and Pauley discovered rather quickly the need for a standard

---

<sup>6</sup> Morris Bealle, Softball Story, (Washington, D.C.: Columbia Publishing Company, 1957), pp. 42-3.

<sup>7</sup> Dr. John Brown, Jr., "Softball Problems—Hearings on the Present Situation," Recreation 28 (December 1934): 445-6.

<sup>8</sup> Bealle, Softball Story, p. 44.

set of rules that could be accepted nationally. The St. Petersburg, Florida, men's team reported that during their journey to Illinois they played twelve exhibition games in twelve different states; each game was played with a different set of rules.<sup>9</sup> Fischer and Pauley decided to organize a national softball association to consolidate these numerous sets of rules, which, they hoped, would simplify intersectional play. At the conclusion of the tournament, with the help of team managers, officials, and players still in Chicago, the two enthused promoters began to construct their organization. Leo Fischer recorded this event.

After our first tournament in 1933, we got a number of the visitors together and coordinated the rules, working with the National Recreation Association.

Here is the historic "Rule I," which is sub-titled "The Game:"

"The name of this game shall be Soft Ball, which includes games formerly known as Kittenball, Diamondball, Playground Baseball, Mushball, Recreation Ball, Indoor-outdoor, Lightning Baseball and kindred games." 10

Fischer, Pauley, and their associates began in a logical fashion—they defined the game and gave it a name. They also established a standard playing field; two fields, in fact—a sixty foot diamond for teams using the twelve-inch ball, a forty-five foot diamond for teams using the fourteen-inch ball and the sixteen-inch ball. 11

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 47-8.

<sup>10</sup> Scrapbook, 1934, Hayes Collection, Clipping from Balls and Strikes magazine, Article by Leo Fischer.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Having built the foundation for their softball organization, the next step was to name it. Fischer and Pauley choose the name Amateur Softball Association of America (A.S.A.). This name has remained unchanged for nearly fifty years. Even though the A.S.A. was backed by the National Recreation Association (N.R.A.), an organization of American park and playground administrators, the powerful Amateur Athletic Union (A.A.U.) challenged it and tried to weaken it. Fischer and Pauley, however, convinced nationally known sports and civics leaders to serve on an advisory board for the A.S.A. Among these were football coaches Amos Alonzo Stagg and Elmer Layden, Big Ten Commissioner Major John L. Griffith, and Bishop Bernard J. Sheil.<sup>12</sup> This, plus the support of William Randolph Hearst, convinced the A.A.U. to accept the A.S.A. as administrators of its softball program.

The support of William Randolph Hearst and his chain of American newspapers was one of the most important factors in the early success and eventual survival of the A.S.A. The Chicago American, Hearst's paper in the "windy city," sponsored the original "Century of Progress" tournament. Leo Fischer was the assistant sports editor at the American. When colleague Jess Kruger, promotion manager for the American, was given that position for the entire Hearst newspaper organization, Fischer and Pauley had an ally in the chain's national headquarters. Kruger, familiar with the success of the first Chicago tournament, wanted to sponsor an event which might compete with the Chicago Tribune's national Golden Gloves boxing tournament. He decided softball could do this. Kruger convinced Hearst to sponsor the national tournament each year and support the A.S.A. Hearst financed a thousand dollar gold and silver trophy to be given to the winning

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

team, and ordered his papers throughout the United States to organize and administer the local leagues.<sup>13</sup> In Omaha, the Hearst paper was the Bee-News, and by February, 1934, plans had been made to form the Omaha branch of the Amateur Softball Association.

\* \* \* \* \*

On Sunday morning, February 4, 1934, the Omaha Bee-News announced the formation of a new softball body; one directly associated with the Amateur Softball Association of America. Ralph Wagner, sports editor of the Bee-News, had been appointed president of the new Omaha Softball Association and was instructed by Jess Kruger's promotion department in New York to establish the leagues in Omaha. Initially, Omaha was chosen to be one of the Metropolitan associations of the A.S.A., while the rest of the state of Nebraska would become one of the State associations. It was in this Sunday morning edition that Editor Ralph Wagner wrote one of the most important announcements in Omaha softball history.

BEE-NEWS to SPONSOR ALL-CITY SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

Four Leagues Will Be Organized; Champ to Enter National Meet

Harry Stevenson Secretary; Loop Winners to Receive Medals;  
Association to Arrange All Details of Play; One Set of Rules  
to Follow

By Ralph Wagner

Come on, all you kittenballers, soft ballers, pugballers  
and playground ballers!

The Omaha Bee-News has organized and planted the foundation  
for a City Softball association. Now, softball is the same  
as kittenball, pugball, twilight ball or playground ball, or

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.



whatever you wish to call the outdoor sport that is played with bats and enlarged baseballs that is taking the country by storm.

Because we think softball is the coming thing, and because the game is growing by leaps and bounds, not only in Omaha but in every city, town, village, hamlet and halfway station, and because the boys who play the game in this city need an organization of this kind, this great newspaper has gone ahead and started the ball rolling, so come on fellows, and help us make this association one of the largest, and, of course, the best in the country. 14

Having announced the formation of the City Softball Association, Wagner quickly established its credibility by presenting the association Secretary and Board of Directors. Harry Stevenson, past president of the Metro Amateur Baseball Association and able director of Omaha's bowling association, accepted the job as Secretary of the new softball association. A number of prominent Omaha sports figures agreed to serve on the Board of Directors. The Board consisted of university athletic directors A.A. Schabinger (Creighton University) and Sid Hartman (Municipal University of Omaha), physical directors E.L. Maxwell (Y.M.C.A.) and Lee Grossman (Jewish Community Center), city Parks Commissioner Frank Frost, and association president, Ralph Wagner. 15

Such an impressive list of supporters indicated the new City Softball Association would be a solid organization. Wagner explained what the new governing body hoped to do for Omaha players.

It is the aim of the association to have at least four leagues—the Greater Omaha, which will be an open affair; the Industrial, composed of players working for the company or backer they represent; the Commercial,

---

14 Bee-News, 4 February 1934, Section B, p. 7.

15 Ibid.

and last, but not least, the Junior league. Boys, if you have a softball league already organized, come right up and join the association.

The association, softballers, will FURNISH the schedules and take care of arranging for diamonds on which to play the games. More than that—the association will furnish the umpires for each game.

The Omaha Bee-News will award medals to every member of the team which wins its league championship.

The association also plans a city elimination tournament for the city championship. Now get this, boys! The city championship softball team will go to the national tournament as the representative of Omaha, providing, of course, enough interest is shown in the association. 16

The association required a \$7.50 franchise fee for each team in the leagues, and a fifty cent fee for each player contract. Junior league teams paid only a three dollar franchise fee and a twenty-five cent player contract fee. The association earmarked this money for umpires, and to send the Omaha softball champion to the national tournament at the end of the season. Wagner stressed that the City Softball Association intended to be an amateur organization, and in no way would operate for financial gain. 17

Secretary Harry Stevenson planned to meet with prospective managers and players each Monday night at the Bee-News building to distribute applications and answer questions. Below Wagner's story announcing the formation of the new softball association, there was a registration coupon for interested players and teams to clip, fill out, and mail in. This coupon appeared in the paper each day until May. 18 The Bee-News' drive hoped to create the

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

the largest and most extensive softball program ever seen in Omaha.

Shortly after the Sunday announcement, employees in the Bee-News sports department spent a great deal of time working on the new association. Inquiries and entries came to the office each day, not only from Omaha, but from the entire state. In the next Sunday edition, Wagner announced the early progress of the softball association.<sup>19</sup> The following week, Harry Stevenson formed the Nebraska State Softball Association for those teams outside of the Omaha area.<sup>20</sup> By February 20, more than twenty Omaha teams had officially entered the new association.<sup>21</sup> Dozens more were being organized. Ralph Wagner, as sports editor of the Bee-News, was sanctioned by the A.S.A., actually instructed by Jess Kruger, to serve as president for both the Omaha Softball Association and the Nebraska State Softball Association. With his duties at the Bee-News, Wagner needed a qualified individual to administer these organizations. Wagner asked Harry Stevenson, Secretary of the Omaha Softball Association, to be the State Commissioner for the Nebraska State Softball Association. Stevenson accepted. After careful planning, Stevenson divided the state into twenty districts and appointed a district commissioner for each.<sup>22</sup>

Intent upon building a strong, grassroots organization, the A.S.A. sent Leo Fischer and Michael Pauley to the various metropolitan areas to explain, firsthand, the rules, regulations, and procedures of this latest

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 11 February 1934, Section B, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 15 February 1934, p. 15.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 20 February 1934, p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 25 February 1934, Section B, p. 9.

version of the game of softball. Fischer, still the assistant sports editor at the Chicago American, was elected president of the A.S.A. by the board of directors, an unpaid position that did not require much involvement with the day-to-day operations. The directors hired Pauley as executive secretary, a full-time job which paid \$2,600 a year.<sup>23</sup> The Athletic Institute, an association of sporting goods manufacturers, financed the trips for Fischer and Pauley early in 1934.<sup>24</sup> Pauley, a sales representative for a sporting goods firm in Chicago, convinced these manufacturers of an enormous softball market.

After three weeks of press reminders, and a major headlined story in the Sunday edition of the Bee-News sports section of March 11, national A.S.A. executive secretary M.J. Pauley arrived in Omaha on Monday, March 12, to meet with officials and players about the new organization. After discussing with Wagner, Stevenson, and others, the various strategies the A.S.A. hoped to implement at the local levels in 1934, Pauley met with all interested players in Courtroom No. 1 at City Hall. A.S.A. rules interested most in the audience, pitching rules in particular. Pauley discussed these at length. The A.S.A. knew that they had to establish some basic underhand delivery techniques if they hoped to provide consistent play throughout the country. Although it took a few years to eliminate the problem of different pitching styles, this pre-season effort by Pauley and Fischer helped considerably. Pauley also discussed other rules about base running, lead-offs, and passed balls before leaving for his next meeting in St. Louis.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Bealle, Softball Story, p. 48.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Bee-News, 14 March 1934, p. 15.

Since knowledge of the rules was so important for standardizing the game from coast to coast, the Bee-News, like the other papers in the Hearst chain, began publishing the A.S.A. rules for softball. To clarify the 1934 pitching rules the paper printed a series of photographs demonstrating legal and illegal pitching methods.<sup>26</sup> Those A.S.A. rules governing equipment differed little from the year before. The association required teams to use the common thirty-four inch bat and the smooth-seamed ball, twelve or fourteen inches in diameter. Baseball gloves were optional, but metal spikes were banned for the 1934 season. A.S.A. rules permitted no bunting, nor any base stealing. A player could not leave the base until a pitched ball had either crossed the plate or been hit. Bases remained sixty feet apart, but the pitching distance was only thirty-seven feet. The A.S.A. required teams to play ten men to a side, instead of nine. This tenth player became the short-fielder or rover. All A.S.A. leagues played seven-inning games instead of nine-inning contests.<sup>27</sup> The Bee-News ran the complete list of A.S.A. rules in nine consecutive editions from April 30 to May 8.

Teams and leagues organized quickly in March and April. The Omaha Softball Association first formed the Greater Omaha League. Promoted as the best league in the city, the eight member teams played Monday and Friday evenings during the season. Closest to the Greater Omaha League in quality was the American League, also a Monday-Friday league. The United Beer League, a Sunday morning league, included many of the players who played Mondays and Fridays in the Greater Omaha and American leagues. Prohibition

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 11 March 1934, Section B, p. 9.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 25 February 1934, Section B, p. 9.

was repealed on December 5, 1933, and the dramatic rise of softball coincided with the return of beer in the United States. Softball and beer remain close companions for many American players; some will not indulge in one without the other.

Omaha's response to the Bee-News softball association soon changed plans to offer just four leagues. The Metro League, the National League, and the Industrial League all joined the Omaha Softball Association in March. All of these leagues were part of the Omaha Softball Association and the parent A.S.A. Other teams in Omaha, however, joined the A.S.A. as part of the Nebraska State Softball Association. Early in 1934 it was unclear whether or not Omaha would be sanctioned as a separate metropolitan association of the A.S.A. During the season the A.S.A. decided not to give the Omaha tournament champion an automatic berth in the national tournament. The Omaha champion would have to qualify through the Nebraska state tournament. This eliminated the need for a separate Omaha Softball Association. The Omaha association became just another district, albeit the largest, in the Nebraska State Softball Association (N.S.S.A.).

Omaha's Holy Name Athletic Club sponsored four leagues under the structure of the N.S.S.A. These leagues all played at the Holy Name diamond on Maple Street and Fontenelle Boulevard. The Holy Name Athletic Club administered the Holy Name Gate City League, the Holy Name Aksarben League, the Holy Name Athletic Club League (a closed league for club members only), and the only Omaha women's league in 1934, the Holy Name Girls League. The Omaha Y.M.C.A., with the sanction of the N.S.S.A., sponsored two Protestant Church leagues, the Ahamo League and the Federal League. The South Omaha Softball Association, another member of the N.S.S.A., organized the Southern

League. A six-team Bank League joined the state association, as did a Benson Community League. The Union Pacific Athletic Association, one of the oldest softball organizations in Omaha, entered its Union Pacific League in the Nebraska association. The active Jewish Community Center also formed a league. With the addition of the Swift and Cudahy leagues, Omaha had nineteen leagues and dozens of teams by early May.<sup>28</sup> Hundreds of players joined the organized leagues in 1934. Independent teams would never again dominate the Omaha softball scene as they did in 1933.

The formation of leagues did not stop in early May. The Omaha Lutheran churches of the Missouri synod organized a Walther League. The Baker Ice Machine Company offered its employees a four-team league. On Omaha's north side, players, some of them from the black community, joined one of the three Mid-City Leagues. The Mid-City Senior League, the Mid-City Junior League, and the Mid-City Midget League all played at the corner of Twentieth and Burdette Street. For Omaha's substantial Catholic school population, the Knights of Columbus Parochial School Softball Association organized four leagues for its elementary schools. Thus, the Nebraska State Softball Association, which now included the Omaha Softball Association, administered, in Omaha, twenty-eight leagues, 181 teams, and nearly thirteen hundred players.

Due to this great number of leagues and teams in 1934, locating enough softball fields presented an immediate problem. The A.S.A. suggested to the local associations that they place city park officials on the softball board of directors. Wagner selected Omaha's Park Commissioner, Frank Frost,

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 13 May 1934, Section B, p. 8.

as one of the first appointees to the Nebraska State Softball Association board of directors. Frost accepted the position with great enthusiasm. Shortly after the Bee-News announced the formation of the new softball association in February, Frost assured the public that his department at City Hall would do all it could to provide enough softball diamonds that season.

"I believe," Commissioner Frost said in one Bee-News statement, "that there is enough vacant ground around town so we can construct 25 or 30 softball diamonds in addition to the diamonds already available at Elmwood, Fontenelle, Miller, and other parks."<sup>29</sup> As the map on the following page indicates, Commissioner Frost did not construct thirty diamonds, but he did produce enough new fields to keep the many leagues on schedule.

Frost and softball commissioner Harry Stevenson checked a number of locations throughout the city for potential diamonds. Many of these lots needed to be graded and prepared before they could be used for play. Ralph Wagner and the Bee-News kept the proper political connections at City Hall, for Omaha Street Commissioner Harry Knudson offered to grade any lots that needed to be prepared for softball play.<sup>30</sup> With cooperation like this, players believed Park Commissioner Frost when he assured them ". . . just tell the boys that there will be plenty of softball diamonds, and kept in condition, for their association."<sup>31</sup>

---

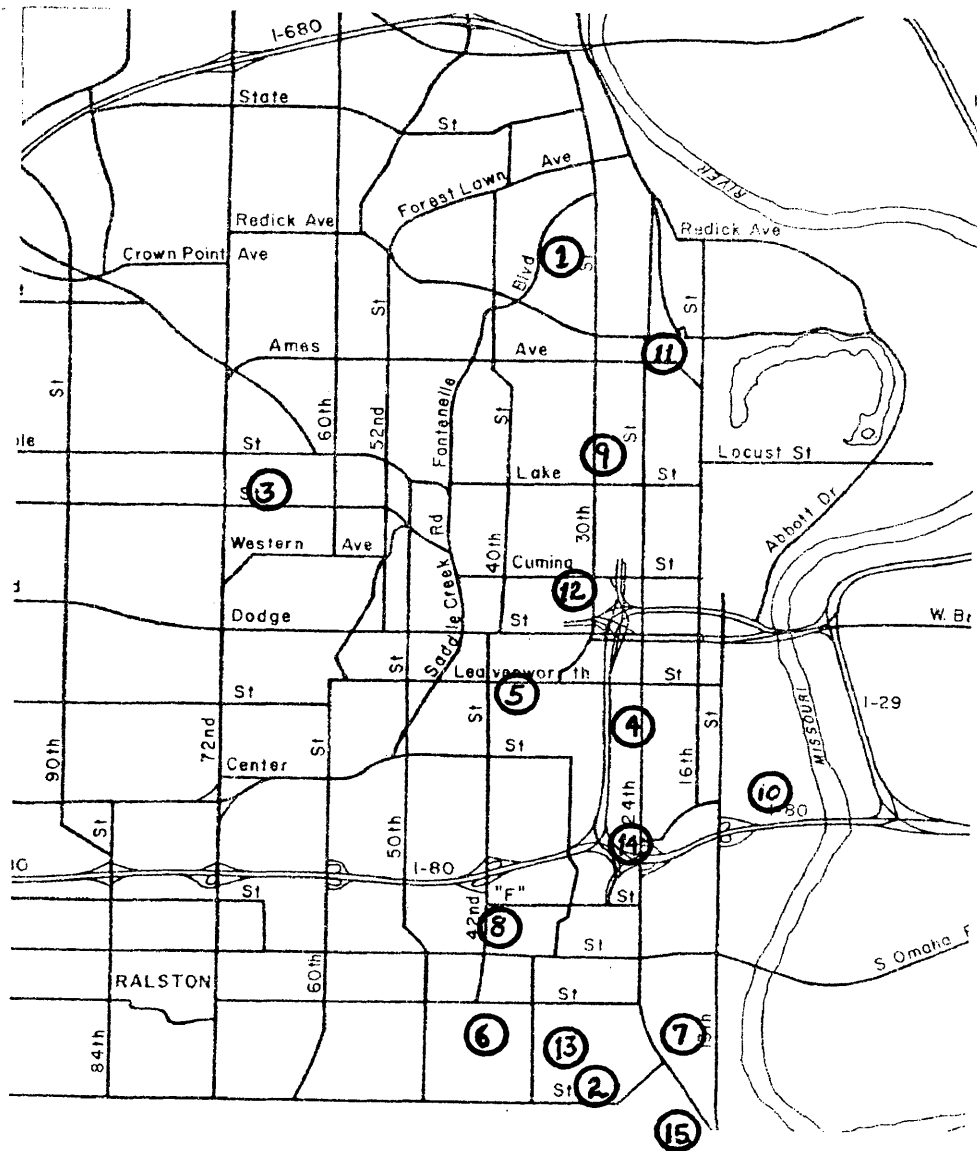
<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 17 February 1934, p. 14.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 25 February 1934, Section B, p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 20 February 1934, p. 10.



New Softball Diamonds 1934



1. Thirty-fourth and Curtis Street
2. McKinley Park, Twenty-eighth and Harrison Street
3. Sixty-sixth and Blondo Street
4. Twenty-fourth and Poppleton Street
5. Fortieth and Leavenworth Street
6. Morton Park, Forty-second and "V" Street
7. Brown Park, Fifteenth and "U" Street
8. Forty-second and "H" Street
9. Thirtieth and Wirt Street
10. Gilmore Park, Eighth and Bancroft Street
11. Saratoga School, Twentieth and Merideth Avenue
12. Tech High School, Thirtieth and Cuming Street
13. Herdzina Field, Thirty-second and "U" Street
14. Luxus Park, Twenty-fifth and Vinton Street
15. Twenty-first and Washington Street

The N.S.S.A. chose mid-April as the starting date for the first A.S.A. softball season in Omaha. On Sunday morning, April 15, the earliest official opening date ever in Omaha, the United Six Beer League began with three ten o'clock games in South Omaha parks.<sup>32</sup> This league, made up of the best players of the week-night leagues, attracted hundreds of fans during those summer Sunday mornings. While thousands of Omaha residents quietly attended church, many other people received their first glimpse of softball at these games. One of those spectators, Floyd Hayes, wrote about that Sunday morning Beer League.

The United Six Beer League, a Sunday morning league, helped sell the game of softball to the fans back in 1934.

When they played at the Cristie Heights diamond in South Omaha, as many as 1,500 fans were on hand to cheer them on. Sometimes the tempers of the fans flared up. There were side bets by the fans and fisticuffs, too. It was in those Depression years; where else could you see a ball game, a fight, and get a large schooner of suds for a dime? The games were all replayed in the taverns after the game. These fans loved softball.<sup>33</sup>

It was this kind of atmosphere that lured many of the fans to these fast-paced contests. New celebrities emerged. Bill Arromis, who played for the Red Front Edelweiss in the United Six League and for Haskin Soap in the Greater Omaha League, was called the "Babe Ruth" of Omaha softball this year, for he hit twenty-seven home runs in the Sunday morning league

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 15 April 1934, Section B, p. 10.

<sup>33</sup> Scrapbook, 1934, Hayes Collection, Personal account.

and twelve more in the Greater Omaha League. Arromis had these thirty-nine home runs by July 15.<sup>34</sup>

When fans attended these league games in 1934 they often saw a fast, well-played game. They watched the players perform, dressed again in the white duck slacks, the long-sleeved pullover sweatshirts, baseball hats, shoes with rubber cleats, or tennis shoes. They saw a brave, but possibly simple-minded catcher, who wore a glove, but no mask, while attempting to stop the speedy deliveries of the city's top pitchers.<sup>35</sup> In a half-squat position six feet behind the plate, this human backstop sometimes caught the wicked foul tips with his glove, other times with his face. The fans cheered or jeered each play, but usually came back for more.

Among the many new players in the Omaha softball leagues in 1934, a number of city league baseball players began playing in some N.S.S.A. leagues once or twice a week. A few hardy athletes played on two or three softball teams and one or two baseball teams each week.<sup>36</sup> A handful of hardcore baseball fans, however, resented the intrusion of softball on the Omaha sports scene. Some of this resentment emerged because of the competition for playing fields. Ralph Wagner, Bee-News sports editor and president of the N.S.S.A., defended and promoted softball in his daily column during the 1934 season.<sup>37</sup> As sponsor of the city softball association, the

---

<sup>34</sup> Bee-News, 15 July 1934, Section B, p. 8.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 1 April 1934, Section B, p. 9.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 10 June 1934, Section B, p. 8.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 22 March 1934, p. 13 and 5 May 1934, p. 15.

Bee-News naturally gave the game tremendous coverage in their editions. This Hearst paper published a colorful and extensive sports section during the 1930s which often included detailed cartoons about local events. A large cartoon portraying the soaring popularity of Omaha softball appeared in the March 30 edition of the paper.<sup>38</sup> The city's other major newspaper, the Omaha World-Herald, did not cover any of the N.S.S.A during those years the Bee-News sponsored the association. While thousands in Omaha played or followed the sport, the World-Herald reported only the few non-association teams and leagues that attempted to survive outside the A.S.A. The Bee-News stopped publication in September of 1937. The World-Herald began covering the N.S.S.A. the following spring.

Word of Omaha's softball popularity reached George Sisler, former baseball great, in St. Louis. Sisler sent a representative to Omaha to investigate the city for the possible construction of a softball complex. Sisler had built a few softball stadiums in St. Louis and charged admission for the games. Thousands attended each night and he earned a profit from these promotions. Although Sisler never became directly involved in an Omaha project, his interest attracted others and helped Omaha acquire a lighted softball field for 1935.<sup>39</sup>

As the season progressed the leading teams in each league began to prepare for the coming city and state tournaments, and the chance for an expense-paid trip to Chicago. The Omaha City Tournament lost some prestige when the A.S.A. decided that Omaha did not qualify as a Metropolitan association, that the city champion could not advance directly to Chicago.

---

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 30 March 1934, p. 30.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 4 August 1934, p. 11.

To qualify for the national tournament, the Omaha champion also had to win the Nebraska state tournament.

The winner of each Omaha league qualified for the City Tournament. The tournament began Saturday, August 25, and was played at League Park, home of the Omaha Packers, a Western League baseball team.<sup>40</sup> Softball fans paid twenty-five cents to watch the tournament each night. The following teams, as league champions in 1934, all participated in Omaha's first

**A.S.A.-sanctioned City Tournament:**

Bonner Coal-Greater Omaha League  
 Pink Elephants-American League  
 Holmes Recreation-National League  
 Independent Merchants-Metro League  
 U.P. Shops-Industrial League  
 Solvenes-Cudahy League  
 Corn States Serum-Swift League  
 Doss Cafe-Gate City League  
 J&P Cigar Store-Aksarben League  
 Sokol Athletic Club-Southern League

Omaha National Bank-Omaha Bank League  
 Berry Clothiers-Benson League  
 Munch-Holy Name Membership League  
 Sample Furs-Jewish Community  
 Center League  
 First Covenant-Y.M.C.A. Ahamo League  
 Clifton Hill Presbyterian-Y.M.C.A.  
 Federal League  
 Zion Lutheran-Omaha Walther League  
 Ammonias-Baker Ice Machine League  
 Mid-City Seniors-Mid-City Senior  
 League  
 Union Pacific Traffics-U.P. Athletic  
 Club League

With banner headlines, pictures, and many well-placed stories, the Bee-News heralded the first A.S.A. City Tournament in Omaha. They covered the games daily, from the opening game on Saturday, to the Thursday night finals on August 30. The tournament was a single-elimination affair until the championship round. Then the format required the winning team to capture two out of three games—all on the same night. Under the lights at Omaha's League Park on Fifteenth and Vinton Street, the Pink Elephant team of the American League faced the Venetian Cafe team of the Aksarben for the Omaha

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 25 August 1934, p. 16.

city championship. Although the Venetian Cafe won the first game 1-0, the Pink Elephants prevailed as they rallied to win the second game 6-3. The Elephants then made a late-inning rally in the third game to win 2-1, and with it the first City Softball Tournament. For this victory, the Pink Elephants earned a berth in the Nebraska State Tournament the following week.

During the City Tournament, the South Omaha Whimpys, an independent women's team, issued a challenge to the U.S.Keds, winner of the Holy Name women's league, for a women's city championship game. One night during the tournament the two teams battled for the city crown. The U.S. Keds easily won 11-4 and captured the first women's softball championship of Omaha.<sup>41</sup>

The Bee-News softball association originally planned the first State Tournament for League Park in Omaha, but changed the site to Lincoln when State Fair officials requested the move to the fairgrounds.<sup>42</sup> The first N.S.S.A. state meet began Monday, September 3, at one o'clock in the afternoon. Huge crowds, consisting of both fan and fairgoer, attended the tournament games which included all the district winners from Nebraska. Omaha's entry, the Pink Elephant Tavern, lost to Banker's Life of Lincoln, the eventual tournament winner. The crowds for the Sunday afternoon final between Banker's Life and Sutherland, Nebraska, drew an estimated fifty thousand spectators. Fans completely surrounded the fairground field; many were crowded just a few feet from the foul lines.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Scrapbook, 1934, Hayes Collection, Personal account.

<sup>42</sup> Bee-News, 23 August 1934, p. 12.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 3 September 1934, p. 11.

Banker's Life became the first N.S.S.A. team to win the all-expense paid trip to the A.S.A. National Tournament in Chicago on September 8-10. Played at Chicago's Lincoln Park and other "Century of Progress" locations, the tournament drew over 100,000 fans on the final day.<sup>44</sup> Nebraska's Banker's Life team, the youngest in the tournament, lost in the second round to one of the pre-tourney favorites, the Phoenix Jewelers. The Ke-Nash-a team of Kenosha, Wisconsin, won this second A.S.A. national tournament. The women's division of the "national tournament" drew only eight teams, none from Nebraska. Hart Motors of Chicago became the second A.S.A. women's champion.

As the season ended, A.S.A. and N.S.S.A. officials surveyed the most important year in the history of modern softball. Although in Omaha some of the earlier years produced important developments in kittenball and diamond ball, none compared to the spectacular growth of A.S.A. softball that the city experienced in 1934. Other communities promoting the A.S.A. experienced similar success. The A.S.A. estimated that more Americans participated in softball in 1934 than in any other outdoor sport—including golf.<sup>45</sup> Why? Because of the persistence of two Chicago sports lovers who sold the idea of a nationally standardized softball game to a newspaper legend, who in turn helped them win over the rest of the country. Leo Fischer and Michael J. Pauley gave the world the softball game it knows today. Recreation officials from across the nation recognized this when they commented on the

---

<sup>44</sup> Kyle Crichton, "Not So Soft," Colliers 96 (10 August 1935): 24, 38.

<sup>45</sup> Bee-News, 15 April 1934, Section B, p. 8.

game at their 1934 winter session:

This game has not had any parent. It had been on the doorstep of many organizations, clamoring for admittance, but no one had taken it in. It is now being taken in. . . .

Heretofore, this game has been going nowhere. We now believe that it is really starting to go places, with one name, one game, one set of rules, sponsored by one joint committee representing all of the national organizations interested in this sport, with one guide which will be the official handbook. 46

Omaha softball sponsors, the Bee-News, and the N.S.S.A. were all extremely pleased at the local response to the game. Sporting goods stores tried hard to keep equipment on hand. The figures in Omaha were impressive. Over five thousand boys and girls played in the Bee-News summer softball leagues. Ralph Wagner, president of the N.S.S.A., released official figures for Omaha which listed twenty-three leagues, 340 teams, and 4,570 players under contract.<sup>47</sup> Though these numbers indicated a very successful season, President Ralph Wagner promised better things to come.

\* \* \* \* \*

After the 1934 season finally ended, N.S.S.A. officials made plans for 1935. Ralph Wagner, association president and Bee-News sports editor, sought improvements for the coming season. Wagner guaranteed more leagues should the demand require it. He vowed to obtain new playing fields with the help of Park Commissioner Frank Frost and the cooperative owners of

---

<sup>46</sup> Dr. John Brown, Jr., "Softball Problems," Recreation, p. 446.

<sup>47</sup> Bee-News, 31 August 1934, p. 15



vacant lots. In addition, the city softball association planned to construct a lighted, fenced stadium with grandstands and parking, owned and operated by the N.S.S.A. The Bee-News promised to promote a first-class women's league, a women's city tournament, and a women's state tournament, whose champion would go to the nationals.<sup>48</sup>

Some of the teams in 1935 planned to play three or four times a week and needed more diamonds for this. As the map on the following page shows, six new softball fields were prepared in Omaha for the 1935 season. Of most interest, however, was the new "N.S.S.A. Park" at Thirtieth and Wirt Street in North Omaha. Many smaller Nebraska communities had lighted fields, some as early as 1933. Whenever the N.S.S.A. wanted to schedule night games in 1934, they had to negotiate with the baseball officials at League Park for open dates there. The N.S.S.A. wanted a new softball park solely for association play. Investor Al Sanders, a former Texan, wanted to build a softball complex similar to the George Sisler models in St. Louis. Negotiating with Omaha softball officials, Sanders agreed to build the stadium with the N.S.S.A. and share the profits. With the assistance of Sanders' capital, the N.S.S.A. obtained its stadium for 1935.<sup>49</sup>

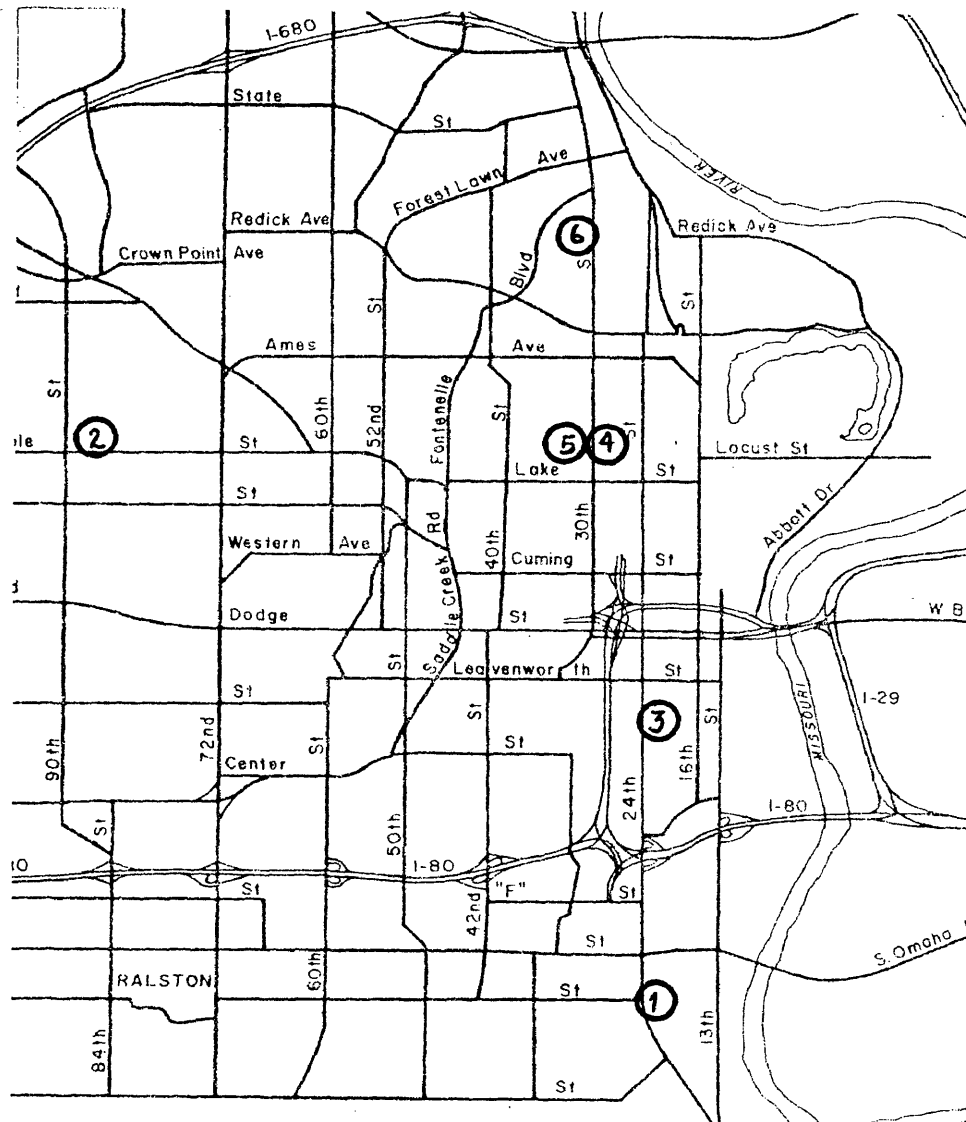
While the Bee-News promoted the new lighted stadium in 1935, they also pushed the formation of a strong women's softball league in Omaha. Women's softball attracted a great deal of fan interest throughout the nation during the Thirties, and later during the war years of the Forties. In early March of 1935, the N.S.S.A. began organizing the new women's league, the first to

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Scrapbook, 1935, Hayes Collection, Personal account.

New Softball Diamonds 1935



1. Twenty-fourth and Railroad Avenue
2. Eighty-fifth and Maple Street
3. Twenty-second and Poppleton Street
4. Twenty-eighth and Wirt Street
5. Thirtieth and Wirt Street (first lighted softball park in Omaha)
6. Thirtieth and Curtis Street

be directly affiliated with the state softball association.<sup>50</sup> The Bee-News sponsored the new league and it became known as the "Bee-News Girls League."<sup>51</sup> To attract quality players and teams, the softball association scheduled all Girls League games at the N.S.S.A.'s new lighted park at Thirtieth and Wirt Street. Al Sanders and the city softball association planned to profit from the large numbers of fans attending these games. Many came to see the ladies' brand of softball; others came to study the tight jerseys and shorts some of the teams featured. The Bee-News Girls League was a special part of the 1935 season.

Eight teams joined the new women's league. Sponsors and managers scrambled to find the best female softball players in town. When it appeared the talent in Omaha might be a little thin for eight complete teams, E.M. Segal, the physical director of the Knights of Columbus club, announced the formation of a K. of C. girls' softball school. Beginning early in April, the school offered to teach interested girls ". . . batting, sliding, fielding, pitching, and the rules of the game."<sup>52</sup> The Bee-News worked hard to attract women athletes. During March and April that spring, the Bee-News sports pages often carried stories and pictures of the outstanding female softball players of 1934. The press campaign succeeded. In 1935, the Omaha women's league established a tradition of popular softball that continued for many years.

---

<sup>50</sup> Bee-News, 29 March 1935, Section B, p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 4 April 1935, p. 14.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

In February, March, and April, the men's teams and leagues began to prepare for the April 29 starting date. The association this year required each team to pay just a one dollar franchise fee to enter a league. The N.S.S.A. also collected a ten-cent contract fee for each player signed by a team. The player contract bound the athlete to the team for the season. Only in exceptional cases could a player change teams; the N.S.S.A. board ruled on all these cases. The Omaha softball teams soon reorganized and entered the city leagues. The best teams entered the Greater Omaha League, again the top league in Omaha. Other good teams chose the American League, which along with the Greater Omaha League, played all its games at N.S.S.A. Park. For the Tuesday-Thursday players, the softball association offered the Metropolitan, Industrial, and National leagues. A Commercial League was formed for employees of Omaha manufacturing plants. For "white collar" workers, the Junior Chamber of Commerce League organized teams from the local banks and insurance agencies. The Benson League provided teams for players in that community.

The Y.M.C.A. operated three "Y" Church leagues, and the Lutherans again promoted their Walther League. One of the oldest leagues in Omaha, the Union Pacific League, reorganized in 1935. The Holy Name League resumed play at their Forty-fifth and Maple Street diamond for a second season. Omaha also had an Aksarben League. For employees in food production and distribution, the N.S.S.A. sanctioned the Armour League, the Hinky Dinky League, and the Safeway League. Most of the softball players from Omaha's black community on the "near north side" played in the Urban Softball League. Like the other city leagues, the winner of the Urban League qualified for the City Softball Tournament at the end of the season. For

the city's younger players, the Omaha Boys Athletic Association Softball League offered teams summer competition.

A month after the 1935 season began, Al Sanders convinced the N.S.S.A. to form a Sunday night league for the best players and teams in Omaha. This league, he hoped, would be as successful as the Sunday morning United Beer League of 1934. Since no other leagues played at the lighted N.S.S.A. park on Sundays, Sanders planned to open the stadium for business this night, too. Many of the players in the Sanders League competed during the week in the Greater Omaha and American leagues; therefore, the Sanders League winner could not play in the City Tournament in August. However, promoter Sanders scheduled a "home and home" series with the winner of the Sisler League in St. Louis after the season ended. <sup>53</sup>

After observing the popularity of softball throughout the United States in 1934, rival softball associations emerged in 1935. Though no competitive associations settled in Omaha, the A.S.A. attempted to firmly establish its position as a softball organization and as a member of the Amateur Athletic Union. The A.S.A. sent two strong messages to its local affiliates: no A.S.A. player could play softball for money, and no player could compete in A.S.A. local, state, or national tournaments after having played for, with, or against a non-A.S.A. organization. <sup>54</sup>

Other than this A.S.A. warning, which often was not possible to enforce, the players in 1935 needed to learn only a few pitching changes before the season began. A pitcher could now use any form of underhanded delivery as

---

<sup>53</sup> Scrapbook, 1935, Hayes Collection, Clipping from unidentified newspaper, 21 May 1935.

<sup>54</sup> Bea-News, 31 March 1935, Section B, p. 4.

long as the pitching arm was not more than six inches from the body when the ball was released.<sup>55</sup> Only overhanded or sidearm throws were banned. Otherwise, play remained much the same. Runners could not leave the base before the ball reached the plate. Baseball spikes were still illegal, although many players complained that night softball and wet grass made tennis shoes or rubber soled shoes inadequate. The A.S.A. continued to work with sporting goods manufacturers to consistently regulate the composition of the softball.<sup>56</sup>

With great fanfare the Bee-News announced the opening of the 1935 Omaha softball season at the new lighted N.S.S.A. Park at Thirtieth and Wirt Street. In this the second season of association softball, the Bee-News predicted a better brand of softball as the new stadium and greater public exposure attracted the best players in Omaha.<sup>57</sup> On Monday evening, April 29, the 1935 season began. Most public attention centered on the activities at N.S.S.A. Park, although there were games at other locations that week. The association displayed three games at the lighted park that night. Teams from the two best leagues, the Greater Omaha League and the American League, played two of the games, and teams from the Bee-News Girls League played the third.<sup>58</sup> Elaborate "opening day" activities planned by the N.S.S.A.

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 1 April 1935, p. 9.

<sup>56</sup> A.O. Anderson, "Soft Ball Problems," Recreation 29 (November 1935):406-7.

<sup>57</sup> Bee-News, 28 April 1935, p. 9.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 29 April 1935, p. 7

included "first pitch" ceremonies with Omaha Mayor Roy N. Towl and City Commissioners Harry Trustin, Frank Frost, and Dan Butler.<sup>59</sup> Fifteen hundred fans attended the opening of the N.S.S.A. Park. The first game played in the park matched the American League's National Auto Parts team against Club Delmar at six o'clock. At 7:45 P.M. the lights were turned on and the heralded Bee-News Girls League began. Harkerts played American College in this historic opener. At nine o'clock the men played their first game under the new floodlights. Omaha's best league, the Greater Omaha League, completed the successful evening as the Paxton Billiards played Russell Sports.<sup>60</sup>

Due to the new softball stadium, spectator interest rose to new highs. In 1934, interest in softball had been great, but fans did not have adequate grandstand areas most of the time to watch games. Now they did. The Bee-News promoted the top leagues as major sporting events in Omaha. Even though they provided daily coverage during the week, the Bee-News reserved page four of the Sunday sports section for softball. On this page they published one or two photographs of players or games in action, as well as schedules, standings, results, statistics, columns, and commentary. This extensive coverage by the Bee-News attracted some outstanding players from Omaha and the Midwest to association softball leagues. In 1935 Ben Crain first played in an Omaha softball league, pitching and hitting for the Pink Elephants of the Greater Omaha League. As the reputation of the Omaha leagues at N.S.S.A. Park grew, a tradition began, a tradition of outstanding

---

<sup>59</sup> Scrapbook, 1935, Hayes Collection, Clipping from unidentified newspaper.

<sup>60</sup> Bee-News, 29 April 1935, p. 7.

softball, extensively promoted, and efficiently run.

During the 1935 season many fans attended the games four or five nights each week. Other events at N.S.S.A. Park also attracted large crowds. With no television, air conditioning, shopping centers, or electronic game rooms, many people spent their summer evenings either at home with the radio, possibly at the movies, out in the neighborhood, or at a sporting event. Streetcars ran across town and the fans without cars could get to many locations. When organizations like the N.S.S.A. provided games and other attractions, fans by the hundreds attended.

One of softball's special events occurred Tuesday, July 30. At eight o'clock that evening the Russell Sports team of the Bee-News Girls League played the all-male lineup of their team sponsors. The sponsors talked a good game, but their age, physical condition, and lack of recent softball experience hindered many of them. This game attracted a great number of fans who enjoyed themselves immensely as the ladies "dusted" the gentlemen sponsors 24-10.<sup>61</sup>

During those summer nights a number of Omaha sports personalities could be found at N.S.S.A. Park and other softball locations. Tony Goodman, brother of Omaha's Johnny Goodman, the last amateur to win the United States Open Golf Championship, umpired many of the association's softball games that summer.<sup>62</sup> One team, the Omaha Welders, featured nine players who were over six feet tall, most over two hundred pounds. Among these players were Rudy Tesar, former Crieghton University football star

---

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 30 July 1935, p. 10.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 9 June 1935, Section B, p. 4.



and future judge, and Richard Hruska, whose brother, Roman, later enjoyed success as a Nebraska politician.<sup>63</sup> One Omaha pitcher, Frank Barr, a regular in the Omaha leagues, made Ripley's "Believe-It-Or-Not" column for a game he pitched this year. On August 9, at the Columbus, Nebraska, Firemen's fourth annual Mid-Nebraska Kittenball Tournament, Barr struck out thirty batters. Every out was a strikeout. Playing for the Nielsen Chevrolet team of Columbus, Barr had to pitch ten innings to defeat Seward 3-2. Years later Douglas Ripley agreed that this event was indeed incredible and published it in one of the syndicated cartoon columns.<sup>64</sup>

In August the winners of each Omaha league prepared for the first City Tournament scheduled for N.S.S.A. Park. Both the City and State tournaments were scheduled for this lighted field in North Omaha. One of the reasons the softball association wanted to build this park in 1935 was to have a site for all A.S.A. sanctioned tournaments. On Monday, August 19, the City Tournament began at N.S.S.A. Park. This single-elimination tournament matched these league champions, all vying for the top three spots, which this year guaranteed a place in the State Tournament.

Pink Elephants-Greater Omaha League  
Cinek Coals-American League  
Cudahys-Industrial League  
Albright Merchants-National League  
Paxton Gallagher-Commercial League  
U.P. Traffics-Union Pacific League  
Omaha Welding-Metro League  
First Lutheran-Walther League

First Covenant-"Y" Church League No. 2  
Salem Lutheran-"Y" Church League No. 3  
Wholesales-Armour League  
Benson Buffet-Benson League  
Derbys-Urban Senior League  
Merchants-Urban Junior League  
Talcotts-Holy Name League

---

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 28 April 1935, Section B, p. 4.

<sup>64</sup> Scrapbook, 1935, Hayes Collection, Copy of letter from Douglas Ripley to Frank Barr, Omaha, Nebraska, 16 September 1948.

For the twenty-five cents admission, fans could watch these teams battle for the chance to get to Chicago on that expense-paid trip to the national tournament. Three games were played each evening. On Monday night, August 26, the Cinek Coals of the American League beat Ben Crain and the Pink Elephants of the Greater Omaha League 5-2 and 5-0 to capture first place in the 1935 N.S.S.A. City Tournament. The second place Pink Elephants and third place Cudahys also qualified for the Nebraska State Softball Tournament the following week. In the first N.S.S.A. Omaha women's tournament, Russell Sports beat Walker Inn two out of three games for the championship and advanced to the first N.S.S.A. women's State Tournament.

On Friday, August 30, men's and women's district winners from throughout Nebraska arrived in Omaha to play for the state championship at N.S.S.A. Park. The Bee-News and the N.S.S.A. arranged for the men's teams to stay at the Castle Hotel. The women's teams registered at the Rome Hotel. Eighteen men's teams and seventeen women's teams came for the tournament. In addition to the hundreds of Omaha fans who regularly attended the local games, numerous out-state fans followed their teams in the quest for the championship trophy.

The excitement and interest in the tournament seemed to rival that of a state high school basketball tournament. On the women's side, no team could match the play of the Syracuse Bluebirds, whose pitcher and hitting star, Nina Korgan, dominated the state tournament as long as she played here. Korgan, from Council Bluffs, was a tremendous young athlete who later played in Tulsa and New Orleans on world championship softball teams. She became the first Omaha-area player selected to the National Softball Hall of Fame. For three consecutive years Nina Korgan played for the Syracuse

Bluebirds; each year they won the Nebraska State Softball Championship.

In men's play, the Omaha teams dominated. The state championship final was a repeat of the city final, as the Cinek Coals played the Pink Elephants. Pitching for the Cinek Coals team was a young stenographer, twenty-year old Joe Rezak. While trying to pitch with a sore arm earlier that spring, Rezak had discovered an extremely effective release that completely baffled most hitters. Although Ben Crain was the most dominating pitcher during the Thirties and Forties in Omaha, 1935 was Joe Rezak's year. In the state finals, as in the city finals, Rezak and the Cinek Coals beat the Pink Elephants, this time 3-0. On September 6, the Cinek Coals and the Syracuse Bluebirds boarded the train for Chicago and the A.S.A. National Tournament.

The third annual A.S.A. National Softball Tournament was played at Lincoln Park along Lake Shore Drive in Chicago. The tournament began September 7 with fifty-four men's teams and twelve women's teams. Omaha's Cinek Coals, the first Omaha team to play in the A.S.A. nationals, lost their first game, but in a peculiar way. Pitcher Joe Rezak's delivery had been criticized by some disappointed losers in the Omaha and Nebraska tournaments, and they forwarded these complaints to the officials in Chicago. In the first Cinek Coal game against Pittsburgh, the plate umpire began calling each of Rezak's pitches a "ball," even though all were well within the strike zone. Unable to pitch without having each delivery called illegal, an automatic "ball," Rezak had to give way to another pitcher. Cinek's lost the game to Pittsburgh 7-2. Other umpires at the game considered the delivery legal, and the following year it was officially approved. But for Rezak, the chance of a lifetime to win the National

Softball Tournament had passed.<sup>65</sup> The Crimson Coaches of Toledo, Ohio, won the 1935 tournament.

The Syracuse Bluebirds, one of only twelve women's teams entering the women's 1935 national tournament, came very close to winning the title. Behind the outstanding pitching and powerful hitting of Nina Korgan, the Bluebirds were tied with the Cleveland (Ohio) Bloomers 3-3 in the bottom of the seventh inning when a misjudged fly ball in left field went for a triple. Cleveland won the game 4-3. The Cleveland Bloomers advanced and won the 1935 championship.<sup>66</sup>

After the A.S.A. national tournament, the Omaha Junior Chamber of Commerce sponsored a Midwest Open Softball Tournament at N.S.S.A. Park from September 16 to September 24. Eighteen Omaha teams entered the tournament along with nine out-of-town teams. Six women's teams competed in that division. The Greater Omaha League's Pink Elephants, with Ben Crain pitching, won the tournament by defeating Solomon Foods of Sioux City 5-4 in the final. In the women's bracket, the Independent Prints beat Russell Sports 15-5 to capture first prize.<sup>67</sup>

Softball's popularity continued to grow in 1935, not only in Omaha, but all over Nebraska, throughout the Midwest, and in most of the nation as well. The national media discovered the new pastime and weekly magazines began to report on the popularity of the game. One writer, Frank Menke, calculated

---

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, Personal account.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Bee-News, 15 September 1935, Section B, p. 4.

that more than sixty-one million fans watched softball games in the United States in 1935, ten million more than attended baseball games.<sup>68</sup> Time magazine reported that there were two million players, sixty thousand teams, and one thousand lighted parks in the U.S. in 1935.<sup>69</sup> Other groups, like the American and National Softball Associations, tried to form rival organizations to profit from the game's popularity.

The problems facing the A.S.A. in September of 1935 occurred not only from competitive associations. The rules of the game needed some revision in order to offer the best game possible. After the national tournament each year, the A.S.A. held meetings with those state commissioners and local officials attending the tournament in Chicago. At the 1935 tournament they discussed some of the proposed rule changes for 1936. Some suggested eliminating the tenth player to open up the hitting part of the game. Others suggested rules to permit bunting, base stealing, and increased pitching distances. Because of the popularity of night softball, players requested the use of spiked baseball shoes, which would help players move on wet grass.<sup>70</sup> During the 1930s, the game of softball continued to change in small but important ways. This constant attempt for improvement helped maintain the game's popularity for the player and fan alike.

---

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 10 May 1936, Section B, p. 4.

<sup>69</sup> "Softball," Time 26 (16 September 1935): 47-8.

<sup>70</sup> Bee-News, 11 September 1935, p. 11.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### GOLDEN YEARS AT FALSTAFF PARK: 1936-1940

For the first few years after 1934, softball's popularity was such that no matter how successful one year seemed, the next year looked to be even better. Soon after officials of the Amateur Softball Association (A.S.A) and the Nebraska State Softball Association (N.S.S.A.) reviewed their achievements for 1935, they began to prepare for an even greater 1936. For the A.S.A., good news came quickly. At the December meeting of the Amateur Athletic Union (A.A.U.) delegates approved an "article of alliance" between the A.A.U. and the A.S.A.<sup>1</sup> The A.A.U. officially dropped softball from the list of sports over which they claimed jurisdiction and recognized the A.S.A. as the official governing body for American softball.

This agreement greatly strengthened the A.S.A. They now had the power to suspend A.S.A. violators from all A.A.U. events in the United States. Early in April the A.S.A. sent all local associations explicit instructions regarding players who competed with unsanctioned teams. Anyone playing with, for, or against these "outlaw" teams would be suspended from A.S.A. events for one year.<sup>2</sup>

On the local level, however, the softball program that had been so successful in 1935 encountered some problems before 1936. During the 1935 season the N.S.S.A. Park at Thirtieth and Wirt Street attracted numerous fans and drew a great deal of attention. Yet, before the 1936 season began,

---

<sup>1</sup> The Omaha Bee-News, 7 April 1936, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 12 April 1936, Section B, p. 4.

that stadium was disassembled, transported, and rebuilt at another location. There were a number of reasons this happened. Al Sanders, owner of the park, had to study these arguments with the N.S.S.A before making this move.

It was during the winter of 1935-1936 that Sanders and the softball association decided to move the park from Thirtieth and Wirt Street to Twenty-fifth and Vinton Street in South Omaha. This new lot was located behind the Pink Elephant tavern, which stood on the southwest corner of Twenty-fourth and Vinton Street. This new location was bounded by Vinton Street to the north, Falstaff Brewery to the west, Krug Street to the south, and the Pink Elephant tavern to the east. The lot had been used for softball since 1930. Paul Borowiak, owner of the Pink Elephant and avid sponsor of a city softball team, convinced Sanders that more money could be made by constructing the park at this location. Many softball players and fans were from South Omaha. This location, Borowiak argued, would increase attendance at the park—not to mention the Pink Elephant tavern.

There were also reasons Sanders and the N.S.S.A. wanted to leave the Wirt Street corner. Some of the residents in the neighborhood complained about the traffic and commotion the softball games caused each night during the summer. In 1935, an incident occurred which convinced Sanders and the N.S.S.A. that perhaps another location might better serve their purpose. One night, Ben Crain, six foot, five inch star pitcher and hitter in the Greater Omaha League, smashed a home run over the chicken wire fence constructed high above the outfield wall. The ball sailed out of the park and broke a window in a nearby house. The next week the owner filed a damage suit against Ben Crain, the perpetrator, Al Sanders, owner of the park, and the Omaha Bee-News, sponsor of the N.S.S.A. About the only ones

the homeowner did not name were the catcher who called for the pitch, and the pitcher who delivered it. The case was settled out of court and was later described as "the most expensive home run in Omaha softball history."<sup>3</sup> This incident helped convinced Sanders that a new site was needed.

Aside from the neighborhood complaints, which actually bothered only Sanders and the N.S.S.A., the location of the park in North Omaha disturbed some of the players and fans in 1935. Although not in the area considered the "near north side," the Thirtieth and Wirt Street park was close enough to Omaha's black community that some whites wished an alternate site could be found. This was not the last time the proximity of Omaha's black citizens encouraged the building of a new softball park. In the 1960s, George Dill, wealthy business man and dedicated softball fan, helped fund construction of a new softball complex at Sixty-eighth and Ames Avenue, so that the Omaha women's teams would not have to travel through North Omaha to play at Boyd Park on North Sixteenth Street.<sup>4</sup>

Although at times during the spring of 1936 it seemed that the new stadium on Vinton Street might not be ready for opening day, Sanders completed construction by April. Built directly behind the Pink Elephant tavern on the southwest corner of Twenty-fourth and Vinton Street, the new stadium sat between the tavern and the Falstaff Brewery to the west. Behind home plate, at the northeast corner of the stadium, a chicken wire backstop reached high to catch any foul balls the batters hit. Wooden bleachers stretched down both the first and third base lines, room for two thousand

---

<sup>3</sup> Scrapbook, 1936, Floyd Hayes Collection, 3118 South Forty-fourth Street, Omaha, Nebraska, Personal account.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Carl Kelley, Omaha, Nebraska, 20 June 1980.



or more.. Two dugouts waited for the players just a few steps from the infield. The floodlights, moved from the Wirt Street field, stood just outside the outfield fence, and alongside both infield dugouts.<sup>5</sup> Officially called "N.S.S.A. Park," the new stadium on Twenty-fifth and Vinton soon became known as "Falstaff Park" or the "lighted park."<sup>6</sup>

While the top leagues in Omaha were assured of a stadium for 1936, it appeared that the other teams and leagues might have fewer diamonds that season. The Bee-News announced as early as March that some teams might not be able to play due to lack of playing space.<sup>7</sup> Some of the private lots used in 1935 no longer were available in 1936. The map on the following page indicates the few additional diamonds Parks Commissioner Frank Frost was able to secure for the 1936 season. This annual shortage of softball diamonds plagued Omaha players for decades to come.

One of the casualties in 1936 was the Omaha Industrial League, an eight-team league that had existed in 1934 and 1935. Because of the limited number of fields, the N.S.S.A. could not accept the Industrial League in 1936. Most of the other leagues, though, were able to continue. The three top attractions, the Greater Omaha League, the American League, and the Girls League, all played at Falstaff Park each week. Leagues playing at the other locations around Omaha were the Metropolitan, National, Benson, Junior Chamber of Commerce, Union Pacific, and Jewish Community Center.

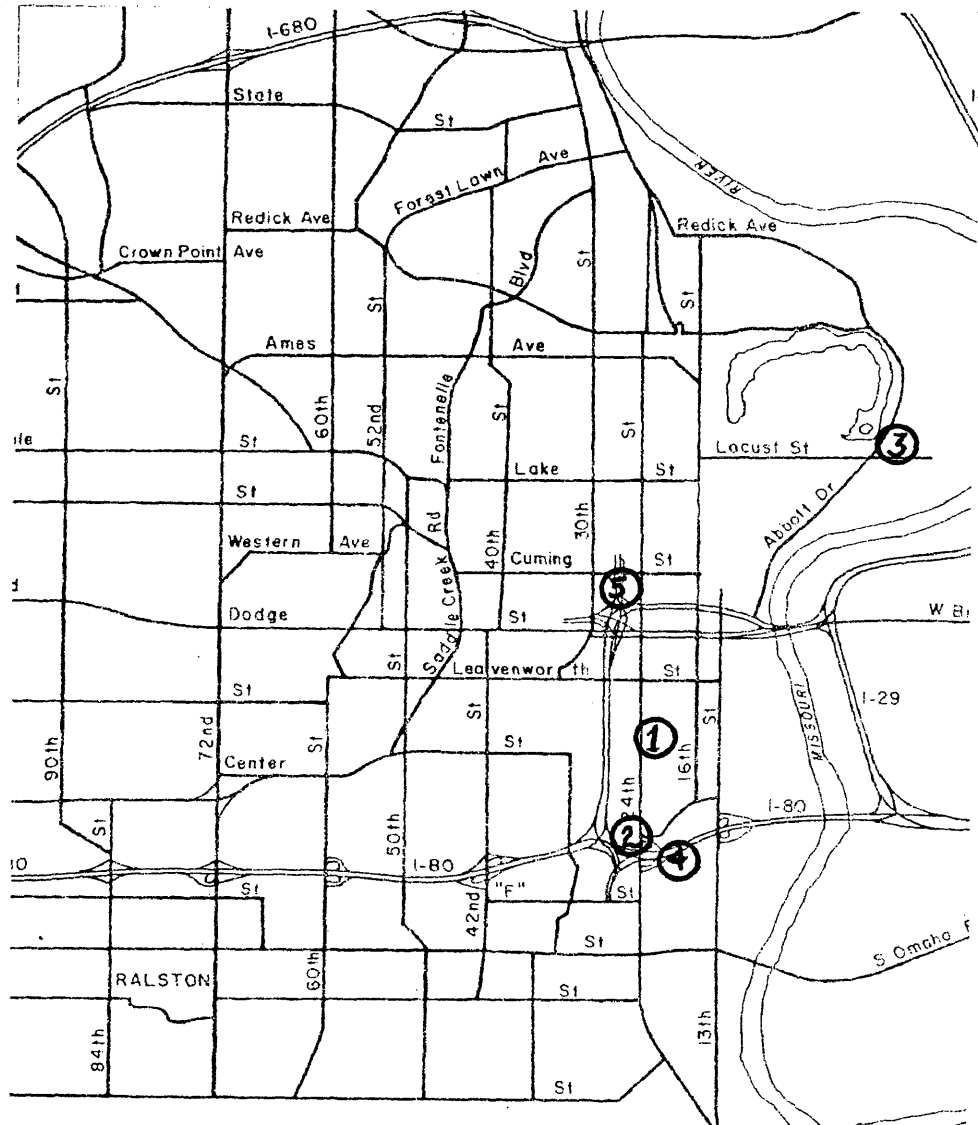
---

<sup>5</sup> Scrapbook, 1937, Hayes Collection, Photographs of Falstaff Park.

<sup>6</sup> Bee-News, 3 May 1936, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 16 March 1936, p. 10.

New Softball Diamonds 1936



1. Columbus Park, Twenty-fourth and Woolworth Street
2. N.S.S.A. Park or Falstaff Park, Twenty-fifth and Vinton Street
3. Air Port Field, East Omaha, southeast corner of Carter Lake
4. Seventeenth and Deer Park Boulevard
5. Twenty-seventh and Burt Street

Two Y.M.C.A. Protestant Church leagues were formed, along with one Junior Church League. The Church League was very careful this year about screening players from each team. Officials made a special effort to "control" the rosters of Church teams by implementing a few rules which they hoped would eliminate certain practices of the previous year. In April, the Bee-News announced this plan.

Due to the fact some of the teams ran in "ringers" last season, the leagues voted to bar any player who does not attend Sunday School at least twice a month. Greater Omaha and American league players also will be barred. 8

The Walther League, teams from Omaha's Missouri Synod Lutheran Churches, again entered the N.S.S.A. Leagues for company employees included the Farm Credit Administration League, the Hinky Dinky League, and the Swift League. On Omaha's north side, the Urban League formed again in 1936. By June of that year, F.D.R.'s "New Deal" helped fund this urban recreation program, and it became the W.P.A. League. The Holy Name Athletic Club reorganized its four-team league. The Omaha Boys Athletic Association added teams to its league in 1936.

As the players met in March to practice for the season, the new pitching rules created the most discussion. The A.S.A. rules committee altered the pitching rules for 1936, hoping to bring more offense to the game. In less than a decade softball had evolved from a friendly neighborhood game where opponents lobbed soft underhand tosses to each other, to a highly competitive contest where talented pitchers released a pitch that sometimes traveled as fast as a thrown baseball—from a distance of less than forty

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 25 April 1936, Section B, p. 4.

feet. As a result, the A.S.A. moved the pitching distance from thirty-seven feet to forty feet, and they eliminated all "windmill" windups and other deceptive deliveries. Omaha pitchers were first informed of this change early in April when the Bee-News announced the new regulations.

In pitching, a windup may consist of not more than one upward [swing] in front and over, or one downward and backward swing of the pitching arm. The ball shall be delivered on the first forward swing of the pitching arm. 9

For those athletes not accustomed to translating "rules committee" language, the N.S.S.A. clarified the changes the following week.

"Most of Omaha's softball pitchers will have to learn how to pitch all over again this year," the Bee-News warned. "The windup . . . [has been] eliminated . . . [because] it's compulsory to deliver the ball on the first forward swing of the arm. Because the arm cannot cross in front of the body, it will be impossible to use a baseball windup with the old sidearm delivery." 10

Despite the advance warning, the N.S.S.A. still felt compelled to offer a clinic on the new pitching rules. Umpire-in-chief Mike Kracher advertised a meeting for all interested softball pitchers at the Knights of Columbus gym on April 24 to explain and demonstrate the legal delivery. Kracher required his umpires to attend the meeting so they would know what constituted an illegal pitch and what did not. Kracher's method for educating the pitchers was rather unusual. He locked all the pitchers in separate rooms and called them into the gym one at a time for the "once over."

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 5 April 1936, Section B, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 12 April 1936, Section B, p. 4.

This "divide and conquer" treatment may or may not have saved a lot of argument, but Kracher warned those pitchers not attending that they only had themselves to blame for being called on illegal pitches once the season began. <sup>11</sup>

The only other A.S.A. rule change for 1936 allowed players to wear metal baseball spikes if not more than three-eighths of an inch in length. <sup>12</sup> Rubber cleats or tennis shoes were still recommended, although no shoes were actually required. ("Shoeless" Joe Murphy of Omaha's Cudahy team got his nickname in 1936 for his barefooted play.) <sup>13</sup> Other rules remained the same. The A.S.A. still allowed no bunting, no base stealing, and no leading-off by the baserunner.

On Sunday, April 26, the 1936 season began. Teams in the Jewish Community Center League played that Sunday morning to open the season. All other leagues started on Monday, April 27. At Falstaff Park teams from the Girls League played the first game each night, followed by a game from the American and one from the Greater Omaha League. In an effort to improve the level of play, only four teams were allowed to join the Girls League in 1936. There were not enough good women players in Omaha to fill eight teams. The Bee-News did not, however, ignore the women's teams. They still gave outstanding news coverage to the women, with photographs, headlines, and weekly batting averages. Sponsors of the women's teams, like Russell

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 24 April 1936, p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> Morris Bealle, Softball Story, (Washington, D.C.: Columbia Publishing Company, 1957), p. 32.

<sup>13</sup> Scrapbook, 1936, Hayes Collection, Personal account.

Sports, bought ads supporting their players and publicizing their schedule. Members of the Kitty Clover team wore the "shorts" uniforms at Falstaff Park in 1936, but most of the women's teams wore the regular baseball uniform.

The 1936 season at Falstaff Park initiated an era in Omaha softball that many long-time fans and players consider the "Golden Years" of softball in this city. From 1936 until World War II, softball at Falstaff Park reached a competitive level never before seen in Omaha, a level many old-timers say has not been reached since. The conditions for softball were right in 1936. The Depression continued to plague many parts of the United States. Promoters and sponsors could hire top softball players to work in their companies and play for their teams. A good softball player could make seventy dollars a week at a job, if he played with the owner's softball team, while his co-workers might only make fifteen or twenty dollars for the same day-time work.<sup>14</sup>

Most of the members of the Omaha Softball Hall of Fame played softball during this era and the softball fans of Omaha came regularly to see them. Ben Crain, six foot, five inches tall, at 230 pounds, reportedly could deliver a pitch so fast that it was difficult to see, much less hit. He was a tremendous hitter, a fine all-round athlete from Sioux City, Iowa, who also played professional basketball and world-class volleyball. Crain, the first Omaha player to make the National Hall of Fame, attracted fans to the stadium for nearly fifteen years. Paul Lynch, the "Babe Ruth of Omaha softball," led the Greater Omaha League in home runs at Falstaff Park for twelve of thirteen years beginning in 1936. The big, left-handed first baseman was a threat to hit a home run in every game. Eddie Stanek, an

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

outstanding baseball player, who, on July 5, 1936, was "banned for life" from the amateur baseball leagues in Omaha because of his uncontrollable temper, switched to softball. Playing for the Cudahy team in the American League at Falstaff Park, he was extremely quick and competitive, played center field brilliantly, and harassed opponents regularly with his baserunning. Darrell Churchill, an office worker for the Union Pacific Railroad who later was promoted to an executive for that company, was one of the best infielders the city softball league's had ever produced. Others, like Leonard "Heavy" Schneider, and Lyle Whiteing, all played the game very competitively. Few played just for fun at Falstaff Park when a job was on the line or when it was tournament time.

People attended these games not only because they were exciting, but also because softball had no competition from television, air conditioning, little league sports, video games, or shopping centers.<sup>15</sup> Crowds of one thousand, two thousand, even three thousand, attended games at Falstaff Park. The Bee-News, of course, encouraged this attendance. It published complete box scores for many of the games in 1936, and each Sunday printed the leading batting averages from the Greater Omaha, American, and Girls leagues. Often pictures of the top two hitters in the Greater Omaha League would be printed beside the batting average column. Other stories appeared which highlighted the play of certain players and teams.

Lest the great number of games at Falstaff Park each week dull the fans' appetite, sponsors offered "community nights" on a regular basis. The Cudahy Packing Company, solid supporters of their team in the American

---

<sup>15</sup> Personal letter from Wally Provost to author, 15 July 1980. Provost was an Omaha World-Herald sports columnist in 1980.

League, held company nights at the park and raffled off Cudahy Puritan hams which they gave when a home run was hit.<sup>16</sup> One Sunday night in June the Nebraska state softball champions, the Cinek Coals, played the Missouri state champions, the Schwein Sandwich Shops, in an exhibition game. Games such as this drew good crowds, for the Bee-News publicized them well in advance. The newspaper sponsored its own fund-raising exhibition, a game for its "Bee-News Shoe Fund." With this fund the newspaper purchased shoes for needy children. Poverty was a fact of life for many Americans, and funds such as this were not unusual.<sup>17</sup>

Guiding the softball association in Omaha this year was a man of many administrative talents. State Softball Commissioner Harry Stevenson ran the N.S.S.A. in 1936 and for many years after. A former amateur bowling and baseball league official in Omaha, Stevenson was asked by Ralph Wagner to be Secretary of the Omaha Softball Association (O.S.A.) early in 1934, but after the O.S.A. merged with the state association, he became State Softball Commissioner. Stevenson, who was forty-four in 1936, had been a Deputy Sheriff, manager of the Omaha city auditorium, and was later Chief Adult Probation Officer for Douglas County. From 1934 to 1944 he administered Omaha softball for the A.S.A. When players behaved badly on the field in 1936, Stevenson held a meeting for all managers and sponsors. Umpires often encountered a great deal of abuse from players, managers, and fans. Stevenson planned to stop it after this meeting. He established severe penalties for any player who struck an umpire, another player, or

---

<sup>16</sup> Scrapbook, 1936, Hayes Collection, Copy of Cudahy Packing Plant news circular.

<sup>17</sup> Bee-News, 13 August 1936, Section B, p. 1.



a fan, banned profanity and smoking on the field, and replaced umpires who did not report violations.<sup>18</sup>

Halfway through the 1936 season, Al Sanders sold Falstaff Park to Paul Borowiak, owner of the Pink Elephant tavern. During the season Borowiak received ninety percent of the profits from admissions. The N.S.S.A. received the other ten percent. In the city and state tournaments, Borowiak received eighty percent of the total gate; the N.S.S.A. received twenty percent. Borowiak paid a number of bills during the season. He hired sixteen people to help operate the stadium each night. He bought softballs for the games. He paid the light bill, which totaled about seven dollars a night. He purchased fifty light bulbs for the giant floodlights each summer. Each bulb cost six dollars. The ten and twenty percent the N.S.S.A. received sent the Nebraska state softball champions to Chicago each year for the national tournament.<sup>19</sup>

It was fortunate the N.S.S.A. had the new stadium in 1936 for their leagues and tournaments, because no other lighted field was available in Omaha this year. League Park, which diamond ballers used for exhibition games in 1931, and which the N.S.S.A. acquired for the City Softball Tournament in 1934, burned on August 13. This baseball stadium at Fifteenth and Vinton Street, also called Western League Park and Packer Stadium, had been the home of Omaha's professional baseball teams for a number of years. Some believed the park may have been saved but for a manpower shortage in the Omaha Fire Department. Due to a "depressed" city budget in 1936, "payless

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 28 June 1936, Section 8, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> Scrapbook, 1936, Hayes Collection, Personal account.

vacations . . . [had been ordered] for firemen to make up the budget deficit." <sup>20</sup> Homes in the area were also damaged.

Falstaff Park was ready, however, for the 1936 city and state softball tournaments. For the first time both tournaments were held at the new park on Twenty-fifth and Vinton Street. On August 26, the winners of twelve leagues started playing for the Omaha city championship. These leagues qualified their champions for the city tournament:

Greater Omaha League-National Auto Parts  
 American League-Cudahy Packers  
 National League-Smith-Robinson Motors  
 Metro League-U.S. Engineers  
 Union Pacific League-Omaha Shops  
 Benson League-Benson Buffet  
 Jewish Community Center League-Omaha Potato Market  
 Junior Chamber of Commerce League-Alpha Camp  
 F.C.A. League-Emergency Crop and Feed Loan  
 Walther League-Zion Lutheran  
 Swift Company League-Jewels  
 Holy Name Athletic Club League-Bedford Avenue Pharmacy

The defending state champion received an automatic berth in the state meet and, if from Omaha, was not allowed to participate in the city tournament after 1935. When the state champion came from Omaha, as was often the case, four Omaha teams entered the state tournament. Since the state tournament, beginning in 1935, was held in Omaha, the N.S.S.A. wanted to attract as large a crowd as possible, so they allowed the top three finishers in the Omaha city tournament to automatically qualify for the state meet each year. The National Auto Parts team of the Greater Omaha League won the City Softball Tournament in 1936 by defeating the Cudahy Packers of the American League for the title. Third place went to the U.P. Shops. No women's

---

<sup>20</sup> Bee-News, 15 August 1936, p. 1.

tournament was held in Omaha in 1936 since only four teams played in the Girls League. Seven Omaha women's teams did, however, play in the Nebraska women's softball tournament the following week, as teams outside the Bee-News Girls League were recruited to fill the tournament program.

In 1936 the state softball tournament came to Falstaff Park for the first time. Of the eight thousand softball players in Nebraska this year, only the district winners came to Omaha to compete for the trip to Chicago. The N.S.S.A provided food, entertainment, and dancing at a pre-tournament party at the Rome Hotel for all players. At Falstaff Park, for just twenty-five cents, softball fans could watch teams from Omaha, Lincoln, and other parts of the state battle for the coveted state championship.

Eleven women's teams entered the State Softball Tournament held the first week in September. Nina Korgan and the Syracuse Bluebirds won their second straight title when they beat Omaha Malashocks 6-0 in the final. An overflow crowd of three thousand, one of the largest crowds in the history of the park, watched the men's finals as the Cudahy Packers gained revenge for their city tournament loss. Cudahy beat defending state champion Cinek Coal 9-0 for the men's state championship.

The Cudahy Packers of Omaha and the Bluebirds of Syracuse boarded the train for Chicago on September 11. The national tournament began at Soldier Field on September 12. Cudahys won their first round game 5-1 over Beloit (Wisconsin) Liberty Trucks. They lost the next game 4-3 to Milwaukee, a team who had earlier beaten tourney favorite, Briggs Body of Detroit. Syracuse, on the other hand, played an outstanding tournament, making it all the way to the semi-finals before losing to Cleveland National Screw Company 7-1. Cleveland won the women's national championship. Nina Korgan pitched

Syracuse through three games that final day, tiring only during the third contest. Kodak Park of Rochester, New York, won the men's trophy.

\* \* \* \* \*

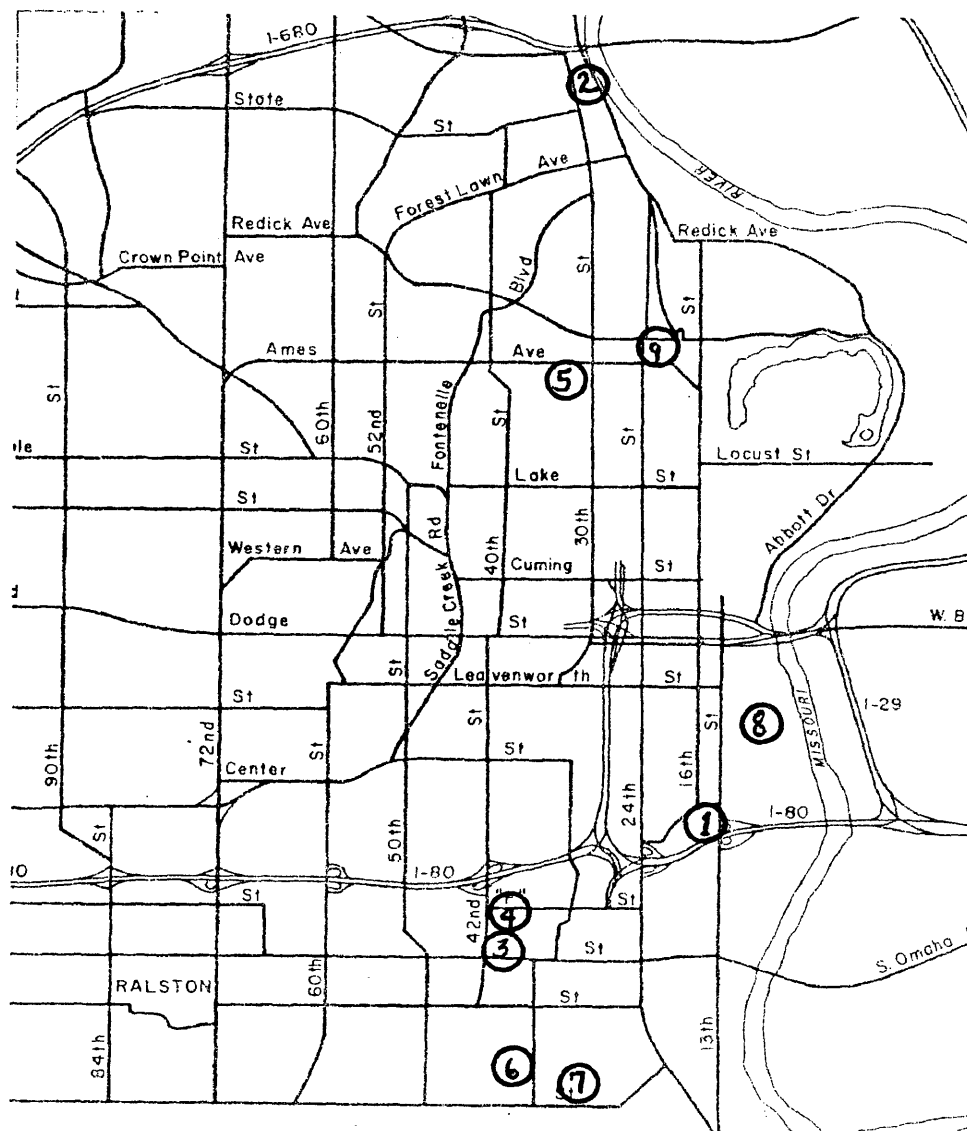
Few realized when the 1937 season began that it was to be the final year the Omaha Bee-News would sponsor and support the N.S.S.A. in Nebraska. Softball remained extremely popular in 1937, with no sign of any change. The A.S.A. again warned local organizations to ban players and teams not sanctioned by the association. In Omaha, only the Jewish Community Center League did not belong to the association this year. Other teams in Omaha could not play against teams in this league without forfeiting their right to play in the N.S.S.A. Ralph Wagner, president of the N.S.S.A., and Harry Stevenson, State Commissioner, upheld this regulation in 1937. N.S.S.A. Secretary Walt Dinkel continued to check the players and teams throughout the year to insure the rule was followed.

Teams hurried to join leagues early in 1937. Once again the limited number of softball diamonds prevented more teams from forming leagues. As the map on the next page illustrates, only two new diamonds were found for 1937, and one of these was on a cleaned-up corner of old League Park. These fifteen leagues, however, were able to join the N.S.S.A. in 1937:

Greater Omaha League  
 American League  
 Girls League  
 Metropolitan League  
 Industrial League  
 Benson League  
 Union Pacific League  
 Junior Chamber of Commerce League

Protestant Church League  
 Walther League  
 United Food Stores League  
 Catholic Workman League  
 Holy Name Athletic Club League  
 Farm Credit League  
 Urban High School League

**New Softball Diamonds 1937**



1. Fifteenth and Vinton Street
2. Utilities Field, M.U.D., Twenty-ninth and Bondesson Street
3. Thirty-ninth and "K" Street
4. Thirty-ninth and "I" Street
5. Thirty-third and Taylor Street
6. Thirty-sixth and "X" Street
7. Twenty-seventh and "U" Street
8. Ninth and Pierce Street
9. Twenty-fourth and Ames Avenue

The Girls League again had four teams: Metz Beer, Russell Sports, Malashock Jewelers, and the Pink Elephants. The women rejected the "popular" shorts uniforms of 1936 and most wore the regular baseball uniform. The talent in the Girls League was still not distributed evenly. The younger teams lost most of the time until they gained enough experience to be competitive. One sponsor, Paul Borowiak, recruited young players for his Pink Elephant team, using it as a farm team for the Girls League as it furthered the development of these players. There were other women's teams in Omaha who were not in the Girls League, like Rabes Buffet, a team of young black women. These teams often played the Girls League teams in exhibitions, and sometimes entered the women's state tournament in September.

A major rule change in 1937 allowed the baserunner to leave the base when the ball left the pitcher's hand. No longer need the runner wait until the ball had been hit or had crossed home plate. This helped the offense, for the runner now obtained a better jump on the ball, and sometimes was even able to steal a base.<sup>21</sup> On defense, all players could now wear baseball gloves, but only catchers and first basemen could use the larger fielding mitts. The A.S.A. kept the tenth player on the field in 1937, and still did not allow bunting. A less lively ball was also manufactured for teams in cities with small playing areas.<sup>22</sup>

Omaha teams began the 1937 season on April 26. Again, the Falstaff Park leagues received most of the attention. The N.S.S.A. tried to highlight

---

<sup>21</sup> Bealle, Softball Story, p. 32

<sup>22</sup> Arthur T. Noren, "Softball-The Game for All," Recreation 30 (January 1937): 508, 518.

the contests here to attract fans and raise money for the association. State Commissioner Harry Stevenson required all players on the field at Falstaff Park to be in full uniform. Although some of the teams still wore the duck pants or slacks of the earlier years with the long-sleeved pullover jersey, most of the teams began wearing a regulation baseball uniform. This uniform requirement helped bring a "professional" appearance to the games at Falstaff Park. The high level of play and the fact that some players worked for the team sponsors did nothing to tarnish that professional image.

The intense competition delighted the fans and encouraged some of the teams in the Greater Omaha and American leagues to try new methods to improve their ball clubs. The United States Engineers team of the American League sponsored a team of younger players in the Holy Name Athletic Club League, using the team as a farm club for their adult team.<sup>23</sup> Competition off the field, however, could not compare with the battles that occurred inside the fences at Falstaff Park. The fierce contests in the Greater Omaha League sparked players' tempers and entertained the fans. During one game in 1937 between the Cudahy Packers and the National Auto Parts, a disputed call at third base so infuriated the sponsor of the Auto Parts that he pulled his team out of the league.<sup>24</sup> The players returned as the Atlas Roofers, however, and finished the season. They were later involved with the Cudahy team in another memorable game that season. One evening both teams carried a 1-1 score into extra innings. One or two extra innings were not unusual

---

<sup>23</sup> Bee-News. 25 April 1937, Section D, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Scrapbook, 1937, Hayes Collection, Personal account.

for softball at this level, but when this game reached the tenth and eleventh innings, it became something special. Fifteen, sixteen, seventeen innings—no one could score. Some fans thought the game might be declared a tie when twenty innings passed, since midnight had also passed. Finally, in the twenty-first inning, Eddie Stanek, the Cudahy center fielder, grabbed his bat, witnesses claim, walked to the plate, and said, "I'm going to end this thing." He promptly singled, stole second base, and scored on an infield hit by Lyle Whiteing.<sup>25</sup>

The Omaha City Softball Tournament began August 26. No bigger city tournament had ever been held. For the first time, each league champion and runnerup was eligible for the city meet. The Cudahy Packers, winners of the Greater Omaha League, did not play in the 1937 city tournament because they were defending state champions and automatically qualified for the state affair. These teams entered the city tournament:

Greater Omaha League—Falstaff and Atlas Roofers  
 American League—Markel Cleaners and Ritz Night Club  
 Metropolitan League—Barish Sanders and Seymour Club  
 Industrial League—Union Pacific and Falstaff  
 Benson League—Benson Buffet and Benson Ice  
 Union Pacific League—Freight Accounts and Interstate  
 Junior Chamber of Commerce League—Alpha Camp and Nebraska Power  
 Protestant Church League—Ames Avenue Methodist and First Christian Blues  
 Catholic Workman League—St. Joseph and St. Adalbert  
 Urban High School League—H.S.S. and Woodson Center  
 Metropolitan Utilities District League—Utilities Service  
 Walther League—First Lutheran  
 Farm Credit Administration League—Collections  
 Holy Name Athletic Club League—Bedford Avenue Pharmacy

Tickets to the tournament were in great demand and many people tried to talk their way into the stadium. Commissioner Harry Stevenson had to clarify

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



admittance procedures during the tournament. "Players will be admitted free to the park," the Bee-News announced, "only on playing nights. A player will be allowed to take in only one guest free, and it must be a women." <sup>26</sup>

For the first time in tournament history four umpires were used for each game. On the final night of the tournament, the Atlas Roofers beat Falstaff of the Greater Omaha League two games out of three to win the Omaha softball championship. The first Christian Blues of the Protestant Church League took third and became the first Church League team from Omaha to qualify for the state tournament.

The N.S.S.A. had planned an even bigger evening of dancing and entertainment for the contestants of the 1937 state softball tournament, but Omaha's city health commissioner, Dr. Floyd Kinyoun, had to cancel the affair. Kinyoun also barred youths under the age of eighteen from Falstaff Park during the entire state tournament. The reason—a severe polio epidemic was sweeping Nebraska and the Midwest. Dr. Kinyoun explained in his newspaper statement that the danger of young people contracting the disease greatly increased when they gathered in one place. <sup>27</sup> The elaborate plans for the softball party were scrapped, but the tournament began on schedule.

The Falstaff Brewing Company in Omaha offered a large trophy to the winner of the 1937 state tournament. Two of the favorites, Cudahys and Atlas Roofers, were from Omaha, but other communities offered strong competition. Attendance surpassed two thousand for the finals as the Lincoln Falstaff team defeated Atlass Roofing 7-5 in ten innings for the

---

<sup>26</sup> Bee-News, 26 August 1937, p. 9.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 4 September 1937, p. 13.

championship. Syracuse won their third straight women's title as they defeated Russell Sports 6-0 in the final. Metz Beer and Rabes Buffet also entered the women's tournament from Omaha.

Lincoln Falstaff, the men's winner, added Ben Crain to their roster and traveled to Chicago for the National Tournament. State champions could add two or three players for the national meet. Crain, however, was not enough for the Lincoln team as they lost to Phoenix in the first round, 3-2. Nina Korgan and the Syracuse Bluebirds won their first game 5-3, but lost the next game to their old nemesis, Cleveland, on a no-hit shutout, 2-0. In spite of another superb performance by Nina Korgan, Syracuse again lost to the eventual national champion. The Cleveland National Manufacturing Company won the women's title that year, while Briggs Manufacturing Company of Detroit won the men's championship at Soldier Field.

On September 5, Ralph Wagner, President of the N.S.S.A., summarized the 1937 season in his daily sports column and revealed A.S.A. statistics from the softball season. Three million people played organized softball in the United States in 1937. Twenty million spectators attended the games. Omaha alone had close to two thousand players in its association.<sup>28</sup> The 1938 season promised to be even better. The Bee-News, however, would not be around to record it. On September 28, 1937, the Omaha Bee-News printed its final edition.<sup>29</sup> Its chief competitor, the Omaha World-Herald, bought its circulation lists and physical plant. No longer would this Hearst newspaper publish in Omaha. Sports editor Ralph Wagner, who four years earlier had been appointed President of the Nebraska State Softball Association, left

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 5 September 1937, Section D, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 28 September 1937.

a strong, highly successful softball organization. The N.S.S.A. now had to prove it could operate on its own.

\* \* \* \* \*

Although Ralph Wagner was no longer President of the N.S.S.A. in 1938, most other association officers retained their positions. State Commissioner Harry Stevenson, who made the day-to-day decisions during the first four years, returned to that office. Secretary Walt Dinkel again handled all publicity and record-keeping, although not having the Bee-News around to promote the game made this task somewhat more difficult. An office was constructed at Falstaff Park since there was no longer any Bee-News office to use.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, more leagues organized than ever before. In addition to the three leagues that played at Falstaff Park there were nineteen other adult leagues sanctioned by the N.S.S.A. in Omaha. Enough youth softball teams organized to form eleven leagues. For the first time since 1933, teams which could not find a league with any openings began playing independent softball regularly without any N.S.S.A. affiliation.

When the teams returned to spring practice in 1938 they discovered new rule changes that some players had wanted for a number of years. Bunting became legal in 1938. Since that time the bunt has dominated softball strategy, offensively and defensively, at every level of play. In another effort to help the offense, the A.S.A. required that pitchers wear dark uniforms for night games, to provide more contrast to the batter looking for the pitched ball.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> The Omaha World-Herald, 17 April 1938, Section 5B.

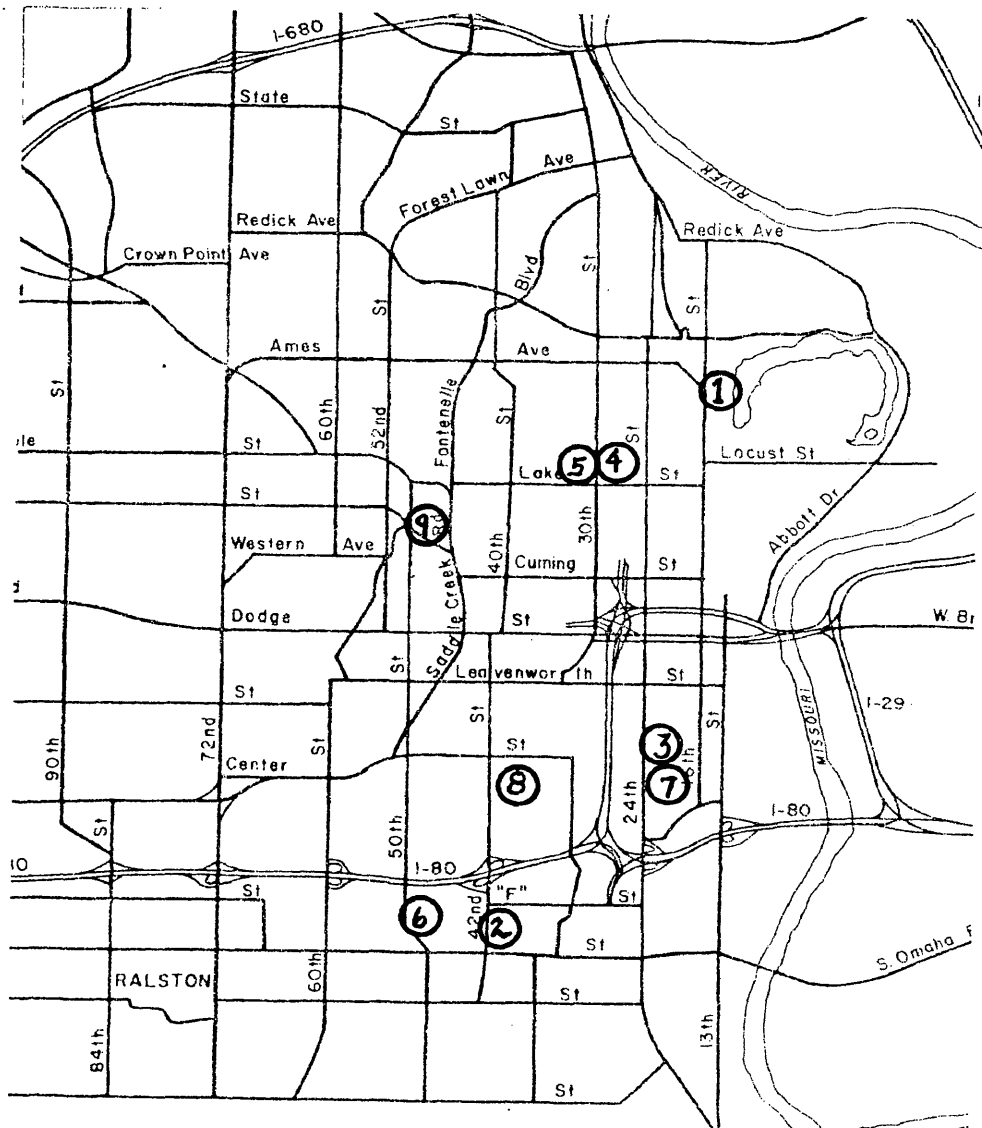
<sup>31</sup> Scrapbook, 1938, Hayes Collection, Personal account.

On April 25 the season began. The Omaha World-Herald started covering the Falstaff Park games now that the Bee-News no longer ran the N.S.S.A. In April and May the World-Herald provided good coverage of the top leagues, printing line scores on most games, and even carrying daily schedules. By August, however, the World-Herald no longer maintained this coverage. The days of softball headlines, box scores, photographs, batting averages, and daily schedules had passed.

The first black team to play in the Greater Omaha League at Falstaff Park entered the league in 1938. Although black teams had competed in Omaha since the Bacchanites of the early diamond ball leagues, no black team had ever played in the Greater Omaha League since the formation of the N.S.S.A. The Urban League registered black softball teams, but this was just a community league which scheduled games on corner lots. The Dr. Pepper team joined the Greater Omaha League after their manager met with Commissioner Harry Stevenson. Stevenson told team manager Martin Thomas that the first fight his team had at Falstaff Park would be their last fight there. Stevenson promised to replace them in the league. No other team had ever been warned like this before entering the league. Only hot-tempered Eddie Stanek had received a similar warning, and in his case, it was justified. Thomas, however, kept his team, and his opponents, in line, and the black Dr. Pepper teams, later Storz Beer, were successful for a number of years. 32 Thomas later became a member of the Omaha Softball Hall of Fame.

The 1938 season passed, a success, as those just before it. Even the World-Herald sponsored a softball exhibition at Falstaff Park for its "World-Herald Fresh Air Camp Fund." On July 17 three games were played for

New Softball Diamonds 1938



1. Boyd Park, Sixteenth and Boyd Street
2. Forty-second and "H" Street
3. Twenty-second and Hickory Street
4. Twenty-eighth and Spencer Street
5. Howard Kennedy School, Thirtieth and Maple Street
6. Robbins School, Forty-ninth and "I" Street
7. Castelar School, Eighteenth and Martha Street
8. Harrison Heights Park, Thirty-seventh and Martha Street
9. Forty-seventh and Decatur Street Park

this charity. Admission was twenty-five cents, and three thousand people crowded into the stadium, standing ten deep around the outfield. After watching Metz Beer and Russell Sports of the Girls League play at seven o'clock, the fans saw Doss Cafe play Dr. Pepper at eight. The highlight of the night came at nine o'clock when the Cudahy Packers, behind the pitching of Ben Crain, beat Roberts Dairy of Sioux City, Iowa, 2-1. <sup>33</sup>

The biggest exhibition of the 1938 season, however, occurred after the season was over. On September 29, Heavyweight Champion Joe Louis and his Brown Bomber softball team played at Falstaff Park. <sup>34</sup> Earlier in September Louis had torn a tendon in his right leg playing softball. His fight manager, Mike Jacobs, demanded that he halt the tour, but Louis continued to play. <sup>35</sup> Omaha's black community newspaper, the Omaha Star, excitedly announced the arrival of the champion. <sup>36</sup> The team arrived by bus, Louis by private auto. A squad of four Omaha detective sergeants was detailed to protect the Heavyweight Champion that day. <sup>37</sup>

Reserved seats at Falstaff Park sold for sixty-five cents, general admission cost forty cents. Three thousand people gathered to watch Louis play first base while his talented teammates covered the other positions. His team played Omaha Falstaff that night. During the game Louis struck out three times and missed two chances at first, and after six innings Falstaff

---

<sup>33</sup> World-Herald, 10 July 1938.

<sup>34</sup> Scrapbook, 1938, Hayes Collection, Personal account.

<sup>35</sup> World-Herald, 13 September 1938, p. 10.

<sup>36</sup> Scrapbook, 1938, Hayes Collection, Clipping from the Omaha Star, 1938.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., Personal account.

led the Brown Bombers 2-0. For the benefit of the fans, and other Omaha softball players who wanted to play in the game against Louis, the exhibition was lengthened to nine innings. The Bombers scored one run in the seventh, then three more in the top of the ninth, to win the game 4-2.<sup>38</sup>

At the end of the regular season, again first and second place in the league standings qualified a team for the city softball tournament. The 1938 tournament began August 21 with the following teams:

Greater Omaha League—Cudahy Packers and Falstaff  
 American League—Doss Cafe and Ritz Nite Club  
 Metro League—Royal Arcanum and Ike's Tavern  
 Industrial League—Falstaff Brewery and Roberts Dairy  
 Junior Chamber of Commerce League—Nebraska Clothing and Federal Land Bank  
 Benson League—Louis' Market and Benson Buffet  
 Union Pacific League—Freight Accountants and Presidents  
 Jewish Community Center League—Milder Oil and A.Z.A. No. 1  
 National League—Omaha Potato Market and Hickory Inn  
 Walther League—Florence Lutheran and St. Paul Lutheran  
 Recreational "A" League—Woodson Center and H.S.S.  
 Holy Name Athletic Club League—Hodge Electric and St. Joseph  
 Junior Optimists League—City Mission and Falstaff Park  
 Farm Credit Administration League—Presidents  
 Pulaski League—Village Bar

The N.S.S.A. determined that some leagues were not good enough to play in the city tournament. Some of the teams from those leagues decided to have their own tournament on August 18 before the tournament at Falstaff Park began. The top two teams from the Senior Church League, the Junior Church League, the Commercial League, and the Metropolitan Utilities District League met for an Independent Softball Tournament. Played at M.U.D. Field at Twenty-ninth and Bondesson Street in Florence, this tournament lasted until August 26. Augustana Lutheran won the tournament by defeating Ames Avenue Methodist 8-7 in the final.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> World-Herald, 27 August 1938, p. 18.

The city tournament at Falstaff Park again attracted fans by the thousands. Because Lincoln Falstaff had won the state championship in 1937, no Omaha team received an automatic berth to the state meet in 1938. All Omaha teams had to qualify through the city tournament. The Cudahy Packers continued to dominate Omaha softball in 1938 as they won the city tournament. Falstaff, also of the Greater Omaha League, finished second. Doss Cafe, winners of the American League, took third. By their finish in the city tournament, these three teams qualified for the state tournament from Omaha.

For the third consecutive year Falstaff Park hosted the Nebraska State Softball Tournament, this time from September 3 to September 6. Because the national tournament was scheduled to start September 8 in Chicago, weather presented an interesting series of events. Rain caused the cancellation of all Monday games, and the Tuesday finals were pushed back until Wednesday night. The train for Chicago was to leave Omaha at 12:47 A.M. In the final game, Cudahy and Falstaff, the finalists in the city tournament, met for the state championship. Cudahy, who had beaten Falstaff in the Greater Omaha League and in the Omaha City Tournament, again expected to win. Team members brought their suitcases so that they could board the train after the game. With brave confidence, Falstaff team members arrived at the park carrying their baggage, too. The game became closer than Cudahy expected. When the Cudahy right fielder crashed into the wall chasing a fly ball, it went for a home run, and Falstaff won the trip to Chicago, not Cudahy. The game ended at 12:20 A.M. Falstaff asked Eddie Stanek and pitcher Lyle Whiteing of Cudahy to join their roster and quickly headed for the train station. 40

---

40 Scrapbook, 1938, Hayes Collection, Personal account.



In the women's division, Nebraska crowned a new champion. The Syracuse Bluebirds, winners of the previous three women's state tournaments, disbanded in 1938. Four Omaha teams entered the tournament: Russell Sports, Metz Beer, Malashock's Jewelry, and California Beauty School. Russell Sports won the state tournament and became the first women's team from Omaha to make the trip to the nationals.

Omaha Falstaff and Russell Sports were among the 90 teams from 44 states and Canada to attend the 1938 National Softball Tournament in Chicago. The early round games were played at Mills Field in Chicago, while the finals were again held at Soldier Field. Falstaff won their first game 2-0 over Shreveport, Louisiana, but then faced the eventual 1938 champion, the Cincinnati Pohlrs, and lost 3-0. The women of Russell Sports also won their first game 3-0 over Toronto, Canada, and then defeated Buffalo, New York, 2-1. In the quarterfinals, however, they lost to the Phoenix Ramblers 8-0. Both Omaha teams played well in the 1938 national tournament.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1939, major league baseball celebrated an American baseball centennial, one hundred years since the alleged invention of the game by Abner Doubleday. But softball, the A.S.A. claimed, surpassed baseball in popularity in the United States. Over two million players enjoyed this sport in 1939. Frank G. Menke, in his book Encyclopedia of Sports, estimated that more than sixty million spectators watched softball annually, ten million more than watched baseball.<sup>41</sup> Softball continued to gain supporters across the nation.

---

<sup>41</sup> Leo Fischer, "Softball Steps Up," Reader's Digest 34 (June 1939):135

In Omaha, more teams than ever before entered the N.S.S.A. leagues. In addition to the three leagues at Falstaff Park, there were twenty other adult leagues and a dozen or more youth leagues sanctioned by the association. State Commissioner Harry Stevenson found the task of running the program more difficult each year. Since the Bee-News no longer supported the N.S.S.A., the association sometimes struggled to meet all the payments. The three dollar and fifty cent team registration fee and the ten cent player contract fee did not generate enough money to cover all the association expenses. The paid trips to Chicago for the national tournament each year were expensive, and even the crowds at the city and state tournaments did not provide anything extra after this trip was made. Stevenson discovered that Nebraska was the only state to provide the all-expense trip. Stevenson's pay for his work as Commissioner in 1938, collected after all N.S.S.A. bills were paid, was two hundred dollars. Before the season began, Stevenson delegated more duties to his assistants, and discussed softball income with the N.S.S.A. board of directors.<sup>42</sup>

The Omaha softball season began April 24. The only A.S.A. rule change concerned pitching and catching apparel. Pitchers could no longer wear white or gray sweatshirts or scarfs, but catchers were required to wear a catcher's mask. Women catchers had to wear both the mask and a chest protector.<sup>43</sup> Otherwise, pitchers continued to pitch from forty feet, teams still used ten players, and the bunting and baserunning rules remained unchanged.

---

<sup>42</sup> World-Herald, 9 April 1939, Section 2B.

<sup>43</sup> Bealle, Softball Story, p. 33.

In the Greater Omaha League, still Omaha's best, the Cudahy team disbanded, and many of the former players now played for Ruppert's Beer. The Girls' League still carried four teams. Albert J. (Buss) Langenegger started a girls' softball school in 1939, hoping to teach young women the skills of softball and provide more players for the teams in the Falstaff Park league.<sup>44</sup>

Although many fans still attended Falstaff Park (over seventy-eight thousand for the 1939 season),<sup>45</sup> the coverage the leagues received from the World-Herald continued to be sparse. League schedules, standings, line and box scores were no longer supplied. Again, the World-Herald did sponsor an exhibition at Falstaff Park for its Good Fellows Fund,<sup>46</sup> but until the city and state tournaments arrived, little other softball news was offered.

The 1939 City Softball Tournament committee utilized a suggestion by a Protestant Church League player and official, Carl P. Kelley. Kelley proposed that the tournament be divided into two divisions, Class A and Class B.<sup>47</sup> Many of the teams wanted to participate in post-season play and this plan allowed more of them to do so. Four of the leagues had tried this with the Independent Softball Tournament at M.U.D. Field in 1938. Now these teams could qualify for the official City Softball Tournament in the Class B division. The N.S.S.A. chose the best leagues and teams for the Class A

---

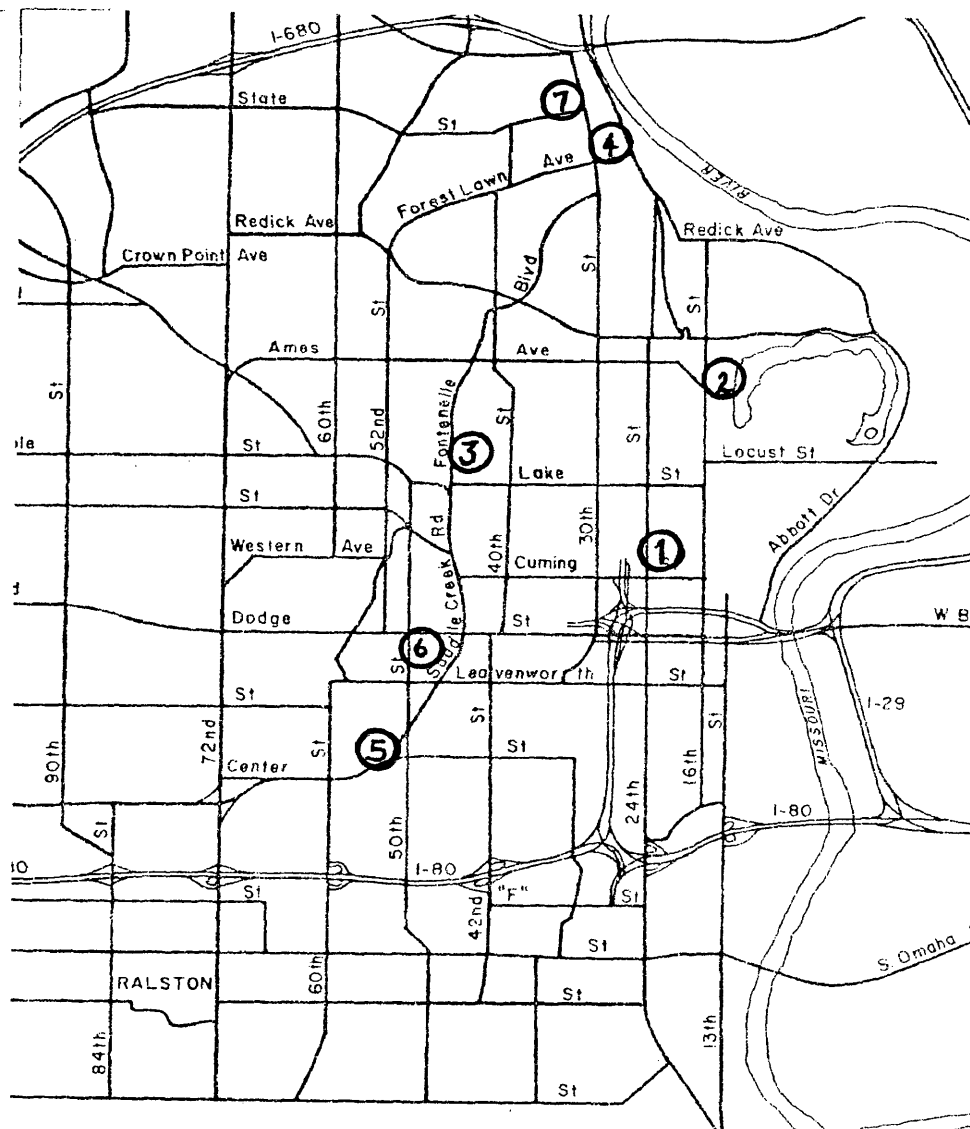
<sup>44</sup> Scrapbook, 1939, Hayes Collection, Clipping from the South Omaha Sun, "Softball Scribblings" column by Floyd Hayes.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., Personal account.

<sup>46</sup> World-Herald, 23 July 1939.

<sup>47</sup> Scrapbook, 1939, Hayes Collection, Personal account of Carl Kelley's induction into the Omaha Softball Hall of Fame.

**New Softball Diamonds 1939**



1. Twenty-second and Seward Street
2. Thirteenth and Boyd Street
3. Clifton Hill School, Forty-fifth and Corby Street
4. Florence Field, Twenty-seventh and Craig Street
5. Fifty-second and Center Street
6. Forty-ninth and Farnam
7. Danish Park, Thirty-sixth Street in Florence

tournament, the remaining leagues and teams played Class B. Again, only the top three teams from the Class A tournament would qualify for the Nebraska State Softball Tournament.

In spite of the new city tournament arrangement, the Protestant Church Athletic Association held their own Church League Tournament on August 7. Sponsored by the Omaha Y.M.C.A., the winners of the four Church Leagues met at Boyd Park, Thirteenth and Boyd Street, to determine the grand champion. Ames Avenue Methodist outlasted First Covenant, Augustana Lutheran, and Immanuel Baptist to win the championship.

Three weeks later the City Softball Tournament began at Falstaff Park. It began August 20 and was scheduled for eleven days. Fifty-two teams qualified in the 2 classes, 18 teams made up the Class A field, 34 teams the Class B. These teams qualified for the Class A division:

Greater Omaha League—Ruppert's Beer and Doss Cafe  
 American League—Metz Beer and Brown Park Merchants  
 Industrial League—Falstaff Brewing and Nebraska Power  
 Metro League—Golden Spike Beer and Hickory Inn  
 National League—U.S. Supply and Bon Ton Tavern  
 Benson League—Corner Bar and Louis' Market  
 Junior Chamber of Commerce League—Nebraska Clothing and Interstate  
 Urban High League—H.S.S. and Four C's  
 Commercial League—Wilson Packing Company  
 Union Pacific League—U.P. Stores Department

In Class B, while some of the teams were second place finishers in Class A leagues, in most cases they were all first and second place winners in the Class B leagues.

Commercial League—Kimball Laundry and Nebraska Power Station  
 Union Pacific League—Freight Accounts and Passenger Accounts  
 Farm Credit Administration League—Legal and Presidents  
 South Church League—Gospel Tabernacle and Park Forest Presbyterian  
 Central Church League—Augustana Lutheran and First Covenant  
 West Church League—Yeomen Coventry and Immanuel Baptist  
 North Church League—Ames Avenue Methodist and Florence Presbyterian

Walther League—Cross Lutheran and Trinity Lutheran  
 Jewish Community Center League—Breslow Auto Parts and Leavenworth Merchants  
 Florence Community League—Roger's Grocery and Fort Omaha  
 Catholic Workman League—St. Procopius and St. Joseph No. 1  
 Junior Optimist League—White Spots and Dahlbreck's Grocery  
 South Recreation League No. 1—C.I.O. and Golden Hill  
 South Recreation League No. 2—Mason Merchants and Sheely All-Stars  
 Nebraska Power League—Nebraska Power Station and Orphans  
 United Foods League—United Foods No. 1 and United Foods No. 2  
 Urban Junior League—Comets and Tigers

Ruppert's Beer won two out of three from Doss Cafe in the championship tournament to win the 1939 Class A crown. The Brown Park Merchants took third and also qualified for the Nebraska State Softball Tournament the following week. In Class B, the church teams dominated as Immanuel Baptist captured two games from Gospel Tabernacle to win the first Class B city championship.

On September 2 the state tournament began at Falstaff Park. This year the tournament had to compete for attendance with the Omaha McDevitts, the American Legion baseball team that won the 1939 national championship. Since the final best-of-seven National Legion World Series was played at Omaha's Fontenelle Park, much of the city's interest dwelt on these baseball games. Although crowds were down somewhat at Falstaff Park, the tournament proceeded as usual. Omaha entered four teams in the men's division. Omaha Falstaff, the defending champion, had not played in the city tournament. Four Omaha women's teams from the Falstaff Girls' League entered the state tournament. They were Russell Sports, Malashocks, California Beauty School, and South Omaha Bowling. Season records meant little in the state women's softball tournament, for the young South Omaha Bowling team lost thirty games without winning one during the season at Falstaff Park.

In the women's bracket, Russell Sports of Omaha again won the state title and the trip to the nationals. In men's play, Doss Cafe, runnerup in the Greater Omaha League and the City Tournament, earned the right to play in Chicago by defeating Grand Island Palace Market in the final game, 6-0. This was one of the rare times a team outside of Omaha or Lincoln made it to the finals of the Nebraska state tournament.

The 1939 A.S.A. national tournament again was held at Soldier Field in Chicago. Doss Cafe played two outstanding games that year. In the first game they defeated tourney favorite Phoenix, Arizona, 1-0 in ten innings. Pitching for Phoenix was future Hall-of-Famer Al Linde, who struck out twenty Doss players that day in the ten-inning game. Doss lost, though, in the second round, to Covington, Kentucky, 1-0. Covington advanced to win the men's national title that year. The Omaha women also performed well. After beating Kuna, Idaho, 9-1 in the first game, they fell 5-0 to the Chicago Downdrafts in the second game. J.J. Kriegs of Alameda, California, won the women's crown in 1939.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1940 Americans discovered they had more to discuss than the economy, the weather, and the coming sports season. Europe was at war, and the battles that had been waged in Asia for nearly a decade suddenly took on greater importance. On the lighter side of events, though, softball's popularity continued to spread, not only throughout the United States, but also to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Brazil. The American Olympic Association planned to request that softball be added to the program

at the next Olympic Games.<sup>48</sup> But in 1940, no one was quite sure whether or not there would be a next Olympic Games.

In the United States, softball remained popular as a spectator and participant sport, but there finally appeared limits to its never-ending growth. Because of the spectator interest and national media publicity that softball received in the late 1930s, some attempts had been made to form professional softball leagues. Unlike baseball, however, softball did not appeal to the fan who had to sit dozens of rows away from the action. The game was too fast, the movements too quick, for anyone not within close proximity of the field. When it came to filling stadiums, softball could not compete with America's national pastime, whose tradition, media exposure, salaried players, and public following put it on another level. Softball, though, continued to draw hundreds of people at the local levels.

In Omaha, twenty adult leagues joined the three major leagues at Falstaff Park to make up the Omaha association this year. In addition, seven youth leagues were sanctioned by the N.S.S.A. for the season. State Commissioner Harry Stevenson, with the help of secretaries Walt Dinkel and Floyd Hayes, reorganized the Nebraska State Softball Association and divided the state into twelve districts. Stevenson appointed Lyle Remde as Assistant State Director for the N.S.S.A.<sup>49</sup> Remde had for many years promoted softball from the other side of the Missouri River, in Council Bluffs.

In this seventh softball season for the N.S.S.A., some players were still

---

<sup>48</sup> Brock Milton, "Baseball's Lively Kid Brother," The New York Times Magazine (1 September 1940): 8.

<sup>49</sup> World-Herald, 5 May 1940, Section 5B.



able to use their playing ability to obtain jobs. Mary Burnap, a twenty-one year old pitcher who excelled two years for Russell Sports, landed a job in the bottling plant at the American Beverage Bottling Company. At night she pitched for the American Beverage team in the Girls' League at Falstaff Park. Burnap was the only women in Omaha to get a job through softball in 1940.<sup>50</sup> Her credentials were outstanding, though. In two trips to the national tournament she had won three games. A handful of men found work with companies contingent upon their softball play, an occurrence not common since the mid-1930s. For some sponsors business improved as the United States increased supplies to Great Britain, and as President Franklin Roosevelt began to build up the American armed forces. These sponsors could now afford to be somewhat more liberal with their accounts.

Softball players found some important rules changes in 1940. The pitching distance was increased from forty feet to forty-three feet. A pitcher also had to come to a complete stop in his windup before delivering the ball to the batter. The batters' box was enlarged for the hitter. It was now six feet long and three feet wide. Beginning in 1940, if a catcher dropped a third strike, the batter could attempt to take first base, unless it was occupied with less than two out.<sup>51</sup>

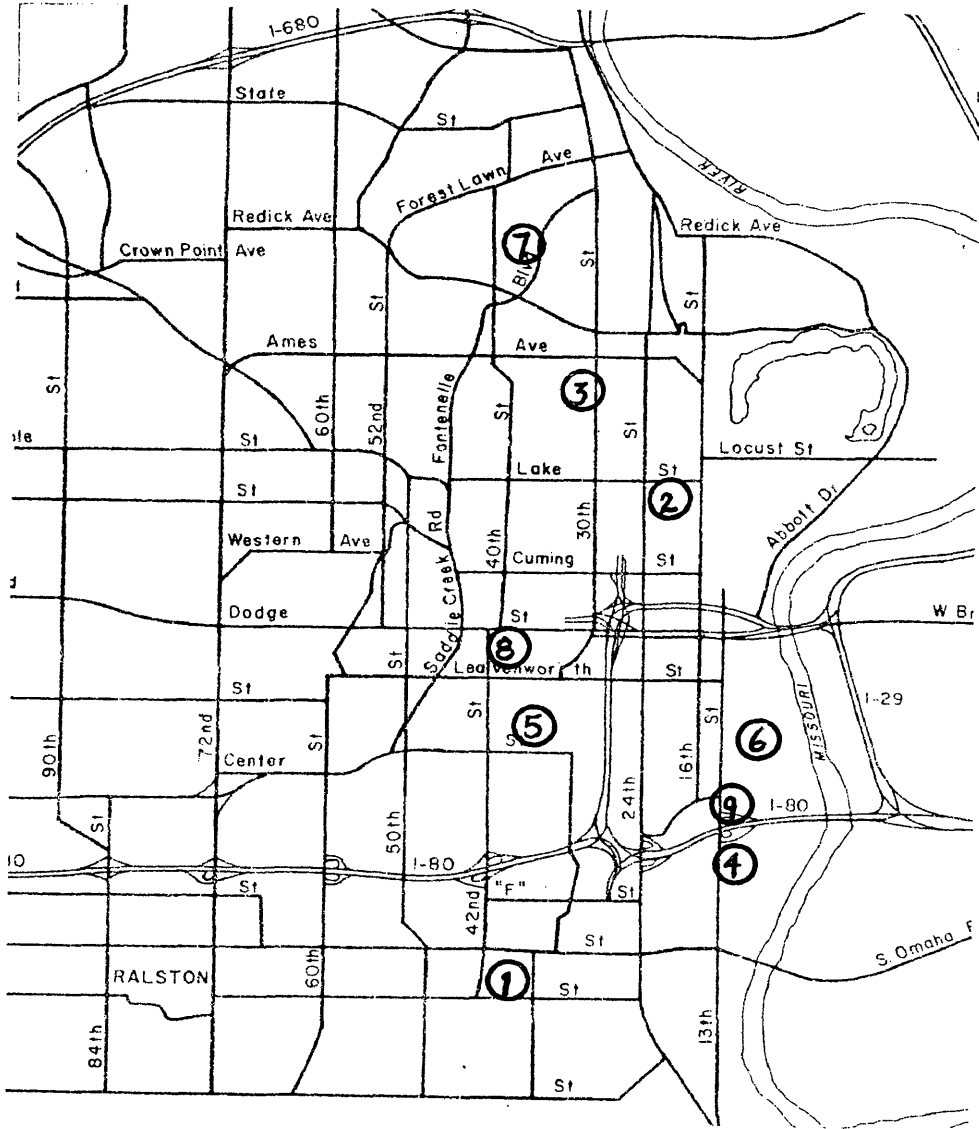
Along with the many regular season games in 1940 there were also many "benefit" games for players who had suffered injuries while playing softball. In the 1930s when a man was injured and out of work there was often no alternate source of income. His teammates would sponsor a "benefit game"

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 11 August 1940, Section 38.

<sup>51</sup> Bealle, Softball Story, p. 33.

**New Softball Diamonds 1940**



1. Thirty-sixth and "Q" Street
2. Twenty-second and Burdette Street
3. Sprague Field, Thirtieth and Sprague Street
4. Twelfth and "B" Street
5. Field Club School, Thirty-fifth and Walnut Street
6. St. Francis Cabrini, Ninth and William Street
7. Belvedere School, Thirty-eighth and Kansas Avenue
8. Fortieth and Farnam Street
9. Brickyards, Thirteenth and Frederick Street

at Falstaff Park some weekend and use the proceeds to help support the player's family until he could return to work. At Falstaff Park and other playing fields in Omaha broken ankles and fractured legs were not uncommon. Other team members, understanding the need for this money, promoted these games and worked for a good turnout.

The World-Herald's coverage of the Falstaff Park leagues failed to improve in 1940. Fewer column inches were devoted to softball this year, especially during the regular season. Since the demise of the Omaha Bee-News most softball news was offered not in the metropolitan editions in Omaha, but in a neighborhood competitor in South Omaha, the South Omaha Sun. In 1936, Floyd Hayes, who soon became Secretary of the N.S.S.A., began writing a softball column in the South Omaha Sun called "Softball Scribblings." After the Bee-News presses shut down, Hayes' columns in the Sun provided much of the news for softball players and fans.<sup>52</sup> The Omaha World-Herald continued its softball exhibition for the World-Herald Free Milk Fund, but promoted little else until the tournaments began.

Nearly every team, it seemed, wanted to play in a tournament in 1940. The Church League started things off with their third annual Church League Softball Tournament for the champions of its different divisions. In this tournament, which was held at their Thirtieth and Sprague Street field, Yeomen Coventry won first place over St. Luke.<sup>53</sup> The W.P.A. City Recreation Department in Omaha organized its first Junior League Softball Tournament in

---

<sup>52</sup> Scrapbook, 1936-1946, Hayes Collection, Clippings and copies of the South Omaha Sun, various "Softball Scribblings" columns by Floyd Hayes.

<sup>53</sup> World-Herald, 14 August 1940, p. 16.

September. Most of the recreation centers entered their junior league teams in this tournament played at Elmwood and Columbus parks.<sup>54</sup>

For the second straight season the Omaha City Softball Tournament was divided into two classes. Ten Class A teams qualified for the tournament, while eighteen Class B teams won tournament berths.

#### Class A

Metz Beer	Assumption
Falstaff Beer	Monkey Mountain
Louis' Market	Nebraska Power
Milder Oil	Brandeis
W.O.W. 16	Nebraska Clothing

#### Class B

Our Redeemer Lutheran	Cross Lutheran
Lincoln Tavern	King's Outpost
Tom O'Connor	Sample-Hart
World-Herald	Morton Park
St. Paul	St. Stanislaus
U.P. Shops	Leavenworth Markets
Vita Freeze	U.P. Stores
John Opitz	Paxton-Mitchell
Presidents	Yeomen Coventry

Metz Beer won the 1940 City Softball Championship by defeating Louis' Market two out of three games in the finals. Falstaff Brewery took third. Doss Cafe automatically qualified for the state meet by virtue of its 1939 state championship and did not play in the city tournament. Our Redeemer Lutheran won the Class B tournament.

A week later Falstaff Park hosted its fourth state softball tournament. The four women's teams from the Falstaff Park Girls' League again entered the tournament. A new Russell Sports team from the Omaha league played in the tournament, for although Russell Sports was defending state champion,

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 1 September 1940, Section 2B.

most of the players from the 1938-1939 team now played for American Beverage. Malashocks and the South Omaha Bowlers were the other two entries for the state tourney. American Beverage won the tournament, the third straight for these women, by beating the Lincoln "Lincolnettes" in the final. In men's play, Doss Cafe swept into the finals with easy victories in the opening rounds. There they met the Lincoln Dr. Pepper team. Lincoln beat Doss Cafe 7-1 to win the Nebraska State Softball Championship for 1940. For the first time in Nebraska, the N.S.S.A. attempted a State Class B Tournament. Three Omaha teams, Metz Beer, Yeomen Coventry, and Our Redeemer Lutheran, entered, but after one round the tournament was halted.<sup>55</sup> There just was not enough interest for a Class B tournament on the state level in 1940.

For the first time since the A.S.A. national tournament began, the games were not held in Chicago. Detroit hosted the 1940 tournament which began September 5. Ninety-five teams and nearly two thousand players traveled to Detroit that week seeking the national softball title. Lincoln's Dr. Peppers found the competition tough as they dropped their opening game 4-0. American Beverage won their first game 3-2, but lost the next game 2-1. Kodak Park of Rochester, New York, won the men's championship, while the Phoenix Ramblers captured the women's crown.

When the 1940 season ended, few realized a golden age of Omaha softball ended with it. The nation began to prepare for war as it studied reports from across both oceans. Soon these wars plunged Americans into a great struggle, a struggle whose aftermath would change the lives, and lifestyles, of all who survived. American's habits and leisure-time activities no longer would be the same. The era of the Depression allowed the game of softball to find

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., Section 18.

an important place in the lives of many Americans. No other time could have been so right.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE WAR YEARS: WORLD WAR II 1941-1945

"Draft Takes Away Many Softballers . . . Fewer Leagues Expected This Year." <sup>1</sup> Though written in March of 1941, that headline accurately explained the predicament the Nebraska State Softball Association (N.S.S.A.) faced each spring during World War II. Although a few teams lost players to the military in 1940, beginning in 1941 increasing numbers of Omaha's softball-playing population were missing from the city's diamonds each season. The Omaha World-Herald divulged this trend early in 1941 when it reported the concerns of city softball officials.

Softball players have been hit harder by the war situation than any other athletic group in town. At least eight standout players have enlisted or been drafted. Probably 10 or 12 others have already gone the same route, and a large percentage of the entire playing personnel, being single and of the proper age, will be in khaki soon.

This is one reason observers believe there will be fewer leagues in town this season. Another is that defense taxes, plus the general uneasiness, has made sponsors a little harder to bag. <sup>2</sup>

Early in 1941, while Congress debated isolation and intervention, the United States government prepared for war. Even though it was nine months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the military camps

---

<sup>1</sup> The Omaha World-Herald, 16 March 1941, Section 4B.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

housed more and more of the nation's young men. However, the N.S.S.A. soon learned that no matter how many young Omaha players were gone, no matter how dreary the forecasts of February and March; those still at home, though thirty, and even forty years old, with families and home-front jobs, took time to play softball when summer arrived. Although some top athletes were gone, other players, usually older, but often experienced softballers, soon replaced them. If, in 1941, some sponsors were "a little harder to bag," teams located others. In 1941 the softball association lost four leagues from the 1940 season, but three new leagues took their place. In fact, before the season ended, there were more teams playing in 1941 than in 1940. Greater challenges, however, arrived the following spring.

In March of 1942, just four months after the attack of December 7, softball players still in Omaha wondered if there would even be softball in 1942, or if the N.S.S.A. would become an early war casualty. Commissioner Harry Stevenson and Secretary Floyd Hayes realized once again that while earlier in the year prospects looked dim for softball, by mid-April, sponsors and managers, revived by the warmth of spring, intended to field teams. By mid-season, there were but five fewer leagues than in 1941. Many of the rosters contained teen-agers, though, and increasingly older players to fill the war-time vacancies. Because fewer good players remained in Omaha, Stevenson had to disband the American League for 1942. The softball commissioner then placed the handful of good teams into the Greater Omaha League at Falstaff Park; there were just not enough good players left to maintain two quality six-team leagues. The American League did not reorganize until after the war; it was the first Omaha casualty of World War II. There would be more.



The N.S.S.A itself nearly disappeared in 1943. With the nation's military facing two dangerous and powerful enemies in separate theaters of war, even greater sacrifices were required at home. Compared to this test of national survival, local softball leagues received low priority. In 1943, men in their thirties were being called by the United States military. But as March melted into April, managers again urged N.S.S.A. Commissioner Harry Stevenson to activate the Omaha association. In response to this interest, Stevenson held a meeting to establish the demand for softball this year.<sup>3</sup> After listening to team managers, players, and the Omaha City Recreation Department, Stevenson accepted a solution. The N.S.S.A. merged with the City Recreation Department, a municipal department which had offered separate softball leagues in Omaha for nearly six years. George Vanous, director of the City Recreation Department, offered to operate all leagues except the Greater Omaha League and the Girls' League. Those leagues continued under Stevenson's jurisdiction at Falstaff Park. Floyd Hayes, Secretary of the N.S.S.A., was among that new group of Omaha men gone to the military service in 1943. Faced with the loss of this hard-working partner, Stevenson, rather than see the N.S.S.A. fold, accepted the offer of help from Vanous. Vanous established his city softball offices at Athletic Park on Twenty-second and "L" Street, and although he required all teams to join the N.S.S.A.,<sup>4</sup> the first major step in the dismantling of this once-powerful softball association had occurred.

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 4 April 1943, Section 2B.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 11 April 1943, Section 1B.

The second major step of that dismantling came to pass early in 1944 when Harry Stevenson, State Softball Commissioner for the N.S.S.A. since 1934, resigned that position before the season began. Stevenson, who lost association secretary Floyd Hayes to military service the previous year, had really only administered the Greater Omaha and Girls' leagues at Falstaff Park in 1943, and decided he was no longer needed. Many of the players and managers were gone from the city, and while new players and managers tried to fill the vacant positions, they often failed to meet Stevenson's standards. George Vanous, director of the City Recreation Department, became the new State Softball Commissioner for Nebraska and Omaha. Vanous, who shared the duties with Stevenson in 1943, occupied the top spot alone in 1944.<sup>5</sup>

Vanous tried to be firm, and control the association in the manner that Stevenson had. He soon discovered that many of the war-time players did not know the procedures and traditions of Omaha softball that had been a part of the game for nearly a decade. Vanous encountered numerous problems his first year. For example, the Y.M.C.A. Church League refused to join the N.S.S.A. this year and Vanous had to suspend this league from the A.S.A.<sup>6</sup> This was just the first of many decisions Vanous had to make as the players and managers tested his authority in 1944.

Although it was still too early to demobilize the nation in the spring of 1945, Americans believed this year might bring the end of the war. The N.S.S.A. had survived the war, in name, if not in substance; for in 1945 it was not the same association it had been in 1940. Only eighteen adult

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 9 April 1944, Section 1B.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 28 May 1944, Section 2B.

leagues in Omaha joined the N.S.S.A. in 1945, the fewest since the 1930s, yet they represented over 130 teams. Many teams played two or three times a week and tied up a number of the playing fields. Commissioner George Vanous faced, for the first time, the problem that had not plagued Omaha softball since the war began—the lack of softball diamonds.

Since the early 1930s the same handful of softball parks had been used year after year. Falstaff Park was always reserved for Greater Omaha League, American League, and Girls' League play. But the National League, the Industrial League, the Metro League, and other leagues had to use the remaining diamonds around the city. In Central Omaha, Gifford Park, on Thirty-third and Cass Street, and Dewey Park, on Thirty-second and Dewey Street, were two of the most popular softball sites. Miller Park, at Twenty-fourth and Kansas Street, was the best North Omaha playground. To the west, the three diamonds at Elmwood Park, Sixty-second and Leavenworth Street, were extensively used all summer. In South Omaha, Athletic Park, at Twenty-second and "L" Street, and Columbus Park, at Twenty-fourth and Woolworth Street, were the two diamonds receiving most softball play. (See the Omaha maps on pages 19, 25, 49 and 99 for these locations). These, plus a few vacant lots and schoolyards accounted for the N.S.S.A.'s total available softball diamonds.

In 1941 the City Parks Department installed new lights at Athletic Park on Twenty-second and "L" Street and the Omaha Recreation Department scheduled two games a night there. The N.S.S.A. feared that some of the fans might attend these free games rather than continue to pay the ten cents admission at Falstaff Park. The Protestant Church Athletic Association, in a similar challenge to the N.S.S.A., installed lights at its field on Thirtieth and

and Sprague Street to accomodate the teams in the city Church leagues. While some fans still attended Falstaff Park to view the best teams in Omaha, attendance gradually declined during the war.

The shortage of softball fields, though not a concern early in the 1940s, became a major problem by 1945, and the N.S.S.A. leadership was, in part, responsible. When Harry Stevenson administered the association early in the decade, he retained the same cooperation from city government that he and Ralph Wagner secured in 1934. Stevenson, a familiar face to the commissioners at city hall, maintained these contacts as manager of the Omaha city auditorium, and later as Douglas County Chief Probation Officer. The men in city government usually gave Harry Stevenson all the assistance possible.

With Commissioner George Vanous, however, things were different. Vanous, an early W.P.A. recreation worker in South Omaha, worked his way up through the Omaha Recreation Department until he became director. Vanous, however, was, at one time, a bail bondsman, and he did not circulate in the same crowd as Stevenson. Any assistance he received from city government during his tenure as softball commissioner, he struggled to get. These many struggles, and his sometimes-abrasive manner, agitated the people he had to deal with, and negotiating softball business became more difficult each year. The 1945 season produced a prime example—the need for additional softball diamonds. Vanous and the City Recreation Department requested one hundred diamonds from the Parks Department. The City Planning Board decided Omaha needed eighty-three diamonds.<sup>7</sup> Yet, only fifteen softball fields were available.

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 29 April 1945, Section 2B.

Before the conflict over diamonds split the city and the N.S.S.A., the association administered a somewhat different softball program during the early years of the decade. As the top softball players left Omaha at the direction of the United States Department of War, the local leagues became the playgrounds for an older crowd. The first adult "slow pitch" league in Omaha especially exemplified this. Organized and promoted by George Vanous of the South Omaha Recreation Center in 1941, this league was open to "athletes" who weighed more than two hundred pounds and had passed their thirtieth birthday. "Other athletic infirmities would be welcome," Vanous remarked when announcing the league.<sup>8</sup> The South Omaha Slow Pitch League fielded teams until 1946, when the return of the younger war veterans to Omaha softball convinced these old-timers there was no longer any room for their game. Another slow-pitch league, the Benson Ancients League, organized in 1943, but played only until 1945.

Not all the war-time softball players were older players returning to their former leagues. Some were younger players, teen-agers, or new players, equally unfamiliar with the rules, procedures, and practices of the Omaha softball leagues. In 1943, rowdy behavior on the field reached such proportions that Commissioner Harry Stevenson publically warned the players about profanity on the field, prolonged arguments with umpires, and sportsmanship in general.<sup>9</sup>

One group of players caused very little trouble for softball administrators during the war. They were employees of the Martin Bomber Plant. Some of

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 13 April 1941, Section 5B.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 13 July 1943, Section 2B.

the plant workers asked George Vanous to organize softball leagues at the plant.<sup>10</sup> Vanous found fifty teams ready to play, and he soon formed eight leagues. Since the plant operated twenty-four hours each day, workers played in morning, afternoon and evening leagues. The Martin Bomber Plant, which was located south of Bellevue and later became the site of Offutt Air Force Base, provided many recreational opportunities for their hundreds of employees, and their softball leagues helped the N.S.S.A. operate for three years. For example, aside from the Martin Bomber leagues, the N.S.S.A. sanctioned only eleven adult leagues in Omaha in 1943. There were nearly as many leagues at this defense plant as in the rest of Omaha combined. The Martin Bomber leagues remained important to Omaha softball until 1945, when the Allied victory eliminated the need for excessive bomber production.

By the second year of the war, Americans at home noticed shortages in a variety of products as the War Production Board manipulated the war-time economy. Great re-cycling drives began in 1942 as states, counties, cities, and towns worked to meet their quotas for scrap metal and rubber. Softball did its part in Omaha by holding "scrap metal" games at Falstaff Park. On Sunday, July 26, 1942, the first of these was held. To enter the stadium that night, a fan had to present at least one pound of rubber or five pounds of scrap metal.<sup>11</sup> Omaha teams traveled across the state this season, playing games for the scrap metal drives in the smaller communities of Nebraska.

The goals of these national war drives changed each year. In 1943 the

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 25 April 1943, Section 1B.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 26 July 1942, Section 1B.

the effort shifted to raising money for other war causes. Players raised two hundred dollars in August for the "Smokes for Service Men Fund" when Jeep Bar of the Girls' League played an exhibition with Wagon Wheel Bar of the South Omaha Slow Pitch League.<sup>12</sup> As the United States began to finance military offensives, intense "war bond drives" occurred. On July 7, 1944, Falstaff Park held a war bond drive, and sponsors hoped for bond sales of \$100,000 at the three-game exhibition that night.<sup>13</sup>

While Americans promoted drives for the war effort each year, and men's softball leagues declined in the cities, one segment of amateur softball remained constant in Omaha, and even prospered as the war continued—that segment was women's softball. The Falstaff Park Girls' League, which since 1936 had featured only four teams, expanded to six teams from 1943 to 1945. American women, stepping into responsible jobs outside the home during the war, became more active in some social and recreational affairs as well. It was during this time that one of Omaha's greatest softball teams, the 1944 Jeep Bar team, competed in the Falstaff Girls' League. Jeep Bar won the Girls' League that year with a record of twenty-nine wins and no defeats, the first time a team in the league had ever gone undefeated. Star pitcher Mary Burnap Chavis had pitched for Russell Sports and American Beverage in the national tournament late in the 1930s before moving to Denver and marrying. When her husband entered the military service late in 1943, she returned to Omaha to live with her family. She and other women standouts

---

<sup>12</sup> Scrapbook, 1943, Floyd Hayes Collection, Clipping from unidentified newspaper, 22 August 1943.

<sup>13</sup> World-Herald, 18 June 1944, Section 2B.

like Bernie Schacht, June Price, Mary Riso, Deed Skarka, Vivian Lee, and Ruth Lehman formed this outstanding team which swept through the State and Regional Tournaments undefeated, and won two games in the National Tournament for forty consecutive wins. <sup>14</sup>

Nationally, interest in women's softball far surpassed that in Omaha. Many sports fans, and the national media, while regretting the major league baseball decline, discovered the best American female athletes remained in the country, many performing for A.S.A. softball teams. In 1942 The Saturday Evening Post published a story on these women athletes which featured softball star Nina Korgan. <sup>15</sup> Korgan, who pitched her teams to A.S.A. World Championships six times during the Forties, was the same Nina Korgan who left Council Bluffs as a young woman to pitch Syracuse, Nebraska, to three consecutive State Softball Championships at Falstaff Park. As Korgan and her teammates demonstrated, during the war American women aggressively pursued segments of society previously reserved for men.

One men's softball tradition the N.S.S.A. was able to maintain was the year-end city softball tournament. The association continued to divide the leagues into two classes, entering the better teams in Class A, and placing the others in Class B. While twenty to thirty teams consistently entered the Class B tournament each year, entries in Class A gradually declined during the five year period, from a high of twenty-two teams in 1941 to a low of eight teams in 1945. Because a total of fifty-four teams entered both tournaments in 1941, Commissioner Harry Stevenson ruled that any team

---

<sup>14</sup> Scrapbook, 1944, Hayes Collection, Personal account.

<sup>15</sup> Robert M. Yoder, "Miss Casey At Bat," The Saturday Evening Post 215 (22 August 1942): 16-17, 48-49.



holding a twelve-run lead after five innings would be declared the winner. This practice, which later became the "ten-run rule," or the "twenty-run rule" for three innings, helped the teams complete the tournament on schedule. Metz Beer won the City Championship Class A Tournament in 1941, and continued to dominate local and state softball for the next two years. Because Metz Beer won the Nebraska State Tournament from 1941 to 1943, they did not compete in the next three City Tournaments. This gave Storz Beer, who finished second to Metz Beer in the Greater Omaha League those three years, a chance to win the City Tournament. Storz Beer, the first black team to win the City Softball Tournament when they captured the title in 1942, continued to capitalize on Metz Beer's absence and also won the championship in 1943 and 1944. This great Storz Beer team was the first Omaha team in N.S.S.A. history to win three consecutive City Tournaments. The winning string may have continued, but Storz Beer won the Nebraska State Championship in 1944 and was ineligible to participate in 1945. The North Omaha Eagles won it that year.

In the state tournaments during World War II, Omaha teams won the championship each year at Falstaff Park. Metz Beer, the dominant team in the Greater Omaha League after 1940, remained consistent throughout the tournaments as they won three straight state softball championships from 1941 to 1943. When Hastings beat Metz Beer in the second round of the 1944 tournament, this allowed Storz Beer a chance to win the state championship, which they did by defeating the Martin Wing Assembly team 2-1 in the final. In 1945 Ben Crain led Buck's Bar to the state championship in one of the greatest individual performances in the history of the state meet. In four games Crain pitched four shutouts; two of those

were no-hitters. He allowed only two hits during those four games. Having done all that, he then hit the home run in the final game which brought his team the victory 1-0. <sup>16</sup>

Omaha women won four of five Nebraska State Tournaments from 1941 to 1945, losing only the 1942 title to the Lincoln Blackbirds. American Beverage won the state meet in 1941, but Omaha's Russell Sports dropped a 7-5 final to Lincoln in twelve innings in 1942. Omaha's Jeep Bar began its domination of Nebraska women's softball in 1943 when they beat the defending champion Lincoln Blackbirds 5-4 in the championship game. In 1944 Jeep Bar again won the State Championship title, playing the regular season, the State Tournament, and the Regional Tournament without a loss. In 1945, however, the team lost some key members, and Omaha's Barnes Bar won the Falstaff Park Girls' League and the Nebraska State Championship.

Travel restrictions during World War II forced the A.S.A. to require that state champions qualify for the national tournament through Regional Tournaments around the country. While some areas initiated this in 1942, Nebraska champions did not encounter these tournaments until 1943. The Western Regional, later re-named the Mid-Central Regional, was played at St Joseph, Missouri, during the war. Controversy surrounded Nebraska's entry into the Regional the first year. Metz Beer, the 1943 Nebraska State Champion, refused to participate in the tournament, claiming the N.S.S.A. did not provide enough money to cover their expenses. Metz Beer, as state champions in 1941 and 1942, had advanced directly to the national tournament after their state meet victories. When Metz refused to enter the Regional

---

<sup>16</sup> Scrapbook, 1945, Hayes Collection, Clipping from unidentified newspaper.

Tournament, the state runnerup, Martin Bombers, was then selected to represent Nebraska in St. Joseph. Some Metz supporters claimed that government funds were used to send the Martin Bomber team to the tournament, but a plant spokesman denied it.<sup>17</sup> Ironically, the substitute Martin Bomber team, who finished third in the Greater Omaha League, third again in the City Tournament, and second in the Nebraska State Tournament, won the 1943 Western Regional. The Nebraska women's state champion, Jeep Bar, decided, like Metz Beer, not to attend the Regional Tournament in 1943, but no substitute was sent in their place.

Ben Crain led the Martin Bombers to their second straight Regional Tournament in 1944, this time when Nebraska State Champion Storz Beer decided to pass up the event. Storz, the first black team to win the Nebraska State Softball Championship, believed a trip to St. Joseph to participate in a tournament on the same field with white players would be unwise, possibly dangerous. The Martin Bombers, who again placed second in the state meet after a fourth place finish in the Greater Omaha League, won the Western Regional for a second year. Jeep Bar, the Nebraska women's champion, attended the 1944 Regional Tournament and increased their undefeated string to thirty-eight as they won the title.

In the 1945 Regional, the Nebraska women's champion, Barnes Bar, won their first two games in the tournament, but lost in the final 5-3. Ben Crain's Buck's Bar team, entering the tournament this year as the Nebraska State Champion, lost their first game and had to play through the losers' bracket. Crain pitched remarkably as he hurled three shutouts on the final

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 1943, Personal account.

day to win the Regional Tournament for the Nebraska champions. The three victories, however, came in an unusual fashion. It took a rain-delayed, late-night double-header sweep to do it. After the rain, Buck's won their second game of the day to force the third contest. The second game ended at 1 A.M. Officials began the third game at 1:15 A.M. The mud was so deep in the infield that the umpires put home plate in center field and the teams played in the wet grass. An hour and a half later, at 2:45 A.M., the game ended. For the third year in a row, an Omaha men's softball team had won the Western Regional at St. Joseph and earned the trip to the National Tournament. <sup>18</sup>

Due to the success of Ben Crain and his Omaha teammates in the Regional tournaments during World War II, Omaha teams were able to attend each national tournament from 1941 to 1945. Metz Beer, as Nebraska State Champions, played in the national tournament in 1941 and 1942; Ben Crain's Regional Tournament champions, the Martin Bombers, participated in 1943 and 1944; while Crain's 1945 team, Buck's Bar, played in the national meet in Detroit that year. The 1943 Martin Bomber team fared the best of the Omaha teams, winning three games that year before losing two and being eliminated.

Two women's teams from Omaha attended the national tournament—American Beverage in 1941, and the great Jeep Bar team of 1944. American Beverage was eliminated early, but Jeep Bar won their first two games before losing in the third round 9-0. After forty consecutive victories, they finally met defeat. They lost the next game 7-0; after winning so many games, Jeep Bar ended the season with two shutout losses.

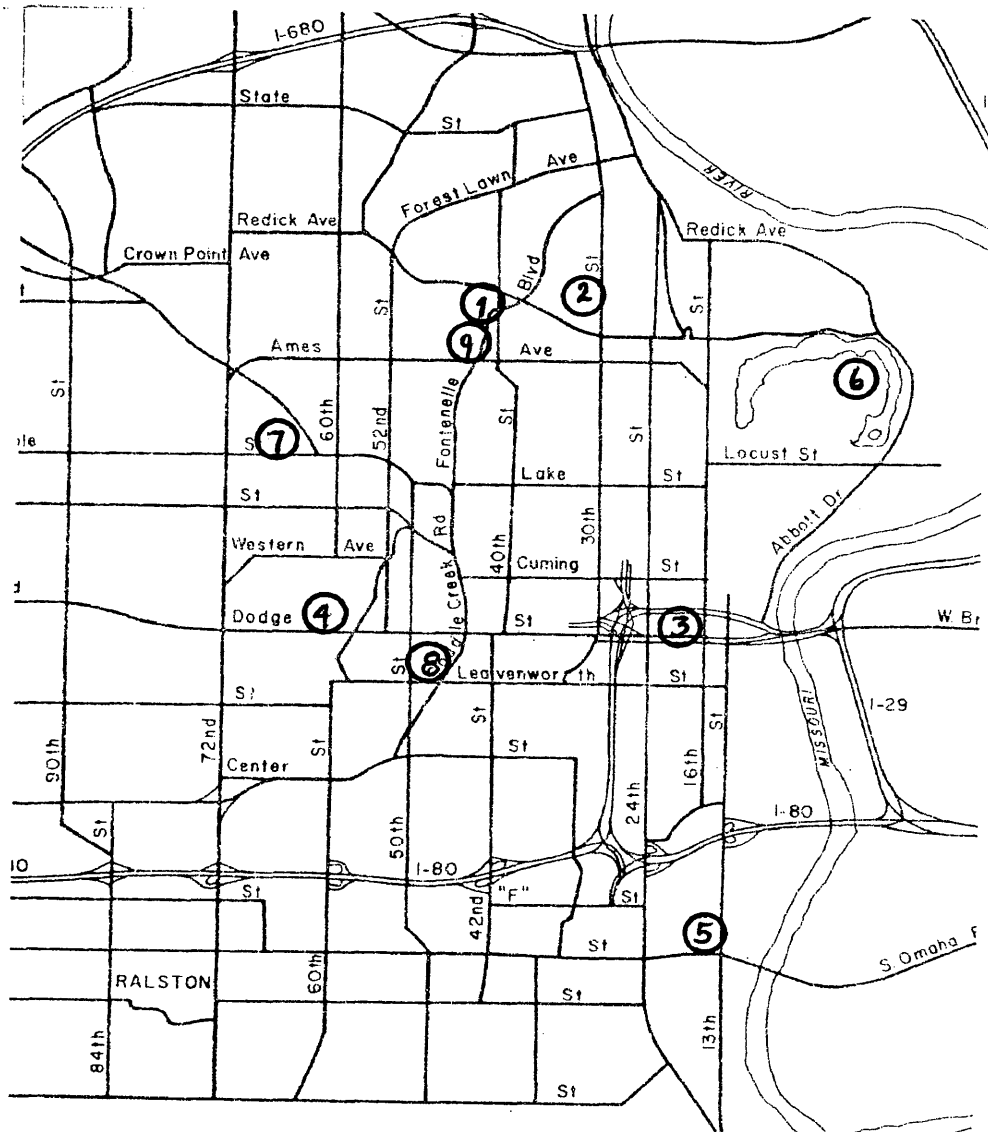
---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

For five years World War II altered the character of Omaha softball more than any other factor. When the 1945 season opened in Omaha on Monday, May 7, many expected the war in Europe to end at any time. They did not have to wait long. On Tuesday all games were postponed.<sup>19</sup> It was May 8, 1945, V-E Day. The war in Europe was over. As the season continued, Americans watched the Pacific theater and counted the days to an Allied victory there. On August 14 the news arrived and Americans celebrated V-J Day, hoping, at last, to live in peace.

The years of war finally ended. When the 1945 season began, the American nation was fighting a war in two theaters. Millions of Americans worked, fought, and some died each day for this war. In September, when the final out was made in the National Tournament, the enemy on both continents had surrendered. Americans wanted to demobilize, to re-discover the life of peace. Many sports fans in Omaha believed those "golden days" of softball would return.

New Softball Diamonds 1941-1945



1. Forty-first and Fontenelle Boulevard
2. Fort Omaha, Thirtieth and Fort Street
3. Seventeenth and Davenport Street
4. Sixtieth and Dodge Street
5. Spring Lake Park, Thirteenth and "J" Street
6. Carter Lake Park, Carter Lake
7. Benson West School, Sixty-sixth and Maple Street
8. Omsteel Athletic Field, Saddle Creek and Jones Street
9. Forty-third and Grand Street

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE POST-WAR YEARS 1946-1950

While Americans discovered the realities of the post-war world in 1946, prospects for Omaha softball looked brighter than they had since 1940. Many American servicemen had played softball during the war, so many that some veterans claimed it was the leading sport during the war in military camps and on island bases.<sup>1</sup> These enthusiasts believed that softball would be more popular than ever when the men returned home, that play in the top Omaha leagues could reach the level attained during the "golden years" of softball in the late 1930s.<sup>2</sup> Some truly believed that 1946 would be a banner softball season. Other developments, however, indicated that Omaha softball would never regain that earlier success.

One critical issue involved the Commissioner of Omaha softball, George Vanous. After the 1945 softball season, on September 6, Omaha Mayor Charles Leeman dismissed Vanous from his position as director of the City Recreation Department. Vanous, as softball commissioner, had directed the N.S.S.A. from his City Recreation offices since Harry Stevenson resigned in 1944. A ten year City Recreation employee, Vanous had worked in the W.P.A. recreation programs in the 1930s and had been a big booster of city softball. Although Mayor Leeman refused to publicize the reason for the dismissal, it was rumored that Vanous "loosely handled" city funds.<sup>3</sup> In a letter to Vanous,

---

<sup>1</sup> Scrapbook, 1946, Floyd Hayes Collection, 3118 South Forty-fourth Street, Omaha, Nebraska, Personal account.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Frank Fochek, Omaha, Nebraska, 8 September 1981.

Leeman wrote that Vanous' services were "no longer needed or desired," and that to save Vanous from public embarrassment, he hoped Vanous himself would keep the matter private.<sup>4</sup> Though out of his city job, Vanous vowed to keep his N.S.S.A. position, which he did the rest of the decade.

Still at odds with the Omaha mayor in the spring of 1946, Vanous began to criticize the City Council and the Parks Department for their failure to build new softball parks, or to improve existing fields, or to pay for all softball umpires.<sup>5</sup> While Vanous convinced the Omaha players of his position, he only agitated the city leaders. Not only did they refuse to act on these requests, the city eventually took action which further damaged the Omaha softball association. In 1947 the Omaha Parks and Recreation Commission, directed by former softball player and manager Frank Fochek, decided to dismantle the softball park at Thirty-second and Dewey Street, and to construct a tennis complex there in its place.<sup>6</sup> For two decades Dewey Park had been one of the busiest fields in Omaha. The first city diamond ball tournaments in the early 1930s were held here. Now the N.S.S.A. sought a replacement diamond. The Association received a narrow tract of land from the city at Thirty-fifth and Leavenworth Street as a substitute for Dewey Park, but because of its small size, this field was suitable only for junior league play.<sup>7</sup> Though this action by the city angered Vanous and the N.S.S.A. board, some blamed Vanous for the loss of Dewey Park.

Vanous continued to receive criticism during his tenure, not only

---

<sup>4</sup> The Omaha World-Herald, 6 September 1945, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 10 May 1946, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Frank Fochek interview.

<sup>7</sup> World-Herald, 13 April 1947, Section 4B.



for his poor relationship with city officials, but also for his lax policies regarding play at Falstaff Park. Since 1936, teams at Falstaff Park had always been required to play in full uniform. In 1947 players began disregarding that rule, and they arrived at the park to play in various combinations of pants and jerseys; anything, it seemed, to draw attention. Long-time fans, recalling the snappy, professional-looking teams of the late 1930s, accused Vanous of failing to enforce this practice.<sup>8</sup> The amateurish appearance of some of the players in these "major" softball leagues failed to attract more customers to the games.

In spite of the many post-war problems and the difficulties Commissioner Vanous encountered, when the 1946 season began, the chances for a successful softball program seemed bright. On April 29 twelve hundred softball fans paid to watch the opening games at Falstaff Park. Park officials claimed it was the largest opening attendance in the history of the stadium. Softball's popularity appeared unchanged in this first post-war year. Just one year later, when most American servicemen were home and most factories had been retooled for peacetime production, softball continued to be a popular sport in Omaha, but in a somewhat different way. Omaha softball was becoming more a participation sport, less a spectator sport. Early in April Commissioner Vanous announced that more than seven thousand people would play softball in 1947, a great increase from the forty-five hundred players of 1946.<sup>9</sup> The lack of city softball facilities again burdened the Omaha association.

---

<sup>8</sup> Scrapbook, 1947, Hayes Collection, Clipping from the South Omaha Sun, "Softball Scribblings" column by Floyd Hayes, 7 August 1947.

<sup>9</sup> World-Herald, 13 April 1947, Section 4B.

Another report also disturbed some players in 1947. Rumors that Vanous planned to disband the Girls' League prompted the Commissioner to vigorously deny it. "Nothing to it," Vanous declared. "We have plenty of backers but do lack for talent."<sup>10</sup> Though the Falstaff Park Girls' League expanded to six teams during the war, it dropped back to four teams after 1945. Vanous worked with sponsors and managers and again produced a four-team league for the 1947 season.

Softball enthusiasts of the late 1940s were less concerned with the Falstaff Park leagues, though, than the earlier Omaha fans had been. In 1948, twenty-six leagues joined the N.S.S.A., but the attendance at Falstaff Park began to reflect the post-war trend. After a first night rainout, only 625 spectators attended the opening games at the stadium on April 27.<sup>11</sup> This low attendance at the re-scheduled opener marked Falstaff Park's thirteenth season, and this loss of revenue did not encourage park owner Paul Borowiak about the future of the facility.

The 1949 season nearly completed the transformation of Omaha softball from a spectator event to an activity generating mass participation as more people than ever in the city played softball for recreation and relaxation. No longer could an outstanding player expect to land a job with his softball ability. The "standing-room-only" days at Falstaff Park were over. While in 1946, only twenty-three leagues joined the N.S.S.A., thirty-six leagues joined the association in 1948, by far the most ever to organize. These were the Industrial leagues, the Church leagues, the Community leagues, the

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 6 April 1947, Section 2B.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 28 April 1948, p. 18.

Business leagues; leagues provided to give employees and friends some fellowship and recreation. More leagues could have been formed this season had there but been enough fields.

These hundreds of new Omaha softball players discovered a somewhat different game than the pre-war players knew. After World War II, the Amateur Softball Association (A.S.A.) experimented with the rules of the game, attempting to satisfy various complaints and requests. In 1946 the rules committee shortened the base paths from sixty feet to fifty-five feet.<sup>12</sup> The A.S.A. hoped to see more runs in 1946, as well as a few more hits. A year later the national association finally eliminated the tenth player from the teams. No longer would the defense have a "rover" or "short fielder" to intercept hits by the offense.

After a two year experiment, the rules committee moved the base paths back to their original sixty feet for the 1948 season. With the tenth player gone from the defense, and the pitching distance back to forty-three feet, the A.S.A. decided that the pitcher need no longer wear the dark uniform. Pitchers now could wear the regular team uniform and look like part of the team.<sup>13</sup> By 1948 most softball teams wore regular baseball uniforms instead of the brightly colored satins. Finally, in 1950, after fifteen years of changing the pitching distance, from thirty-seven feet to forty feet, then to forty-three feet; the A.S.A. rules committee found a distance they hoped would be ideal—forty-six feet.<sup>14</sup> This distance has now remained

---

<sup>12</sup> Morris A. Bealle, Softball Story, (Washington, D.C.: Columbia Publishing Company, 1957), p. 34.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

the same for over thirty years. Very few changes have occurred in fast pitch softball since 1950.

In Omaha, the City Softball Tournament continued as an annual event after the war. The N.S.S.A retained the two class system which allowed many more teams to participate, for by the late 1940s, participation was the important element in Omaha softball. From 1946 to 1949 the number of teams entering the Class A tournament remained fairly constant; 12 in 1946, 14 in 1947, 15 in 1948 and 1949. In Class B, however, the number of teams selected for the tournament increased dramatically; twenty-six teams in 1946, but fifty-two teams by 1949.

The Class A tournament still offered the finest softball competition in the city. In the 1946 tournament, pitcher Lou Kubat of Metz Beer pitched the first perfect game in Nebraska tournament history, city or state, as he beat Corn State Serum 9-0 on August 21.<sup>15</sup> Metz Beer advanced to win the Class A championship that year in the first post-war affair. Walt's Bar took the city title two of the next three years, winning in 1947 and 1949. In 1948 Ben Crain led Storz Beer, a different group than the black Storz team of the early 1940s, to victory in the city Class A tournament.

Omaha teams dominated play at the state level during these four years, winning each Nebraska State Softball Tournament, men's and women's, between 1946 and 1949. In the 1946 tournament it appeared Nebraska softball might reach new levels of popularity as twenty-five teams from around the state entered the Falstaff Park elimination. These out-state teams discovered, though, that the Omaha teams still had the upper hand in state tournament

---

<sup>15</sup> World-Herald, 22 August 1946, p. 12. The information in this chapter regarding leagues, games, scores, and tournaments comes from the Omaha World-Herald 1946-1950.

competition. The first and second place teams from the Greater Omaha League, Buck's Bar and the black Storz Beer team, met in the championship game. In the sixth inning of this game, with Buck's Bar leading 7-2, the Storz Beer team left the field after a disputed umpire's decision, giving Buck's the state championship by forfeit, 7-0. In the women's 1946 tournament, Jeep Bar, winner of the Omaha Girls' League, won the Nebraska state title when they defeated Lincoln Amos Coals 10-0 in the final.

The 1947 tournament clearly indicated that the spectacular statewide popularity of softball during the previous year was a temporary development which quickly reversed itself. Outside of Omaha and Lincoln, fewer teams now entered the tournament than before the war. After World War II, most smaller communities gradually turned to baseball instead of softball for state competition. The reason for this was the same reason that caused softball to struggle everywhere in the 1950s and 1960s before the slow pitch game arrived—the difficulty in developing good softball pitchers. Most of these communities had high school baseball teams, and though the high school coaches developed baseball pitchers each year who later played with the local men's team, no comparable program existed for young softball pitchers. Even during the 1930s, when more pitchers in these smaller communities did work at improving their softball play, a men's team outside of Omaha or Lincoln had never won the State Softball Championship. Out-state teams usually fared quite poorly against the competitive hitters of the larger cities. Baseball became the popular sport in these communities after the war, while competitive softball nearly disappeared on the state championship level.

Walt's Bar, runnerup to Buck's Bar in the Greater Omaha League in 1947, won the Omaha City Tournament and continued its fine play while

capturing the state championship as well. The Omaha women kept pace with the men as Girls' League champion Florentines defeated the Lincoln Blackbirds 6-1 for the 1947 championship. During the 1948 state tournament, observers finally realized that softball never really recovered from the interruption of World War II. Only ten teams, compared to the twenty-five in 1946, entered the men's State Tournament this year. Four of these teams were from Omaha. For those players and fans who remembered the festive pre-tournament dances and dinners at the Rome Hotel a decade before, and the two or three dozen teams who battled for the chance to go to Chicago and the National Tournament, this was a disappointing scene. As in 1947, the runnerup in the Greater Omaha League, this year Ben Crain's Storz Beer team, went on to win the City Tournament and the State championship. For the third consecutive year, the champion of the Omaha Girls' League, which was Seven Up in 1948, won the women's State championship.

For the first time since 1934 the women's State Tournament was held outside of Omaha. The four Omaha entries had to travel to Lincoln's Municipal Field to play in the 1949 meet. The Omaha women still dominated the tournament, though, as Omaha Seven Up defeated Omaha Hamm's in the final, 6-0. The men's State Tournament, however, again was played at Falstaff Park, for the fourteenth straight year in 1949. In the all-Omaha final, Walt's Bar beat Storz Beer 2-0.

The Western Regional Tournament which Omaha teams so dominated during the war did not have a Nebraska champion after the war. The Omaha teams, men and women, who as Nebraska State Champions qualified for this tournament in St. Joseph each year, fared less well these years. Whereas shortly after the war, some of the Omaha representatives might win one or two games, even

making it to the final before being ousted from the double elimination tournament, by 1949 Omaha's best were losing their first two games of the event, sometimes without scoring a run. Not until 1955 would another Omaha team win the men's Regional Tournament and qualify for the A.S.A. National Tournament. The 1945 Buck's Bar team of the Greater Omaha League was the last Nebraska team in the Forties to play in a national tourney.

In 1950 the decline of the Nebraska State Softball Association continued at a very rapid rate. The Omaha World-Herald chronicled the major reason for the association's descent when the season began.

Softball Season to Start Without a Lighted Park

Most of Omaha's 3,500 softball players on more than two hundred teams will swing into action this week—weather permitting.

There will be no traditional opening at Falstaff Park. The City's one lighted major softball plant is only a memory to members of the Greater Omaha, American and Girls Leagues.

These organizations, supposedly the fastest in Omaha, will join the dubs and fun-players on the crowded twilight program. They will play at Boyd and Columbus Parks. 16

To owner Paul Borowiak, the decade since 1939 might have been a century. No longer did the stadium draw great crowds of paid admissions. It was even difficult finding enough people to operate the ticket booths, concession stands, and cleanup crews. After the 1949 season, Borowiak decided Falstaff Park could no longer produce a profit. He had the park dismantled early in 1950.

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 30 April 1950, p. 18.

Without Falstaff Park, N.S.S.A. Commissioner George Vanous sought other options for Omaha's major softball leagues. The Protestant Church Athletic Association maintained a lighted diamond at Thirty-first and Sprague Street, but used it nearly every night of the week for Church League games. A plan to join with Omaha's amateur baseball league administrators in building a lighted baseball/softball complex at Thirtieth and Lake Street never materialized. Vanous, whose disputes with City Commissioners and other officials still cast a bad light on the N.S.S.A., received unfair criticism when he could not find enough softball diamonds, not only for former Falstaff Park leagues, but for all the teams who wanted to play. "I don't blame these outfits for being bitter about my administration," Vanous said. "However, all I can do is make the best out of a bad playing and financial situation. I'll gladly turn this job over to anyone who can do better under existing softball conditions."<sup>17</sup> There were those in Omaha who soon accepted his offer.

In August Vanous encountered another diamond problem—where to play the 1950 City Softball Tournament. Though various "experts" offered different solutions, none proved to be practical or possible.<sup>18</sup> Vanous finally accepted an offer by the Papillion Veterans of Foreign Wars for the use of their lighted field southwest of Omaha. The park was fourteen miles from downtown Omaha.

Thirty-one teams entered the Class A tournament, making it the largest Class A field ever assembled. With forty-one teams in the Class B tournament,

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. The information regarding George Vanous in this chapter comes from the Omaha World-Herald, April to September, 1950.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 6 August 1950, Section 3B.



a total of seventy-two teams from Omaha's thirty-six leagues played in the 1950 City Tournament. Vanous had expected a few more teams, but, as he explained, "several teams had to drop out of the meet since they were weakened by calls to the armed services."<sup>19</sup> The "police action" in Korea began in June and thus accounted for the absence of some of the city's softball players.

In spite of collecting the most teams ever for a City Softball Tournament, Vanous decided that it would be a good time to change the tournament to a double elimination affair. In the longest and most chaotic City Tournament ever held, Storz Beer won the Class A championship. Many of the losers' bracket games were played in Omaha on unlighted fields. Tournament officials had a difficult time keeping track of all the results. In fact, the final order of the top three teams in Class A was not decided until after the Nebraska State Tournament.

Both the men's and women's State Softball Tournaments were held at Lincoln's Municipal Field in 1950. Defending men's champion Walt's Bar led the five team Omaha delegation, but this year that delegation failed to capture the state championship. For the first time since 1940 a team outside of Omaha became state champion as the Lincoln Whistles defeated Walt's Bar 2-1 in the final. In the women's tournament, Omaha Skelgas won the Nebraska State Championship and advanced to the Regional Tournament.

In the St. Joseph Regional the Skelgas team demonstrated some of the form shown by Omaha teams here in the past. Skelgas lost their first game 4-3 to Des Moines, and had to play back through the losers' bracket. They then beat Des Moines 12-5, and went on to defeat St. Joseph 2-1. With this

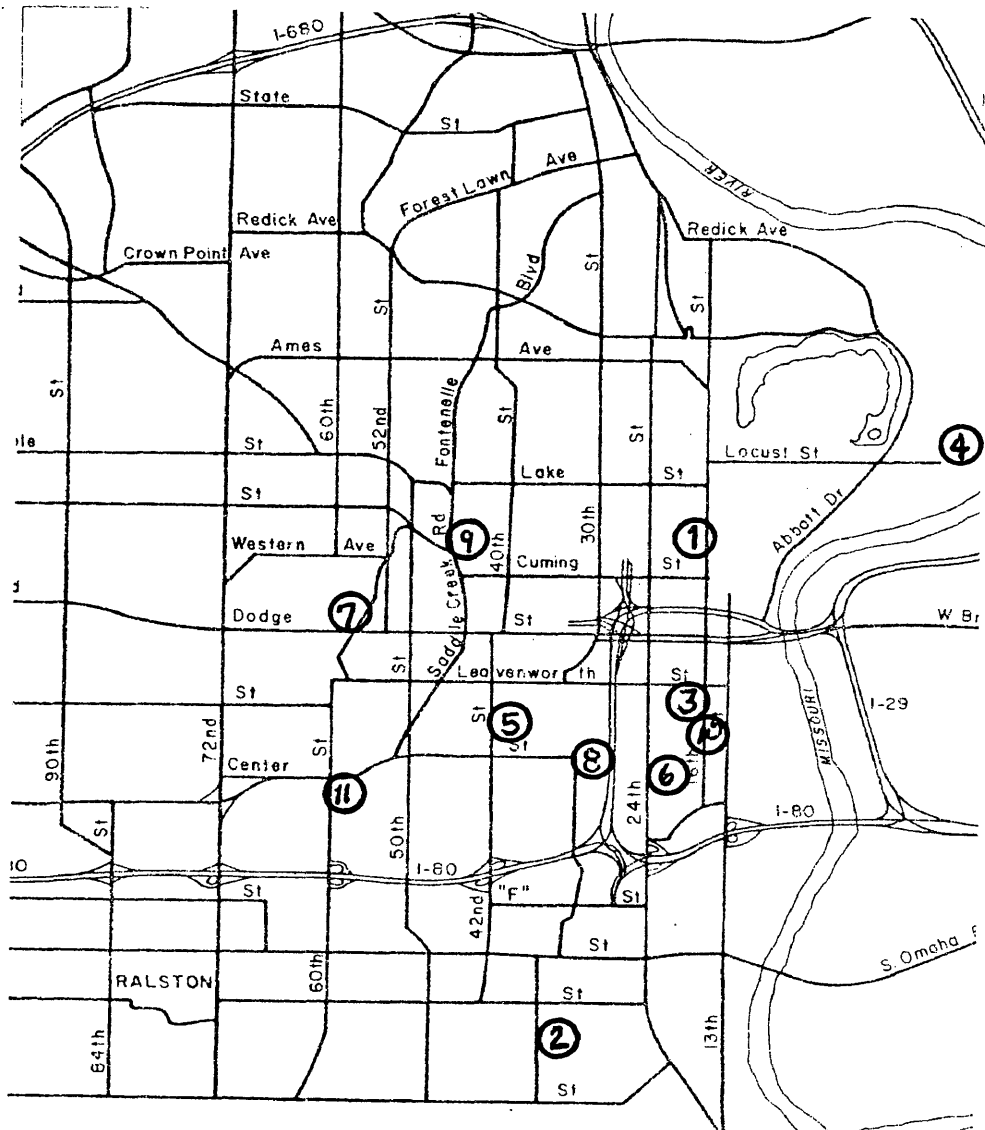
---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 13 August 1950, Section 3B.

win they moved into the final, where, after nine scoreless innings, they finally lost to the Kansas City Dons, 1-0.

As the 1950 season ended, the grumbling directed at Softball Commissioner George Vanous continued to build, a situation which led to the formation the following year of the Omaha Softball Association (O.S.A.). Under the direction of Commissioner Carl Kelley, the O.S.A. grew into one of the largest and most successful softball organizations in the A.S.A. In fact, the O.S.A. has been so successful, and received so much recognition, that many softball enthusiasts do not realize that once there was another softball era; a special era which produced some of the greatest teams, and some of the greatest softball players this city has ever known. Without the early successes and failures of the Nebraska State Softball Association, there would be no world-renowned Omaha Softball Association today.

New Softball Diamonds 1946-1950



1. Seventeenth and Charles Street
2. South Side Terrace Field, Thirty-second and "U" Street
3. Seventeenth and Leavenworth Street
4. Airport South Park, East Omaha, Twenty-eighth and Locust Street
5. Forty-first and Poppleton Street
6. Twenty-first and Dorcas Street
7. Happy Hollow Park, Dodge Street and Happy Hollow Boulevard North
8. Project Park, Thirty-third and Martha Street
9. Forty-fifth and Hamilton Street
10. Paxton Vierling Field, Sixteenth and Pierce Street
11. Sixtieth and Center Street

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE OMAHA SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

In 1951 the Nebraska State Softball Association (N.S.S.A.) finally died. Dissatisfied softball players and angry league organizers asked Frank Fochek, member of the Omaha Parks and Recreation Commission, to investigate Softball Commissioner George Vanous. Fochek, who later characterized Vanous as "a drunk, a thief, and a professional bail bondsman," made a telling discovery.<sup>1</sup> The N.S.S.A. sanctioned more than 230 teams in Omaha in 1950. Each of these teams paid a registration fee to the N.S.S.A., part of which was to go to the Amateur Softball Association (A.S.A.). Fochek wrote the national office of the A.S.A. and learned that only nine Omaha teams were registered there. Vanous, who had been unable to account for public money as the City Recreation Director in 1945, made a similar misjudgment in 1950. Fochek instructed Parks and Recreation Commissioner Ralph McKlintock to refuse the N.S.S.A. use of city parks for association softball games. This effectively killed the N.S.S.A. The A.S.A. investigated the matter and removed George Vanous as Softball Commissioner for Nebraska and Omaha.<sup>2</sup>

During the time Fochek was making his investigation, a group of softball officials and players met and formed a new organization—the Omaha Softball Association (O.S.A.). Representatives from the Protestant Church Athletic Association, the Y.M.C.A., the Catholic Youth Organization, the

---

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Frank Fochek, Omaha, Nebraska, 8 September 1981.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Jewish Community Center, and other community and service organizations met at the old Y.M.C.A. on Seventeenth and Harney Street to organize the "City-Wide Softball Commission of Omaha." The group, which was soon recognized by the A.S.A. as the Omaha Softball Association, elected Fred Shinrock, a Y.M.C.A. employee, to be first president, but he served only a few months, then resigned. Floyd Wilson was then elected president of the O.S.A., and he served until 1957.<sup>3</sup>

After the A.S.A. investigation of 1951, Nebraska was divided into two regions. The city of Omaha became a Metropolitan division of the A.S.A. structure.<sup>4</sup> The Metro tournament champion went directly to the Regional Tournament each year. The rest of the state became part of the Nebraska Softball Association. These teams no longer had to compete with Omaha teams for a Regional trip.

In 1952 the O.S.A. directed its first full season of Omaha softball. Throughout the country softball participation declined during the 1950s as newer attractions captured American's time. Omaha softball also suffered losses early in the decade, but a few years later began to make a steady climb as additional teams registered with the O.S.A. In 1957 the 201 teams in Omaha finally matched the number of teams in the city in 1950. The year 1957 was important to Omaha softball for another reason, because it was in that year that Carl Kelley became president of the Omaha Softball Association. Two years later he was appointed by the A.S.A. to be Softball Commissioner for the Omaha Metropolitan division. Kelley, who had served the old N.S.S.A. through the Protestant Church Athletic Association and the South Omaha

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Carl Kelley, Omaha, Nebraska, 20 June 1980.

<sup>4</sup> Scrapbook, 1951, Floyd Hayes Collection, 3118 South Forty-fourth Street, Omaha, Nebraska, Personal account.

recreation leagues since the 1930s, had been a strong backer of the O.S.A. during its first five years.

Under Kelley's leadership, the growth of softball continued to make a steady climb. In 1960, 243 teams joined the O.S.A., while in 1965, 624 teams registered with the association. Five years later the number increased to 876. It was during the 1970s, though, that softball participation increased remarkably in Omaha. A new kind of softball became popular now—slow pitch softball, softball for everyone. Almost anyone could pitch softball in the slow pitch game, and nearly everybody could hit it. In 1975 the O.S.A. registered 1,819 teams; by 1980 this figure reached 2,705. During the 1970s Omaha became the largest A.S.A. district in the United States. Some Omaha enthusiasts began to call their city "the softball capital of the world."

For many years Carl Kelley and his wife, Lola, ran the O.S.A. virtually by themselves. They collected entry fees, made up the schedules, assigned the fields, and delegated umpires. When softball began to expand in Omaha in the Seventies, others wanted into the act. After observers discovered that the O.S.A. banked tens of thousands of dollars each year, the political wheels began to turn. Kelley, who some O.S.A. board members challenged in 1974, was actually defeated in his bid to remain association president in 1979. Carl Kelley had served as O.S.A. president for twenty-two years. He remained Softball Commissioner for the Omaha Metropolitan division of the A.S.A. Former O.S.A. board member Mike Healey became the new president of the O.S.A.

During the 1980s, softball meant fun, recreation, and fellowship to some people; prestige and money to others. Many individuals and groups

closely watched the progress of the O.S.A. In the fall of 1981, the Omaha City Council debated the arrangement that the City of Omaha had with the O.S.A., and decided to force some changes. After some anxious moments, the O.S.A. maintained their contract for public parks with the city, but the city acquired much more control over the association's financial and decision-making powers.<sup>5</sup> Softball during the 1980s will be a time of challenge for any administrative body. With cuts in public funds, many people may find themselves without a place to play this popular sport. Playgrounds are relatively scarce and the demand for diamonds is great. Most local softball enthusiasts hope that Omaha softball will maintain its current growth and continue to be the "softball capital of the world."

---

<sup>5</sup> The Omaha World-Herald, 22 October 1981.

APPENDIX I

OMAHA SOFTBALL OFFICIALS 1934-1982

Ralph Wagner: President, Nebraska State Softball Association, 1934-1937

Harry Stevenson: Commissioner, Nebraska State Softball Association, 1934-1944

George Vanous: Commissioner, Nebraska State Softball Association, 1944-1951

Fred Shinrock: President, Omaha Softball Association, 1951

Floyd Wilson: President, Omaha Softball Association, 1952-1957

Carl Kelley: President, Omaha Softball Association, 1957-1979  
A.S.A. Commissioner, Omaha Metropolitan District, 1959-

Mike Healey: President, Omaha Softball Association, 1979-



APPENDIX II

OMAHA CITY SOFTBALL CHAMPIONS 1931-1950

Men

1931 Russell Sports  
1932 Hodge Electric  
1933 Russell Sports  
1934 Pink Elephants  
1935 Cinek's Coals  
1936 National Auto Parts  
1937 Atlas Roofing  
1938 Cudahy Puritans  
1939 Ruppert's Beer  
1940 Metz Beer  
1941 Metz Beer  
1942 Storz Beer  
1943 Storz Beer  
1944 Storz Beer  
1945 North Omaha Eagles No. 38  
1946 Metz Beer  
1947 Walt's Bar  
1948 Storz Beer  
1949 Walt's Bar  
1950 Storz Beer

Women

1931 none  
1932 none  
1933 none  
1934 U.S. Keds  
1935 Russell Sports  
1936 Metz Beer  
1937 Metz Beer  
1938 Russell Sports  
1939 Russell Sports  
1940 American Beverage  
1941 American Beverage  
1942 Jeep Bar  
1943 Jeep Bar  
1944 Jeep Bar  
1945 Barnes' Bar  
1946 Jeep Bar  
1947 Florentine's Gardens  
1948 Seven Up Bottlers  
1949 Seven Up Bottlers  
1950 Skelgas Appliances

Class B City Tournament Champions

1939 Immanuel Baptist  
1940 Our Redeemer Lutheran  
1941 Assumption  
1942 Fort Omaha Eagles  
1943 Martin Flyers  
1944 Kiwanis Club  
1945 St. John's  
1946 St. Luke's No. 1  
1947 Offutt Field  
1948 Companion Company  
1949 Covenant Presbyterian  
1950 none

APPENDIX III

NEBRASKA STATE SOFTBALL CHAMPIONS 1931-1950

Men

1931 none  
 1932 Maser's Grocery-Lincoln  
 1933 Maser's Grocery-Lincoln  
 1934 Banker's Life-Lincoln  
 1935 Cinok's Coal-Omaha  
 1936 Cudahy Puritans-Omaha  
 1937 Falstaff Beer-Lincoln  
 1938 Falstaff Beer-Omaha  
 1939 Doss Cafe-Omaha  
 1940 Dr. Pepper-Lincoln  
 1941 Metz Beer-Omaha  
 1942 Metz Beer-Omaha  
 1943 Metz Beer-Omaha  
 1944 Storz Beer-Omaha  
 1945 Buck's Bar-Omaha  
 1946 Buck's Bar-Omaha  
 1947 Walt's Bar-Omaha  
 1948 Storz Beer-Omaha  
 1949 Walt's Bar-Omaha  
 1950 Whistle Bottlers-Lincoln

Women

1931 none  
 1932 none  
 1933 none  
 1934 none  
 1935 Bluebirds-Syracuse  
 1936 Bluebirds-Syracuse  
 1937 Bluebirds-Syracuse  
 1938 Russell Sports-Omaha  
 1939 Russell Sports-Omaha  
 1940 American Beverage-Omaha  
 1941 American Beverage-Omaha  
 1942 Blackbirds-Lincoln  
 1943 Jeep Bar-Omaha  
 1944 Jeep Bar-Omaha  
 1945 Barnes' Bar-Omaha  
 1946 Jeep Bar-Omaha  
 1947 Florentine Gardens-Omaha  
 1948 Seven Up-Omaha  
 1949 Seven Up-Omaha  
 1950 Skelgas Appliances-Omaha

MID-CENTRAL (WESTERN) REGIONAL CHAMPIONS 1942-1950

Men

1942\* Goetz Athletic Club-St. Joseph  
 1943 Martin Bombers-Omaha  
 1944 Martin Bombers-Omaha  
 1945 Buck's Bar-Omaha  
 1946 Knights of Columbus-Springfield  
 1947 Commerce Loan-St. Joseph  
 1948 White Front Caseys-Springfield  
 1949 Smacks' Candy-St. Joseph  
 1950 Union Wire and Rope-Kansas City,  
 Missouri

Women

1942 Martin-Chelsey-Topeka  
 1943 Martin-Chelsey-Topeka  
 1944 Jeep Bar-Omaha  
 1945 Martin-Chelsey-Topeka  
 1946 DX Oilers-Topeka  
 1947 Walker-Shay Realty-Des Moines  
 1948 Walker-Shay Realty-Des Moines  
 1949 Goetz Athletic Club-St. Joseph  
 1950 Dons-Kansas City, Missouri

\*The Nebraska champions, Metz Beer of Omaha, were not required to compete in the 1942 Regional, but instead went directly to the National Tournament

APPENDIX IV

NATIONAL SOFTBALL CHAMPIONS 1931-1950

Men

1931 Stephen's Buick-Minneapolis\*  
 1932 Wemcoes-Lake Mills, Wis.\*  
 1933 J.J. Gills-Chicago  
 1934 Ke-Nash-A's-Kenosha, Wis.  
 1935 Crimson Coaches-Toledo, Ohio  
 1936 Kodak Park-Rochester, N.Y.  
 1937 Briggs' Mfg. Co.-Detroit  
 1938 Pohler's-Cincinnati  
 1939 Carr's-Covington, Ky.  
 1940 Kodak Park, Rochester, N.Y.  
 1941 Bendix Brakes-South Bend, Ind.  
 1942 Deep Rock Oilers-Tulsa, Okla.  
 1943 Hammer Field-Fresno, California  
 1944 Hammer Field-Fresno, California  
 1945 Zollner's Pistons-Ft. Worth, Tx.  
 1946 Zollner's Pistons-Ft. Worth, Tx.  
 1947 Zollner's Pistons-Ft. Worth, Tx.  
 1948 Brigg's Beautyware-Detroit  
 1949 Tip Top Clothiers-Toronto, Ont.  
 1950 Bombers-Clearwater, Florida

Women

1931 none  
 1932 none  
 1933 Great Northerns-Chicago  
 1934 Hart Motors-Chicago  
 1935 Bloomer Girls-Cleveland  
 1936 National Mfg. Co.-Cleveland  
 1937 National Mfg. Co.-Cleveland  
 1938 J.J. Krieg's-Alameda, California  
 1939 J.J. Krieg's-Alameda, California  
 1940 Ramblers-Phoenix, Arizona  
 1941 Higgin's Midgets-Tulsa, Oklahoma  
 1942 Jax Maids-New Orleans  
 1943 Jax Maids-New Orleans  
 1944 Lind and Pomeroy-Portland, Oregon  
 1945 Jax Maids-New Orleans  
 1946 Jax Maids-New Orleans  
 1947 Jax Maids-New Orleans  
 1948 Ramblers-Phoenix, Arizona  
 1949 Ramblers-Phoenix, Arizona  
 1950 Lionettes-Orange, California

\* National Diamond Ball Champions

APPENDIX V

OMAHA'S LEAGUES AND TEAMS 1930-1950

Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1930

Omaha Indoor Baseball League

Bemis Park Merchants  
C.B.&Q. Aristocrats  
Eagles No. 38  
Gehrman Penn Mutuals  
Kountze Park Merchants  
Marchio Tams Contractors  
Russell Sports  
Van Avery Sports

City Indoor Baseball League

Arbor Athletic Club  
A.Z.A. No. 1  
Garlow's Bowling  
Manganaro Pharmacy or  
Sixth Street Boosters  
Nicholas Athletic Club  
Twenty-fourth Street Boosters  
Union Pacific Athletic Club  
Western Electric

Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1931Omaha Indoor Baseball League

Russell Sports  
 Twenty-fourth Street Boosters  
 Haskins Soap  
 Hodge Electric  
 Union Pacific Athletic Club  
 South Omaha Merchants  
 Independent Print  
 Van Avery Sports

National Diamond Ball League

Dave's Clothes Shop  
 Metropolitan Billiards  
 Central Park Athletic Club  
 Stroud Machinery  
 Northwestern Bell  
 U.S. Rubber Company  
 West Ames Merchants  
 J.B. Coffee Shop

Gate City Indoor Baseball League

Rudy Anthony Market  
 Thallas Hatters  
 Knowles Van and Storage  
 Ambassador Cafe  
 Goldenbergs  
 A.Z.A. No. 1  
 White Eagle Oil  
 Sanitary Towels

Union Pacific Monday Night League

Freight Accounts No. 1  
 Miscellaneous Accounts  
 Purchase and Stores  
 Freight Accounts No. 2  
 Auditors Officer  
 Motor Power and M'v  
 Store Department  
 Division Superintendent and D.C. and H.

Union Pacific Friday Night League

U.P. Shops  
 Passenger Accounts  
 General Freight  
 Local Freight  
 Auditor Disbursements  
 Pacific Fruit Express  
 General Passenger  
 Traffic Department

North Side Church League

Wheeler Memorial  
 Central Parks Congregational  
 North Side Christian  
 North Presbyterians  
 Immanuel Lutheran  
 Olivet Baptist  
 Calvary Baptist  
 First Methodist

OTHER OMAHA LEAGUES

Grain Exchange League  
 Fontenelle League

Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1932Omaha Diamond Ball League

Hodge Electric (1)  
 Russell Sports (2)  
 Bee Hive Cleaners  
 World's Billiards  
 Sixteenth Street  
 Merchants  
 Thallas Matters  
 Van Avery Sports  
 Italian-American  
 Civic League

National Diamond Ball League

North Twenty-fourth  
 Street Merchants  
 or Bacchanites (1)  
 Central Park Merchants  
 Miller-Knuth  
 Ford Brothers  
 M&M's  
 J.B.'s  
 Mellow Cups  
 Ted's Pen Shop

Gate City Diamond Ball League

Knowles Van and Storage  
 Rudy Anthony Market  
 A.Z.A.  
 Thallas Matters  
 Sanitary Towels  
 Ambassador Cafe  
 White Eagle Oil  
 Goldenberg

Protestant Church Diamond Ball League

Olivet Baptist  
 Central Park/  
 Congregational  
 Calvary Lutheran  
 North Presbyterian  
 Clifton Hills

Protestant Church League (continued)

Northside Christian  
 Kountze Memorial  
 Calvary Baptist  
 First English Lutheran  
 Immanuel Lutheran

Omaha Bankers Diamond Ball League

Omaha National Bank  
 First National Bank  
 U.S. National Bank  
 Stockyards National Bank  
 Council Bluffs Savings Bank  
 Federal Reserve Bank  
 Occidental Building and Loan  
 Conservative Saving and Loan

Western Union Diamond Ball League

Plant Department  
 Messengers  
 General Managers  
 Traffic

Jewish Community Center Diamond Ball League

A.Z.A. No. 1  
 A.Z.A. No. 100  
 Psi Mu  
 Thorpien Athletic Club  
 Charles Street Market  
 Pants Store

Sinclair Refining Diamond Ball League

Omaha Branch  
 Council Bluffs Branch  
 Service Stations

Holy Name Kittenball League

Iversons  
 Moores  
 Schucharts  
 Mulcahys  
 O'Briens  
 Donitz

Colored Diamond Ball League

Bacchanites  
 Cultural Center Red Sox

OTHER OMAHA LEAGUES

Union Pacific Kittenball League

Junior Chamber of  
 Commerce Diamond Ball League

Grain Exchange Diamond Ball League

YOUTH LEAGUES

Southwestern Playground Ball League

Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1933Omaha Diamond Ball League

Russell Sports (1)  
 Bonner Coal  
 Mid-City  
 Pulaski's  
 Thallas Matters  
 Van Avery Sports

All-City Diamond Ball League

South Omaha Merchants (1)  
 Crestwood Shops  
 Donkins  
 Doss Cafe  
 Forty-ninth and Dodge Street  
 Merchants or Buy-Rites  
 Thirty-third Street Merchants

American Diamond Ball League

A.Z.A. No. 1  
 Mello Cups  
 Gross-Coleman  
 Psi Mu  
 Question Club  
 Ragmuffins  
 Sample Furs  
 Tuxedos

Protestant Church Diamond Ball League

Ames Avenue Methodist  
 Clifton Hill Presbyterian  
 First Covenant Presbyterian  
 First English Lutheran  
 Hanscom Park Methodist  
 Kountze Memorial Lutheran  
 North Presbyterian  
 North Side Christian  
 Olivet Baptist  
 Pearl Methodist

American Lutheran Conference  
 Kittenball League

Benson Immanuel Lutheran  
 Cass Street Immanuel Lutheran  
 Cross Lutheran  
 Council Bluffs Immanuel Lutheran  
 First Lutheran  
 Our Savior Lutheran  
 Pella Lutheran  
 Salem Lutheran  
 Trinity Lutheran  
 Zion Lutheran

Omaha Banks Kittenball League

Federal Reserve Bank  
 First National Bank  
 Livestock National Bank  
 Stockyards National Bank

People's Forum Kittenball League

Brown Park Pharmacy  
 Cinek's Coal  
 Frank's Jewelry  
 Hoaglands  
 Ouradas  
 Pipals

YOUTH LEAGUES

Southwestern Playground Ball League

Omaha's Independent Teams: 1933

All-Nations	Nazarene Church
All-Stars	North Omaha Boosters
Arbor Athletics	North Twenty-fourth Street Boosters
Bee-News Bluejays	North Twenty-fourth Street Crooners
Bellevue Aces	NDA
Benson Barber Poles	Omaha Welders
Benson West	Pastry Shop
Binney Street Community Team	Paxton-Gallaghers
Breeze All-Stars	Rinky Dinks
Brownie	Salernos
Buck's	Sam Mazzio's All-Stars
Cargill	Sammy's
Casino Cafe	Sarcastics
Castelar Cubs	Sheely's
Cooper White Sox	Shnovies
Creamery Package	Shragoes
Cuming Street Merchants	Silver Slippers
Drake Court	Sinclair Service
Easy Parking	South Omaha Boosters
Frank Theiler's Popeyes	South Omaha Dilers
Franklin Street Brewers	Spearman's
Gifford Park Kittenballers	Special Delivery
Grace Baptist	Standard Blue Prints
Greco	Storz Brewery
Grocery-Gas	Swift's Jewells
Hinky Dinky	Swift Zigarows
Hodge Electric	Train School
Ike Payne's All-Stars	Truck Drivers
Jamieson's Angelos	Tully's
Konkites	Tommy's Service
Kountze Parks	Twentieth Street Cut Throats
Kozols	Twentieth Street Merchants
Laushman Sluggers	Twentieth Street Ramblers
Little Barons	Twentieth Street Sluggers
Little Giants	Twentieth Street Wops
Loose Wiles	U.P. Kittenballers
Louis' Rats	Universals
Manganoros Sluggers	Walnut Hill Vagabonds
Mazzie All-Stars	West Lawn
McKinley Park Boosters	White Castle Hamburger
Mellow Cups	Wimpy's
Millio Milittis	Wolfe's Grocery
Modern Rodeo Junior Cubs	Woodson Center
Modern Woodmen of America	Yankite Ramblers
Mother's Best Friend	Young Americans
Morningside Kittenball Team	Youngman Orial
	Zones



Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1934Greater Omaha League

Bonner Coal Company (1)  
Arts  
Haskin Brothers Soap  
Paxton Billiards  
Little Bohemia  
M&M Barbeque  
Lawlor Sports  
Russell Sports

American League

Pink Elephants (1)  
Atlas Beer  
Vagabonds  
Twenty-fourth and  
Leavenworth Street  
Merchants  
Casino Cafe  
Club Delmar  
Whimpys  
Loyal Club

United Beer League

Red Front Edelweiss (1)  
Rondevous Luxus (1)  
Potach Budweisers  
S&S  
Lou's Triumphs  
Hiatt's Atlas

Metro League

Independent Merchants (1)  
Mutual Benefit  
Omaha Ice  
Doss Cafe  
Bud Husker Inn  
Tel Jed Sokols  
Hodge Electric  
Omaha Welding Company

National League

Holmes Recreation (1)  
Live Wire Cleaners  
Junior Chamber of Commerce  
Miller Cereal Mills  
Rosenblatt Grocery  
Grant Storage Battery  
Engdahl Tap and Body  
Demolay

Industrial League

Union Pacific Shops (1)  
Orchard-Wilhelm  
Western Electric  
Federal Land Bank  
Nebraska Power Company  
Puritan Laundry  
Firestone Service  
Post Office

Holy Name Gate City League

Doss Cafe (1)  
Gentleman Mortuary  
Higgins Cleaners  
Bud Husker Inn  
Conkley Overalls  
Empire Buffett

Holy Name Aksarben League

J&P Cigar (1)  
Bonner Coal Company  
Haskin Soap  
Hinchey Laundry  
Russell Sports  
Arts

Holy Name Girl's League

U.S. Keds (1)  
Holy Name Athletic Club  
Holy Name High School  
Bellevue  
Harkert  
Kinhead

Holy Name Athletic Club League

Munch (1)  
Schotts  
Habers  
Moriaritys  
Dunnes

Y.M.C.A. Church League  
Ahamo League

First Covenant (1)  
North Presbyterian  
Latter Day Saints  
Hanscom Methodist  
First Christian  
Omaha Gospel Tabernacle  
North Side Christian

Y.M.C.A. Church League  
Federal League

Clifton Hill  
Presbyterian (1)  
Pearl Methodist  
First Christian  
First Central  
Congregational  
Kountze Memorial  
Lutheran  
Trinity Baptist

South Omaha Softball League

Sokol Athletic Club (1)  
South Omaha Catholic  
Sokols  
Fifty-sixth Street  
Merchants  
Social Settlement  
Morton Park No. 1  
Woodson Center  
Saints Peter and Paul  
Morton Park No. 2

Omaha Bank League

Omaha National Bank (1)  
 First National Bank  
 Federal Land Bank  
 U.S. National Bank  
 Live Stock National Bank  
 Federal Reserve Bank

Benson Softball League

Berry Clothes (1)  
 Cornhusker Buffet  
 Morningside Improvement  
 Club  
 Bargain Center  
 J.L. Carbalays  
 P.A. Clark Auto Supply

Union Pacific Athletic  
Club League

Union Pacific Traffics  
 (1)  
 Car Records  
 Executive Vice Presidents  
 A.F.A.&L.G.  
 Purchasing Department  
 Interstate Transfers

Jewish Community Center  
League

Sample Furs (1)  
 Selner Furniture  
 Psi Mu Fraternity  
 A.Z.A. No. 1  
 Wardrobe Cleaners  
 Pearless Cleaners

Swift Company League

Corn States Serum (1)  
 Premiums  
 Jewells  
 Silver Leaf  
 Brookfield  
 Sunbritte

Cudahy Company League

Solvenes (1)  
 Clix  
 Gold Coin  
 Rex  
 Meadow Grove  
 Puritans  
 Pioneers  
 Old Dutch Cleaner

Omaha Walther League

Zion Lutheran (1)  
 Cross Lutheran  
 First Lutheran  
 Friday Evening Club  
 St. Paul Lutheran  
 Trinity Lutheran

Baker Ice Machine Company  
League

Ammonias (1)  
 Freons  
 Methylys  
 Sulphurs

Mid City Senior League

Mid City Seniors (1)  
 Sluggers  
 Cruisers  
 Merchants  
 Cornhuskers  
 Aces

YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUES

Mid-City Junior League  
 Mid-City Midget League  
 Knights of Columbus  
 Parochial School  
 Softball  
 Association - 4  
 leagues

Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1935Greater Omaha League

Pink Elephants (1)  
Doss Cafe  
Showboat  
Russell Sports  
Paxton Billiards  
Art Blissards

American League

Cinek Coal (1)  
Braden Stars  
Robin Hood Stags  
All-State Tires  
National Auto Parts  
Club Delmar  
Automatic Sprinklers  
Shamrock Cafe

Bee-News Girls' League

Russell Sports (1)  
Walker Inn  
American College  
Safeway Cab  
Harkerts  
Cowboy Dawsons  
People's Forum Club  
All Makes Radio Service

Metropolitan League

Omaha Welders (1)  
Federal Land Bank  
Liggett Drug  
Hoffmann Mortuary  
South Omaha Merchants  
U.S. Engineers  
West's All-Stars  
Heafey and Heafey

Industrial League

Cudahys (1)  
Omaha National Bank  
Swifts  
Omar Bakery  
Corn States Serum  
Orchard and Wilhelm  
Western Electric  
29 Club

National League

Albright Mechanics (1)  
Sample Furs  
Kitty Clover  
Vinton Merchants  
Hulac Chevrolet  
Mary Jane Potato Chips  
Peerless Cleaners  
Miller Cereal

Commercial League

Paxton-Gallagher (1)  
Nebraska Consolidated Mills  
Omaha Flour Mills  
Bemis Bag Company  
Sunkist Flour  
Carpenter Paper

Junior Chamber of Commerce League

Livestock National Bank (1)  
Harry A. Koch  
U.S. National Bank  
Public Improvements  
First National Bank  
Farm Credit Administration  
Service Life Insurance  
Grain Dealers Mutual

Union Pacific League

Traffic (1)  
Interstate Transit  
Freight Auditors  
Purchasing  
Vice Presidents  
Nebraska Division

Benson League

Benson Buffet (1)  
Cornwall Cafe  
Barrett Printing  
Omaha Country Club  
Caddies  
Cornhusker Buffet  
P.A. Clark

"Y" Church League No. 1

South United Presby-  
terian (1)  
Latter Day Saints  
Kountze Memorial  
First Christian Blue  
North Side Christian  
Clifton Hill  
Presbyterian  
North Side Presbyterian  
Hanscom Park Methodist

"Y" Church League No. 2

First Covenant (1)  
Gospel Tabernacle  
First Christian Red  
Immanuel Baptist  
Pearl Methodist  
St. Paul Methodist

"Y" Church League No. 3

Salem Lutheran  
Benson Immanuel  
Bethel Lutheran  
Deaconess Immanuel

"Y" Church League No. 3  
(continued)

Pella Lutheran  
Cass Street Immanuel  
Our Savior Lutheran  
Zion Lutheran  
Trinity Lutheran

Walther League

First Lutheran (1)  
Zion Lutheran  
St. Paul Lutheran  
Florence Lutheran  
Mount Calvary Lutheran  
Cross Lutheran

Holy Name League

Talbot (1)  
Scott  
O'Leary  
Munch  
Shannon  
Boatman

Aksarben League

A.Z.A. No. 1 (1)  
Xi Lambda  
Watson Brothers Transfer  
Rosenblatt Grocery  
Mixing Bowl  
Alpine Goat Dairy

Armour League

Wholesalers (1)  
Clover Bloom  
Stars  
Survey  
Boosters  
Trucking

Hinky Dinky League

Quality Meats (1)  
Headquarters  
Fresh Fruits  
Del Monte  
Tastee Crackers  
Warehouse

Safeway League

Safeway No. 526 (1)  
Safeway No. 529  
Piggly Wiggly No. 19  
Truck Drivers (Western  
States)

Urban Softball League

Derbys (1)  
Globe Trotters  
Beau Brummells  
Three Keys  
Chats  
K's  
Lake Merchants  
Christ Child Center

Sanders League

Doss Cafe (1)  
Russell Sports  
Cinek Coal  
Paxton Billiards  
Pink Elephants  
Blissards  
Automatic Sprinklers  
National Auto Parts

YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUES

Omaha Boys' Athletic  
Association League

Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1936Greater Omaha League

National Auto Parts (1)  
 Russell Sports  
 Pink Elephant-Falstaff  
 Doss Cafe  
 Holmes Recreation  
 Miller Knuth (Markel Cleaners)

American League

Cudahy Packers (1)  
 Cinek Coal  
 Automatic Sprinklers  
 Safeway Stores  
 Omaha Welding  
 Miller Cereals

Girls League

Metz Beer (1)  
 Russell Sports  
 Malashock Jewelry  
 Kitty Clover

Metropolitan League

U.S. Engineers (1)  
 Reds-Robin Hoods  
 Leslie O. Moore Mortuary  
 Mason Ramblers  
 East Omaha Merchants  
 Silver Bar

National League

Smith-Robinson Motors (1)  
 H.O.L.C.  
 W.P.A. No. 475  
 Saddle Creek Market  
 Western Electric  
 Royal Arcanum Insurance

Benson League

Benson Buffet (1)  
 Sprague Pills  
 Leslie Berry  
 Cornwell Cafe  
 Omaha Country Club Caddies  
 P.A. Clark

Junior Chamber of Commerce League

Alpha Camp (1)  
 Grain Dealers Insurance  
 First National Bank  
 U.S. National Bank  
 Livestock National Bank  
 Omaha National Bank  
 Crop and Seed Loan  
 Corn States Serum Company

Jewish Community Center League

Omaha Potato Market (1)  
 Tower Cigar Store  
 Omaha Jobbing  
 Sample Fur  
 A.Z.A. No. 1  
 Psi Mu

Y.M.C.A. Protestant Church League No. 1

First Christian Blues (1)  
 Brown Park Mission  
 Trinity Methodist  
 Hanscom Park Methodist  
 Augustana Lutheran  
 First Baptist

Y.M.C.A. Protestant Church League No. 2

First Christian Reds (1)  
 Latter Day Saints  
 Kountze Memorial  
 St. Paul  
 Omaha Gospel Tabernacle  
 Clifton Hill Presbyterian

Walther League

Zion Lutheran (1)  
 First Lutheran  
 Mount Calvary Lutheran  
 Cross Lutheran  
 St. Paul Lutheran  
 Florence Lutheran

Farm Credit Administration League

Emergency Crop and Feed Loan (1)  
 Federal Intermediate Credit Bank  
 Accounting  
 Secretaries  
 Collection  
 General Agents

Hinky Dinky League

Quality Meats  
 Del Monte  
 So Tasty Crackers  
 Headquarters

Swift League

Jewels  
 Vigiro  
 Brookfield  
 Premiums

Holy Name Athletic Club League

Bedford Avenue Pharmacy (1)  
 Thirtieth Street Merchants  
 Corey-McKenzie  
 Uncle Sam Breakfast Food

Urban Senior League (W.P.A. League)

Rabes Buffet  
 Derby  
 Tuxedo  
 C.R. Coles  
 Omaha Jobbing All-Stars  
 Miller's All-Stars

YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUES

Urban Junior League  
 Urban Grade School League  
 Y.M.C.A. Junior Protestant Church League  
 Omaha Boys' Athletic Association League

Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1937Greater Omaha League

Cudahy Packers (1)  
 Falstaff Brewing (2)  
 Atlas Roofing  
 Sandy's Tavern  
 Omaha Welding  
 Robin Hood Brewing

American League

Markel Cleaners (1)  
 Ritz Night Club (2)  
 Broken Rail Inn  
 United States Engineers  
 Novak's Market  
 Russell Sports

Girls' League

Metz Beer (1)  
 Russell Sports (2)  
 Malashock Jewelers  
 Pink Elephants

Metropolitan League

Barish-Sanders (1)  
 Seymour Camp (2)  
 Toney's Famous Tavern  
 Royal Arcanum  
 Farm Credit Administration  
 Hodge Electric  
 Mayper's Clothing  
 Twenty-fourth and Farnam  
 Street Merchants

Industrial League

Union Pacific (1)  
 Falstaff (2)  
 Bemis Bag  
 Thomas Kilpatrick Co.  
 Western Electric  
 Omar Flour Mills  
 Beebee and Runyon  
 Furniture

Benson League

Benson Buffet (1)  
 Benson Ice (2)  
 Omaha Country Club Caddies  
 Cornwell Cafe  
 Louie's Market  
 Berry's Clothing

Union Pacific League

Freight Accounts No. 1 (1)  
 Interstate (2)  
 Omaha Shops  
 Traffic Department  
 Research and Engineering  
 Freight Accounts No. 2

Junior Chamber of Commerce League

Alpha Camp (1)  
 Nebraska Power (2)  
 First National Bank  
 U.S. National Bank  
 Livestock National Bank  
 Omaha National Bank

Metropolitan Utilities District League

Service Building (1)  
 Office Building (2)  
 Meter Readers  
 Gas Plant  
 Accounting Department  
 Free Maintenance

Protestant Church Athletic Association Softball League

Ames Avenue Methodist (1)  
 First Christian Blues (2)  
 Brown Park Mission  
 First Christian Reds  
 First Baptist  
 Omaha Gospel Tabernacle  
 North Side Christian

Walther League

First Lutheran (1)  
 Mount Calvary  
 Lutheran (2)  
 Cross Lutheran  
 Zion Lutheran  
 St. Paul Lutheran  
 Trinity Lutheran

Farm Credit Administration League

Collections (1)  
 Federal Intermediate  
 Credit Bank (2)  
 Emergency Crop and  
 Feed Loan  
 Federal Land Bank  
 Secretaries  
 Department

Holy Name Athletic Club League

Men's Club (1)  
 Bedford Ave. Pharmacy (2)  
 Clifton Hill Merchants  
 U.S. Engineers  
 Corey-McKenzie  
 Vagabonds

United Food Stores League

Spices (1)  
 Gelatin Dessert (2)  
 Beverages  
 Coffee  
 Preserves  
 Dressing

Catholic Workman League

St. Joseph (1)  
 St. Adelbert (2)  
 St. Procopius

Catholic Workman League  
(continued)

St. Wenceslaus  
St. Lucus  
St. Ivan

YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUES

Urban High School League  
Sea Scout League  
Jewish Community Center Junior Softball League



Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1938Greater Omaha League

Cudahy Packers (1)  
 Falstaff (2)  
 Robin Hood  
 Omaha Jobbing  
 Dr. Pepper  
 Seymour Camp No. 16 W.O.W.

American League

Doss Cafe (1)  
 Alpha Camp W.O.W.  
 Ritz Night Club  
 Daves Clothes Shop  
 Van Avery Sports  
 Metro Package Delivery

Girls' League

Russell Sports  
 Metz Beer  
 Malashocks  
 California Beauty Shop

Benson League

Louie's Market (1)  
 Benson Buffet (2)  
 Benson Ice  
 Omaha Country Club  
 Sprague Drug  
 Berry Clothes

Catholic Workman League

St. Joseph  
 St. Wenceslaus  
 St. Procopius  
 St. Adalbert  
 St. Ivan  
 St. Valiev

Y.M.C.A. Commercial League

Alamito Dairy (1)  
 Orchard-Wilhelm (2)  
 Hinky Dinky  
 Murphy-Did-Its  
 Opitz Motors  
 United Motors  
 Wright-Wilhelmy  
 Carl Anderson

Farm Credit Administration League

Presidents (1)  
 Legal (2)  
 Collections  
 Crop and Feed Loans

Holy Name League

Hodge Electric (1)  
 St. Joseph Giants (2)  
 Laux Steak  
 Clifton Hill Merchants

Industrial League

Falstaff (1)  
 Roberts Dairy (1)  
 Bemis Bags  
 Beebe-Runyan  
 Northern Natural Gas Co.  
 Nebraska Power  
 National Park Service  
 Omar Flour

Jewish Community Center League

Milder Oil (1)  
 A.Z.A. No. 100 (2)  
 Sigma Alpha Mu Alumni  
 Alpha Pi Tau  
 A.Z.A. No. 1  
 Adler's Delicatessen

Junior Chamber of Commerce League

Nebraska Clothing (1)  
 Federal Land Bank (2)  
 Interstate Transit  
 First National Bank  
 Omaha National Bank  
 U.S. National Bank  
 Watson Brothers  
 Fairmont Creamery

Metropolitan League

Royal Arcanum (1)  
 Ike's Tavern (2)  
 Rinky Dinks  
 Century Distillers  
 Clifton Hill Stars  
 West "Q" Merchants

Metropolitan Utilities District League

Service (1)  
 Meter Readers  
 Maintenance  
 Accounting

Morton Park Recreation League

Morton Park Juniors  
 St. Stanislaus  
 Sts. Peter and Paul

National League

Omaha Potato Market (1)  
 Hickory Inn  
 Skinner Manufacturers  
 Brandeis Food  
 Brandeis Store  
 Save-U-Markets

North Twenty-fourth  
Street Recreation League

Woodson Center (1)  
H.S.S. (2)  
K Club  
Dennenberg Merchants

Pulaski Men's Club League

Village Bar (1)  
Roncha Brothers Printing  
Ye Pastry Shop  
Terry's Dentist

Union Pacific League

Freight Accountants (1)  
Presidents (2)  
Miscellaneous Accounts  
Traffic

Walther League

Florence Lutheran (1)  
St. Paul Lutheran  
First Lutheran  
Mount Calvary Lutheran  
Cross Lutheran  
Zion Lutheran

Y.M.C.A. Protestant Church  
League

Ames Avenue Methodist (1)  
Augustana Lutheran (2)  
First Christian Blues  
Covenant Presbyterian  
Olivet Baptist  
South Side Christian  
Gospel Tabernacle  
North Side Christian  
Bethel Lutheran  
Church of the Bretheren  
Lowe Avenue Presbyterian  
Immanuel Baptist  
First Baptist  
Salem Lutheran  
First English Lutheran  
First Covenant  
First Christian Reds  
Florence Presbyterian

Italian Independent League

Rinky Dinks (1)  
Peggy's All-Stars (2)  
Modern Italian-American  
Hickory Inn  
Trentinos  
Italian Gardens

North Twenty-fourth  
Street Recreational  
League: Seniors

H&M Buffet  
Married Men  
C.R. Coals  
Porters

Independents

Brodkey Jewelers  
World-Herald  
World-Herald Editorial  
World-Herald Mailing  
Room  
World-Herald Night  
Side Printers  
World-Herald Day  
Side Printers  
World-Herald Composing  
Room  
Hickory Inn  
Italian Gardens  
Rinky Dinks  
Tyndall All-Stars  
Modern Italian-Americans  
Save-U-Markets

YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUES

Brown Park Recreational Boys Softball League  
Brown Park Recreational Girls Softball League  
Junior Optimist League  
North Twenty-fourth Street Recreation League  
North Twenty-fourth Street Recreation Girls League  
North Twenty-fourth Street Recreation Grade School League  
Sea Scouts League  
Boys Senior Recreational Softball League  
Girls Senior Recreational Softball League  
Y.M.C.A. Junior Church League

Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1939Greater Omaha League

Ruppert's Beer (1)  
Doss Cafe (2)  
Andy's Ark  
Omaha Jobbing  
Falstaff Beer  
Dr. Pepper

American League

Metz Beer (1)  
Brown Park Merchants (2)  
Italian Gardens  
McKee Construction  
Van Avery Sports  
Rinky Dink Tavern  
South Omaha Bowling  
Royal Arcanum

Girls' League

Russell Sports (1)  
Malashocks (2)  
California Beauty Shop  
South Omaha Bowling

Benson League

Corner Bar (1)  
Louie's Market (2)  
Monkey Mountain Bar  
Omaha Country Club Caddies  
Haynes Bar  
Omaha Potato Market  
Sloppy Joes

Catholic Workman League

St. Procopius (1)  
St. Joseph No. 1 (2)  
St. Albert  
St. Joseph No. 2

Central Church League

Augustana Lutheran (1)  
First Covenant (2)  
First Christian  
First Baptist  
City Mission  
Kountze Memorial

North Church League

Ames Avenue Methodist (1)  
Florence Presbyterian (2)  
Miller Park Presbyterian  
Central Park Congregational  
North Side Christian  
Our Redeemer Lutheran

South Church League

Gospel Tabernacle (1)  
Park Forrest Presbyterian (2)  
Salem Lutheran  
South Side Christian  
Grace Baptist  
St. Luke Lutheran

West Church League

Yeomen Coventry (1)  
Immanuel Baptist (2)  
Pella Lutheran  
Covenant Presbyterian  
North Presbyterian  
First English Lutheran

Commercial League

Wilson Packing Company (1)  
Kimball Laundry (2)  
Nebraska Power Station  
Murphy-Did-Its  
Letter Carriers  
International Harvester

Cudahy League

Puritan  
Solvene  
Gold Coin  
Rex  
Ever Ready  
Clix

Farm Credit Administration League

Legal (1)  
Presidents (2)  
Accounting  
E.C. and F.L.

Florence Community League

Rogers Grocery (1)  
Fort Omaha (2)  
White Spots  
Orioles  
Bellevue N.Y.A.  
United Marketeers

Independent League

Harry Trustins (1)  
Tropic Tavern  
Robinsons  
Ritz Tavern

Industrial League

Falstaff (1)  
Nebraska Power (2)  
Northern Natural Gas  
Roberts Dairy  
Beebe-Runyan  
Omar Flour  
Alamito Dairy  
Storz

Jewish Community Center  
League

Brewlow Auto Parts (1)  
Leavenworth Merchants (2)  
S.A.M.  
A.Z.A. No. 1  
A.Z.A. No. 100  
B'nai B'rith

Jr. Chamber of Commerce  
League

Nebraska Clothing (1)  
Interstate (2)  
Fairmont  
First National Bank  
W.O.W. 16  
Provident Loan

Metro League

Golden Spike Beer (1)  
Hickory Inn (2)  
Clifton Hill  
Higgins Cleaners  
Harding Creamery  
Gorats  
Blue Bell  
Little Bohemia

National League

U.S. Supply (1)  
Bon Ton Tavern (2)  
Brandeis  
Social Settlement  
P.W.A.  
Lincoln Market

Union Pacific League

Freight Accounts (1)  
Passenger Accounts (2)  
Disbursement  
Motive Power  
U.P. Stores  
Freight Traffic

Union Stockyards League

Construction  
Office  
Cowboys  
Chutes

United Foods League

United Foods No. 1 (1)  
United Foods No. 2 (2)  
Shurfine Coffee  
Shurfine Beverages  
Shurfine Dressing  
Shurfine Butter  
Preserves  
Spices

Urban High School  
League

H.S.S. (1)  
Four C's (2)  
Woodson Center  
Stars

Walther League

Cross Lutheran (1)  
Trinity Lutheran (2)  
First Lutheran  
Bethany Lutheran

YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUES

Junior Church League  
Dundee Kiwanis Senior League  
Dundee Kiwanis Junior League  
Junior Optimist League  
Midget Optimist League  
North Recreation League  
South Recreation League No. 1  
South Recreation League No. 2  
Urban Girls' League  
Urban Junior League  
Urban Midget League

Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1940Greater Omaha League

Doss Cafe (1)  
 Wilson Packers (2)  
 Metz Beer  
 Falstaff Beer  
 Blue Ribbon Beer  
 Storz Beer

American League

Milder Oil (1)  
 Cavaliers (2)  
 Chez Paree  
 Fifty Club  
 Standard Blue Prints  
 Bon Ton Tavern

Girls' League

American Beverage (1)  
 Malashocks (2)  
 Russell Sports  
 South Omaha Bowlers

Ahamo League

Letter Carriers (1)  
 World-Herald (2)  
 Paxton-Mitchell  
 F. Club  
 Burlington Railroad  
 Mail Clerks

Benson League

Louis' Market (1)  
 Monkey Mountain (2)  
 Corner Bar  
 Missouri Pacific  
 Leslie Berry  
 Hayes Tavern

Booster League

C.I.O. (1)  
 Hilltop Merchants (2)  
 Logan Chiefs  
 Cleveland Insurance  
 Standard Barber Shop  
 White Spots

North Senior Church  
League No. 1

Augustana Lutheran  
 Gospel Tabernacle  
 Ames Avenue Methodist  
 North Side Christian  
 Immanuel Baptist  
 First English Lutheran  
 Lowe Avenue Presbyterian  
 Florence Presbyterian  
 Yeomen Coventry Presbyterian  
 Benson Presbyterian

North Senior Church  
League No. 2

Hanscom Park Methodist  
 Augustana Lutheran Grays  
 Our Redeemer Lutheran  
 West Benson Presbyterian  
 Covenant Presbyterian  
 Pella Lutheran  
 Benson Christian  
 Gospel Tabernacle Whites  
 First Baptist  
 Kountze Memorial  
 First Christian

South Senior Church League

City Mission  
 South Side Christian  
 Wheeler Methodist  
 St. Luke's Lutheran  
 Kountze  
 South Side United  
 Presbyterian

Commercial League

Wilson Packing (1)  
 Letter Carriers (2)  
 Nebraska Power Station  
 Phillips 66  
 Mutual Benefit  
 Kimball Laundry

Dundee Kiwanis League

Steinheimers (1)  
 Kiplingers (2)  
 Wilke-Mitchells  
 West Farnam Rollers  
 Stryker Water  
 Dundee Electric  
 Dundee News  
 Mi Cleaners

Farm Credit League

Legal (1)  
 Presidents (2)  
 Accounting  
 E.C. and L.

Industrial League

Nebraska Power (1)  
 Falstaff Brewery (2)  
 Omar Flour  
 Eggers O'Flyng  
 Storz Brewery  
 Northern Natural Gas  
 Beebe-Runyan  
 Peter Pan

Jewish Community Center  
League

Leavenworth Markets (1)  
 Lincoln Tavern (2)  
 Wardrobe Clothing  
 A.Z.A. No. 100  
 A.P.T.  
 Nebraska Fruit Market

Jr. Chamber of Commerce  
League

Nebraska Clothing (1)  
 W.O.W. Camp 16 (2)  
 Providential Loan  
 Livestock National Bank  
 First National Bank  
 U.P. Stages

Metro League

Metz Golden Spike (1)  
 Ike's Tavern  
 Union Stock Yards  
 Gluek's Beer  
 Omaha School Supplies  
 Trentino Cafe

Metropolitan Utilities  
District League

Office  
 Service No. 2

National League

Brandeis (1)  
 Loose Wiles (2)  
 Bradford-Kennedy  
 Social Settlement  
 All Makes  
 Sidles

North Omaha League

John Opitz (1)  
 Sample-Hart (2)  
 Balbach  
 Sigma Mu  
 Central Park  
 Olivets  
 Mothers Best  
 Ford Plant

Union Pacific League

U.P. Shops (1)  
 Freight Accounts (2)  
 U.P. Stores  
 Disbursement  
 Chief Engineers  
 Freight Traffic

Urban Bud Billikens League

Five C's  
 Stars  
 Burdettes  
 Pirates  
 Bombers  
 Peppers

Urban Senior League

Four C's  
 Senators  
 H.S.S.  
 Woodson Center

Walther League

Cross Lutheran (1)  
 St. Paul (2)  
 Zion Lutheran  
 Bethany Lutheran

YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUES

Boys Recreation League  
 Junior Church League  
 Community Chest Agency League  
 Chest Agency Juniors  
 C.Y.O. Softball League  
 South Omaha Recreation League No. 1  
 South Omaha Recreation League No. 2  
 Urban Junior League

Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1941Greater Omaha League

Nebraska Clothing (1)  
Metz Beer (2)  
Falstaff Beer  
Glueks  
Storz Beer  
Wilson Packing

American League

Phillips Store (1)  
Doss Cafe (2)  
Omar Mills  
All Makes  
Brain Sports  
Alvis Bar

Girls' League

American Beverage (1)  
Russell Sports (2)  
Council Bluffs' Katelman  
Malashocks Jewelers

Ahamo League

World-Herald (1)  
Paxton-Mitchell (2)  
Letter Carriers  
Mail Clerks  
Watson Brothers  
Kimball Laundry  
Mutual Benefits  
Railway Express

A.I.B. (Bank) League

Livestock National Bank  
(1)  
Farm Credit Bank (2)  
U.S. National Bank  
Omaha National Bank  
First National Bank  
Federal Loan Bank

Benson League

McCoy Service (1)  
Louis' Market (2)  
Chris Monograms  
Tietzort Grocery  
De Molays  
Trocadero  
R.A.M.

Bomber League

Ramblers (1)  
Big Eds (2)  
Schlaifers Clothing  
Monoghans Bar  
Metz  
Hinky Dinky

Church League (Class A)

Yeoman Coventry (1)  
Gospel Tabernacle (2)  
Augustana Yellow  
South Side United  
Presbyterian  
Our Redeemer Lutheran  
St. Lukes  
First Christian  
North Side Christian  
First Baptist

Commercial League

Kimball Laundry (1)  
Letter Carriers (2)  
District CCC  
Mutual Benefit  
Super Service  
7th Corp, Area 9

Dundee Kiwanis League

Steinheimer  
Don Kiplingers  
Mi Cleaners  
Stryker

Dundee Kiwanis League  
(continued)

Dundee News  
West Farnam Roll  
Dundee Electric  
Admiral Theater

Florence Recreation League

Fort Omaha Eagles (1)  
Fort Omaha Blitz (2)  
Dairymen  
Tony's Bar

Fort Omaha League

Headquarters  
Federal Building  
Faldley Building  
Signal Corps  
Quartermaster  
Medical Corps

Industrial League

Northern Natural (1)  
Roberts Dairy (2)  
Audiphone  
Beebe-Runyan  
Nebraska Power  
Alamito Dairy

Jewish Community Center League

Lincoln Tavern (1)  
Milder Liquor (2)  
A.Z.A. No. 1  
A.Z.A. No. 100  
Denenberg  
Council Bluffs. No. 7  
A.K.'s

Jr. Chamber of Commerce League

Refinites (1)  
 Hauff Sports (2)  
 Omaha Jobbing  
 Great Western Financiers

Metro League

Golden Spikes (1)  
 Sidles (2)  
 Vita Freeze  
 Trentino Cafe  
 Brandeis Store  
 Golden Spike  
 Corner Bar

National League

U.P. Stages (1)  
 Bradford-Kennedy (2)  
 Venetians Club  
 La Conga Bar  
 International Molders  
 St. Peters  
 Logan Chiefs  
 Sons of U.S.W.V.

Nebraska Power League

Stations (1)  
 Engineers (2)  
 Sales  
 Service  
 Orphans  
 Office

North Omaha League

John Opitz (1)  
 Merchant Biscuits (2)  
 Americans  
 Belvedere Club  
 Mothers Best  
 Olivets  
 Sample-Hart  
 Sigma Mu

Safeway Stores League

Nob Hill (1)  
 Breakfast Gem (1)  
 Jell Well  
 Superb

South Omaha Recreation League - Butler League

South Side Christian (1)  
 Phillips Store Juniors (2)  
 Missouri Avenue Merchants  
 Mauro Whips  
 Wheeler Methodist  
 Checker Cabs

South Omaha Recreation League - Packer League

Kiwanis (1)  
 F Club (2)  
 Hanscom Park Athletic Club  
 Bellevue Indians  
 Terrace Homes  
 Bellevue Cards  
 Knights of Columbus  
 Post Office

South Omaha Recreation League

Ernie Hoffman Service  
 Christ Child  
 Pursley Grocery  
 Omaha Merchants  
 Fisher Grocery  
 Athletes  
 Catholic Workman  
 Main Center  
 London Clothes  
 Vick's Tavern

Street Railway Co. League  
(Stryco League or St-Ry-Co)

Mechanics (1)  
 Bus Garage (2)  
 Bus Operators  
 Car Operators

Union Pacific League

Freight Accounts (1)  
 Shops (2)  
 U.P. Stores  
 Car Department  
 Prior Service  
 Traffic  
 Chief Engineers

Urban Senior League

Four C's (1)  
 H.S.S. (2)  
 Stars  
 Woodson Center

Walther League

Cross Lutheran (1)  
 St. Paul Lutheran (2)  
 Bethany Lutheran  
 Zion Lutheran

Slow Pitch League

Four Bars (1)  
 South Omaha Eagles (2)  
 South Omaha Business  
 and Social Club  
 Holmes Club

YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUES

Benson Recreation Jr.  
 League  
 Church League Class "B"  
 C.Y.O. Twilight League  
 City Recreation Girls'  
 League  
 Logan Junior League  
 South Omaha Junior  
 Recreation League  
 Urban Grade School League  
 Urban High School League



Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1942Greater Omaha League

Metz Beer (1)  
 Storz Beer (2)  
 Falstaff Beer  
 Local 554  
 Nebraska Clothing  
 Phillips Store

Girls' League

Howells Root Beer (1)  
 Midwest Auto Parts (2)  
 Russell Sports  
 Malashock Jewelers

Ahamo League

Paxton-Mitchell (1)  
 Local 554 (2)  
 Independent Metal  
 Letter Carriers  
 Mail Clerks  
 World-Herald

A.I.B. Bank League

Mutual Benefit (1)  
 Omaha National Bank (2)  
 Farm Credit Bank  
 Livestock National Bank  
 U.S. National Bank  
 First National Bank

Benson League

Walnut Hill  
 Nifty Bar  
 Star Guards  
 McCoy Services  
 Glenn Martin Bomber  
 Plant  
 Louis' Market

Bomber League

Silver Dollar (1)  
 Johnny's Cafe (2)  
 South Omaha Bowlers  
 Brown Park  
 Bomber Plant  
 Terrace Homes  
 Red Flyers  
 Star Guard  
 S and M Club  
 Allies

Butler League

Catholic Workman (1)  
 Ernie Hoffman (2)  
 Missouri Ave. Merchants  
 Upland Homes  
 Christ Child Center  
 Highland Park  
 Phillips Department Store  
 Bud O'Donnells

Church League Class "A"

Covenant Flyers (1)  
 St. Lukes (2)  
 Immanuel Baptist  
 Clifton Hill Presbyterian  
 Our Redeemer Lutheran  
 Calvary Baptist  
 City Mission  
 Yeoman Coventry  
 Benson Baptist  
 North Side Presbyterian

Church League Class "B"

West Benson Presbyterian  
 North Side Christian  
 Gospel Tabernacle  
 Bemis Park Baptist  
 Trinity Lutheran  
 St. Paul Methodist  
 Trinity Methodist  
 First Evangelical  
 Augustana

Industrial League

Northern Natural Gas (1)  
 Omar Flour (2)  
 Railway Express  
 Audiphone  
 Beebe-Runyan  
 Roberts Dairy

Jewish Community Center League

A.Z.A. No. 1  
 Glenwood  
 Providents  
 A.Z.A. No. 100  
 AK's  
 Ronok's

Jr. Chamber of Commerce League

Hauff's Sports (1)  
 Fuch's Machinery (2)  
 Harding Seal Test  
 Omaha Jobbing

Metro League

Metz Jubilee (1)  
 Big Ed's Bar (2)  
 Wilson Packing  
 U.P. Stages  
 Brandeis Store  
 Brain Sports

National League

Fort Omaha Eagles (1)  
 Bradford-Kennedy (2)  
 Fort Crook  
 Checker Cab  
 Fort Omaha Blitzers  
 Metz Nationals

North Omaha League

Sigma Mu (1)  
 John Opitz (2)  
 Eagles Lodge  
 Logan Chiefs  
 Metz Robin Hood Rangers  
 Supreme Bakers  
 Orphans  
 Gilbert's Texaco

Safeway League

Jell Wells  
 Breakfast Gems  
 Superbs  
 Nob Hill

South Omaha Industrial League

Swift Premiums (1)  
 Kiwanis Club (2)  
 Omaha Steel Works  
 Bellevue Vocational  
 School  
 Albright Club  
 Independent Metals  
 CIO 223  
 Smith Motors, Inc.

Sunday Night League

Louis' Market  
 Nebraska Clothing  
 Local 554  
 Metz  
 Metz Jubilee

Traffic Club League

Traffics No. 1  
 Traffics No. 2

Union Pacific League

U.P. Stores (1)  
 Car Department (2)  
 Freight Claims  
 Traffic  
 Wheel Shop  
 Disbursements

Urban Senior League

Hamms Beer (1)  
 H.S.S. (2)  
 Four C's  
 Stars  
 Tuxedos

U.S. Engineers League

Mail and Records (1)  
 Construction (2)  
 Designs  
 Drafting  
 Finances  
 Mimeographs

Slow Pitch League

Glueks (1)  
 South Omaha B and S Club (2)  
 Four Bars  
 South Omaha Eagles

YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUES

Junior Church League  
 Dundee Kiwanis Junior League  
 South Omaha Recreation Junior League  
 South Omaha Recreation Midget League  
 Urban Junior League  
 Urban Cub League

Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1943Greater Omaha League

Metz Beer (1)  
 Storz Beer (2)  
 Martin Bombers  
 North Omaha Eagles No. 38  
 Big Ed's  
 Falstaff Beer

Girls' League

Russell Sports (1)  
 Jeep Bar (2)  
 Martin Bomber Plant  
 Malashocks  
 Creamery Package  
 South Omaha Bowlers

Ahamo League

Fuch's Machinery (1)  
 Watson Brothers (2)  
 Mail Clerks  
 World-Herald  
 Fort Crook

American League

Radio School (1)  
 Fort Omaha (2)  
 A.G.O.  
 Mi Cleaners  
 Omaha Silent Athletic  
 Club  
 Equipment Depot  
 Coca Cola  
 Columbia Squires

Benson Senior League

Clippers (1)  
 Bunnies (2)  
 Ramblers  
 Flyers

Fort Crook Ordinance League

Building 163  
 Building 86  
 Building 85  
 Building 162

Industrial League

Letter Carriers (1)  
 Martin Modified Flyers (2)  
 Seven Up Bottling  
 Omaha Steel  
 U.P. Stores  
 Roberts Dairy

Martin Bomber Plant Bombers League

B-26 (1)  
 Boleros (1)  
 Production All Stars  
 Tool Room  
 Machine Shop  
 Tool Design

Martin Bomber Plant Marauders League

Aces (1)  
 Air Force (2)  
 Guards  
 Air Corp  
 Mod 8  
 M.F.A.

Martin Nebraska Morning League

Purple Martins (1)  
 Marauders (2)  
 Final Assembly  
 Purple Martins  
 Raw Stores  
 Inspection Assembly  
 Camouflage  
 Position 9  
 Sheet Metal

Martin Monday Twilight League

Tyler Tigers (1)  
 Gremlins (2)  
 Wings  
 Assembly B-26  
 Chiefs Indians  
 Sheet Metal

Martin Tuesday Afternoon League

Tool Room (1)  
 Welders (2)  
 Splice  
 Machine Shop  
 Production All Stores  
 Design

Martin Wednesday Afternoon League

Slow Motion (1)  
 Ground Testers (2)  
 Eager Beavers  
 Raw Stores  
 Welders  
 Bombadiers  
 Inspection-Boleros  
 Final Assembly

Martin Wednesday Morning League

Position 3 (1)  
 Owls (2)  
 Machine Shop  
 Sub Assembly  
 Wolves Assembly  
 Position 4

Martin Friday Twilight League

Modification No. 8 (1)  
 Engineering  
 Mars  
 Chiefs Indians  
 Tylers Tigers  
 Wings  
 Engineering  
 Gremlins

South Omaha Industrial League

Mi Cleaners (1)  
 Swifts Packing (2)  
 Wilson's Packing  
 Fort Crook Medics

South Omaha Industrial League (continued)YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUES

Brown Park Service	Athletic Field Junior League
Ordinance Service Command Shop	Benson Junior A League
Fuchs Machinery	Benson Junior B League
Fort Crook	Social Settlement League
	Urban Junior League

U.S. Engineers League

Mail and Records (1)  
 Equipment and Depot Administration  
 Thirtieth and Sprague Design  
 M.R.D.  
 Flood Control

Victory League

C.M.P. District (1)  
 N.O.P. Transportation (2)  
 World-Herald  
 N.O.P. Administration

Y.M.C.A. Church League

Pearl Methodist (1)  
 Gospel Tabernacle  
 Trinity Methodist  
 Fairview Presbyterian  
 United Bretheran

South Omaha Slow Pitch League

Glueks (1)  
 Wagon Wheel Bar (2)  
 Eagles No. 1  
 Eagles No. 2

Benson Ancients League  
(Slow Pitch)

McCoys (1)  
 Cornwells (2)  
 Ernies Tavern  
 Bold Eagle Tavern

Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1944Greater Omaha League

Metz Beer (1)  
 Storz Beer (2)  
 North Omaha Eagles No. 38  
 Martin Bombers  
 Gate City  
 C.M.P. District 5  
 Marauders  
 Falstaff Beer

Girls League

Jeep Bar (1)  
 Barnes Bar (2)  
 Russell Sports  
 Creamery Packing  
 Martin Bomberettes  
 Martin Blue Streaks

Ahamo League

Mail Clerks (1)  
 World-Herald (2)  
 Eaton Metal  
 Watson Brothers

American League

Phi Rho Sigma (1)  
 Wonder Bread (2)  
 Knights of Columbus  
 Omaha Traffic Club  
 O.S.C.S.  
 Fort Omaha

Benson Senior League

Orioles (1)  
 Sluggers  
 Bunnies  
 Tigers

Butler League

Eagles No. 154 (1)  
 Wonder Bread (2)  
 Watson Brothers  
 Thirteenth Street  
 Merchants  
 Corn State  
 Checker Cab

Fort Crook Ordnance League

Full Tracks (1)  
 Half Tracks (2)  
 W.V.A.M.  
 Jeeps

Industrial Twilight League

Wing Assembly (1)  
 Fuch's Machinery (2)  
 Marines  
 U.P. Stores  
 Roberts Dairy  
 Omaha Steel

Jewish Community Center League

A.Z.A. No. 1  
 Ro Noh  
 A.Z.A. No. 7  
 Habonim  
 A.Z.A. No. 100

Martin Monday League

Metal Bench (1)  
 Plant and Equipment (2)  
 Has Beens  
 Engineers  
 Flight Section

Martin Tuesday League

Mars (1)  
 Gunners (2)  
 Toolers  
 Wing Assembly  
 Wood Shop  
 Raiders

Martin Wednesday League

Raw Stores (1)  
 Laboratory (2)  
 Production  
 Maintenance  
 Peacocks  
 Industrial Engineering

Martin Tuesday Morning League

Machine Shop (1)  
 Wings (2)  
 Tool Room  
 F Flyers  
 B-29  
 Snafus  
 Assembly  
 Receiving

Martin Thursday League

Gunners  
 Staple Gremlins  
 Toolers  
 Bombadiers  
 Wing Assembly  
 Raiders

Martin Friday Twilight League

Aces (1)  
 Ribs (2)  
 P-40's  
 Engineers  
 Clean Up  
 Boleros

South Omaha Industrial League

Mondos (1)  
 Kiwanis (2)  
 Marines  
 O.S.V.S.  
 Silent Athletic Club  
 Jackson Cafe

U.S. Engineers League

M.R.D. (1)  
 Mail and Records (2)  
 Drafting  
 Equipment Depot

Victory League

North Side Merchants (1)  
 Firestone Tire (2)  
 N.O.P.  
 Columbus Squires  
 De Molays  
 Debonairs

Y.M.C.A. Church League  
Monday Senior Division

Youth, Incorporated  
 Trinity Methodist  
 Gospel Tabernacle  
 First Methodist  
 Pearl Methodist  
 Bemis Park Baptist

Y.M.C.A. Church League  
Tuesday Senior Division

First Covenant  
 Bethel Lutheran  
 North Side Christian  
 Kountze Memorial  
 West Benson Presbyterian  
 Century Outpost

Y.M.C.A. Church League  
Women's Division

Pearl Methodist  
 First Methodist  
 North Side Christian  
 Fairview Presbyterian

Slow Pitch Softball  
League

Blue Ribbon (1)  
 Eagles No. 154 (2)  
 Barnes Bar  
 Brown Derby

Benson Ancients Slow Pitch  
Softball League

Ernies (1)  
 Benson Buffet (2)  
 Trudy's Inn  
 Kremer Funeral

YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUES

Benson Intermediate League  
 Benson Junior League  
 Benson Girls' League  
 C.Y.O. Girls' Softball League  
 Logan Fontenelle Junior League  
 South Omaha Junior League  
 Social Settlement Kiwanis League  
 Y.M.C.A. Church Junior League

Omaha's Leagues and Teams 1945Greater Omaha League

Martin Bombers (1)  
 Storz Beer (2)  
 North Omaha Eagles No. 38  
 Malashocks  
 South Omaha Eagles  
 Falstaff Beer

Girls' Recreation Softball League

Barnes' Bar (1)  
 Jeep Bar (2)  
 Bomberettes  
 Martin Blue Streaks  
 Streamliners  
 Headquarters, Seventh Service

Ahama League

Paxton-Mitchell (1)  
 Mail Clerks (2)  
 World-Herald  
 Eaton Metal

American League

St. Agnes (1)  
 O.S.C.S. (2)  
 Darby's  
 Burlington Trailways  
 Carmel Crisp Shop  
 Buck's Bar

Bomber League

No. 5  
 Merchants  
 Old Vets  
 Bombers  
 Jackson Cafe

Butler League

Caramel Crisp (1)  
 Missouri Avenue Merchants (2)  
 Jackson Cafe  
 Kiwanis Club  
 Watson Brothers  
 City Merchants

Fort Crook League

Warehouse (1)  
 Detachment (2)  
 P.O.W. Guards  
 Officers  
 Reclamation  
 Pilots School

Industrial Twilight League

Phil Bealers (1)  
 Wonder Bread (2)  
 Roberts Dairy  
 Monkey Mountain  
 Butter Nut Bread  
 Martin Wing Assembly  
 Omaha Steel  
 U.P. Headquarters

Martin Booster League

Laboratory (1)  
 Jokers (2)  
 Machine Shop  
 Metal Bench  
 Tool Room  
 Ground Test  
 Plant and Equipment  
 Flight Inspection

Martin Invader League

Administration (1)  
 Flyers (2)  
 Personnel  
 Engineers  
 Army GI  
 Line No. 5  
 Army  
 Camouflage

Martin Morning League

Snafus (1)  
 Wings (2)  
 Wildcats  
 Final Assembly  
 Machine Shop  
 Morning Wonders

Martin Flyers League

Tool Engineers (1)  
 Air Corp (2)  
 Aces  
 Spares

Protestant Church Senior League  
Central Division

First Christian (1)  
 Gospel Tabernacle (2)  
 Clifton Hill Presbyterian  
 Lowe Presbyterian

Protestant Church Senior League  
North Division

North Side Christian (1)  
 Miller Park Presbyterian (2)  
 Trinity Presbyterian  
 Covenant Presbyterian  
 Pearl Methodist  
 Trinity Methodist  
 North Presbyterian  
 Fairview Presbyterian

Protestant Church Girls League

Fairview Presbyterian (1)  
 Clifton Hill Presbyterian (2)  
 Covenant Presbyterian  
 Miller Park Presbyterian  
 First Baptist  
 North Side Christian  
 Pearl Methodist  
 First Methodist

Round Table League

A.Z.A. No. 1 (1)  
 A.Z.A. No. 100 (2)  
 Habonim  
 Ro Noh  
 A.Z.A. No. 7

South Omaha Industrial League

Local CID No. 47 (1)  
 Corn State Serum (2)  
 Wilson Packing  
 Watson Brothers  
 Knights of Columbus  
 Royal Arcanum

Victory League

Paxton-Mitchell (1)  
 South Omaha Merchants (2)  
 Debonnairs-DeMolay  
 Malashocks  
 American Roads  
 Outlaws

West Ames Church League

Central Park Congregational Seniors (1)  
 Ames Methodist (2)  
 Olivet Baptist  
 Central Park Congregational Juniors

Benson Ancients Slow Pitch League

Menche Grocery (1)  
 Ernies Tavern (2)  
 Kremer Funeral Home  
 Yankee Oil Company  
 Rannies  
 Trudy's Inn

YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUES

Athletic Field Junior League  
 Benson Senior Girls League  
 Benson Junior Girls League  
 C.Y.O. Girls League  
 Falstaff Junior League  
 Protestant Church Junior League  
 Social Settlement Kiwanis League



Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1946Greater Omaha League

Bucks Bar (1)  
 Storz Beer (2)  
 Falstaff Beer  
 Walt's Bar  
 Eagles No. 38  
 Malashocks  
 Crosstown Motors

American League

Metz Beer (1)  
 Wilson Packing (2)  
 Vinton Merchants  
 Tropics Bar  
 Cascio's Grills  
 Gay Club

Girls League

Jeep Bar (1)  
 St. Francis (2)  
 U.P. Streamliners  
 Phil Breslers

Ahamo League

B'nai B'rith (1)  
 World-Herald (2)  
 Eaton Metal  
 Mail Clerks  
 Omaha National Bank  
 Teddy Bear Club

Booster League

U.P. Stores (1)  
 Roberts Dairy (2)  
 U.P. Freight Claims  
 U.P. Commissary  
 Wonder Bread  
 Cudahy Packing  
 Holy Family  
 Standard Oil

Commercial League

Kiwanis Club (1)  
 Merchant Biscuit (2)  
 Southwest Civic Club  
 Burlington Trailway  
 Nebraska Power  
 Independent Metal  
 Letter Carriers  
 White Motors

Cow Town League

Mainelli Construction (1)  
 Knights of Columbus (1)  
 Ted's Bar  
 Fort Crook  
 Leavenworth Merchants  
 North Omaha Businessmen

Engineers' League

Standard Blue Print (1)  
 Fuch's Machinery (2)  
 Anderson Equipment  
 Missouri Valley Machinery  
 Nebraska Tractor  
 American Road

Industrial League

Northern Natural Gas (1)  
 Local 47 CIO  
 Corn States Serum  
 Railway Express  
 Webber Motors  
 Nebraska Power  
 Paxton-Mitchell  
 Cook's Paint

Lutheran Church League

Cross Lutheran (1)  
 First Lutheran (2)  
 Mount Olive Lutheran  
 Mount Calvary Lutheran  
 Zion Lutheran  
 Bethany Lutheran

Metro League

Fuch's Machinery (1)  
 Grant's Battery (1)  
 Butternut Bread  
 Overland Greyhound  
 Laux Tavern  
 Don's Bar  
 Carmel Crisp  
 Eaton Metal

National League

West Lawn Garage (1)  
 Peterson-Michaelson (2)  
 Air Force Veterans  
 American Road  
 Independent Metal  
 Elbow Room  
 7th Service Command  
 De Molay

Protestant Church  
League No. 1

Covenant Flyers (1)  
 St. Lukes (2)  
 Augustana  
 Clifton Hill  
 North Side Christian  
 Our Redeemer

Protestant Church  
League No. 2

Yeomen Coventry (1)  
 City Mission (2)  
 Cross Lutheran  
 Dietz Memorial

Protestant Church  
League No. 3

St. Lukes (1)  
 Parkside (2)  
 Augustana Lutheran  
 Bemis Park Baptist

State League

Grant Battery (1)  
Weeping Water (2)  
Bellevue  
Papillion  
Nebraska City

Stryco League

Cummings Barn (1)  
Bus Garage (2)  
Ames Barn  
Pierce Barn  
Shops  
Council Bluffs

U.P. Shops League

Electricians (1)  
Wheel Shops (2)  
Machine Shop  
Floor Gang

Veterans of Foreign Wars League

Rudolph Deml (1)  
D. Louis Black (2)  
St. Mihiel  
Cooties  
Jack Chuda  
G.I. Club Post 181

Victory League

Omaha National Bank (1)  
Bill's Bar (2)  
South 20th Street  
    Merchants  
Nalibows  
Olson Brothers  
South Omaha Sun  
Bud's Cafe  
2nd Ward Improvement  
    Club

Y.M.C.A. Church Girls' League YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUES

North Side Christian  
Fairview Presbyterian  
Pilgrim Congregational  
Covenant Presbyterian  
Low Avenue Presbyterian  
Florence Presbyterian

Y.M.C.A. Church League  
Senior MenCentral Division

Trinity Presbyterian  
Miller Park Presbyterian  
Kountze Memorial  
First Christian  
First Covenant  
Gospel Tabernacle Red  
Gospel Tabernacle Blue  
East Omaha Imps

North Division

United Brethren  
Trinity Lutheran  
Trinity Methodist  
Calvary Baptist  
Covenant Presbyterian  
Low Avenue Presbyterian  
Reorganized Latter Day Saints

South Division

South Side United Presbyterian  
Pilgrim Congregational  
Wheeler Memorial Presbyterian  
McKinley Park Baptist

Benson Ancients Slow Pitch League

Menche's Grocery (1)  
McCoy's Service (2)  
Yankee Oil  
Ernie's Tavern  
Kremer's Mortuary  
Benson Musette  
Royal Dairy

Second Ward Youth League  
Y.M.C.A. Junior Church  
    League  
Southside-Kiwanis-  
    Social Settlement  
    League  
City Recreation League  
Junior Recreation League  
Mutual Benefits League

Omaha's League and Teams 1947Greater Omaha League

Buck's Bar (1)  
 Walt's Bar (2)  
 South Omaha Knights  
     of Columbus  
 Kiwanis Club  
 Metz Beer  
 Falstaff Beer  
 Fuch's Machinery

American League

Cascios (1)  
 Malashocks Jewelry (1)  
 Johnny's Outpost 15  
 Rockets  
 Dons  
 One-Eleven League

Girls League

Florentine (1)  
 Palace (2)  
 Streamliners  
 South Omaha Bowlers

Ahamo League

Police Department 531 (1)  
 B'nai B'rith (2)  
 World-Herald  
 Post Office  
 Watsons  
 Hinky Dinky  
 A.Z.A. No. 100  
 South Omaha B'nai  
     B'rith

Benson League

Musettes (1)  
 McCoys Service (2)  
 Johnsons  
 Tropics  
 Louis' Market  
 Royal

Booster League

Omaha National Bank (1)  
 Letter Carriers (2)  
 Teddy Bears  
 Orphans  
 Merchants Investments  
 Park Forrest  
 U.P. Stores  
 Cudahys

Church Senior LeagueCentral Division

First Covenant  
 First Presbyterian  
 Central United Presbyterian  
 First Lutheran  
 Trinity Presbyterian  
 Third Presbyterian

Church Senior LeagueCity Division

Trinity Lutheran  
 Trinity Methodist  
 South Side Christian  
 Omaha Chorus  
 Westminster Presbyterian  
 Dietz Memorial  
 Pella Memorial  
 St. Nicholas Orthodox

Commercial League

Vinton Vets (1)  
 Forresters (2)  
 Olson Brothers  
 Independent Metal  
 Corn States Serum  
 Holy Family  
 World-Herald  
 Burlington

Cow Town League

Odd Fellows (1)  
 Cosgroves (2)  
 Jens Grocery  
 Columbus Squires  
 South Omaha Sun  
 McIninch  
 Harveys  
 Ahopa

Engineers' League

Omaha District (1)  
 Fuch's Machinery (2)  
 Missouri River Division  
 Missouri Valley Machinery

Industrial League No. 1

Paxton-Mitchell (1)  
 Wilson Packing (2)  
 American Road  
 Railway Express  
 Sidles  
 Omaha Steel

Industrial League No. 2

Corn States Serum (1)  
 Northern Natural Gas (2)  
 Metro Utilities  
 Webbers  
 Paxton Vierling  
 Ford  
 Public Power  
 Chevrolets

Industrial League No. 3

Independent Metal (1)  
 American Road (2)  
 Billings  
 Cooks  
 Supreme  
 Electronics

Lutheran League

Mount Calvary (1)  
 Zion Lutheran (2)  
 Mount Clive  
 Bethany Lutheran  
 First Lutheran No. 1  
 First Lutheran No. 2

Metro League

Crestwood (1)  
 Sonny's (2)  
 Naval Reserve  
 Midwest  
 Butter-Nut  
 Anderson  
 Laux  
 Companion

National League

Paxton-Mitchell (1)  
 Peterson-Michelsen (2)  
 Omaha National Bank  
 Knights of Columbus  
 De Molay  
 Merchants Investment  
 Standard  
 Forresters

Near North SideY.M.C.A. Church League

Pilgrim  
 St. John  
 Calvary  
 Zion

Nebraska League

Murphy-Did-Its (1)  
 Reno (2)  
 Holy Family  
 Whitcomb  
 Harney Hornets  
 Debonairs

Near North SideY.M.C.A. Senior League

Midwest Athletic Club  
 Tuxedos  
 Crosstown Lions  
 Benny's

Protestant Church Athletic Association No. 1

Fairview (1)  
 Augustana Lutheran (2)  
 St. Lukes  
 Covenant Presbyterian  
 Gospel Tabernacle  
 Cross Lutheran  
 Clifton Hill Presbyterian  
 First English Lutheran  
 Pilgrim Congregational  
 Four-Square Gospel  
 First Christian  
 Calvary Baptist

Protestant Church Athletic Association No. 2

Zion Lutheran (1)  
 Wheeler Memorial (1)  
 Our Redeemer  
 Kountze Memorial  
 United Brethren  
 Gospel Tabernacle No. 2  
 North Side Christian  
 Emmanuel Baptist  
 First Lutheran  
 Lowe Avenue Presbyterian  
 Calvary Baptist No. 2  
 Parkside Baptist

Stryco League

Council Bluffs  
 Bus Garage  
 Ames Barn  
 Cuming Barn  
 Pierce Barn  
 Shops

U.P. Night Owls' League

Foreman (1)  
 Floor Gang (1)  
 Machine Shop  
 Electricians

VFW League

Rudy Deml (1)  
 Squadron E (2)  
 Aviation  
 Squadron B  
 D. Louis Black  
 Riverview

Victory League

Southwest Civic (1)  
 Pickwick (2)  
 United Air Lines  
 Hibernians  
 U.P. Freight  
 Burlington  
 U.P. Nebraska Division  
 Silent Athletic Club

YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUES

Junior League  
 Sea Scout League  
 World-Herald Carrier  
 League

Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1948Greater Omaha League

Walt's Bar (1)  
 Storz Beer (2)  
 Fuch's Machinery  
 Metz Beer  
 Falstaff Beer  
 Reillys

American League

Johnny's (1)  
 Rockets (2)  
 Corn States Serum  
 Gorat's  
 Vaughns  
 South Omaha Vets  
 P & M

Girls' Greater Omaha League

Seven Up (1)  
 Palace  
 Bowlers  
 Falstaff Park

Ahamo League

Police (1)  
 Richmans (2)  
 Deer Park Boosters  
 Hinky Dinky  
 Pratt School  
 Post Office  
 World-Herald Carriers  
 St. Bernadino

Benson League

Martig (1)  
 Cornhusker (2)  
 Cornwell  
 Musette  
 Bimco  
 Farnam  
 Royal  
 Louis' Market

Big Four League

Tumpane (1)  
 Bennys  
 Happy Hour  
 Woodson Center

Booster League

Central Motors (1)  
 Osoffs  
 Cosgroves  
 Jack Ritonya  
 South Side Merchants  
 Midland Trees  
 Academy of Accounting  
 Cisars

Commercial League

Jones Barrel (1)  
 Omaha National Bank (2)  
 Sidles II  
 Wolf Brothers  
 Southside Merchants  
 Dick's Auto Trim  
 Jets  
 Livestock National

Companion League

Undermutts  
 Dirty Sox  
 Coods  
 Supackers

Cornhusker League

Naval Reserve (1)  
 Farm Crop (2)  
 Stryker  
 Merchants Biscuit  
 Westinghouse  
 Debonairs  
 Burlington  
 West Dodgers

Federated Shop Craft League

Nite Owls (1)  
 Oldtimers (2)  
 Car Shops  
 Electricians

Industrial League No. 1

Independent Metal (1)  
 Southwest Civic (2)  
 Omar Bakery  
 Paxton-Mitchell  
 United Brass  
 Omar Mills  
 Orchard-Wilhelm  
 Army Recruiters

Industrial League No. 2

Public Power (1)  
 Fords (2)  
 Mobiloilers  
 Northern Natural Gas  
 Metro Utilities  
 Webbers  
 Paxton-Vierling  
 Omaha National Bank

Industrial League No. 3

American Road (1)  
 Companion Company (2)  
 ERTI No. 1  
 Petersens  
 Grain Exchange  
 Fairbanks-Morse  
 South Omaha Optimists

Industrial League No. 4

Independent Metals (1)  
 American Road (2)  
 Sidles  
 Riverview Post  
 Billings  
 Unknowns  
 General Electric  
 ERTI No. 2

Lutheran League

Zion Lutheran (1)  
 Cross Lutheran (2)  
 Mount Olive Lutheran  
 Mount Calvary  
 First Lutheran I  
 First Lutheran II  
 Trinity Lutheran  
 Bethany Lutheran  
 St. Paul Lutheran

Metro League

Audiphones (1)  
 Pickwick (2)  
 30th Street and Ames  
 Merchants  
 Naval Reserve  
 Offutt Field  
 Olson Brothers  
 Grass Shack All Stars  
 Harveys

National League

Odd Fellows (1)  
 Hibernians (2)  
 Knights of Columbus  
 Underwoods  
 Cooks  
 Tractors  
 United Air Lines  
 Asbestos

PCAA Monday League

Our Redeemer  
 Lutheran (1)  
 Park Side Baptist (2)  
 Calvary Baptist  
 First English Lutheran  
 Pilgrim Congregational  
 Gospel Tabernacle  
 United Brothren  
 Fairview Presbyterian

PCAA Tuesday League

Gospel Tabernacle (1)  
 Zion Lutheran (2)  
 Cross Lutheran (2)  
 Mount Calvary Lutheran  
 Wheeler Memorial  
 Central Park Congregational  
 Clifton Hill Presbyterian  
 Augustana Lutheran

PCAA Wednesday League

North Side Christian (1)  
 First Christian (2)  
 Trinity Methodist  
 Central United  
 Kountze Memorial  
 First Lutheran No. 1  
 First Methodist  
 First Lutheran No. 2

PCAA Thursday League

Covenant Presbyterian (1)  
 Trinity Lutheran (2)  
 Immanuel Lutheran  
 City Mission  
 Dietz Memorial  
 Pella Lutheran  
 Lowe Avenue Presbyterian  
 South Side Christian

U.P. Headquarters' League

Passenger Accounts (1)  
 Disbursements (2)  
 Nebraska Division  
 Freight Claims  
 M.P. & M.  
 Engineers  
 U.P. Stores  
 Freight Accounts

U.S. Engineers' League

Parson Construction (1)  
 Missouri Valley Machinery (2)  
 Fuch's Machinery  
 American Road

Victory League

White Eagle (1)  
 Western Electric (2)  
 Jens  
 Whitcombs  
 Fairbanks-Morse  
 Orphans  
 Precision  
 Jerrys

Y.M.C.A. Central Church League

First Covenant (1)  
 First Presbyterian  
 Trinity Presbyterian  
 Our Saviors Lutheran  
 Grace Lutheran  
 First Presbyterian  
 Gateway

YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUES

Benson Recreation League  
 Jewish Community Center  
 Youth Council  
 Softball League  
 Junior League  
 PCAA Junior Girls' League  
 S-K-Y League

Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1949Greater Omaha League

Storz Beer (1)  
Walt's Bar (2)  
Benson Musettes  
Omar Bakery  
Falstaff Beer  
Tumpane

American League

Metz Beer (1)  
Corn States Serum (2)  
H & H  
Orchard and Wilhelm  
Louis' Market  
Flyers

Girls' League

Seven Up (1)  
Hamm's Beer (2)  
South Omaha Bowlers  
Falstaff Park

Ahamo League

Letter Carriers (1)  
Hinky Dinky (2)  
Kuseks  
Mail Clerks  
Storz Drivers  
Police VFW  
322  
San Bernadino

Benson League

Kremer's Service (1)  
Millers  
Odd Fellows  
Trimbles  
Ever Ready  
Louis' Market  
Cornhuskers  
Omaha Production

Commercial League

Letter Carriers (1)  
Omaha National Bank (2)  
Pratt School  
Livestock National Bank  
Ka Chunkers  
Sidles  
Barrell-Ines  
Dicks

Companion Company League

Famous Fifth  
Jesters  
Sad Sacks  
Grounders  
Undermutt  
Phalcon

Cornhusker League

Belvedere (1)  
John Opitz (2)  
Westinghouse  
Merchant Biscuit  
Knights of Columbus  
Debonairs  
Skelgas  
Brown Park

East Locust League

Road House  
Newcats

Friendly Tavern League

Don's (1)  
Terry's (2)  
Chesterfield  
Riviera  
Pabst  
Sonny's

Gra-Y Senior League

Stars  
Crosstown

Industrial League No. 1

American Road (1)  
Hibernians (2)  
Hinky Dinky  
Grain Exchange  
Alamito Dairy  
Wilson Packing  
Steel  
Hardwood

Industrial League No. 2

Central Motors (1)  
Northern Natural Gas (2)  
Public Power  
Webber  
H.P. Smith  
Metro Utilities  
Paxton Vierling  
Mobiloilers

Industrial League No. 3

Falstaff Beer (1)  
Companion Company (2)  
Peterson  
American Road  
Grain Exchange  
Central Motors  
Independent Metal  
Associated Seed

Jewish Community Center  
Varsity Softball League

Kaimans (1)  
Cornhuskers (2)  
Independents  
B'nai B'rith

Lutheran League

Cross Lutheran (1)  
 Zion Lutheran (2)  
 First Lutheran  
 Our Savior Lutheran  
 Mount Calvary  
 Kountze Memorial  
 Pella Lutheran  
 Bethel Lutheran

Lutheran League No. 2

Grace Lutheran (1)  
 Bethany Lutheran (2)  
 Trinity Lutheran  
 Mount Olive  
 Our Redeemer  
 First English Lutheran  
 St. Paul Lutheran  
 Immanuel Lutheran

Metro League

Harveys (1)  
 Fuch's Machinery (2)  
 Pickwick  
 30th and Ames  
 Sierra  
 Fehrs  
 Ziggy's  
 Cosgroves

Metro Booster League

Midland (1)  
 Boulevard (2)  
 General Electric  
 Fishers  
 Yankee Oil  
 Brandeis  
 Twisters  
 Whitcomb

Metropolitan League

Neopolitan (1)  
 Cooper (2)  
 Alamito Dairy  
 Omaha National Bank  
 Omar Bakery  
 Millers  
 Miller-Knuth  
 Metro Utilities

National League

Hibernians (1)  
 United Air Lines (2)  
 H.P. Smith  
 Pittsburgh  
 Asbestos  
 Cudahy Packing  
 Sample Hart  
 Feather Merchants

North Side Y.M.C.A.  
Community League

Omaha Star  
 Midwest  
 Crosstown  
 South Omaha Harlem

Paramount League

USN&MCRTC (1)  
 Salvation Army (2)  
 Whitcomb  
 Cook's  
 Aero Service  
 County Welfare  
 Omar Mills  
 World-Herald Carriers

PCAA Monday League

Miller Park Presbyterian (1)  
 Florence Christian (2)  
 Gospel Tabernacle  
 North Side Christian  
 Calvary Baptist  
 Clifton Hill Presbyterian  
 First English Lutheran

PCAA Tuesday League

Zion Lutheran (1)  
 Augustana Lutheran (2)  
 Trinity Lutheran  
 Pilgrim Congregational  
 Bethany Lutheran  
 Hanscom Park Methodist  
 South Side United Presbyterian

PCAA Wednesday League

First Christian (1)  
 South Side Christian (2)  
 Pella Lutheran  
 First Covenant  
 Kountze Memorial  
 First Lutheran  
 Our Saviors Lutheran

PCAA Thursday League

Covenant Presbyterian (1)  
 Lowe Avenue Presbyterian (2)  
 Immanuel Baptist  
 First Baptist  
 Olivet Baptist  
 Trinity Methodist  
 Central United Presbyterian

PCAA Girls' League

Clifton Hill (1)  
 Calvary Baptist (2)  
 Covenant Presbyterian  
 First Presbyterian  
 North Side Christian  
 Trinity Lutheran

South Omaha Beer League

Lonnie's (1)  
 Village (2)  
 Big Ed's  
 Mosteks  
 Andy's  
 Manhattan  
 Palace  
 Vi's

Swift League

Pard (1)  
 Premium (2)  
 Swiftning  
 Brookfield



Union Pacific League  
No. 1

Nebraska Division (1)  
No Accounts (2)  
Freight Accounts  
Omaha Shops  
Store Department  
Engineers

Union Pacific League  
No. 2

El Rancho (1)  
Freight Accounts (2)  
Disbursements  
Waldorff  
Freight Claims  
Cascio's

United League

Harlem (1)  
Gorat's (2)  
Swartzes  
Upsets  
Bufs  
Cudahy Packing

U.S. Engineers' League

Parsons (1)  
Fuch's Machinery (2)  
American Road  
Missouri Valley  
Machinery

VFW League

Ted's (1)  
Rudy Deml (2)  
Aviation  
Riverview Post  
D.L. Black

Victory League

Rohr's (1)  
Orphans  
Mid City  
Packers  
Jerrys  
Petersons  
South Side Merchants  
Columbian Squires

Y.M.C.A. Church League

Grace Lutheran (1)  
Trinity Presbyterian (2)  
City Mission  
McKinley Park  
Wheeler Memorial  
Latter Day Saints  
First Covenant  
First Presbyterian

YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUES

Indian League  
Jewish Community Center Council League  
Sky League  
West Side League  
Grade School League

Omaha's Leagues and Teams: 1950Greater Omaha League

Jets (1)  
 Vince's (2)  
 Hanscom  
 Darby's  
 Gardiners  
 Jiggs

American League

Katoes (1)  
 Storz Beer (2)  
 Metz Beer  
 Walt's Beer  
 Val's  
 Alumni "T"  
 Selects  
 U.P.W.A.

Girls' League

Skelgas (1)  
 Svoboda  
 Northside Y.M.C.A.  
 First National Bank

Ahamo League

Police (1)  
 Universal Trade School  
 Brass (2)  
 World-Herald  
 Sensation  
 Benevolent  
 Ahamo  
 Railroad School

Benson League

Musettes (1)  
 Al Laux (2)  
 Kremers  
 Millers  
 Orchard  
 Buffet

Commercial League

Fort Omaha (1)  
 Livestock National Bank (2)  
 Omaha National Bank  
 Royal Arcanum  
 Standard  
 American Hungarian  
 First National Bank  
 Hardwood

Companion League

Dirty Sox (1)  
 Ibeems (2)  
 Hitler's Wonders  
 Secundus  
 Senators  
 Famous Fifth  
 Undermuts

Cornhusker League

South Omaha Knights of  
 Columbus (1)  
 Greyhound Overland (2)  
 Southwest Civic Club  
 Westinghouse  
 Supreme Merchants  
 Cooks  
 Hupps  
 Associated

Engineers League

Parsons (1)  
 Missouri Valley (2)  
 Fuch's Machinery  
 Fehrs

Friendly Tavern League

Don's (1)  
 Merchants (2)  
 Chesterfield  
 Terry's  
 Pabst Beer  
 Harmony

Industrial League No. 1

Central (1)  
 Purcellos (2)  
 Sidles (2)  
 A. & B.  
 Omaha Grain Exchange  
 John Day  
 Delpice  
 Carriers

Industrial League No. 2

Falstaff (1)  
 Petersons (2)  
 Omaha Grain  
 Omaha Hardwood

Industrial League No. 3

Mobil (1)  
 M.U.D. (2)  
 O.P.P.D. I  
 Natural Gas  
 O.P.P.D. II  
 Thorndike  
 Omar Bakery  
 Paxton Vierling

Jewish Community Center  
Varsity League

Cornhuskers (1)  
 Kaimans (2)  
 Lusty's  
 B'nai B'rith

Lutheran League No. 1  
South League

First Lutheran (1)  
 Our Savior (2)  
 Zion Lutheran  
 Bethel Lutheran  
 Mount Calvary  
 Kountze Memorial  
 Cross Lutheran

Lutheran League No. 2  
North League

Grace Lutheran (1)  
Trinity Lutheran (2)  
Bethany Lutheran  
St. Paul Lutheran  
Immanuel Lutheran  
Mount Olive  
Luther Lutheran

Metro League

Omaha Police (1)  
Wilson Packing (2)  
Auto Electric  
Midland  
Brown Park  
Cudahy Packing  
Ziff's  
Grisson

Metro Booster League

Skelly's (1)  
Sensation (2)  
Yankee Oil (2)  
Broken Rail  
G.E.  
Turner Park  
Thorpe-Doorways  
Lusty's

Metropolitan League

Rehtmeyer (1)  
Letter Carriers (2)  
Omaha National Bank (2)  
Sidles  
Rohrs  
Fruehaufs  
Omaha Terminal  
Miller-Knuth

National League

St. Phils (1)  
Hibernians (2)  
United Air Lines  
Cudahy Packing  
Delphics  
Royal Arcanum  
Asbestos  
Kresge's

Near North Side  
Y.M.C.A. League

Midwest Athletic Club (1)  
Diamond  
Letter Men's Club  
Cross Town  
Goodfellows

North Omaha Beer League

Spot (1)  
Walking Cane (2)  
Vardas  
Broken Rail  
Hendrick's  
Kentucky

Paramount League

Walking Cane (1)  
Central (2)  
Salvation Army  
Sts. Peter-Paul  
I-Go  
Pickwick  
Aero  
Welfare

PCAA Monday League

Gospel Tabernacle (1)  
Dundee Presbyterian (2)  
North Side Christian  
Bethany Lutheran  
Olivet Baptist  
Clifton Hill Presbyterian  
South Side Baptist

PCAA Tuesday League

Augustana (1)  
South Side United (2)  
First Baptist  
First Christian  
Zion  
Trinity Lutheran  
Pilgrim Congregational

PCAA Wednesday League

Grace Lutheran (1)  
First Lutheran (2)  
Pella Lutheran  
Immanuel Baptist  
Florence Presbyterian  
First Covenant  
East Omaha Presbyterian

PCAA Thursday League

Covenant Presbyterian (1)  
Central Park (2)  
Calvary Baptist  
Lowe Avenue  
Nazarene  
Our Saviors Lutheran  
South Side Christian

South Omaha Beer League

Bighias (1)  
Galas (2)  
Akromis (2)  
Manhattan  
Kusek's  
Village  
Ziggy's  
Palace

Swift League

Premium (1)  
All Sweet (2)  
Swiftning  
Brookfield  
Pard  
Jewel

Union Pacific No. 1

Freight Traffic (1)  
Fuch's Machinery (2)  
Ivanhoe  
Disbursements  
El Rancho  
Pickwick

Union Pacific League  
No. 2

Passenger Accounts (1)  
J.J. Parks (2)  
Merchants  
Freight Accounts  
A.D.A.

United League

Gate City (1)  
St. Mihiel (2)  
Roberts  
Independent  
Grott  
Walking Cane

Veterans' League

Riverview Post (1)  
D.L. Black (2)  
St. Mihiel  
Aviation  
Rudy Deml

Victory League

Leavenworth (1)  
Knights of Columbus (2)  
Senators  
Pickwick  
Rohrers  
Nelson's  
Orphans  
Palace

Wilson's' League

Tendermade  
Freezers  
Specialty  
Sausage  
Bakerite  
More  
Cornking  
Sheep Kill  
Meat  
Mechanical  
Sanitation

Y.M.C.A. Church League

Wheeler Golds (1)  
Latter Day Saints (2)  
First Presbyterian  
Grace Baptist  
Third Presbyterian  
Wheeler Blues  
McKinley Park Baptist  
Central United Presbyterian

YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUES

Benson Recreation League  
JCC Youth Council League  
Junior League  
Logan Fontanelle Recreation League  
S-K-Y League  
OPS Grade School League  
City Recreation League

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### I. MANUSCRIPTS

Hayes, Floyd. Scrapbook Collection. 3118 South Forty-fourth Street. Omaha, Nebraska.

Provost, Wally. Sports Columnist, Omaha World-Herald. Omaha, Nebraska. Personal letter to Richard Behrens, 15 July 1980.

### II. INTERVIEWS

Becker, Harold. Omaha, Nebraska. Interview, 6 October 1981.

Bicak, John. Omaha, Nebraska. Interview, 10 November 1981.

Crain, Ben. Omaha, Nebraska. Interview, 28 September 1981.

Dinkel, Walt. Omaha, Nebraska. Interview, 24 September 1981

Dolan, Ed. Omaha, Nebraska. Interview, 15 September 1981.

Fochek, Frank. Omaha, Nebraska. Interview, 9 September 1981.

Hayes, Floyd. Omaha, Nebraska. Interviews, 18 July 1980, 2 August 1981, and 5 August 1981.

Kelley, Carl. Omaha, Nebraska. Interview, 20 June 1980.

Maggio, Frank. Omaha, Nebraska. Interview, 13 October 1981.

McAuliffe, Father Harold. Creighton University. Omaha, Nebraska. Interview, 17 September 1981.

Schneider, Leonard. Omaha, Nebraska. Interview, 15 September 1981.

Stoney, George. Omaha, Nebraska. Interview, 24 September 1981.

Theiler, Joe. Omaha, Nebraska. Interview, 15 September 1981

### III. NEWSPAPERS

The Lincoln Star

The Nebraska State Journal

The Omaha Bee-News

The Omaha World-Herald

### IV. PERIODICALS

- Anderson, A.O. "Softball Problems." Recreation 29 (November 1935): 406-7.
- Bly, Wayne. "The Return of Softball." Recreation 53 (May 1960): 206.
- Brown, Dr. John, Jr. "Softball Problems—Hearings on the Present Situation." Recreation 28 (December 1934): 445-6.
- "Changes in the 1948 Rules for Softball." Recreation 41 (December 1947): 420.
- Crichton, Kyle. "Not So Soft." Collier's 96 (10 August 1935): 24,38.
- Cuthbertson, L.J. "A Softball Field for Night Games." The American City 55 (January 1940): 87.
- Danzig, Irwin. "Fast-Rising Slow Pitch League." Recreation 53 (May 1960):224.
- Davidson, Aaron. "The Batter Half." Collier's 114 (12 August 1944): 18-19,41.
- Elliott, Malcolm. "Softball is Dead? Not in Saginaw!" Recreation 50 (June 1957): 220.
- Fischer, Leo. "Softball Steps Up." Reader's Digest 34 (June 1939): 134-5.
- Gathrid, Raymond. "Softball." Literary Digest 124 (11 September 1937):32.
- "Indoor Baseball." Time 34 (27 November 1939): 62.
- "Ladies of the Little Diamond." Time 41 (14 June 1943): 73-4.
- Milton, Brock. "Baseball's Lively Kid Brother." The New York Times Magazine (1 September 1940): 8,15.
- Noren, Arthur T. "Softball—The Game for All." Recreation 30 (January 1937): 508, 513.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Softball—the New American Fever." Recreation 34 (March 1941): 735-6, 745.
- "Official Rules for Softball 1946." Recreation 40 (May 1946): 86-7, 96.
- "Official Softball Rules." Recreation 45 (January 1952): 443.
- "Softball." Time 26 (16 September 1935): 47-8.
- "Softball-1953." Recreation 46 (December 1952): 416.
- "Softball for Oldsters." Recreation 34 (March 1941): 746-7.
- "Softball Recommendations." Recreation 50 (April 1957): 133.
- "Softball Rules 1947." Recreation 41 (May 1947): 76.
- "Softball Rules for 1950." Recreation 43 (December 1949): 455.
- Strauss, Michael. "Queen of Diamonds." The New York Times Magazine (4 August 1946): 47.
- Taylor, Frank J. "Fast and Pretty." Collier's 102 (20 August 1938): 22-3, 38.
- Yoder, Robert M. "Miss Casey At The Bat." The Saturday Evening Post 215 (22 August 1942): 16-7, 48-9.

#### V. BOOKS

- Area Guide and Rule Book. Omaha: Omaha Softball Association, 1977.
- Bealle, Morris A. Softball Story. Washington, D.C.: Columbia Publishing Company, 1957.
- The McMillan Dictionary. New York: McMillan Publishing Company, 1973.

#### VI. MISCELLANEOUS

- Amateur Softball Association 1979 Hall of Fame Calendar. "Softball: From Kittenball to the Hall of Fame." Oklahoma City: Amateur Softball Association, 1979.