

Game 9

No Glove, No Spikes.... Not the Only Problem

Black Jacks 9
The Canners 11

	<u>Line Score</u>							
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>T</u>
Black Jacks	4	0	0	4	1	0	0	9
The Canners	0	3	0	0	6	2	X	11

Over the past two years we have faced this team six times: three times last summer, twice in the fall league and one time this season. Needless to say there's lots of history between us. Although we took two out of three from them last summer (they were then called Swing Crew), they were the first team to beat us, winning pretty big by a score of 24-10. In the fall we split a double header with them, losing a game we should have one. Going into this year we knew that they had a decent team. We beat them 18-8 on our Sunday make-up game, but they did not have their full team. Not that we did either, but I don't think they have the bench strength we do. Regardless, we knew what we were up against on Wednesday night. That was a team that had the ability to beat us, if we did not play up to par.

The lineup once again was different. This is now nine games and nine different lineups. I had to really get creative especially with the batting order. But, I was pretty confident we'd be okay.

Let me preface these next few paragraphs by saying a few weeks ago I forgot my spikes. Luckily enough I got the field early and called my wife who jumped in the car and brought them to me. We all forget things. We are human. This is no different. However, this did make the night that much more interesting.

At around six o'clock Scags arrived. He had a blank look on his face as we greeted each other. That blank look came with this bombshell. "I don't have my stuff." That pretty much amounted to his spikes and his glove. We solved the spikes problem when he borrowed Lee's sneakers. Although, not that safe, it meant he could at least get on the field. The problem was his glove. Scags is lefty. We had a few spare gloves for righties, but nothing for lefties. The other team didn't even have a lefty, so he was left without a glove.

We only had ten players. If we would have had eleven (now you know why I like going with eleven) he could have DH'd and everything would have been fine. Unfortunately, not only did we only have ten, Scags was scheduled to pitch. With that no longer a possibility, the coach really had to put his thinking cap on. Mind you, I do NOT like having to think that much just before game time.

I had a few options, and settled on Blake making his pitching debut. This meant, Champ our regular catcher would have to move to right center and Scags would have to catch, albeit with a righty glove!

Needless to say my confidence level dropped a bit with all of these changes. I hoped it was not a sign of things to come. But, what can you do. You still have to play the game. You never know what can happen. You just hope the changes do not have a negative effect on the outcome of the game.

I give lots of credit to Blake, who at first was a bit reluctant to take the mound. Blake is an experienced softball pitcher, but in "no height limit" softball. Our league is "six – twelve". But after three warm-ups, (that's literally all we had time for) he said he would be fine. And he was. Nice job Blake. Eleven runs is not a lot in softball. You know that.

I also have to give some credit to Scags for even trying to play with a right glove. I know he felt bad. And he did try to get someone to bring his stuff down, but they never made it. Like I said, we are all human. It happens.

As far as the game goes, we started off well plating four runs on the first inning. Champ singled and Blake tripled him home for a quick run. Lee walked putting runners at first and third. Joe P knocked in a run on a fielder's choice. Marty doubled putting runners on second and third. Then yours truly knocked in two with a single to right.

It seemed like we were off to the races with a quick start. But, for the next two innings the hitting completely stopped. In the second we went down one, two, three, which is a rarity for us. The Canners followed with three runs of their own cutting our lead to one.

In the third, a pop-put, ground out, a walk and another pop out ended the inning quickly. The Canners stayed quiet in their half of the inning with no runs.

In the fourth we seemed to get back on track. Champ started things with a sacrifice fly. Lee singled in a run and Joe P knocked in two, to increase our lead to five: 8 to 3.

Blake kept The Canners off the scoreboard again in the bottom of the fourth, to maintain our five run lead. In the top of the fifth we added one more with Haack's sacrifice fly. But the insurance runs we needed were just not there. A six run lead in this league can evaporate very quickly. Unfortunately, it did. As the Canners plated six runs on the bottom half of the fifth tying the score at nine.

With two innings still to play we just looked at it as a two-inning game. A few runs in each inning should have done the trick. But, unfortunately we were just not up to the task. In the sixth, other than a bases empty single, we went down after four hitters. This opened the door for The Canners. They quickly put two runners on base. But they had the bottom of their order up. We thought for sure we'd get out of it with not runs scored. Not this time, as their last hitter hit a long line drive to the perfect spot in right center clearing the bases. He almost had a homerun but we threw him out at the plate. Luckily we got out of it giving up only two runs.

Down by two going into the top of the last inning, we needed base runners and runs. Marty and I both singled to start the inning putting runners at first and second with no out. On a normal night, odds are that at least both of us would have scored. But the softball gods were not with us this time, as the next three batters went down ending the game.

A lot of things did not go particularly right for us on Wednesday. However, none of those is to blame for this loss. We lost because we flat out did not hit. We managed twelve hits over seven innings. That's awful. The last game we had that low of a hit output, we lost too. On top of that, nine runs doesn't cut it either, especially against a team that can score.

I'm beginning to believe all of our hits were with Scags' equipment... in a rental car.

On the Defensive

- Marty made a nice sliding catch on a short pop fly to left. With it came his Flip, Flop and Fly routine! Thank GOD! I missed it so. And according to Marty, "that f___'in hurt too!"
- Even with a right-handed glove Scags managed to hang on to a long throw from the outfield for a tag out at home. Well, he was actually one for two with tag outs. The other throw was just to hot too handle. Great effort though.
- Lee and Haack were involved with a nice six to four to three double play.
- Joe P toughed out his aches and pains to play left center for the first time in a long time. There is only ONE Mr. Softball.

Coach's Corner

- Nine games, Nine different lineups. Nuff said....
- Opportunities for real big innings were there, but we just could not capitalize. You can score runs with a low hit output if the timing of the hits are right.
- Joe P made a strategic defensive move in the outfield during the last inning that very well could have played a role in the last two runs scoring for the Canners. He said he would take the blame. I say no. WE take the blame because we should have talked about it before hand. Regardless, we didn't hit and that was the problem.
- Out of 21 possible outs 14 were either pop-ups or fly-outs.
- Six outs were force-outs, meaning a runner was forced out at another base on a ground ball.

Big Hitters

Blake	2 for 4	2 runs	Triple	1 RBI
Joe P	2 for 4		Triple	3 RBI
Marty	2 for 2	2 runs	2 walks	
Pete	2 for 4			2 RBI

League Standings

The Naturals	8-1
Black Jacks	7-2
The Canners	7-2
Squirrel Cagers	6-3
CH Robinson	3-6
Shake N Bake	2-7
D-Bags	2-7
Risky Business	1-8

Comic Relief

Run only if...

My speed never gets old. This short exchange occurred with me on first and Lee coaching first.

Lee: Only run if, the ball goes through the fence over there, down the hill, back up the hill and towards the woods.

Pete: Are you sure?

Lee: Yes, I want to make sure you can make it to second.
Pete: Well, to be safe let's make sure the ball is through the woods and into the street.
Lee: Yeah, that's good.
Pete: I want to make sure I can make it too.
Lee: Now put that in your recap.

Whatever....

After hitting a crappy roller toward third that turned into a throwing error at second

Joe: Was that a three and one pitch?
Pete: Whatever.
Joe: That was a three and one pitch wasn't it?
Pete: Whatever.
Joe: You swung on a three and one pitch?
Pete: Whatever.
Joe: I'll stop the game and we'll go at it right now.
Pete: Whatever.
Joe: I'm serious
Pete: Me too. Whatever!
Joe: You don't swing at that pitch.
Pete: Whatever
Joe: I'll bench you.
Pete: First off, whatever. Second, I thought the count was two and two.
Joe: No you didn't.
Pete: I'm too tired to deal with your bullshit right now. So whatever.
Joe: Okay. Run on anything there's two outs.

No Equipment...

This was Scags trying to tell me he did not have his equipment.

Pete: Hey look who it is. What's up Scags.
Scags: I don't have my equipment.
Pete: What?
Lee: He's a mess!
Scags: I don't have my stuff.
Pete: I don't get it. How can you not have your stuff?
Scags: It's in a rental car at work.
Pete: What is exactly?
Scags: My glove and my spikes.
Pete: How the hell did your stuff end up in a rental car at work.
Scags: I took the rental car home for my dad to test drive.
Pete: Huh? What the heck does a test drive have to do with this?
Scags: That's where my equipment is.
Pete: You lost me.

What's wrong?

In the top of the seventh down by two runs, I singled to put runners on first and second with no outs. Joe P, was coaching first. We quickly agreed on a strategy to put just a little more speed on the base paths. I said... a little!! ☺

Joe: Nice hit.
Pete: Thanks
Joe: How are you feeling?
Pete: As good as can be expected
Joe: Maybe we put in a runner here for you
Pete: What are you trying to say?
Joe: No, seriously. I think it might be a good move.
Pete: You're right. That's a good move.

So, I called time asked the ump for a courtesy runner. I slowly walked to the bench from first base trying to make it look like I was hurting. Wendy was sitting along the first base side.

Wendy: What's wrong?
Pete: Nothing.
Wendy: What's hurting you?
Pete: Nothing.
Wendy: Why are you coming out then?
Pete: Shhhh... wait a second.

Trying to get her to stop talking until I got back to the bench, so no one would hear.

Wendy: Are you okay?
Pete: Yes. I'm fine.
Wendy: Why aren't your running then?
Pete: Strategy...(wink, wink)
Wendy: Strategy? Ohhhhh yeah, I get it.
Pete: Whew... thank God!

This is what I came here for?

After the game Wendy could not help but stick her two cents worth in about the loss.

Wendy: Nice job guys
Joe: Well, what can you do?
Wendy: I drove all the way here, with a screaming baby for twenty minutes for you guys to lose?
Pete: Ouch!
Wendy: Seriously? What's that all about?
Honestly, I think everyone is was too afraid to say anything else...

I'm Engaged....

Marty left us with these closing comments

Marty: What time is next week's game?
Pete: 9:30.
Marty: Maybe next week I'll bring my fiancée.
Pete: What? Your fiancée?
Wendy: You're engaged?
Marty: Yep.
Wendy: Congratulations
Pete: Yeah, congratulations
Lee: What did he say?

Pete: He got engaged.
Joe P: What?
Lee: For real?
Joe P: Yep, and she's black....

The End.....

Next Week

Opponent: Risky Business
Record: 1-8
Last meeting: We won 16-6
Game Time: 9:30 PM

The coach has spoken.....

Pete