

Week of Monday, August 5, 2024

The Henderson County 68+ Older Sluggers finally caught a break from the weatherman and were able to get all of their five-inning abbreviated games in against the North Georgia Patriots on Monday, August 5th, in Tiger, Georgia. The Older Sluggers were coached by Stan Steinberg and sponsored by **Carolina Blinds** for these games. The Sluggers last played on July 15th and the offense was a little rusty as they were only able to score eight runs through the first four innings, five of which came in the first inning. The good news is that North Georgia was only able to score eight runs during the same time frame. The even better news was that after North Georgia scored one run in the top of the fifth inning to take a lead Henderson County came back and scored two to pick up a 10-9 walk-off win over the Patriots. Don Ward secured the win on the mound. The Older Sluggers had a team batting average of 0.615 for the game and were led at the plate with perfect outings from Stan Steinberg (2-2), Don Ward (3-3), Gary Ayers (2-2), and Jerry Austin (2-2 with a home run). Also aiding the offense were Bob Drew (2-3), Jim Zitney (1-2), Gene Reiser (1-2), Rick Sweeney (1-2), Tim Epley (1-2), and Gary Warren (1-2).

After squeaking by with a one-run win in the first game the world returned to normal as the Older Sluggers looked more like themselves when they doubled their offensive output in game two. Henderson County put up five runs in the top of the first and never trailed as they rolled to a comfortable 20-10 victory over the Patriots. Don Ward once again picked up the win on the mound. The Sluggers had a team batting average of 0.697 for the game and were led by the following batters who hit 1.000 for the game: Bob Drew (3-3 with a walk), David Keith (3-3 with a home run), Gary Ayers (3-3 with a double), Gary Warren (1-1 with a walk and a sacrifice fly), Jerry Austin (2-2 with a walk), and Rick Sweeney (3-3 with a double). Also aiding the cause were Scott Searle (2-3 with a walk), Tim Epley (2-3 with a double), and Stan Steinberg (2-3).

The Patriots proved to be pesky opponents all day as they continually dumped in base hits just out of reach of the Sluggers gloves but Henderson County took an early lead and prevailed in game three with an 18-11 victory. Once again Don Ward was the winning pitcher as he ran his record to 3-0 on the day. The team batting average in game three for Henderson County was 0.767. Leading the way with perfect plate appearances were Don Ward (3-3 with a double and a home run), Gary Ayers (2-2), Gene Reiser (2-2 with a triple), Jerry Austin (3-3 with a double), and Jim Zitney (3-3). Chipping in were Bob Drew (2-3), Tim Epley (2-3 with a triple), Rick Sweeney (1-2 with a double), Stan Steinberg (1-2 with a double), David Keith (1-2), and Gary Warren (1-2). The Sluggers had two players, Gary Ayers and Jerry Austin, who were truly perfect at the plate as they never made an out all day. It should also be noted that Stan Steinberg turned three double plays on the day by stepping on third base and throwing out the runner at the plate.

With the three wins on the day, Henderson County ran their record to 22-2 in the Clayton 68+ League to maintain their hold on first place in the league.

The travel schedule for next week will have two teams in action. On Monday, August 12th the Henderson County Older Sluggers will have a rare home game as they host the Franklin Older Bones in Clayton 68+ League play. On Wednesday, August 14th, the mixed 60+ Sluggers will travel to Sandy Andrews Memorial Park in Marion, NC to face the High Country squad from Boone.

The Henderson County Senior Softball League is always looking for new players age 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://hcsssoftball.com>.