

# MB Senior Little League's Inaugural Season a Success

By Gregg McMullin



Jon Wilhite throws out the ceremonial first pitch before the championship game.

For a number of years, the Mira Costa High School's baseball program was fed through the Manhattan Beach Little League and then through the Babe Ruth League program held in El Segundo. It was a system that worked awkwardly because there just wasn't a true feeder system that directly linked a summer program to the high school. There were some Manhattan Beach players that wound up not going to Mira Costa but instead opting to go to a private school such as Loyola or Chadwick. A group of Mira Costa baseball people that included coaches changed the way the feeder system for the Mustangs will be used in the future when they formed the Manhattan Beach Senior Little League.

Carlos Rojas is an assistant Mira Costa varsity baseball coach, who has also coached at the Babe Ruth League level in El Segundo during the summer. He said he saw the need to have a better feeder system for incoming high school players and a venue for players who are already playing for one of the lower level Mustang teams. So Rojas and Mark McDonald came up with an idea to start a league devoted to players between the ages of 14-16 who were going to attend Mira Costa. "We needed something for the players entering Mira Costa so the coaches could give them an opportunity to compete for a position and get them started in our instructional program," said Rojas.

Mark McDonald became the commissioner of the new league, and he along with a number of other volunteers put the process in motion to get the league officially started. Their vision was subsequently sanctioned by Little League International, and Manhattan Beach was awarded a Senior League charter.

The MBSL has four teams and each team has a distinct color of the Mustangs including green, white, yellow and grey. There are 14 players on each team and they are coached by current Mustang coaches at the soph/frosh, junior varsity and varsity levels, including Steve Manqueros (JV), Andy Caine (soph/frosh), Aaron Medina (varsity) and Steve Fedor (varsity).

Games in the newly-formed league were played at Marine Park. From the start it was obvious that Marine Park was the place to be while watching future Mustangs honing their skills. The teams played a 15-game season with a championship tournament held between all four teams, and that tournament was just concluded. According to McDonald, the skill level was much more advanced than originally thought and it might have been one of the top 16U leagues in the South Bay. For Rojas, it was a great opportunity to see the players improve. At least three players from the MBSL were promoted, so to speak, to the American Legion team that is made up of potential 2010 varsity players. Garrett Fedor, Mike Romero and Anthony Lombardo

all played for Mike Neily's American Legion squad this summer and could battle for a spot on the Mustangs' varsity team next year.

In the finale, the White team won 7-4 behind the strong pitching performance by Morgan Ascher and Turner Conrad who closed out the game. Two-year Mustang star James Glawe continued his strong bat skills by hammering a 375-foot double to lead the White team to the championship.

In a strong show of support and strength, the championship game was preceded by a ceremonial first pitch by former Mustang standout Jon Wilhite. If you remember, Wilhite was a passenger in a car that was broadsided by another vehicle driven by an alleged drunk driver. Wilhite was the only one of the four occupants in the vehicle to survive the crash and is going through painstaking rehabilitation. Wilhite made the slow trek towards the pitcher's mound and then after a few moments, threw a strike to the catcher much to the delight of the large crowd.

Mike Wilhite, Jon's brother, said that the Manhattan Beach Little League and the Senior League have been very supportive of Jon and his struggle for recovery. In fact Jon threw out the first pitch prior to one of the Manhattan Beach Little League's All-Star games and Jon and his family were awarded a check from donations collected through the MBSL community for over \$40,000 to help with associated therapy costs for his rehabilitation.

The MBSL selected its all-star team and after the ballots were collected, Bryan Afzali received the most votes. The All-Stars will be coached by Steve Manqueros and his staff while the rest of the roster includes Garrett Fedor, Jackson Lipps, Anthony Lombardo, Sean Isaacs, Ryan Erickson, Larry Dalansky, Brett Clark, Derrick Largent, Morgan Ascher, Ryan Franklin, Turner Conrad, Austin Henning, Max Wolmuth and Cody Espeso.

The MBSL All-Stars will play in the District 36 tournament starting Saturday in Lomita against other teams from the district including Santa Monica, Venice and Beverly Hills as well as the host team Lomita. The Lomita Senior League field is located on the corner of Western Avenue and Palos Verdes Drive North. If the MBSL does well enough to advance through the district, state and regional play, they could play in the World Series in Easley, South Carolina starting August 5.

### Mustang News and Notes

It's no secret that the Mira Costa Athletic Department will seem a little emptier when school starts up in September. Bob Fish, the Mira Costa AD for the past 10 years, has been relieved of his duties in a cost-cutting measure. Fish was an absolute pillar of strength in his position and he was one of the most popular, approachable, organized and visual athletic directors in the South Bay. We'll all miss you, Bob.



## Dear Carol

Dear Carol,

I have a new boyfriend and he is wonderful. He treats me so well, he only wants to spend time with me, he tells me how pretty I am and how much he loves me. I've never had a boyfriend like this. Truthfully, I've never had a real boyfriend at all. I met him at the local college. He wants me to change my major so we can take all of our classes together. That will be hard for me because I've always wanted to be a teacher and he is majoring in business. I've always gone to school with my high school girlfriends but he says we should spend our time without them. He tells me I should quit my part time job so I won't meet any other men. I work in a women's clothing store, when would I meet men? I need the money to pay for school. My parents don't like him. They say he is too possessive. My girlfriends don't like him either because he takes up all of my time so we don't have time for fun anymore. I love having a boyfriend who pays so much attention to me but I miss being with my friends and he gets mad if I don't spend every minute with him. How can I get him to understand that I need just a little time for myself and my friends?

Carrie

Dear Carrie,

Run; don't walk to the nearest exit from this relationship. Your boyfriend says he loves you but what he really loves is controlling you. The rope of this relationship will get tighter and tighter if you don't cut it now. It is easy to be blinded by someone who showers you with pretty words of love and affection. Your friends and parents see clearly that you are being enslaved by this

boy. Make a plan to end it in a public place with friends or family nearby then leave. Do not be alone with him; do not take his calls, make a clean break, and stay away from him. His efforts to control you will only get stronger if you don't get away now.

Dear Carol,

I've read that there is a man in town who has been pulling down his pants in front of young girls. What should I do if I see this happening? How can I avoid it happening to me and my friends?

Wanda


Dear Wanda,

Always walk with friends or family. Be aware of your surroundings and don't go near any parked cars, especially if they are blocking the sidewalk. If you see this person acting that way, walk quickly away, go to the nearest house for help and call 911. Try to remember what the car looks like and the license plate number. People like this usually become more bold and dangerous. You are wise to be aware and alert.

Send questions to askcarolnow@gmail.com

Carol is a Life Coach available for private consultation in person or on the phone. •





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