

PGs manager: 'We should've won 30 at least'

By Chronicle Staff

Winning records don't always bring complete satisfaction. And so it is with Nelson Petree, owner/manager of the Winston-Salem Pond Giants.

Petree's team improved dramatically over a 12-month period, finishing up at 26-9, compared to 16-18 in '90. "Yeah, we won more games this year than we did last year," Petree said.

"But we also had better ball players. Still, I feel we could've done better. I had 36 games booked and we should've won 30 at least."

Added talent combined with added experience, said Petree, made the difference for this year's squad. Lamont Ferguson, in his second year of semi-pro ball, continued to develop as a lead-off hitter and base stealer, often acting as the spark for the PGs offense.

Jeff Belcher proved to be one of the team's most consis-

tent hitters, particularly with men in scoring position and rookie Darryl Young played first base and third base, while providing Winston with another steady bat at the plate as a regular and designated hitter. Catchers Scott McDaniel and Chad Sinkist proved to be valuable as able battery mates for the PGs pitching staff.

One of the major problems that plagued the Giants was not always having a full roster for each game. As a result, consistency was difficult to maintain for an entire season, even though the PGs won 70 percent of the time.

"What hurt us most was having a lot of our players leaving before the season ended because they had to go back to school (college)," Petree said.

"A lot of times, we just never knew what we would do because we weren't always sure who would be playing on a given day. It was always a problem of

us having everybody there for all the games."

The PGs pitching staff was left a bit on the sparse side when they lost three pitchers during the early portion of the season.

Dennis Key, who played at South Carolina-Spartanburg, was picked in the fourth round of Major League Baseball Draft by the Pittsburgh Pirates. Gerald Plaster also signed a pro contract and Todd Jenkins opted to play in the Valley League which is composed primarily of college baseball players.

Even though the pitching wasn't as well-stocked as he would have liked, Petree still received steady performances from the remainder of the mound crew. Kyslinger, who played at Georgia Tech last spring, came on strong after joining the team in late June.

The fireball pitcher (fastball has been clocked at 94 mph), won five straight games for Winston coming down the home

stretch. Tony Smith (Guilford College) was also a prime hurler in Petree's starting rotation.

In the bullpen, Frankie Burcham, David Brentley (Appalachian State) and Rusty Baumgardner helped to solidify the Giants' relief pitching.

A lack of roster depth haunted the Giants when they played in the State Semi-Pro Tournament in July. The PGs bowed out with a 2-2 record. However, the consensus is that their opening round forfeit loss to Mt. Airy was a major contributing factor to their being eventually eliminated.

In that tourney opener, the PGs forfeited in the top of the 10th inning with the score tied 7-7. Ferguson was ejected from the game when the umpire ruled that he threw his bat away after striking out.

Petree claims that the ump was in error. What happened, he explained, was that Ferguson threw his bat down and ran to first as instructed because the

Mt. Airy catcher lost control of the third strike, which would allow Ferguson to advance to first base if he beat the throw.

But whether or not Ferguson beat the throw became a moot issue. The umpire ejected Ferguson, which left the Pond Giants with only eight men to finish the rest of the game which would have gone into extra innings.

Because they had less than the nine players required to play, the victory was awarded to Mt.

Airy. "Not having enough people really hurt us in the state playoffs," Petree said. "We had only 11 players to start with. And I had to use both players that I had on the bench (relief pitcher and designated hitter). We normally have 16 players, but not for the state playoffs. If we had our normal crew, it gives me some flexibility in making changes during the game. Without that flexibility, you're limited as to what you can do."

Pond Giants finale

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two for three with one run driven in.

On the base paths, Lamont

would give the PGs all they could handle. Baugess didn't get a lot of defensive support from

mitted two errors in the first frame and were fortunate to get out of the inning. Walnut Cove left two men stranded on base.

The Giants, however, rebounded in their half of the first. Ferguson got things started when he walked, then stole second base and third base. Wilkins followed through with a sacrifice fly to leftfield to bring Ferguson in, knotting the game at 1-1.

Walnut Cove experienced what was their last lead when they edged ahead 2-1 in the third inning. With one out, Maurice Price smashed a triple to centerfield. Ferguson made a move to spear the drive, but lost the ball in the sun at the last moment.

Eric Dalton's high bouncer up the middle of the infield produced the Tigers' second run, scoring Price from third.

For all of the offense displayed by the home team, defense also had its moments. The defensive gem of the game was turned in by PGs' rightfielder Williams.

In the Tigers half of the fourth, with one out and one man on, May lofted a soft bloop single to shallow rightfield, just beyond the reach of first baseman Kyslinger and just in front of Williams.

The Tigers' Floyd Dixon, who had reached second after singling and advancing on a sacrifice bunt, attempted to score from second.

But Williams came through with an accurate throw to catcher Hooker to nail Dixon at the plate. As it turned out, it would be the last time that Walnut Cove would come close to scoring.



Tony Smith provided the Giants with solid mound performances during the course of the season. He also came through with timely hitting against Walnut Cove last Saturday.

Photo by Chronicle Staff

Ferguson proved to be especially troublesome for Walnut Cove. Ferguson had three stolen bases. Burcham was also productive in that department, coming through with two thefts of his own.

At the outset of the game, it appeared that Walnut Cove

his mates in the first inning as the PGs starter, but it could have been much worse.

The Tigers broke on top, 1-0, thanks to a passed ball by Hooker and two missed opportunities to turn double plays by the Winston infield. The PGs com-

Aggies opener

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At linebacker, Rodney Edwards and Chad Armstrong are proficient at creating turnovers, while Dee Moye and Sam Davis (seven interceptions) are proven performers in the secondary.

Morgan's strength is on offense. All 11 starters return, including wide receiver Glenn Moore, who missed most of '90 due to a muscle tear.

Moore, if given the opportunity, figures to administer a stern test to the A&T secondary. Two seasons ago, Moore, an All-MEAC choice, established himself as the league's premier deep threat, finishing up with 41 receptions for 637 yards and 8 touchdowns — in spite of being double and triple teamed most of the time.

In order for Morgan to have a decent shot at an upset, Moore will have to get his hands on the football. A&T's defense, while very formidable, proved to be most vulnerable against the pass last season (allowing over 2,000 yards).

Given that, soph QB David Partin looms as a central figure in the MSU game plan. As a rookie, Partin took his lumps more than he cared to, but still delivered 83 passing yards without having the team's top receiver and, without the benefit

of adequate protection from the offensive line. Michael Carter, James Ledbetter and Craig Stills will make life a lot easier for Partin if they can hold the fort against what will surely be a ferocious A&T pass rush.

Even Moore and Partin will be two guys to watch, it's not wise to forget about Sean Nelson, who is one of the MEAC's elite when it comes to all-purpose yards. Nathan Ayers showed much promise as a running threat and he's ready to take his game one notch higher.

Defense is where the Bears will most likely experience a lot of headaches. The Bears are still rebuilding on that side of the ball. But they should get better as the season progresses.

Matt Steeples is viewed as an up and coming terror at defensive tackle and Reno Lucas (80 tackles) is already one of the best linebackers the conference has to offer. The secondary isn't shabby, not with the return of cornerman Eddie Hill (five interceptions) and all-league safety Robert Johnson.

But when you break all of this down, it still comes down to Maynor and his ability to be the wild card factor in any game. The Bears will be rarin' to go, but they won't be ready to derail the A&T express train. Not this year anyway.

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Weston Travel is proud to have Toni Jones as our Ram of the Week. Miss Jones, a native of Winston-Salem, began her career with WSSU in 1986 as a secretarial assistant to the Title III Coordinator. Toni is a graduate of West Forsyth High School and an active member at Friendship Baptist Church. Outside of her work at WSSU, Toni enjoys cooking, sewing, and honing-in on her computer skills.

The most fulfilling aspect of Toni's job is the contact that she enjoys with the students and establishing great working relationships with her peers. Toni possesses a highly developed talent for pointing out places on the Ram campus, which has proven conducive to providing directions for lost students and visitors. You can find Toni Jones brightening up the R.J. Reynolds Business Center if you need help or just a friendly smile. Toni stresses the importance of a solid educational foundation for living a productive and fulfilling life. One day Toni hopes to further her love for children and sincere belief in education by opening her own day care center.

We salute Toni Jones for her commitment to WSSU, our community and all those with whom she interacts.

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