

2022 Articles in *Sun Lakes Splash*



Good game, guys! Members of the Core Photography squad salute their opponents after a recent game. We instituted “the salute” to replace handshakes to help minimize COVID risks. (Courtesy of Magic Moments PhotoShop)

January 2021

Goodbye Fall, Hello Winter Softball By Larry Wolfe

The Fall Seasons for both our Lakes and Sun Divisions ended in December after the deadline for *Splash* articles. We’ll do a complete recap of the final standings and batting statistics in next month’s edition. In the meantime, you can view up-to-date info on the Stats Page of our website: www.sunlakessoftball.com.

With a week and a half left in the Fall Seasons, the Core Photography squad was atop the Lakes Division with a 10-6 record. The Young Realty Team was in second place with a 7-5 W-L record. The Top Five hitters in the division were Vern Rodgers (.753), Ernie Flores (.738), Mike Willits (.719), Tim Loeffler (.703) and Manny Verduco (.702). Rookie Brian Brockman led the division in homers with six, closely followed by Vern Rodgers with five.

In the Sun Division, Spooner PT and Wolfe & Associates were in a virtual tie for the top spot with records of 7-5 and 8-6, respectively. Dan Melosi led the division in hitting with a robust .857 average. (Note that the all-time Sun Lakes average leader is Reyes Gonzales, who posted a .873 mark in 2016/17. So, Dan's within striking distance!) The remainder of the Top Five were Tom Bersano (.817), Larry Kaufmann (.813), Dave Platt (.800) and Bobby Farmer (.758). Top home run hitters were Bob Wicks (13), Tom Stephens (12), Bobby Farmer (11) and Larry Kaufmann (10).

Our Winter Sessions begin on January 4 and continue through late February. See the Schedules Page on our website for the full schedule. Our regular sessions will be followed by a double elimination tournament. League play is on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays with recreational play on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Also, see a separate article in this month's *Splash* to view the schedule for our Lady Sluggers team.

We thank the Buckeye Boys, fans of THE Ohio State University Buckeyes, for renewing their promotional banner at the Field of Dreams. The Buckeye supporters have been sponsoring a banner since 2010. Go to the Sponsors Page on our website for information about all our advertising and team sponsors. If your company or organization is interested in becoming an advertiser, call Larry Wolfe at 602-538-2248. There is also additional information on the Sponsors Page of the website.



First baseman and player/manager Terry Finley (foreground) and second baseman Suzy Steinmann (left) are ready for action in a 2021 game.
(Courtesy of Candid Clicks Photography)

January 2021

Lady Sluggers Home Schedule
By Larry Wolfe

Our Lady Sluggers senior softball team opens their home schedule at the Field of Dreams on Wednesday, January 5th. The first pitch is scheduled for 12 Noon. The remaining home dates are January 12, 19, 24 and 26 and February 2, 16 and 23. Mark your calendars! The full home and away schedule is available on the Ladies Page of our website: www.sunlakessoftball.com. Note that the team plays doubleheaders on each play date.

The Sluggers are members of the Valley of the Sun League, which includes teams from throughout the Southeast Valley. Come out to the field and cheer on your senior Sluggers!



Dennis LePore is ready to swing away at a recent Fall League game. Catcher Rick Thompson and Umpire Ron Carmichael look on. (Courtesy of The Foto Factory)

February 2022

Crazy Endings to Fall Softball Sessions By Larry Wolfe

You've all heard the old saying, "It ain't over till the fat lady sings." However, that's probably politically incorrect now, so we'll go with Yogi Berra's quote: "It ain't over till it's over!" That certainly describes what happened in both the Lakes and Sun Divisions at the close of our Fall Sessions.

First, in the Lakes Division, the A-1 Golf Carts-sponsored team needed to win its final two games to tie the Young Realty Team for first place. And Manager Joe Commisto's team did just that; but it's how they did it that is crazy. After winning the first game of a doubleheader versus Skyview Digital Media by the fairly comfortable score of 19-13, they staged a comeback for the ages in winning the second game 26-25. Going into their final at bats, the Golfers trailed Skyview 25-14. Ernie Flores led off the inning with a base hit but was quickly erased by a force out. One out. Then the craziness began. Eleven straight batters reached base, scoring ten runs in the process. Paul Eskridge hit a sac fly to tie the score. Now two

outs. Gene Granquist drew a base on balls before Charlie Alley singled to bring in Manny Verduco with the winning run. The win resulted in A-1 tying Manager Gary Hillabolt's Young Realty squad for first place, both with 11-7 records.

In the Sun Division, Manager Kim Whitney's Leckner Realty team started the season with a woeful 1-7 record, seemingly destined for last place. But, no, the Realtors then went on an eight-game winning streak, enabling them to tie Manager Randy Neumann's Spooner PT club with identical 9-7 records. The Realtors may have won the pennant outright, but the Therapists beat the Redeemed Team twice on the final day of the season to secure the tie. Crazy, indeed!

The top ten hitters in the Lakes Division were Vern Rodgers (.753), Ernie Flores (.744), Bill McCoy (.731), Tim Loeffler (.706), Manny Verduco (.695), Doug Warwick (.693), Brian Brockman (.691), Gene Granquist (.685), Gary Hillabolt and Frank Rouse (both .667). Brian Brockman led the division in homers with nine while Tim Loeffler and Vern Rodgers each hit six taters.

In the Sun Division, Dan Melosi led the league with a robust .867 average, followed by Marty Hobby (.825), Larry Kaufmann (.803), Tom Bersano (.795), Bobby Farmer (.778), Dave Platt (.766), Bob Wicks (.759), Greg Lemmon (.757), Dave Lingen (.744) and Mike Lebet (.729). Bob Wicks was the home run leader with 17, followed closely by Larry Kaufmann and Thom Stephens (15 each).

A big thank you goes out to The Redeemed Team (Suzy Steinmann & Michelle Hudak, Realtors) for renewing their advertising banner at the Field of Dreams. They also sponsor one of our teams in the Lakes Division. Go to the Sponsors Page on our website, www.sunlakessoftball.com, to read more about them and all our other sponsors and advertisers.



Cheryl Loyd and Jane Harvey cheer on their teammates during the opening game of the season. (Photo by Skyview Digital Media)

February 2022

Lady Sluggers' Season is Underway
By Larry Wolfe

The Lady Sluggers opened their season on January 4th with a twin bill versus the Stingers of Sunland Village East. Their schedule features thirteen doubleheaders and two tournaments. The tournaments are at Viewpoint RV & Golf Resort in Mesa (February 18-20) and at Valle del Oro RV Resort, also in Mesa (February 25-27).

By the time you read this, the Sluggers will have seven doubleheaders remaining, three at home and four on the road. The remaining home schedule includes the following: Wednesday, February 2nd versus Viewpoint, Wednesday, February 16th versus Rock Shadows and Wednesday, February 23rd versus Valle Del Oro. See the Ladies Page on our website, www.sunlakessoftball.com, to see the full home and away schedule. All home games start at noon and are played at the Field of Dreams, near Riggs and Old Price Roads. Come down to the field and cheer on our Sluggers!



Turn that double play, ladies! Left to right: Cyndy Hilby, Frankie DeMouth, Suzy Steinmann (#2), Kelly Hill (outfielder) and Cheryl Loyd (#4)
Photo Courtesy of Skyview Digital Media

March 2022

Lady Sluggers Having Winning Season By Larry Wolfe

The Lady Sluggers ended their 2022 season at the end of February. At press time, they had a record of thirteen wins, six losses and one tie. They had only six games remaining, so they'd already clinched a winning record for the season. Congratulations, ladies!

We'll recap the Lady Sluggers full season in the next edition of the *Splash*. In the interim, you can catch up on all current news on our website, www.sunlakessoftball.com.



Members of the Redeemed Team having fun at the Field of Dreams. Front, team sponsors Michelle Hudak & Suzy Steinmann; second row: Kelly Anderson, John Castro & Dave Platt; Back row: John Cooper, Rick Oien, Greg Lemmon, Mgr. Larry Kaufmann & Mark Durben. Absent: Mark Alop

March 2022

Winter Softball Update By Larry Wolfe

At press time, the Skyview Digital Media team, managed by Bill McCoy, had clinched the Lakes Division title with a record of 12 wins, seven losses and one tie. The Sun Division pennant race was too close to call, with Wolfe & Associates, managed by Ron Carmichael, and the Spooner PT squad, managed by Randy Neumann, battling down to the wire.

The top average hitters in the Lakes Division were Vern Rodgers (.745), Manny Verduco (.730), Dennis LePore (.721), Tim Loeffler (.720) and Brian Brockman (.698). Brockman (17), Rodgers (10) and Loeffler (8) were the leaders in homeruns.

Over in the Sun Division, Marty Hobby was leading the league with a robust .852 average, followed by Dan Melosi (.808), Tom Bersano (.778), Bob Wicks (.761) and Larry Kaufmann (.760). Top homerun hitters were Hobby (26), Greg Lemmon (25), Wicks (23), Bersano (21) and Mike Lebet and Tom Stephens (both with 20 taters).

We'll recap the final Winter Sessions standings and stats in the next edition of the *Splash*.

Our Chief Statistician, Jim Entwistle, pointed out that we recently had a rarity down at the field. In the Lakes Division, The Skyview Digital Media team shut out the Young Realty Team 12-0. That was the first shutout in that division in nearly three years. The last shutout in the Sun Division was two years ago when the Brenden Financial squad shellacked Farmers Insurance 22-0! Since the average score is 17-11 in the Lakes Division and 21-16 in the Sun Division, a shutout is truly an uncommon occurrence.

Our thanks go out to Chandler Air and Christopher & Myranda Fine Diamonds for renewing their advertising banners. Chandler Air has been a sponsor since 2019 while Christopher & Myranda have advertised since 2018. Go to the Sponsors Page on our website, www.sunlakessoftball.com, to learn more about them and all our other sponsors.

Our softball family experienced some very sad times recently. Bill Maxwell's wife, Doris, passed away after a years-long struggle with several health issues; Jeff and Connie Jay's son lost his long battle with cancer and Dave and Anita Boone's son passed away unexpectedly. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their families and friends.



The Lakes Division Winter Tourney Champs: Front, kneeling, l-r: Frank Tanner, Jeff Jay & Terry Zeltinger. Standing, l-r: Tim Loeffler, Wayne Newman, Jerry Smith, Chris Jensen, Dave Boone, Gary Alexander, Billy Maxwell, Mgr. Joe Commisto & Tom Vitolo

April 2022

A-1 Golf Goes from Last to Champs
By Larry Wolfe

After finishing the regular Winter Season with an 8-10 record, good for last place in the Lakes Division, hopes were not high entering the Winter Tournament for Manager Joe Commisto's A-1 Golf Cart sponsored team. However, they surprised the number one seeded Skyview Digital Media crew in the opening game with a 18-12 victory. Wayne Newman led the Golfers with four hits. He was supported by four teammates who stroked three hits each. Ken Brenden and Steve Schaidler had four hits each for the Drones.

In game two, the Young Home Team Realtors beat Core Photography 21-14 with Ken Brenden leading the way, reaching base five times. Jeff Jay and Jerry Smith had four safeties each for the Photographers.

In the third game, the A-1 Golfers continued rolling with a fairly easy 24-14 victory over the Young Home Team. Jeff Jay and Tim Loeffler led the Golfers attack with five hits each while Frank Tanner, Jerry Smith and Terry Zeltinger added four each.

Manager Vern Rodgers led his Core lensmen to a 13-9 win over number one ranked Skyview Digital Media in game four, eliminating the Drones from the competition. Rodgers smacked four safeties, including three doubles.

In game five, the Young Home Team Realtors eliminated Core Photography with a 14-9 win. Mike Willits and Terry Zeltinger had three hits each for the winners, while Dave Boone smacked four safeties for the losing squad. Brian Brockman had three hits, including a long homer and Duke Garoutte added three hits of his own.

In the championship contest, the A-1 Golfers jumped out to an early 9-2 lead and coasted to a 23-11 victory. It was the culmination of their magic run from last to champs. The Golfers banged out a total of 31 hits, with Jerry Smith and Frank Tanner leading the way with five each. Congratulations to Manager Commisto and his squad for a stunning tourney win!

Tim Loeffler led all hitters in the tourney with a .929 on base percentage. Others at .800 and over were Ken Brenden (.864), Frank Tanner (.857), Gary Alexander (.833), Vern Rodgers (.818) and Larry Maggard (.800).



The Sun Division Champs: Kneeling, l-r, Dick Bleich, Paul Gayer, Tom Stephens, Mgr. Ron Carmichael and Dave Martin. Back, l-r, Tom Schneider, John Castro, Dan Melosi, Bill Corso and Mike Gloyd.

April 2022

Comeback Kids: Wolves Capture Sun Division Tourney By Larry Wolfe

The number one-seeded Wolfe & Associates squad was surprised by the number four-seeded Leckner Realty squad in the opening game of the Sun Division's Winter Tournament. In a slugfest, the Realtors outlasted the Wolves 24-22. In a well-balanced attack, leadoff man Bobby Reed went 5 for 5 with 2 homers. He had support from Tom Bersano who was 4 for 5 with two longballs. Marty Hobby had three homers for the Wolves with Dan Melosi adding two.

In game two, Spooner PT bested the Redeemed Team 19-11. The winners were led by Jon Hendrikse (4 for 4 with a homer), Ernie Flores (4 for 4) and Mike Lebet 3 for 4 with two homers).

In the game three winners' bracket, Spooner PT bested the upstart Leckner Realtors 22-14. Mike Lebet led the way for the Therapists, going five for five with two homers. He was supported by Mick Batista and Brad Wendt who had four hits each.

In the losers' bracket, Wolfe & Associates eliminated the Redeemed Team by a 15-9 score. Dick Bleich and Bill Corso led the Wolves' attack with four hits each while Greg Lemmon hit two towering HRs for the Redeemers.

The Wolves continued roaring in game five, banishing the Leckner Realty squad in a close 23-19 contest. Marty Hobby had a perfect day at the plate with two walks, two singles and a long homer. Tom Stephens added four hits, including two longballs. Tom Bersano reached base five times for the Realtors, with three hits and two walks.

The championship game pitted Spooner PT against the Wolves. Counting both the regular season and the tourney, both teams were 14-6 and were 3-3 in head-to-head contests. The Wolves battled back from their game one loss to beat the Therapists 17-12. Manager Ron Carmichael, Marty Hobby and Dan Melosi each had four hits for the winners to lead their attack. Hobby's hits included two homers and a triple.

Marty Hobby had an incredible tournament, going 17 for 18 for a .944 average and he led all players in homers with six. Other top hitters were Bill Corso (.929), Tom Bersano and Bobby Reed (both at .857) and Bob Wicks (.846). Mike Lebet, Dan Melosi and Tom Stephens tied for second in homeruns with four each. Congratulations to Manager Ron Carmichael and his "Comeback Kids!"



The 2022 Lady Sluggers; Front, l-r: Cyndy Hilby, Jane Harvey, Roseanne Kuefner, Teresa Dorman, Suzy Steinmann & Jan Davies. Back row, l-r: Kristina Traylor, Coach Dan Kuefner, Cheryl Loyd, Lynn Casey, Sharon Bergan, Robyn Moody, Sue Rodke, Frankie DeMouth, Terry Finley, Coach Scott Steinmann & Mary Cooper.
Missing: Kelly Hill & Ann Buckley

April 2022

Lady Sluggers Season Wrap-up By Larry Wolfe

Our Lady Sluggers senior softball team concluded a very successful season, with a record of 17 wins, seven losses and two ties. The top five hitters on the team were Sharon Bergan (.795), Frankie DeMouth (.704), Sue Rodke (.702), Suzy Steinmann (.680) and Cyndy Hilby (.595).

Special thanks go out to coaches Scott Steinmann and Dan Kuefner, statistician and scoreboard operator Lynn Tanner and umpire Tom Erpelding. The team also wants to thank all the fans who came to the Field of Dreams to cheer them on.

The Sluggers will begin practice for the 2023 season in November. If you're interested in playing, check out the Ladies Page on our website, www.sunlakessoftball.com, for more information.



The Skyview Digital Media Lakes Division Champs. Left to right: Dennis LePore, Steve Schaider, Charlie Alley, Tom Lorgan, Doug Warwick, Team Sponsor & Skyview's CEO Alysa Chapman, Mgr. Bill McCoy, Jerry Geisinger, Gene Granquist, Terry Zeltinger & Dennis Colbert. Absent: Reggie Reese

April 2022

Skyview and Wolfe & Associates Win Winter Titles By Larry Wolfe

The Skyview Digital Media squad, managed by Bill McCoy, won the Lakes Division's Winter League pennant with a record of 10 wins, seven losses and one tie. Manager Gary Hillbolt's Young Realty Team finished second with a 9-9 record. In the Sun Division Manager Ron Carmichael led the Wolfe & Associates team to a 13-5 record, just edging by Manager Randy Neumann's Spooner PT crew, which finished one game back with a 12-6 mark. Congrats to both championship teams.

The top ten hitters in the Lakes Division were Manny Verduco (.730), Tim Loeffler (.729), Vern Rodgers (.724), Dennis LePore (.723), Brian Brockman (.703), Sam Giordano (.696), Bill McCoy (.689), Mike Willits (.683), Dave Boone (.677) and Gene Granquist (.672). Brian Brockman led the division in homers with twenty. Vern Rodgers finished second with ten round trippers.

In the Sun Division Marty Hobby led the league with an .853 average. The remainder of the top ten were Dan Melosi (.806), Tom Bersano (.783), Mike Lebet (.754), Larry Kaufmann (.751), Bob Wicks (.746), Dave Platt (.725), Jon Hendrikse (.718), Dave Martin (.704), Bobby Farmer (.700) and Greg Lemmon (.700). Bob Wicks led in homers with 28. Others with twenty-plus taters were Greg Lemmon and Marty Hobby (both with 27), Tom Bersano (26) and Mike Lebet and Tom Stephens (both with 23).

As you read this, our Spring Sessions are in full swing. Check out our website, www.sunlakessoftball, for up-to-date news and stats. Also, check out other articles in this edition of the *Splash* for recaps of the Winter Tournaments.

A big thank-you goes out to Dan Schneider, Owner of Aluma-Line, Inc., for renewing his advertising banner. Aluma-Line has been an advertising sponsor every year since 2003! Go to the Sponsors Page on our website for links to Aluma-Line and all our other sponsors. Support Our Sponsors!



Scorekeeper Cyndy Hilby and scoreboard operator Frank Tanner are two of the many volunteers who contribute to the success of our softball program.

(Courtesy of Picture Perfect Photos)

May 2022

Redeemed Team & Core Photography Are Spring Champs
-Larry Wolfe

In two tight pennant races, the Redeemed Team and the Core Photography-sponsored team won their respective divisions. Manager Larry Kaufmann's Redeemed Team edged out Manager Tom Bersano's Leckner Realty squad by one game in the Sun Division, finishing with a 10-6 record versus the Realtors 9-7 mark. In the Lakes Division the race was even tighter with Manager Gary Hillbolt's Photographers finishing a half game better than Manager Joe Commisto's A-1 Golf Carts team. The Photographers went 10-6 while the Golfers were 9-6 with one tie. Thanks to these four managers and team sponsors and these others: Managers Ron Carmichael, Tom Erpelding, Bill McCoy and Randy Nuemann and team sponsors Skyview Digital Media, Spooner Physical Therapy, Wolfe & Associates and the Young Realty Team.

Marty Hobby led the Sun Division in hitting with an .823 average. The remainder of the top ten were Dan Melosi (.810), Tom Bersano (.805), Mike Lebet (.777), Larry Kaufmann (.746), Bob Wicks (.736), Jon Hendrikse (.733), Greg Lemmon (.723), Bob Reed (.722) and Dave Platt (.719). Bob Wicks led the division in homers with 44. Others with 30+ long balls were Tom Bersano (40), Mike Lebet & Marty Hobby (both with 39), Greg Lemmon (36) and Dan Melosi (32).

In the Lakes Division, Tom Lorgan was the batting champ for the third consecutive year with a mark of .766. Others in the top ten were Tim Loeffler (.746), Dennis LePore (.728), Vern Rodgers (.724), Brian Brockman (.721), Sam Giordano (.718), Manny Verdusco (.716), Mike Willits (.701), Gene Granquist (.685) and Bill McCoy (.679). Brian Brockman ran away with the homerun title, slugging 29 big flies. Tim Loeffler and Vern Rodgers both had ten round trippers each.

We'll cover more stats in a future edition of the *Splash*. In addition, the year-end tournament results will appear in next month's edition.

For the first time since the advent of COVID, we held a social event for members, spouses and significant others. Annual awards were presented at the function, including the following (Lakes Division winners listed first): Rookies-of-the-Year Brian Brockman & Greg Lemmon; Most Improved Players Manny Verduco & Kurt Carmichael and Sportsmen of the Year Bill Maxwell & Marty Hobby. Winners of the prestigious Spirit of Sun Lakes Softball Award were Jim Entwistle and Bill Jacobson. Established in 2010, this award is given to the member or members who go “above and beyond” in supporting our program. Winners are selected based upon their outstanding dedication, initiative and service to our organization. Congratulations to Jim and Bill and all the other award winners and league leaders.

We congratulate newly-elected Board Member John Whitman and reelected Board Member Doug Warwick. They join holdovers Tom Erpelding, Cyndy Hilby, Jim Leckner, Bill McCoy and Larry Wolfe. Thanks to Bill Corso who completed two consecutive three-year terms on our Board.

For up-to-date news go to our website: www.sunlakessoftball.com.



The A-1 champs: KNEELING, L-R: Larry Maggard, Tom Lorgan, Manager Joe Commisto and Tim Loeffler. Standing, l-r: Chris Jensen (injured reserve), Gene Granquist, Dave Boone, Doug Warwick, Reg Reese, Charlie Alley, Tom Vitolo and Bob Montelione.

(Courtesy of LePore's Lensmen)

June 2022

A-1 Golfers Win Lakes Division Tourney
-Larry Wolfe

Player-Manager Joe Commisto went four for four, leading his number two-seeded A-1 Golf Carts club to a 13-10 win over Manager Tom Erpelding's Young Home Team Realtors in the opening game of the Lakes Division Spring tournament.

Homer happy Tim Loeffler smashed three long balls to lead Manager Gary Hillbolt's Core Photographers to an 18-14 win over Manager Bill McCoy's

Skyview Digital Media team in the second contest. Jim Entwistle supported the cause, going four for four. John Seigla led Skyview, also going four for four. Brian Brockman went deep for the Drones.

A-1 edged the number one-seeded Core Photography team 15-13 in game three. Lakes Division batting champ Tom Lorgan and Gene Granquist both had three hits to lead the Golfers. Dennis Bernaiche had four hits for the Photographers.

In the game four elimination game, the Young Home Team ousted Skyview Digital Media by an 18-9 score. Tim Loeffler led the Realtors attack with four hits. Gary Alexander had three hits to lead the Drones.

The Young Home Team surprised the #1 seeded Photographers in game five, eliminating them from the tourney with an 18-14 win. In a well-balanced attack, four players had three hits each: Dan Malachuk, Frank Rouse, Don Scoggins and John Seigla. Dennis Bernaiche, Bill McCoy and Manny Verduco paced the Photographers with three safeties each.

In the low-scoring championship game, the A-1 Golfers bested the Young Realtors 10-5. Tom Lorgan led the Golfers with three hits while Tim Loeffler added another homer. No one on the Realtors' team had more than two hits, as the team was held to a total of only eight. Congratulations to Manager Joe Commisto and the A-1 Golf Cart-sponsored club!

Tim Loeffler was the hitting star of the tournament, leading all hitters with a .857 average, 1.737 slugging percentage and five home runs. Tom Lorgan (.818) and Dennis Bernaiche (.800) also had great stats.

The tournament was a great finale to our 2021-2022 season. A cook-out and awards ceremony was held between games on day two with leftovers still available on championship day. The festivities were enjoyed by large crowds throughout the tournament. As the Brooklyn Dodger fans used to say, "Wait till next year! It'll be even better!"



SLSSA President Doug Warwick with award winners Cyndy Hilby & Suzy Steinmann (Courtesy of Pretty Pictures, Ink.)

June 2022

Lady Sluggers Honored at Tourney
-Larry Wolfe

Six members of the Lady Sluggers senior softball team were honored at the annual Spring Tournament and Cook-out.

Award certificates for the top five hitters were presented by Sun Lakes Senior Softball Association (SLSSA) President Doug Warwick to the following: Batting champ Sharon Bergen (.795), Frankie DeMouth (2nd at .704), Sue Rodke (3rd at .702), Suzy Steinmann (4th at .680) and Cyndy Hilby (5th at .595).

Roseanne Kuefner was honored with a Certificate for Most Improved Fielder while Cyndy Hilby was the Most Improved Hitter.

Congratulations to all these ladies for their outstanding seasons. In addition, congrats once again to the whole team for their impressive 2022 record of 17 wins, against only seven losses and one tie.

The 2023 edition of the Lady Sluggers will begin practices in November and start league play next January in the Valley of the Sun League.



The Redeemed Team: Left Group kneeling: Chuck Schaan & Thom Stephens. Standing, l-r: Bill Corso, Kurt Carmichael, Ernie Flores & Marty Hobby. Right Group kneeling: Dave Martin. Standing, l-r: Kim Whitney, Team Mom Janet Rodgers, Vern Rodgers and Manager Larry Kaufmann.
(Courtesy of Kaufmann's Kamera Kompany)

June 2022

Redeemed Team are Sun Division Tourney Champs
-Larry Wolfe

In the opening game of the Spring Sun Division Tournament, the fourth-seeded Wolfe & Associates team, managed by Ron Carmichael, surprised Manager Larry Kaufmann's Redeemed Team by a 21-16 score. Dick Bleich led the Wolves' attack, going four for five with two homers. Dan Melosi and Bobby Reed also homered. Marty Hobby hit two out for the Redeemers while Thom Stephens added one.

In game two, Paul Gayer knocked in the winning run in a comeback win for Manager Tom Bersano's Leckner Realty Team in a 26-25 slugfest versus the Spooner Physical Therapy squad. Dave Cooper (5 for 5), Dave Waibel (4 hits and a walk) and Gregg Lemmon (2 HRs, a single and walk) led the Realtors. Four players (Player-Manager Randy Neumann, Kelly Anderson, Brad Wendt and Bob Wicks) reached base five times for the Therapists. Wicks and Dave Platt homered.

In what might have been prophesied, retired Pastor Thom Stephens hit a game-winning homer in the bottom of the 7th to lead the Redeemed Team to a 20-17 victory to eliminate Spooner PT. Ernie Flores and Billy Kee had four hits each for the winners while Marty Hobby homered twice. Dave Lingen and Dave Platt hit long balls for the losers.

Dave Martin drove in the winning run in game four, securing a 23-22 win for the Leckner Realtors over Wolfe & Associates. Mike Lebet and Dave Lingen both reached base five times for the winners. Lebet and Greg Lemmon each slammed two homers while Dave Platt added one. Dan Melosi reached base six times for the Wolves, including two homers. Both Ron Carmichael and Bobby Reed had four safeties.

The Redeemed Team then eliminated Wolfe & Associates in a close encounter, 11-9. Ernie Flores, Dave Lingen and Kim Whitney led the Redeemers with three hits each while Kurt Carmichael added a homer and double. Bobby Reed had three hits for the Wolves.

In the championship game, the Redeemers unleashed a 32-hit attack on their way to a 25-16 win. Dave Martin had five hits, while Marty Hobby had four hits, a walk, a sac fly and two homers; but the real hero was Thom Stephens who filled in as pitcher due to regular pitcher Bill Corso being injured. It was his first time

pitching “in ages.” Pastor Thom proved to be a savior for the Redeemers! Congrats to Manager Kaufmann and the entire Redeemed Team.

Six players had averages of .800 or better in the tournament, led by Bobby Reed at .867. Other .800 hitters were Billy Kee (.846), Dave Lingen (.833), Kim Whitney (.810) and Ernie Flores and Mike Lebet (both at .800). Marty Hobby was the home run leader with six. Lebet, Greg Lemmon and Dave Platt each had four round-trippers.

Many thanks to Jim Entwistle, our statistician extraordinaire, for compiling all the box scores and stats.



2021-22 Sun Division batting champ, Marty Hobby

(Courtesy of Freeze Frame Fotos)

July 2022

Summer Softball News

-Larry Wolfe

For those who just can't get enough softball, we have a Summer League that started on May 3rd and will run through September 22nd. This league is less "formal" than our regular Fall, Winter and Spring Sessions. We have three teams from Sun Lakes and one from Robson Ranch in the Summer League. Each team plays one doubleheader per week over the 21-week schedule. The summer league Sun Lakes team managers are Kelly Anderson, Gary Hillabolt and Mike Lebet. Randy Peterson manages the Robson Ranch squad. Volunteer umpires are Joe Byrne, Joe Commisto, Denny Davidson, Gary Hillabolt, Dave Platt, Randy Rothenbuehler and Kim Whitney. Cyndy Hilby and Vern & Janet Rodgers are the scorekeepers and scoreboard operators. Thanks to all these volunteers for braving the heat, so we can have a successful summer program.

A special shout out goes to Jim Leckner, a long-time player, Board member and team sponsor for all he did for our program over the past eight years. Jim and Connie recently moved back to South Dakota to be nearer to family. Thanks, Jim. You'll be missed.

Also missing is the monthly Softball Player Profile article, so if you're looking for it, you can stop! We'll resume that series of articles in the fall.

We were saddened by the loss of two former long-time members of our Association. Roger Bassetti and Bruce Watkins both recently passed away. Roger and Bruce were both members of several Sun Lakes World Tournament Championship teams, in addition to playing for many years in our regular league. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Roger's wife, Bonnie, Bruce's wife, Jane, and all their family and friends.

We also send out condolences to member Mark McKinnon who recently lost his brother, DeShon Lobe, to an unexpected heart attack. Our thoughts are with Mark and his family and friends during this difficult time.

RIP, Roger, Bruce & DeShon.



2021-22 Home Run King Bob Wicks
(Courtesy of Sweet Swing Photos)

July 2022

Softball Season Stats for Dummies
-Larry Wolfe

For the first time in several years, there were no new individual batting records set during the 2021-2022 softball season, at least that we know of. We track only “traditional or standard statistics,” not the new advanced metrics. Maybe somebody set a record for one of those metrics, but we’ll never know! Look up the definitions for BABIP, OPS+, WRAA, WPA and WAR and you’ll have a headache trying to decipher what they mean and how to calculate them.

Here's a run down of the “stats for dummies.” The numbers are for the regular seasons only and exclude tournaments. Leaders are listed separately for the Lakes and Sun divisions with the Lakes’ leaders shown first.

At Bats: Wayne Newman (305) and Randy Neumann (375), both below Tom Erpelding's 2017-18 record of 394.

Times On Base: Tim Loeffler (211) and Randy Neumann (262), just short of Erpelding's 2017-18 record of 269.

Walks: Tim Loeffler (35) and Randy Neumann (39), six below Randy's own 2020-21 record of 45.

Singles: Wayne Newman (161) and Dave Martin (172), again just short of Erpelding's 2017-18 mark of 177.

Doubles: Tim Loeffler (39) and Mike Lebet (42), both far below Larry Kaufmann's 2015-16 record 50.

Triples: Joe Commisto & John Robinson (both 8) and Kelly Anderson & Dave Martin (both with 5), far below Bill Stanick's 2016-17 record of 20.

Home Runs: Brian Brockman (29) and Bob Wicks (44), both well below Bobby Farmer's record of 56 set just last year.

Sacrifice Flies: Doug Warwick (7) and Randy Neumann (13), well below Kim Whitney's 18, also set last year.

Batting Average: Tom Lorgan (.766) and Marty Hobby (.823). The all-time record of .873 was set by Reyes Gonzales in 2016-17.

Slugging Percentage, a stat measuring average and power-hitting: Brian Brockman (1.082) and Marty Hobby (1.498). Reyes Gonzales holds that record, too, slugging 1.634 in 2019-20.

There you have it. No new records, but lots of stats that we dummies can understand!

Thanks again to our Chief Statistician, Jim Entwistle, and to all the scorekeepers who recorded the results of every at bat. There would be no stats without them.



The current Field of Dreams banner in centerfield.
(Courtesy of the Photo Phactory)

October 2022

Field of Dreams Marks 20th Anniversary
-Larry Wolfe

The Field of Dreams, the home of Sun Lakes Softball, was dedicated on Saturday, November 9, 2002. We'll be recognizing the 20th anniversary of the field this November.

Sun Lakes Softball was founded in 1984 by Jack Lander with the help of many other pioneers and the support of Ed Robson. The very first "makeshift" field was at the corner of Minnesota Avenue and EJ Robson Blvd. in Cottonwood. In 1988, we played briefly at an empty lot at the corner of Riggs Road and Dobson Blvd. where the First Baptist Church now stands. Then in 1989 we moved to our first "real field" with fences, a backstop, dugouts, stands for fans and other amenities. This field was located where the Robson Library Branch is today. The only drawback was that a lot of foul balls ended up on Riggs Road!

Then in 2002 we moved to the current Field of Dreams. The Opening Ceremonies on that November day included the introduction of the many individuals and

companies that contributed to the construction of the field. There was also a brief memorial service in remembrance of the softball players who had passed since the 1984 founding of our Association. That was followed by a tournament featuring our then four men's' teams. We've now more than doubled our membership to include eight men's teams, the Lady Sluggers and a recreational program.

There are still a dozen guys involved in our program that played in that 2002 Opening Day tournament. They include Dennis Bernaiche, Dennis Colbert, Bill Corso, Denny Davidson, Jim Dunn, Dave Graham-Armstrong, Evan Hansen, Bob Hutchins, Tom Lorgan, Ron Pennington, Tom Vitolo and Larry Wolfe.

Here's to the next twenty years of Sun Lakes Softball!!



Remember those good old days? You can live them again at the Field of Dreams!
(Courtesy of Dream Again Photos)

October 2022

Looking for New Recruits

-Larry Wolfe

The Fall Sessions of our Sun Lakes Senior Softball program will get underway in late October, but it's not too late to join our Association and participate in the upcoming season. We are currently practicing at Snedigar Field on Alma School Road while the Field of Dreams outfield grass is being overseeded. Come by any Tuesday or Thursday from 8 to 10 AM to see what we're all about. The deadline to sign up for the new season is October 13th.

You don't need to be a superstar to participate; we have programs for players with varying skill levels. And there's no need to worry if you haven't played in years. Many of the guys on our teams hadn't played any organized sports for a long time before joining us. You'd be surprised how quickly you'll regain some of those "lost skills" and the desire to be a kid again and a member of a team. The camaraderie among our players is probably the number one benefit of joining us. Plus, there's

the exercise aspect; you'll be running (or at least trotting!) around the bases instead of walking or riding around a golf course! (Although lots of our guys do both!)

If you'd like additional information, you can visit our website at www.sunlakessoftball.com or e-mail Larry Wolfe at larryewolfe@msn.com. We hope to see you at Snedigar Park! Play ball!!



Larry Maggard sprints toward first base in a recent Summer League game. The Fall League is scheduled to start on October 25th.
(Courtesy of Play Ball Photos)

October 2022

Summer Softball is a Wrap
-Larry Wolfe

We wrapped up our long summer season, which started in May, in mid-September. Our guys are now practicing for the upcoming Fall Season at Snedigar Park while the Field of Dreams is being overseeded. Opening Day for the Fall Season has tentatively been set for October 25, dependent upon overseeding being completed

by that date. We plan to have eight teams, four in each of the Sun and Lakes Divisions. Team rosters and game schedules will be posted on our website, www.sunlakessoftball.com, during the week of October 16th.

Our ladies' team, the Sun Lakes Sluggers, who play in the Valley of the Sun League against teams throughout the southeast valley, will begin practicing for their season in late November. Keep an eye on the Ladies Page of our website for up-to-date information.

A well-attended Farewell Party was held at Nando's Mexican Café for long-time member Larry Kaufmann and his wife, Felicia. The Kaufmanns are relocating to California to be near their family. Larry played in our league for over 15 years; he also served as team manager for many seasons and was a valuable member of our traveling tournament teams. Larry was a four-time batting champion, with a career-best .838 in 2013, the second highest average in the history of our league. He also holds the all-time record for doubles, smashing 50 two-baggers in 2016. Additionally, he was noted for having a rifle arm, throwing out hundreds of runners trying to score over the years. He'll be missed as a great ball player, but more so, as a great teammate. Enjoy SoCal, Larry and Felicia!



The World Champs! Kneeling L-R: George Siegel, Dave Platt & Thom Stephens. Standing L-R: Richard Lamoree, Kenny Sheffield, Emery Hunt, King Ott, Mgr. Dennis Dalton, Mark Koskovich, Dan Melosi, Jon Hendrikse, MVP Mike Lebet, Scorekeeper Cyndy Hilby, Marty Hobby & Brad Wendt

November 2022

AZ SCORPIONS ARE WORLD CHAMPIONS!

By Dennis Dalton & Larry Wolfe

The AZ Scorpions 60/AAA team rolled to an 8-0 record in Las Vegas to capture the SS-USA World Championship Tournament crown. Competing in a massive 45-team bracket, the Scorpions combined outstanding pitching, relentless hitting, and a stifling defense to bring home the World title.

Field of Dreams players on the roster included Ron Carmichael, Jon Hendrikse, Marty Hobby, Mike Lebet, Dan Melosi, Dave Platt, Thom Stephens, and Brad Wendt, along with Manager Dennis Dalton and Super Scorer Cyndy Hilby. All made major contributions to the Scorpions successful season.

The Sun Lakes players were among the stars of the show in Las Vegas, placing four athletes on the All-Tournament team: Marty Hobby, Brad Wendt, Dan Melosi, and Mike Lebet joined Emery Hunt of Glendale on the mythical 5-man squad. Shortstop Hobby

was flawless in the field while hitting .786 with a homerun. He and Emery Hunt both hit .786, with Hunt powering 2 homers. Dan Melosi blasted 2 homers and batted .760 while gliding everywhere in the outfield with his easy, graceful gait and sure hands. Brad Wendt was a force at first base and at the plate. Slugging the ball at an almost unbelievable .833 clip, Brad delivered many clutch RBIs. Saving the best for last, Mike Lebet, the Tournament MVP, was sensational, going 22-for-24 and was on base in 90% of his 29 plate appearances. He played a tireless outfield, pinch-ran for players as needed, and gunned down a runner at the plate in a close contest versus the tough Nebraska team.

As dominating as these offensive performances suggest, one must also recognize the unbelievable pitching performance by Kenny Sheffield of Fountain Hills. Playing on a severely injured ankle, Sheffield was nearly unhittable, holding teams to under 9 runs per game and twirling a shutout in the Championship game. "In 18 years of senior ball," said Manager Dennis Dalton, "I've never seen such a dominating performance. Considering this was the Worlds, where teams bring their absolute best players, it was astounding to watch Kenny work. When you consider his injury, you just marvel at his ability and toughness."

The Senior Softball-USA Association World Championships featured 662 teams across 28 age/skill divisions. It's the senior softball marquee event of the year, the largest senior tournament in the world, and has drawn teams from all over the globe. The Scorpions played 8 games against teams from six different states: Hawaii, Nebraska, Georgia, Texas, Maryland and California and won'em all!

Posting a 60-16 W/L record over 12 tournaments, the Scorpions were first or second in ten events, capping the year with the World Championship. With this win, however, comes an elevation to a higher-skill level for 2023. The 60/Scorpions will compete at the Major level, the second highest-ranked division. New player-manager, Brad Wendt, is optimistic about the season ahead. The Scorpions will take the field in Fountain Hills October 29-30 to kick off the new campaign.



A scene from Opening Day 2021: Jeff Jay gets ready to swing as Umpire Joe Byrne and on-deck batter Jerry Smith look on. I bet it was a base hit!

November 2022

OPENING DAY HAS ARRIVED!

By Larry Wolfe

As Major League Baseball is playing the World Series and ending their 2022 season, Sun Lakes Senior Softball is just starting up again. Yes, as MLB winds down, we “wind up!” Opening Day for our 2022-2023 sessions was October 25th. We have Fall, Winter and Spring Seasons, then a more informal summer program. We have a total of eight teams divided between two divisions, plus our Lady Sluggers, who will open their season in January.

This year’s team sponsors are A-1 Golf Carts, Camp Hilby, Core Consulting, Redeemed Team Realtors, Skyview Digital Media, Spooner Physical Therapy, Wolfe & Associate and the Young Home Team Realtors. We also have three new banner advertising sponsors. The Sun Lakes Barbershop, located at 12220 E. Riggs Road; Spooner Physical Therapy, located at 10325 E. Riggs Road, Suite 102; and, the fans of the Wisconsin Badgers all have new banners at the Field of Dreams. Many thanks to all our team and advertising sponsors for their support of our program.

Here's a reflection on Opening Day: What is it about Opening Day that means so much to baseball and softball players? Well, Opening Day isn't just a day, it's a state of mind. It's a symbol of rebirth. It's starting with a clean slate. You've made no errors; you've made no outs and every team is tied for first place! And you know if you win that first game, you can't lose them all! There's a little more excitement than for a regular game; your heart beats a little faster and you're really pumped for that first at bat of the season. You wonder, "Do I still have it?" You take that first swing...and, yes, there it is! And another season is underway! Play Ball!!



Jerry Giesinger of the Skyview Digital Media team gets ready to swing away while on-deck batter, Frank Rouse, looks on. (Photo by Larry Wolfe)

December 2022

FALL SOFTBALL SEASON IS UNDERWAY

By Larry Wolfe

Our Fall Softball Seasons started on October 25th and run through December 16th. This season's team sponsors and managers are as follows:

Lakes Division: A-1 Golf Carts (Manager Dennis Kennedy), Core Consulting (Chris Jensen), Skyview Digital Media (Tom Erpelding) and Young Home Team Realty (Gary Hillabolt)

Sun Division: Camp Hilby (Manager Mike Gloyd), Redeemed Team Real Estate (Sam Giordano), Spooner Physical Therapy (Randy Newmann) and Wolfe & Associate (Ron Carmichael)

At press time we were just into our third week of play, but you can check out up-to-date standings and batting statistics on the Stats Page of our website: www.sunlakessoftball.com.

Our Lady Sluggers team has begun practicing for their upcoming season in the Valley of the Sun League, which includes teams from throughout the southeast valley. Their season begins in early January. Their schedule will be posted on the Ladies Page of our website in the near future.

Three long-time banner advertising sponsors renewed their terms recently. Thanks to Alice Schroeder, President of the Charles Company & Associates, sponsors since 2003; Steven Netzel, President of Netzel Financial Services, sponsors since 2007; and, Wolfe & Associate, Tax & Accounting Services, also a sponsor since 2007. We also have a brand-new sponsor, the Sun Lakes Breakfast Lions Club, which will be advertising their flag flying program at the Field of Dreams. We have links to these and all our other sponsors on the Sponsors Page of our website. Support the companies that support our community!

