

Games 16:

Play-off Tournament *Semi Finals*

To Awaken A Sleeping Giant.....

Citi Gold Gloves **11**
Black Jacks **23**

	Line Score							
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>T</u>
Citi Gold Gloves	0	8	3	0	0	X	X	11
Black Jacks	5	3	0	6	9	X	X	23

The first inning went fast and furious. Three quick outs for Citi GG in the top half and then five quick runs for us. It seemed our "defining moment" was off to a good start. After all, going into the tournament we were the number one seed at 13-2 facing the fourth seed at 6-9. You would have thought we'd make the killing quick and easy. But, something happened along the way. We fell asleep. Citi Gold Gloves pounded out eight runs in the second followed by another three in the third. Not all of these runs were earned, as we seemed to give them a bunch with bad fielding and mental mistakes.

Although we did manage to plate three runs of our own in the second it still felt like we were scoring runs in our sleep. Down 11-8 going into the bottom of the third we still seemed calm; maybe too calm, like sleepwalking. Some of us were yelling, but there wasn't much response. "They're not going to give it to us! We have to earn it! We gotta hit!?" I yelled over and over going into the bottom of the third. That resulted in big fat zero runs in the third.

Something was not right. I could hear the chatter from the other bench. They were leery but they really thought they had us. They started to yell as if the game was theirs for the taking. At the same time, we looked like we were falling apart as we even had our own little episode of infighting. Let's just say competitive spirits clashed loudly for a few minutes.

Suddenly, like someone turning on a light switch, the sleeping Giant woke up! BAM! We scored six runs in the fourth and nine runs in the fifth. The game actually ended with runners still on base due to the twelve-run slaughter rule! Wow! Something in all of us just snapped. We put on a wicked hitting display over those two innings with everyone getting hits. We capitalized on every little mistake Citi GG made. I think most of us completely lost track of the score. I know I did. With eight runs already in and the bases loaded, I heard Joe ask the ump if the slaughter rule was twelve after five innings. The ump said yes and asked what the score was. One sacrifice fly later and the game ended. Once again we began to resemble the regular season champions that went 13-2.

Picking up the win on the mound was Steve Mickelson, remaining undefeated for the season. Steve managed to help his own cause as well by going four for four. He also earned the game ball. Nice way to end the season Steve! Not bad for "an older guy" ☺

At the plate, once again everyone in the line up had a hit. Three guys had four hits: Steve, Haack and Lee. Four guys had three hits: Brad, Danny, Joe and Scummer. Our one through five hitters went and unbelievable 16 for 21, with 15 runs, 4 doubles, a triple and 15 RBI! Once again the Coach looked like genius as I shuffled the lineup a little bit. Some was done by necessity and some was on instinct. I moved Lee, our number two hitter to the leadoff spot. Brad who I usually move around a bit in the lineup I slotted second. Danny our leadoff man I dropped to third. And Joe our number three hitter I put clean up. Scummer, one of our super subs, hit fifth. Thanks guys... I LOVE WHEN THAT HAPPENS!!

After the first hour and a 23 to 11 win, our archrival and nemesis Shades of Gray laid in waiting as they took the first game of the tournament earning the right to face us in the finals.

Big Hitters

Haack	4 for 4	1 Run	2 Doubles	3 RBI
Steve	4 for 4	3 Runs		1 RBI
Lee	4 for 5	4 Runs	Double	1 RBI
Brad	3 for 4	3 Runs	2 Doubles	2 RBI
Danny	3 for 4	4 Runs	Double	5 RBI
Joe	3 for 4	2 Runs	Triple	3 RBI
Scummer	3 for 4	2 Runs		4 RBI

Big Walkers

The Coach 1 for 1 **3 WALKS**

That's right.... I finally made it!!!

Wow, this feels AWESOME!!

Well worth the \$150 fine!! Totally cool!!

NOT!!!

Game 17:

The Sleeping Giant Went Back to Sleep

Shades of Gray 11
Black Jacks 5

	Line Score							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	T
Shades of Gray	1	1	3	0	2	0	4	11
Black Jacks	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	5

I have no idea what happened during the five-minute break between games. Maybe I shouldn't have asked for a few minutes to catch our breaths after the Citi GG game ended. I think we all felt like we woke up at just the right time, and were ready to roll on to the championship. But it seemed like we all sat down on our recliners for a quick rest, but fell right back to sleep, never really waking up until the game was over.

I wish there was something we could blame it on. Poor fielding? No, not really. There were a few minor mistakes, but nothing glaring that cost us the game. Pitching? No, not at all. Holding a team like this to eleven runs is actually pretty good. What then? Look at the score. We flat out did NOT hit. It's that simple. Lee and Danny stayed super hot going a combined six for seven with more than half the teams runs and RBI. Each hit solo homeruns in the seventh inning as well. But two guys cannot do it all. Overall, it was one of our lowest hit outputs of the year. Only three guys had two or more hits.

I don't know how to explain it and I'm not sure anyone really can. Did we get intimidated? I really don't think so. We had already beaten this team twice. Did we choke? Maybe. Who knows?

The bottom line is the better team on this night won and it wasn't us. We did not deserve to win. I hate to end the year on a down note, but it is what it is.

For the second year in a row we took home the second place trophy in the Play-off Tournament.

Big Hitters

Lee	3 for 3	1 Run	HR	2 RBI
Danny	3 for 4	2 Runs	HR	1 RBI

The Coach's Corner

Overall, this was a very successful year. We accomplished quite a bit. We added a few more very talented players to an ever-improving team. We played better as a team and got to know each other just a little more. We bettered our record for the fourth consecutive season. And of course we FINALLY took home our first Regular Season Championship!!

Second place in the tournament, although not what we wanted, did yield another piece of hardware, which sits on my desk. That makes four trophies in two years, not bad at all boys. Not bad at all. We should all be very proud of how far we have come. I know I am.

At the same time there is still work to be done and improvements to be made. I am already looking forward to next year.

I would like to thank everyone for coming out and playing. Whether you played a lot or a little you were still considered a part of this team. Winning softball takes an entire roster of committed quality players. We certainly had that this year. So thank you very much to all of you.

A coach is only as good as his supporting cast both on and off the field. That statement goes to yours truly as well. For the past few years there are a few of you who I lean on for critical advice and feedback. It may not have actually seemed like I was listening, but I was... well kind of...sometimes ☺ You guys are my rocks. No need to mention names you know who you are. In any event, thank you very much!! I couldn't have done it without you.

Finally, a very special thanks goes to our dedicated scorekeeper, and my lovely wife Wendy. I don't think she realizes how important she has become to us. Of course, she does more than just keep score as she is in the middle of just about every Comic Relief Scene. I told you guys.... enter at your own risk. Everyone is fair game for her...no one is safe! It's her only defense being the only woman who comes to every game. Regardless, from the entire team to you... THANK YOU!

COMIC RELIEF

Are you guys the home team?

Only one side of the field has stands. Everyone likes that side because if you actually do have fans coming they have somewhere to sit. Usually whoever gets there first gets that side of the field. As Wendy and I approached we saw the entire Citi GG team there already. However we did see JT there. So, we walked over acting like we were supposed to have that side. JT told me he did get there first, but their whole team was there, so he didn't know what was up. As our team began to assemble the captain from Citi GG, Steve approached me.

Steve: Hey Pete

Pete: Hey Steve, what's up?

Steve: Are you guys the home team?

Pete: Yep.

Steve: Really? You are?
Pete: Yes sir.
~ *(Now I was trying to be nice as everyone knows the higher ranked team is always the home team. So, I wasn't really sure what he was getting at.)*
Wendy: What did he want?
Pete: He wanted to know if we were the home team.
Wendy: Of course we are.
Pete: I know. Not sure what the deal is.
Wendy: Maybe he thinks the home team gets this side of the field?
Pete: *(laughing now)* Oh yeah maybe. I don't care. Did you hear that Lee?
Lee: What?
Pete: Steve from Citi GG asked if we were the home team.
Lee: Why wouldn't we be?
Pete: I don't know.
Lee: Does he think the home team gets this side of the field?
Pete: That's what Wendy said. Maybe.
Lee: What are we going to do?
Pete: We're not moving. If we act like we belong on this side, what the hell will they know? Plus they're afraid of us. So let's see what they do.
Lee: Right. This should be good.
~ *(As the first game ended, we stayed put and kind of watched out of the corner of our eyes, to see what they would do. I looked over my shoulder and saw their entire team headed towards the other bench.)*
Pete: There they go. Damn that's too funny.
Lee: *(Laughing)* They were here first right?
Pete: Technically, but what the hell do I care. If they think we get this side because we are the home team, then we get this side of the field.
Lee: Cause that is the league rule right?
~ *Ah, those poor bastards. If they only knew.*

Where's Joe? Again

As we usually do, Joe and I talked about what time we should get to the game. After putting in our pre-game e-mail that we should arrive early, Joe told me, and I quote "I will be there no later than 7:15. I've got a nice little pre-game speech."

As game time approached, we are talking about five minutes to go, there was NO Joe.

Pete: Who's missing?
Wendy: Everyone's here except Joe.
Pete: Damn it! *(and a few other harsh words that I will not divulge here).*
Wendy: I thought he was going to give a pre-game speech?
Pete: So he said. Give me the cell phone. Here we go again.
Brian: Maybe he got a ticket.
Pete: Typical. He's not answering the phone either.
Lee: Where's Joe?
Pete: I have no idea. He's pissing me off. Phil, if Joe is not here by the time we hit the field go to left until he gets here. If he sits an inning, then he sits an inning.
Phil: Okay. I'll keep looking out for him.
~ *(Just as we all took the field I see Joe running from the parking lot)*
Phil: There he is. Right on time.
Pete: Asshole!
~ *(I just stared watching him run all the way to our bench.)*
Pete: Dude... SERIOUSLY!! What the F__!! Thanks for showing up!

~ Joe proceeded to wrap his arms around me and give me a big hug. Now how can I not laugh... you know with the hug and all. It's an Italian thing.

Joe: I had to make a grand entrance.

Pete: That's what you call it? What about your big pre-game speech?

Joe: I got it.

~ (As he is running out to left field)

Joe: Okay guys. Here we go!! Let's win!

Pete: Yeah, that' ll do it! You're such an asshole!! Only you Joe.

Is anybody listening!?!?

After our little bit of "infighting" during the first game, Lee had a little fun. In his own "Lee-like" way he totally made fun of the whole situation. His whole tirade came after we scored six runs in the 4th inning. Not sure if anyone was really listening, (he claims Danny, Wendy, Haack and Lisa were) but it wound up being a pretty funny exchange with no one else but himself. What made it even funnier was he kept getting louder with each comment. He was screaming by the time he was done.

Lee: Great job with yelling at each other!

Lee: See. Yelling at each other really helps us. Now we've got the lead!!

Lee: Maybe we should do that more often!

Lee: NOW GET THE HELL OUT THERE!

Lee: NOW, LET'S REALLY GET PISSED AT EACH OTHER!!

You were totally OUT!

The following took place after all games were over. Wendy, Lee, Jake, Haack, Haack's girlfriend Lisa and myself were all walking to our cars.

Haack: It's a good thing I kept that one rally going with that force out I hit into. Me being safe at first kept things going.

Pete: Yeah that did it. You were really out you know.

Lee: Yep. You were definitely out.

Lisa: **YOU WERE TOTALLY OUT!!**

Pete: NO WAY!! She doesn't say a word all night long and out of nowhere she comes up with the line of the night!! You were totally out! That's so funny!!

Haack: Thanks a lot Lees.

Lee: Well you know she sure doesn't love him for his speed.

THE END.....Really!

The coach has spoken.

Pete