

Week of Monday, July 15, 2024

The Henderson County Older Sluggers coached by Stan Steinberg and sponsored this week by **Advanced Dermatology and Skin Surgery, PA** traveled to the Parker Meadows Complex in Franklin, NC on Monday, July 15th for a pair of 68+ Clayton League games. Despite a losing record and being the oldest team in the league, Franklin always gives an optimal effort and battles the Sluggers to the end. The Old Bones handed last year's championship Sluggers two of their three losses on the season. In terms of effort, these games were no different. In game one Franklin opened the scoring with a pair of runs in the top of the first only to see the Sluggers respond with four straight doubles to take a 4-2 lead. The Older Bones tied it in the third inning and the game remained close until the Older Sluggers broke away late to pick up a 13-8 victory. Don Ward secured the win on the mound. Henderson County had their third-worst team batting average in the game at 0.568 although that can be partially attributed to some sterling defensive plays by Franklin that robbed Older Sluggers of base hits. Almost half of the Older Sluggers hits went for extra bases as they produced seven doubles, two triples, and a home run. Leading the way offensively with perfect outings were Don Ward (3-3 with two doubles), Sonny Johnston (2-2 with a double, triple, and a walk), Tim Epley (3-3 with a double), and Gary Warren (3-3).

Also aiding the offense were Bob Drew (2-3 with a double), Jim Zitney (2-3), Roger Helm (2-3 with a double and triple), Scott Searle (2-3 with a double), and Rick Sweeney (1-2 with a walk). Gary Ayers had the home run for the Sluggers.

Game two proved to be another close game and was tied at 6-6 before Henderson County scored seven runs in the latter innings to take a 13-6 flip-flop victory over the Older Bones. Don Ward again took the win on the mound. The team batting average rose to 0.686 for the Older Sluggers although their power numbers dropped by half as they had three doubles and two triples. Leading the offensive charge in game two with perfect plate appearances were Don Ward (3-3 with a double), Gary Ayers (3-3 with a double), Gene Reiser (3-3), Roger Helm (2-2), and Rick Sweeney (3-3). Others with near-perfect efforts were Bob Drew (2-3),

David Keith (1-2), Jim Zitney (1-2 with a sacrifice fly), Scott Searle (2-3), and Sonny Johnston (2-3 with a triple). With the pair of wins, Henderson County extended their record to 19-2 in the 68+ Clayton League and continue to hold onto first place.

On Wednesday, July 17th, the Henderson County mixed 70+ Sluggers sponsored by **Skip Sawyer State Farm Insurance** for these games and coached by Danny Davis and Andy Hinds traveled to Sunset Park in Mauldin, SC to face the Upstate 70+ squad. Henderson County started as hot as the weather scoring five runs in the top of the first inning as the first five batters reached safely in a game they would never trail. The Sluggers scored in every inning and put up eleven runs in the "buffet" inning to capture a 28-11 victory. David Keith was the winning pitcher with relief from Don Chambers in the last inning. The Sluggers had a team batting average of 0.667 and were led by perfect outings from Eddie Carpenter (3-3 with two walks), Stan Steinberg (4-4 with a double, triple, and walk), and Dwight Moore (4-4 with a double). Also

chipping in offensively were Danny Davis (3-4 with two doubles and a sacrifice fly), Bud Bonnema (3-4), Wayne Hallgren (3-4), Al Kmieciak (3-4), and Don Chambers (3-4).

Game two proved to be very similar to the first game except Upstate did score a run in the top of the first to take a lead and then they put up five runs in the top of the second to regain the lead after Henderson County scored five in the first to go back on top. After that, it was pretty much all Henderson County as the Sluggers again scored in every inning to walk away with a 23-11 win. David Keith again picked up the victory on the mound with relief help on the hot day from Danny Davis and Dwight Moore in the final two innings. The Sluggers picked up the team batting average to 0.773 in game two with over half the roster having perfect plate appearances led by Gary Warren (4-4), Roger Helm (4-4), Danny Davis (4-4), David Keith (4-4 with a triple), Andy Hinds (3-3), Wayne Hallgren (2-2 with a walk), and Don Chambers (3-3). In addition, Eddie Carpenter (3-4 with a double) and Stan Steinberg (2-3 with a sacrifice fly) were nearly perfect. With the pair of wins the mixed 70+ Sluggers extended their unblemished record to 10-0 on the year.

Next week the league will have two teams in action and in a rarity, all the games will be at home. On Monday, July 22nd, the Henderson County Older Sluggers will play host to the Upstate SC 68+ team in a pair of non-Clayton league games.

On Wednesday, July 24th, the Henderson County mixed 60+ Sluggers will welcome the Burnsville Bears to Jackson Park.

The Henderson County Senior Softball League is always looking for new players aged 50 and older (35 and older for ladies). Regular league games are normally played on Monday and Friday mornings at 9:30 on fields 8 and 9 at Jackson Park in Hendersonville. For additional information call 828-260-2130 or go to Henderson County Senior Softball at <https://hcssoftball.com>.