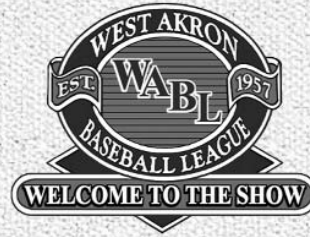




WEST AKRON BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL LEAGUE



Welcome to the 2004 season!

A note from the President – a 2003 success!

I would like to thank all of you who helped in making the 2003 season a success. As I look back on the year, the WABL program continued to provide the opportunity for the boys and girls of West Akron to play baseball and softball in a competitive, but fun environment. Having three of my four children still involved in the program; I know how much they all looked forward to their next game and all fun that came with it. Whether they won or lost, the time that they spent on those fields is something they will keep with them the rest of their lives.

As I step down as the WABL president, I want to thank everyone who has supported me through the past two seasons and let them know how much I appreciate their help. I would also like to thank all the coaches, managers, parents, and especially the WABL board members for the time they volunteer to make the WABL program the success that it is. You are truly the reason that the league continues to be successful year after year.

In closing I hope that all of us continue to remember that this program is for the kids and we all should do our part to make sure they are having fun and creating positive memories to pass on to their kids.

Thank you,

Randy Salyer

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THANK YOU!

We want to thank all of the sponsors, coaches, parents, grandparents, and friends who make WABL possible.

Inside you will find a list of all of the 2003 sponsors. Please patronize these businesses that have so generously supported WABL. If you are interested in sponsoring a team for the 2004 season, please contact **Doug Bryson at By Design: 330-867-9029.**



Here's what's new for 2004!

Hello fellow baseball and softball supporters. I want to remind you of the WABL organization purpose. We are here to teach our children the fundamentals of the game. Encourage them to succeed and improve within their abilities. And to show them how to play fair within the rules and with others to create a team.

STATUS:

We have several growing pains throughout the 12+ years that I have been involved in WABL. The board has grown and almost dissolved and grown again over the past several years due to changes that some liked and others did not. We now have a full executive board and will be working to fill the regular board within a year or less.

The regular roster ball for both boys and girls has shrunk for several reasons over the past few years. Several reasons identified are:

1. Movement of families to the suburbs.
2. Parents having limited time and resources.
3. Parents and players wanting more competition.
4. Parents and players wanting or being forced to play only one sport or activity.

For these reasons and unique ones for both boys and girls, some changes have been implemented to help stabilize or organization.

On the girls side, these actions had to take place about six years ago when the Copley and Revere teams left the WABL umbrella. Travel ball teams for the girls were formed to help keep the girls interested and involved in WABL. The Shedevils have been keeping the girls in our organization by giving them another avenue to travel, better competition and in so doing, have helped push the girls not in travel ball up to a higher level by still remaining in the league and leading the other girls. We have also had clinics and instructional times during the off season for all the girls to attend. All of the girls who play in the travel ball teams for 14U and under are required to play within our roster league or on Copley and Revere roster ball teams. As a result, this program has worked very well.

The boys are now involved in a similar program which was formed to not only help keep our players in the league, but to also give them an opportunity to play at a higher level to help prepare them for high school and beyond. This is the second season for this program and we feel we have worked out the bugs that hindered the first season. Scheduling should not be a problem, and we have reduced the roster season games down to help with the longer playoffs. This will help offset the rising costs of umpires and related expenses. The Falcon program is designed to help WABL players and the area high school programs. Players can go to off season clinics and related programs through Falcon and WABL which will help players improve before the regular season. Anyone who is in WABL, Falcon or the Shedevils programs may attend these clinics.

The tryouts for both programs are held once a year in July or August for the Falcons, and in October for the Shedevils. Both had information out at the Day of Champs, on the website and one of the groups had tryout information printed in the Beacon Journal and West Side Leader. As the program gets out to everyone, and they are looking for the info it will become more of a regular part of the WABL tradition.

We have set up these programs to help the players and WABL. The requirements are not unrealistic and very easy to follow for most participants. We are here to help our children that are involved in the WABL organization. We want to continue the 43 year tradition of roster ball. The expansion to include travel ball is just another branch of our organization to help the players in it obtain their goals. We are not looking to become a travel ball program only!! Our number one priority is the roster ball program and to keep all children in it. Anyone who wishes to play in an outside travel team and play for WABL will not be permitted under our rules for both boys and girls. We are looking out for our program and all the children involved in it; not just for the few who want travel ball only.

Bruce Clough, WABL President

West Akron Baseball League (WABL) Website – GO TO www.wabl.org

If you haven't noticed or you haven't been online, we have a new WABL website. In the spring of 2003 we launched version 2 of www.wabl.org. The new site is just an evolution of our first one, and we will continue to improve it. Feel free to give us feedback and/or information for areas of the site that need it, because we as a volunteer organization can always use help.

We want the WABL website to be your first stop for up-to-date information about WABL, including boys' baseball and girls' softball schedules and standings, the league calendar of events, field locations, sponsors, and other information. If we overlooked anything that you may need, don't hesitate to let us know by emailing us at webmaster@wabl.org, and we'll do our best to get it on the site ASAP.

You may have noticed the new banner ads we have on the site for our sponsors and affiliates, and we encourage that everyone in the WABL organization support these companies/groups. The banner ads are just another way for our sponsors to advertise their great services and for WABL to gain additional funds to put back into fields and equipment. So, stay tuned this year as the site grows and gets bigger and better. We are currently working on a stronger system to get scores and standings correct, updated, and posted on the site, we have researchers working on our WABL history section, and we will have maps and directions to all of our fields this year.

Here's to a great season, and good luck to all of WABL!
Scott A. Cooper, Vice President, Web Services

2004 WABL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 17th	WABL Falcon Travel Youth Baseball Fundraiser @ Portage Country Club		
January 25th	Kent State University Softball Clinics – PITCHING, CATCHING AND HITTING/BUNTING CAMPS		
February 7th – 10AM-Noon	Walk-in sign ups Northwest Family Recreation Center		
February 7th	University of Akron Softball Clinics: – PITCHING AND HITTING CAMPS		
February 11th – 7-9PM	Walk-in sign-ups Northwest Family Recreation Center		
February 14th – Noon-2PM	Walk-in sign-ups Northwest Family Recreation Center		
February 14th	University of Akron Softball Clinics– PITCHING AND HITTING CAMPS		
February 21st	Mail-in Registration deadline		
February 22th	Kent State University Softball Clinics – PARENT/CHILD CAMP		
March 6th – 8:30AM-Noon	8:30 AM 9:45 AM 10:45 AM	American League National League Junior League	Girls Softball Try-outs/Draft St. Paul's Episcopal Church
March 13th – 8:30AM-3PM	8:30 AM 11:00 AM 12:00 PM 2:30 PM	I League F League H League G League	Boys Baseball Try-outs/Draft St. Paul's Episcopal Church
March 21st – 2-4PM	Mandatory Managers' Meeting Northwest Family Recreation Center		
March 29th	Practice season begins		
April 29th	Boys baseball games start		
May 1st	Girls softball games start		
May 1st	Boys picture day – for time, please log on to www.wabl.org		
May 4th	Boys picture day – for time, please log on to www.wabl.org		
May 5th	Girls picture day – for time, please log on to www.wabl.org		
May 9th	Mother's Day No Games		
May 10th	Girls picture day – for time, please log on to www.wabl.org		
June 20th	Father's Day No Games		
June 25th	Boys baseball playoffs start		
June 29th	Girls softball playoffs start		
July 4th	Independence Day No Games		
July 10th	2004 DAY of CHAMPS games and parade		
July 11th	2004 ANNUAL WABL GOLF OUTING and FUNDRAISER		



2002-2003 GIRLS WABL SUMMARY

Hi WABL fans! This was another very exciting year for our girls.

The I League ladies made new strides in training and scheduling. The three I League teams played against Copley, Revere and each other and this seemed to go well. Thanks to Jim Dietsal and the other coaches, a good season was had by all.

The American League had their ups and down, but seemed to level out at the end.

Thanks to Mike Hanlon for running the American League and keeping things together.

The National League is starting to show that we are competitive and will have several good players for the Junior League and beyond. Thanks to Burt Brownfield for covering the National League this year.

The Junior League had three very good teams and showed their stuff in the playoffs. I want to thank Dave Andrews for running this league.

V.P. GIRLS REPORT

I want to congratulate Cindy Alkire for stepping up to take over the job of V.P. of Girls for the 2004-2005 seasons. She will need everyone's support and encouragement as you gave to me to complete her tenure. Please offer your assistance as freely as you did to help me do the job.

I am through my 12th year in WABL and have reached the end of my service time. I would like to thank everyone who has helped me and made my job easier. I want to thank all those who made things interesting for you have taught me many things which I would not have learned or experienced any other way.

To all the coaches, thanks for all your time and cooperation to make our league as good as it is today.

To all the girls, wow, what a ride! I have had a great time and a wonderful bank of memories to keep forever. Without you ladies, we would not have what we have today. I want to thank you and wish all of you great luck and success in all your future endeavors. You can do anything you put your heart and mind into.

Bruce Clough



2003 WABL SPONSORS – THANK YOU!

We would like to thank all of our incredible sponsors, old and new. If not for you the WABL program would not exist.

ADM Board County of Summit
Adolph Optical
Akron Area Commercial Cleaning Inc.
Allan Johnson Travel
Andy's Trophies & Awards
BAC Construction
Berkey, Brendel & Sheline
Bessay Salon
Brockman, Coats, Gedelian & Co.
Brouse McDowell
Buckeye Container
Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs
Coco's Coffee Bar
Crawford & Crawford
Dicks Clothing & Sporting Goods
Evergreen Property Management

Fifth Third Bank
Genie Carpet & Tile
Greg Santos Photography
H & M Lawn Care
Hanna, Campbell & Powell, LLP
Holland Oil Co.
How to Construction
Infrastructure
Ingenuim Packaging
Janna Industries
JG Pads
Kastner, Westman & Wilkins LLC
Knights' Runners Club
Lew's Plumbing & Drain Co.
Marion Psychological, Inc.
Pier Associates Inc.

Rockne's Fairlawn
S.A. Comunale Co. Inc.
Scanlon & Gearing
Scolaro
Smithers Scientific
Stagecoach Antiques
Summa Orthopaedics
Swenson's Restaurants
The Caterers by Papparazzi's
Trifiro Painting
Verizon Wireless
West Side Leader
Woodland Preschool
Wahl to Wall Construction

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

The Firestone Marching Band for their 20+ years of participation in our Day of Champs parade.
The Akron Police Department & The Akron Fire Department for protecting our kids and for the trucks in the parade that all kids love.
The coaches and assistant coaches for all of their time and patience.
The University of Akron & Kent State University Softball Teams for their great clinics.
Andy's Trophies for all those trophies.
First Assembly Church for the use of their softball field.
All our sponsors who keep us going and the parents of all of our kids.
Bob Keith - Councilman Ward 8
All those we forgot to mention but greatly appreciate.



IMPORTANT NEWS - WABL FUNDRAISING

WABL over the years has initiated several fundraising programs to help subsidize or off set league expenses to keep the cost of registration as low as possible for the parents/guardians of children who participated in the program. Examples of previous fundraisers required parents/guardians to sell candy, raffle tickets and lottery tickets. The most recent fundraiser, which WABL participated in has subsequently been lost due to lack of participation from coaches and parents, was BINGO. Bingo generated revenue annually to the organization of \$10,000. This revenue loss requires the organization to once again develop a revenue stream to match/exceed this loss or WABL will be forced to increase registration fees to cover league expenses.

Every fundraiser that has been initiated has met resistance from a small minority, which inevitably dooms the organization's ability to generate revenue to offset higher registration fee. Bingo was the

most successful revenue produced the league experienced to date, not to mention the least impact to the parents/coaches by not requiring out-of-pocket expenses and only a one time commitment of 3-4 hours to assist in selling tickets at the bingo hall. The organization's commitment was to have at least 7 individuals attend once a month. This commitment meant that only about 5% of the parents/coaches had to participate to be successful, which was not met. The organization and I would appreciate the assistance of the parents/coaches by submitting your written suggestions to the address below on how the WABL organization can develop a revenue stream to offset a registration increase in the near future. Thank you.

Robert Heffern, V.P. Finance
WABL • P.O. BOX 5751 • AKRON, OHIO 44372-5751

GRANT UPDATE



WABL has obtained a grant from the City of Akron Neighborhood Partnership Program valued at \$5000. This money was spent to improve two fields used by the WABL organization. The major amount was used to improve Forest Lodge Field and the balance was used to fill in Simon Perkins Field #1. I want to thank the following organizations and people for without them we could not have obtained or completed this grant.

The City of Akron & Bob Keith
- Councilman Ward 8
Helen Tomic - City Planner
William Spaulding -Parks and
Recreation
Randy Rose
Summit Paint Center
Reeves Lumber Company
Copley Tool Rental

Tom's Excavating
Terry Lumber
H & M Lawn Service -
John Heffern
BAC Construction -
Bruce Clough
Condor Welding
Lockheed Martin
Al Barber, V.P. Lockheed

Gerald Keehner, G.M.
Cary Dell, Training Manager
Don Curfman
Walt Berry
BSA Troop 75
Bruce Fahey, TL
Bill Jordan III, TL
Steven Forfia
Pat Fahey

Bill Jordan IV
Maneeta Gujrah
Board members of WABL

Thank you and please let these
people know how we
appreciate all their efforts!

Vice President of Fields,

Recently, there has been a lot of renovation work done to the field at Forest Lodge. This included drainage under the team benches, installation of new benches, and painting of the fence. This was done with a grant from the city of Akron and the Akron Community Foundation. We hope to continue with more improvements at other city fields as long as grant money can be obtained.

A major concern with the upkeep of the baseball fields from the city of Akron has been brought to our attention in regards to the trash that is left over after each game around all bench areas. WABL will be monitoring this

problem this year to find out what teams are the culprits. We are also asking each coach to fill in low areas around home plate and the pitching mound after each game to maintain better field conditions. Depending upon the amount of rainfall this spring and summer, water tends to collect in these areas which creates mud and slows down drying time before next game scheduled on these fields.

Good luck to all teams, and have an enjoyable season!

John Heffern



AMERICA'S FAVORITE PASTIME, STILL SECURE



America's favorite pastime has a history of being secured by those who served in another, but least favorite pastime: war. The ongoing Iraq conflict started last spring right around the time the 2003 WABL season was kicking into gear. I only felt it appropriate to acknowledge this conflict and the ones before it because of baseball's rich ties to our country's spirits, our military, and players who have served this county in times of conflict.

This most recent conflict has activated a West Akron neighborhood unit, the Ohio Army National Guard's 1484th Transportation Co., located at the armory on North Hawkins Ave. Many members of this brave unit are part of the West Akron community and some are even WABL and Akron Public Schools alumni.

These brave men and women signed up to protect and serve our country, and they have now put their lives on hold to ensure that ours here can continue to move on peacefully and uninterrupted. There have been many brave soldiers that performed a duty to this country; many of them even Baseball Hall of Famers, who took time out from their ball

careers to protect this country and our way of life. Some were drafted, but others signed up voluntarily, much like members of our current military does today.

There are things we can do as a community to help support these West Akron soldiers and their families during this time of sacrifice. The unit's family support group is seeking donations from individuals and corporations to help soldiers' families while they are gone.

Send donations to the 1484th Transportation Company
Family Readiness Group at:
414 N. Hawkins Ave., Akron, OH 44313

There is also a chili cook-off at Arnie's S.R.O., 1900 W Market St., Akron, OH 44313, on Sunday, February 1, 2004, with all proceeds benefiting the 1484th Transportation Company Family Readiness Group Fund.

Please, just take some time to remember that *TIME Magazine* named the American Soldier the 2003 Person of the Year, and not only is our own local 1484th Transportation Company important to us, but all of the brave men and women of the US military that are sacrificing themselves for all of us.

Thanks,
Scott A. Cooper
Vice President, Web Services