

Game 4

Another Naturally Cold & Windy Night

The Naturals 12
Black Jacks 15

	<u>Line Score</u>							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	T
The Naturals	4	0	3	1	1	3	x	12
Black Jacks	1	6	0	5	3	x	x	15

At around 3:30 PM the day of the game, I had the following conversation with someone who is supposed to be on the Disabled List.

Joe: How many guys do we have for tonight?

Pete: We have 10.

Joe: We don't have 11?

Pete: No.

Joe: Okay good.

Pete: Why?

Joe: Cause I'm playing.

LONG SILENCE.....

Pete: What?

Joe: I'm playing.

Pete: Are you kidding me?

Joe: Nope. Put me in.

Pete: I don't feel right about this. How are you feeling?

Joe: I feel good. I had a good week, so I'm playing.

Pete: Joe, this is not right

Joe: Yes it is. I can't sit out against an undefeated team.

Pete: Yes you can, and you will.

Joe: I'm playing. Don't argue with me.

LONG SILENCE, and a long stare down....

Pete: I'm going to feel horrible if something happens

Joe: Nothing is going to happen. We're going to win.

Pete: Okay, fine. Where do you want to play?

Joe: In the field

Pete: How about DH.

Joe: NO, in the field. How about the outfield?

Pete: No. I draw the line there.

Joe: Third base?

Pete: Fine.

Joe: That works.

Pete: I hope so.

Joe: Told you I wasn't done yet.

This is the third consecutive season where we were one of the last two undefeated teams facing off in an early season game. Two years ago we lost. Last year we won. So, we were trying to make it two out of three.

Although this team was not as arrogant as the teams we faced the last two years, especially last year, (their captain said they were not impressed with us and that they would mop the floor with us) you could tell by their demeanor, they fully expected to win. In their minds, there was no doubt they were going to walk away with a victory. I can't describe it. It's just something that you feel. I know I'm not the only one who sensed it. That kind of arrogance has a tendency to back fire.

For the third game out of four the weather was cold with a temperature around forty-five degrees at game time. The wind was whipping up about as strong as I've ever felt it, blowing gusts from right field to left. To say the least, this led to incredible challenges on just about any fly ball, especially high pop flies. The outfielders took the brunt of adventurous winds, as the ball seemed to consistently dodge at the last minute in some strange direction. A few balls were missed, but this was no fault of the outfielders. They did the best they could with what they had to work with. Both teams struggled, so it wasn't like one team had an advantage. It just made the game that much more interesting.

Scags made his second start of the season on the mound. We quickly fell behind four to nothing, immediately feeling the cause and effect of the cold and wind. The inning could have been worse. And quite honestly I felt good getting out of there only down four runs.

Danny, who complained he did not have a "typical Danny game" in his last outing, quickly made up for it leading off our half of the first with a home run, his second of the season, cutting the lead to four to one.

In the top of the second Danny made one of the most amazing running catches to left center field I have ever seen. The Naturals number three hitter hit an absolute moon shot to Danny's right and deep. Within the first two steps watching this at first base, I could tell he had a beat on it. It was like going from 0 to 60 in 2.3 seconds! He simply ran down a ball that should not have been run down. It was like watching poetry in motion, like something you see in the major leagues. Needless to say, he totally took the wind out of The Naturals sails at that moment, as it should have been a two-run homer. Instead we got out of the second without giving up any runs.

The momentum Danny gave us with that catch, carried over into our half of the second, when we came storming back with six runs to take a 7 to 4 lead. Three consecutive RBI singles highlighted the assault. Scags and Danny started things driving in one run each, and then Lee followed by knocking in two.

To their credit, (don't forget this team was undefeated going into this game) the Naturals tied the score in the third with three runs of their own. Then they took the lead in the fourth plating one run.

Again we battled back from adversity with another big inning in the bottom of the fourth. Scags hit his first homerun of the year, a two-run opposite field shot to left.

Although he ran through my stop sign at third, (and would have been dead to rights with a good throw), he did manage to score safely. Hey, if you don't listen to the Coach... you better be safe!! ☺ Mr. Softball, Joe P made his return well worth the risk by adding a huge three-run triple to cap the scoring. We took the field in the top of the fifth ahead twelve to eight.

In the top of the fifth with runners on first and second, the Naturals big number three hitter stepped up again. To no one's surprise he hit yet another moon shot to left center. Danny once again turned on the after-burners, making yet another incredible highlight reel catch. This time his momentum took him to into a forward roll. After a tumble-sault he popped up throwing the ball towards the infield. The guy on second tagged up and took off. The ball was hit so deep he scored easily. The guy on first took second. The hitter stood on first base and did not move. We all know Danny made the catch. I started yelling to the ump questioning why the batter was on first base. The ump said Danny did NOT make the catch! He said he dropped it and that's why he had to throw from his knees because he had to get the ball off the ground! Whoa!! Wait a minute! I mean everyone within eyeshot KNEW Danny made the catch, including the hitter! We argued and argued but the ump would not change his mind. So, this goes down as one of the greatest running non-catches in softball history! To his credit the ump did apologize to me between innings. At least he was man enough to do that. In this case, no-harm no foul because they only scored one run. But wow, was that frustrating.

So, going into the bottom of the fifth we led twelve to nine. The clock was ticking, so we were looking for a long inning and some much needed insurance runs. As they say, seek and you shall find. Jake came through with big RBI single. Two batters later Danny cleared the bases with a two-run triple, giving him 4 RBI on the night, capping off what we call a Typical Chim Chim night. (See the Big Hitters List)

Up 15 – 9 we headed into what the ump said was the last inning. We were pretty comfortable with a six run lead. With one of The Naturals hit a three-run homer, which actually turned out to be a blessing, because it cleared the bases. Another hit and two outs later the game finally ended giving us a big win 15- 12.

You can argue and laugh all you want, but as far as I'm concerned, this was a "statement game". That statement is, *check your arrogance at the door when you step on the field to play us.*

Big Hitters List

Danny	3 for 4	2 runs	triple, HR	4 RBI
Scags	2 for 3	2 runs	HR	3 RBI
Joe P	2 for 3	1 run	triple	3 RBI
Haack	2 for 3	2 runs		1 RBI
Jake	2 for 3	1 run		2 RBI
Pete	2 for 3			

Stuff on the side

- For the second time this season Jake **FLOULED** out. What Jake.. you didn't think I'd remember? So, what's a **FLOUT OUT** you ask? Well, in Lee's dictionary, that's

when you are out because you hit a foul ball with two strikes. In softball when you hit a foul ball with two strikes it's an out. For those that were not with us last year, during a conversation I had with Lee about fouling out, no matter how hard he tried he could not stop pronouncing it without the L after the F. So, it stuck. The term IS now officially **FLOUL OUT!!** And when someone does it, you are supposed to yell it out really loud in a weird high-pitched voice. Well, as to not cause too much embarrassment you might want to wait until after the game.

- Marty's Flip, Flop and Fly routine made its return. This time on a wind blown ball to right center that just kept getting blown towards the infield. By the time Marty hit the ground the ball nailed him right in the sternum! OUCH! Nope, he did not make the catch, but I was glad to see the routine back!
- Kudos to Jake for taking advantage of his time playing first base. He caught wicked line drive and then made a real nice scoop on a throw in the dirt from Joe P at third. Once again the Coach looked like a genius moving players around in the field. Have I ever told you how much I love that!
- Joe P made huge waving glove grab to his left on smash to third. I think he had de ja vu from playing goalie in his hockey days. At least that's what I told a guy from the other team. That's the truth by the way. He was a hockey goalie for quite a few years.
- Everyone had at least one hit for the third consecutive game. Six of eleven had at least two.
- Scags' homerun was our first ever from the last spot in the order. You see there is always a method to the coach's madness when it comes to making a batter order too!
- Brad walked twice. He's trying to push the King of walks, Lee, off his throne. This has the makings of a potential war! But like Lee reminded me, "If he wants my crown he has to take his walks like a man!" I'm not really sure what that means, but I guess the gauntlet has been thrown!

League Standings – (this is unofficial)

Black Jacks	4-0
The Naturals	3-1
CH Robinson	3-1
The Canners	3-1
Squirrel Cagers	2-2
Shake N Bake	1-3
D-Bags	0-4
Risky Business	0-4

Comic Relief

Can I have her phone number?

I had this rather comical conversation with the umpire.

Ump: Black Jacks huh? Is that for the strip club?

Pete: Well kind of. It was a combination of that and we have a bunch of gamblers on our team.

Ump: I really like the logo.
(the logo is a picture of a woman in a bikini surrounded by an Ace and a King for Black Jack)

Pete: Yeah, one of the guys found it on a web site somewhere.

Ump: Can I have her phone number?

One for three

Brad continues to struggle with fly balls.

Pete: What were you one for three tonight?

Brad: I don't think so.

Pete: I'm talking about in the field.

Brad: In the field?

Pete: Yeah, with fly balls

Brad: Oh, here we go.

Pete: What? You did catch one didn't you?

Brad: Well, yeah but I'm not sure I could have had one of those.

Pete: I do.

Brad: I guess.

Pete: One for three then?

Brad: Fine then... one for three.

Pete: Thank you

I have to go to a parade

Joe P: What time is the game on Sunday?

Pete: 10:00. Why, you're not going to be there?

Joe P: I can't

Pete: Whatever.

Joe P: I have a birthday party for one of my girls.

Pete: Jacob's party is Sunday afternoon, but Lee is playing.

Joe P: I know, but I have a parade too.

Pete: A parade?

Joe P: Yeah, it's the girl's softball parade.

Pete: Oh...so are you going to wear your clown suit then?

Joe P: What?

Pete: You're clown suit. You are in the parade aren't you?

Joe P: The girls are.

Pete: You're not?

Joe P: No, I have to be there to watch.

Pete: In your clown suit?

Joe P: I don't have a clown suit.

Pete: Really?

I know Joe did not catch on to this, but he does have a clown suit!!! One year for Halloween he dressed up in an outfit very similar to Ronald McDonald!! See, and you all thought I was kidding.

Call it what you want....

My speed never gets old.

Scags: I don't know if I'm getting slower or what?
Pete: Why?
Scags: It seemed like it took me forever to get around the bases on that homerun.
Pete: Nah, it wasn't too bad
Scags: I have to be about the slowest guy on the team.
Pete: Obviously you haven't really seen me run around the bases.
Lee: I wouldn't really call that running. It's more like a real slow jog.
Pete: You call it what you want, and I'll call it what I want.

Brad continued

Brad: I don't know what it is about fly balls.
Joe P: You do seem to have a problem.
Brad: I mean ever since I was a kid.
Pete: So, it's not new then?
Brad: No. I've just always struggled with them.
Pete: We can see that.
Brad: All of my coaches used to get so pissed at me all the time.
Pete: So, you're used to that then?

The End.....

Next Game

Date: May 23rd
Opponent: Squirrel Cagers
Record: 2-2 (not counting Sunday's game)
History: Last year they were called Citi Gold Gloves.
We beat them three times including the playoffs
Time: 7:30 PM

The coach has spoken.....

Pete