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SPORTS Chatter

By Gene Byrd

Let's gather 'round, sports fans, for a little pow wow along the line of sports.

Softball, of course, is rating a big play in Black Mountain right now. Six teams in the Men's League and six teams in the Women's Leagues are carrying on spirited competition. Also midget boys and girls softball teams are in the process of being organized at the Youth Center to compete with other groups of like ages.

Orchids to Dick Morrow for the efficient instruction he is giving to our teen-age and midget groups at the pool. One 12-year-old boy said after Dick's first lesson, Gosh, I believe that guy is going to learn me to swim.

Congratulations to Carl Myers and Luque Medford for instilling hustle and pep in what was an unusually listless American Legion Junior team.

Back to softball—Our men's league was organized three years ago to fill a needed spot in the town's recreational program. The six teams that originally comprised the league still retain their franchise. From its humble beginnings on the north end of the field, the league has progressed to the point that lights have been installed and a move is now under way to install seats on the field. The junior chamber of commerce has been the fairy godfather of the league and most of the material advancements must be credited to them. In addition, the whole town has been more than cooperative in all ways. Much of the success of the league has been due to the continuously favorable publicity given it by the Black Mountain NEWS.

Problem: Some of the players in the league have become confused and think the league is now a debating society. We have had this problem in somewhat lesser degree in the past, but it has become more acute of late. Always before patience and tolerance have succeeded, and I am banking on the innate good sportsmanship of the fellows who make up the league to carry us through again. Things look pretty bad now, but as I look back over the preceding years, I think of firebrands who are now as meek as lambs and I feel somewhat encouraged. Then too our arguing element is decidedly in the minority. For every guy who "pops off" there are so many fellows who never beef or gripe even on bad decisions that it gives one hope. If the arguing element were the larger of the two groups, I would feel forced, as president of the league, to dissolve the league and "close up house." The other unpleasant choice that may become mine is this. If small groups on a team or individuals on a team make our games distasteful to the other players and the spectators, I shall be forced to suspend them for the rest of the season and remove their names from the eligibility lists of the league. That would be a drastic step and one I hope I am never forced to take.

Umpires: Our umpires in the league are volunteers and I have never seen one call a game that I did not believe he was doing his honest best. Decisions have been made incorrectly at times, errors in judgment, but the fellows who protest those decisions so vehemently are guilty of dropping fly balls and booting grounders. If their managers raised as much "Cain" with them for missing the ball or striking out as they do over a missed decision, Black Mountain would be a very unhappy spot.

The Crowd: Unfortunately the crowds who come to the softball games help to increase the tension. Many times the play in question is not understood by the crowd, or the rule is not known. "Riding" the ump is an old American custom, and is an innocent pastime but when carried to the extreme is vicious and uncalled for. (Elsewhere I shall give some of the rules commonly misunderstood by both players and spectators alike, thus, causing trouble.)

The Remedy: The players, the crowd, the officials, all realizing that some good clean fun can easily be stopped if friction, selfishness and poor sportsmanship continue, must pull together to see that the last half of league play is unmarred by unnecessary trouble.

The Promise: That next week's column will not be devoted to washing out the softball league's dirty linen in public but will be written from a different angle. Sports Story of The Week:

WITH OUR DISTRICT GOV.

District Governor Herb Sanders was in Hendersonville last Friday night to attend the Lions Club ladies night and to install the new officers. On Monday night he installed the officers at the Newton club which was also ladies' night. Mrs. Sanders accompanied him to both meetings.

The big, tough, big-league manager died and went to a certain point far south of heaven. Just as he was settling down for a nap beside the fire, a burly gent stepped up and slapped him on the back.

"Remember me?" inquired the character.

"Can't say that I do," replied the manager.

"Well, back on earth I asked you 50 times for a tryout and you said you'd see me here first."

Now you tell one, and we'll be seeing you.

TIPTONS HERE

Dr. S. P. Tipton and wife of Ontario, California, were recent guests of his sisters, Misses Ida and Jessie Tipton on the Montreat Road.

FROM CORAL GABLES

Mr. and Mrs. R. G. Witters of Coral Gables, Fla., are in Black Mountain visiting Mr. Witters son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. William Ellington.

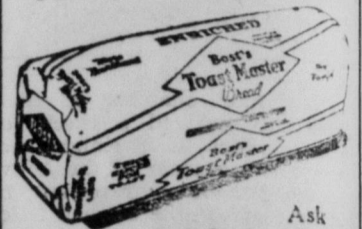
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