

Written: April 22, 2008  
Game Dates: April 16, 2008

## Welcome to: **Black Jacks Softball** Season 6

### The League That Almost Wasn't

This year the drama started even before we hit the field. I showed up at the Lisle Park District Captain's meeting on April 3<sup>rd</sup> to find out there were only three teams signed up for our league, with the season less than two weeks away. This news came without any warning whatsoever, and I had asked several times over the past few months what the registration looked like. But, never received an answer.

This is our fourth season at Lisle. In the first year there were eight teams, in the second there were five and last year there were eight again. So, there has never been any indication that there would be a problem filling a league. Needless to say I was quite shocked and a bit upset to find this out at the last minute.

So the search was on for more teams or perhaps another league. The three captains agreed to play with four teams, only if they made it a doubleheader league. Or so I thought (more on that later). Erica, the League Supervisor said she would try everything she could to find another team. We even gave her a bunch of suggestions like call other park districts that may have waiting lists or offer up a discount to a team in another one of her leagues.

The only other options we had were to switch to the Thursday league or change park districts. We were even considering joining forces with another team to play on Thursday.

On Tuesday April 8<sup>th</sup>, Erica sent out an email saying she tried everything but could not find a team. At that point, I had two other leagues as possibilities and was about to register us in one of them. But, the next day I received another email from Erica saying another team joined because another park district canceled their Wednesday Night men's League.

In the end it all worked out. So, we are now in a doubleheader league with three other teams. Yes, it might get a bit old playing the same teams over and over, but at least we will be out there for two games, which makes it much more worth while to make the drive. Besides, more softball is always good.

### Team Changes:

After last year's very long but very successful season (we did win the play-off tournament) I decided to make some managerial changes. I promoted myself to General Manager, and promoted Joe and Lee to Captain / Coach. This takes a lot of pressure off of me, which I really need. Joe will run the games and lineups, with help from Lee. And Lee is in charge of the tournaments. I of course will be looming in the background making suggestions, and playing mediator among other things, like: maintaining the roster, dealing with the league, keeping up relations with the league, keeping stats, and my favorite, writing this newsletter.

There have also been some drastic changes to the roster. Gone are four key players from last year's team: Bradley, The Mighty Flynn, Champ and Blake. So, help me say hello to a few new faces. The first two helped us out at the end of last year: Brian Potempa and Scott Voelkner.

We also have Mike Putrow and Steve Cavolino, who are friends of Marty's, and we will not hold that against them. Another newbie is Dan Bradley, who manages the batting cages I

go to regularly. He used to play on Thursday's in Lisle, but his team got kicked out for bad behavior. You have to love that.

The last rookie is Jake's brother Jon. He seems to be the mystery man. We're not quite sure he really exists because he has never answered and email.

Finally, say hello to an old friend who has returned: Big John Canale. John is a dear friend of mine, my former neighbor and a former regular, when we played in Westchester. The last time we saw him was two seasons ago, when he made one appearance going four for four. And he managed to make fun of my niece. But who remembers things like that?.....I DO!! ☺

Not only have names changed, but look of the roster has changed. We used to have two categories of players. There was the Main Roster, or your every day players. And there was something I coined a long time ago called the Super Subs. Super Subs were quality players who played when they could, but had other leagues as their priority. The beauty of this was every time one of them played they seemed to have a HUGE game. Our two most famous are Phil and Scummer. Last year Ralph Beck chipped in a few times as well. However, because lives and responsibilities are changing (I will not say we are growing up, because no one wants to hear that shit!) the team has to evolve. So, The Super Sub has been put to rest because the majority of our team is made up of part time players. So, we have Full Timers and Part Timers. However.....as your General Manager, I do reserve the right to bring that tradition back at any time. We'll see how it goes. And so we move on.

Now, how about some softball!!

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### Let's Play Two

All of you Cub Fans should love that headline. Don't tell me you don't know what famous Cub made that quote famous.

#### Game 1

**Squirrel Cage** 11  
**Black Jacks** 12

#### 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>
<b>Squirrel Cage</b>	0	1	0	10	0	0	x	11
<b>Black Jacks</b>	4	1	1	1	4	1	x	12

We started off the season against a team that has now been in the league three years: Squirrel Cage. They managed to beat us pretty good last year in one game. But that's the only time we have ever lost to them. They're an okay team and they're pretty good guys too.

Their captain Steve acted like he was pretty intimidated by us for the first few years. But after they beat us once last year that sort of changed. He's a good guy, and I see him every year at the captain's meeting. This year was no different. When he realized we only had three teams in the league he almost left the meeting, until I convinced him to stay. He said he would as long as I did the talking.

Anyway, the point is he was there the whole time when the idea of a double-header league was brought up. He said he thought it was a good idea. I guess he had second thoughts. When I arrived at the game he pulled up next to me, and we had this exchange.

Steve: Hey Pete

Pete: What's up Steve?

Steve: We're here again.

Pete: Yep. We made it.

Steve: So, what's this bullshit about double headers every week?

Pete: What?

Steve: I don't get. Who the hell wants to do that?

Pete: We do. What's the problem? You were there at the meeting when we brought it up.

Steve: Yeah, but not every week?

Pete: That's what a doubleheader league is Steve.

Steve: Isn't it going to be a bit redundant?

Pete: Maybe, but I'd rather come out here for two hours than one. It makes the drive worthwhile.

Steve: I think this is bullshit.

Pete: Okay. But I don't think anyone else does.

I guess he can call the league and complain, but I think it will fall on deaf ears.

Anyway, here we go.

We actually started this game late because they couldn't get enough guys to fill a squad. We gave them more than the five-minute grace period. No one wants to start the year off with a forfeit.

Scummer, whose real name is Mike and is my brother-in-law, got the start on the mound. And shut down Squirrel Cagers with no runs in the first.

Phil started our half of the first with a walk and Steve followed with a single. Two batters later the runs started as Putrow, Marty and Scummer all drove in runs with singles. A final run scored on an error. We finished the inning up four to nothing.

Cagers came back with one run in the top of the second. We answered back with another on an RBI single by Lee. The score after two was five to one. Scummer did not allow a run in the third. And we added one more of our own on an RBI by John Canale. So after three innings we were up six to one.

Then the bottom dropped out. Last year we started this real bad habit of giving up a monster inning to the opposing team. It seems that habit has continued. We completely fell apart in the field and in no way shape or form supported our pitcher the way we should have. There were quite a few hits obviously, but all after errors. When the bleeding stopped, we gave up ten runs and found ourselves down eleven to six going into the bottom of the fourth.

We managed to get one run closer in our part of the fourth, on an RBI single by Joe, cutting the score to eleven to seven.

Scummer held them to no runs again in the top of the fifth. Then they said something that really pissed me off. They kept asking the ump how much time was left on the clock, because we play on a one hour time limit, meaning no innings can start after one hour. At this point they were ahead, so naturally if the one-hour time limit set in, they'd win. I wasn't buying it. And yelled, "Are you kidding me? We started this damned game late because of you guys. Now you want to take a win like that? That's bullshit!" At first they didn't say anything. But then after they huddled up, the pitcher said, "we'll play as long as it takes to finish the game fairly." You're damn straight we will!

I think that verbal exchange woke us up a little bit. Haack led things off with a walk. I followed with a triple. YES, I said triple! For those of you that are new and have not been with us for the past few years, one of major topics of conversation and a huge target for jokes, is my blazing speed....or lack thereof. Believe me, I don't mind. It's pretty damned funny to be honest. But, sorry to disappoint, I do not think I'm the slowest on the team anymore. Anyway, yes, I HIT A FREAKIN TRIPLE! How? Okay, so it was a little lucky. I hit a hard line drive to right center and it took a wicked bounce and rolled past the right center fielder and right fielder. I

chugged into third standing up without a problem. I turned to the bench and all the yelling started. I just threw my arms up in triumph. It was pretty cool!

Okay, enough of my personal banter. One run is in and I am on third. John followed with another RBI single. Phil and Steve followed with singles too. Then Joe came up with the big blow, a booming two-run double to right center. When the inning ended the game was tied eleven to eleven.

Even though it was only end of the fifth inning, the clock was running. So we decided to go into the extra inning rule. That means each team starts their part of the inning with a runner on second base. This is to promote scoring and move the game along.

Scummer again shut down the Cagers in their half of the sixth. Haack led off with another walk. Two batters later John got on on an error. Phil then stepped to the plate. Last year Phil was a one man wrecking crew in the play-off tournament. He even won the first game of the tournament with the game-winning hit in this same situation. Well, he picked up where he left off singling in Haack with the winning run. Final score: Black Jacks 12, Squirrel Cage 11.

### BOX SCORE

		<b>AB</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>BB</b>	<b>2B</b>	<b>3B</b>	<b>HR</b>	<b>RBI</b>
Phil	RF	3	3	2	1	0	0	0	1
Steve	LF	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	0
Lee	SS	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	1
Joe	RC	4	0	2	0	1	0	0	3
Putrow	1B	3	1	2	1	1	0	0	1
Marty	RC	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Scummer	P	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	1
Haack	3B	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	0
Pete	C	4	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
Canale	2B	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	2

Big Hitters: Phil, Steve, Joe, Putrow, Scummer, Canale

### Game 2

**Black Jacks** 13  
**Squirrel Cage** 14

### Line Score

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>Black Jacks</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Squirrel Cage</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>

This is for sure the game that got away. We made way too many mistakes, both in the field and on the base paths. It's early yet, so these things will happen, but for sure these kinds of mistakes will cost a team wins. We had three runners thrown out on the base paths. There were quite a few errors in the field on easy plays. We have no one to blame but ourselves. In my eyes, they did not beat us. We beat ourselves. If they played better than us, I'd be man enough to say it. But, not this time. We just played worse.

We went down one, two three in the first. That for sure was not a good sign. At the end of one we found ourselves down three to nothing.

We managed to scratch out two runs in the second. After Joe hit a screaming line drive triple to left (he claimed he was not going to push himself and run hard for a home run with no

outs), Putrow knocked him in with a single. Marty helped push him to third, then Haack knocked him in with a sacrifice fly.

We turned around and gave a bunch of runs back with shoddy play. We gave up another five to find ourselves down eight to two after two.

We woke up a little bit in the third with the top of the lineup getting things going. Phil, Steve and Lee all singled consecutively, with Lee's knocking in a run. Then Joe stepped up to the plate. With one mighty swing he sent an absolute BOMB way over the left fielders head. He didn't have to run hard for this home run; a three run shot putting us right back in the ball game.

Scummer came through with a nice inning, shutting Cagers down with no runs in the third. We followed suit with a zero in top half of the fourth. Then in the bottom of the inning, we opened the floodgates again with some bad play in the field, allowing them to plate four runs. After four innings we were down twelve to six.

Again we answered back with a big fifth inning. Joe led things off with another triple, his second of the game. Putrow quickly knocked him in with a single. Marty and Scummer both followed with singles to load the bases.

At this point, I heard Joe on the bench telling someone that Haack has good power and is due. Sure enough.... Boom! A long fly ball over the left fielder's head for a huge three run triple. Two batters later Canale knocked in Haack. Just like that, we were down by only one, 12 to 11.

Again Scummer had a great inning holding them to no runs in the bottom of the fifth. In the sixth we tied the game on Lee's Long ROCKET way over the right center fielder's head for a home run. They may still be chasing that one. He scored before they even got near the ball. That's how far it was hit.

Scummer shut them down yet again in their half of the sixth. With time running out, again we went to the extra inning rule. In the top of the seventh we added one run on an RBI single by John. But unfortunately, they plated two in the bottom of the seventh for a 14 to 13 loss.

So, we start the season with a 1 – 1 record. We will probably be playing 30 games this year, so there's a long way to go! Stay tuned.

### BOX SCORE

		<u>AB</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>BB</u>	<u>2B</u>	<u>3B</u>	<u>HR</u>	<u>RBI</u>
Phil	RF	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Steve	LF	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Lee	SS	4	2	2	0	0	0	1	2
Joe	RC	4	3	3	0	0	2	1	3
Putrow	1B	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	2
Marty	RC	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	0
Scummer	P	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Haack	3B	4	2	2	0	1	1	0	4
Pete	C	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Canale	2B	4	0	3	0	0	0	0	2

**Big Hitters:** Joe (HR #1), Canale, Lee (HR #1), Putrow, Marty, Scummer, Haack

## Comic Relief

### I love this team

**Joe:** I like this make shift team

**Lee:** It all starts with you. Any team that starts with you has got to be good.

**Joe:** I am the foundation.

**Lee:** Yes you are.

**Joe:** Like A-Rod

**Lee:** You're better than A-Rod. And better looking too.

**Pete:** You guys are really beginning to scare me.

**Joe:** You've changed Lee. I'm feeling the love now.

**Pete:** Way too much love especially this early in the season from you two guys.

**Lee:** I'm a new man

**Joe:** I like it.

*Then Joe moved in for a kiss on the cheek. That's when I ran to the garbage can to vomit.*

### Nice Play

*This was an exchange between the ump and myself, after Canale made a nice back handed play on a ground ball to second, and it continued on another backhanded play that Lee made at short. Anything in bold print I yelled out loud. Anything in regular print only the ump could hear.*

**Pete:** **Nice play John! Way to go!** You're a pussy for not getting in front of it... but **hey great play!**

**Ump:** Good one.

*Lee made the same type of play at short.*

**Pete:** **Awesome play Lee! Way to be!**

**Ump:** How come you didn't call him a pussy?

**Pete:** That's different.

### What time is it?

*This was part of the exchange when Squirrel Cagers were asking how much time was left in the first game.*

**Pitcher:** How are we on time?

**Ump:** You're okay for now.

**Pete:** What do you mean time? We started this game late because of you guys. Now you're winning and you want to end it?

**Their Captain Steve:** Don't start Pete

**Pete:** Don't' start? Are you kidding me? Keep it up and we'll have a brawl at the very first game.

**Ump:** We'll let it go a while

**Pete:** Is he for real or what?

**Ump:** Nothing like fun at the old ball park.

### The Return of the Italian Sausage.

*Last year Joe gave Haack the nickname Italian Sausage because of the way he runs, sort to straight up like one of those mascots. It's all in good fun, but I think Joe realizes he needs to be careful.*

**Joe:** Run you Italian Sausage!

**Lee:** The Sausage is back!

**Joe:** Some day he's going to hit me with a bat because of that.  
**Pete:** He'll probably chase you around with one anyway.

**Wow, is he slow.**

*What would a game be without the mention of someone's slow running? Usually, I'm the target. But, not this time. Joe was watching as Canale ran from second to third.*

**Joe:** Wow, is he slow! Oh my God!

**Pete:** If you ever give me a hard time about being slow again, you and I are going to throw it down and go at it.

**Joe:** Wow. Seriously. It's definitely not you any more.

***Welcome back the team John!***

**Nice Back up.**

*On several plays Putrow, who was playing first base, backed up the catcher (me) and Scummer, who was pitching, backed up third base. Lee finally took notice. Now mind you, for the past five years, I have been the regular first baseman.*

**Lee:** Wow! The pitcher backed up third and the first baseman backed up the catcher!? Our first baseman last year never backed up home!

**Pete:** You've got that right he didn't. He didn't do it the year before either. And I was two years younger.

***The End...***

**Next Week's Games**

**Opponent:** Econumus

**Record:** 2-0

**Time:** 8:30 & 9:30

The G.M. Has spoken.....

***Pete***