

Cobourg Legion Minor Softball

Still Going Strong



Congratulations to Cobourg Branch 133 Royal Canadian Legion, believed to be **the longest serving sports sponsor in Cobourg**. The Legion first made organized softball available to youth here in 1958. Their support is still going strong 58 years later.

It all began with about sixty boys under ten years old, divided into four teams. Jack Bevan was the league organizer and his coaches included long-time star softball players Burke Clarey and Dick Turpin. At season's end the Legion hosted a closing banquet for players and coaches, a tradition which continued for many years.

The next year, with the age limit raised, **there were three times as many players. In 1960 registration tripled again to 360!** It was now time for a formal league executive to be elected. Lionel Gutteridge became president, a position he would hold for 7 years.

With so many participants, the organization decided to do things in style. In 1961 **they began the season with a parade** from the Legion on Orr Street, down King Street to Victoria Park where Opening Ceremonies were held. It became an annual tradition, and in 1978 **all the other summer sports teams were invited to join in the parade** which became Cobourg's "All Summer Sports Parade".

Registration in Legion Minor Softball continued to grow, reaching **560 in 1964**, the highest participation in their history.

When Lionel Gutteridge stepped down in 1966 he was replaced as president by Cedric Smith, another war veteran and long time supporter of Legion softball. Since then, many well known softball and Legion enthusiasts have held the prestigious role of president of Cobourg Legion Minor Softball.

On the diamond, Legion Rep Teams have competed in many Ontario Amateur Softball Association Provincial Playdowns, and **brought home several championships**. Individually, Marty Kernaghan has to be the most successful alumnus, going on to be recognized as **one of the best fastball players in the world**.

In recent years, the first-class Legion Fields Park has been the home of Cobourg softball. One of its three diamonds is named after Jack Bevan, who started it all in 1958.

From 1958 until the present day, the Cobourg Legion has faithfully sponsored youth softball in our town.

Thank you Branch 133 and all of your volunteers.



Picture courtesy Metroland Media Group



Mayor Brocaneir throws first pitch - 2011

Picture courtesy Metroland Media Group

