

The 'Fun' Little League

This is the fourth in a series of articles on youth baseball in Torrance. This chapter is on Torrance American Little League.

By HENRY BURKE
Press-Herald Sports Editor

Last month, after spending most of Saturday at Seaside Little League Field, 40 workers from Torrance American Little League piled into a bus and drove 50 miles to Montclair for the grand opening of John Schnepf's Pizza Palace.

It was a typical "fun party" that best characterizes Torrance American's way of doing things.

The league is a direct descendant of a twin-pioneer Little League group in the city.

A makeshift baseball program was started in 1953 to encompass the entire community, and a year later it was divided in a northern and southern division.

The southern section was assigned to Norm Hawkins in 1954 and it became the American Little League in 1955.

The rotation of presidents since that time has been Paul Roettger (55-56), John O'Rourke (57), John Schnepf (58-59), Carl Binford (60), Frank Tuttle (61-62), Jack Brennan (63) and Harry Lingo (64-65).

Prior to becoming league prez, Lingo was a minor and major manager for six years. Five were with the Giants who produced three championships for him.

If anything unusual can be said about the league, it is the loyalty of the adults in returning year after year. Ken Spangler, Bob Schaefer, Marvin Scott, Tex Walker and Frank Astiazaran are veteran coaches.

Joe Gastelum, of the minor Tigers, on the other hand, is a "hand-me-down" manager from South Redondo Little League and Redondo Pony League, and Player Agent Hal Black was active in Riviera Little League.

RE-ELECTED to the auxiliary board for a second term this year were Jeanne Wirick, president; Pat Black, first vice president; Wanda Winter, second vice president; Dot Putzel, secretary, and Cam Ex, treasurer.

Although there are nine Little Leagues in Torrance today, American has never had less than 350 boys in its program. At one time the league shared a ball park with Torrance National at Pacific Coast Highway and Crenshaw, and later at Plaza Del Amo Field near Western Ave.

America's present twin-ballparks are at Seaside Field, a scenic sump area completely surrounded by giant eucalyptus trees.

A two-story building of block construction stands alongside the diamonds.

When the league recently obtained an electric scoreboard from Harry Valero of Russ Thor Volkswagen, a trench had to be dug between the backstop and centerfield for underground wiring. The job was accomplished by handing everybody in sight a shovel. "Needless to say the chore was finished in a hurry—and it was fun to do it this way too," said Jackie Kennedy, league scorekeeper.

OVER THE YEARS TOR-

rance American has maintained perennial team sponsorships from Paul's Chevrolet, Torrance Police Association, 7-Up Youth Foundation, Harvey Aluminum, Higgins Brick and Southwood Drug.

Cliff Nickle, owner of Southwood Drug, had considered limiting his sponsor-

ships this year to a team at Southwood Little League. In the early spring, however, Cliff attended a mid-shipment's reunion in San Francisco and was greeted by Cliff Nickle, a fellow comrade from Northwestern University Midship-

man School, Jack Sweeney. Jack explained to Nickle that he was president of the Chico Little League that competed at last year's Western Regional Tournament in Torrance. So enthused was Sweeney about Little League at the reunion, Nickle was

convinced he should continue to sponsor teams in both the Southwood and American. Torrance American Little League (T.A.L.L.) publishes a weekly newsletter, TALL News, and an annual year book. Keynoted in one of its publications is a series of reminders, one of which depicts the nature of Little League. "The oldest player are 12 and perfection come somewhat later in life for everybody!"



GIFT SCOREBOARD... For Torrance American Little League called for a dedication ceremony this year. Taking part were (left to right) Bob Carnahan, league vice president; Harry Valero, Russ Thor, Inc., Volkswagen dealer, donor; and Harry Lingo, league president. (Press-Herald Photo)



WHAT TO DO WITH OLD BATS?... (Baseball bats, that is) gets attention from four officers of the Torrance American Little League auxiliary. They are (left to right) Mmes. Camele Ex, treasurer; Dot Putzel, secretary; Pat Black, vice president; and Jeanne Wirick, president. Together with Wanda Winter they are all holding the same office for the second year. (Press-Herald Photo)

Hornaday Increases Race Points

Ron Hornaday of Chatsworth continued his build-up as point leader in the Pacific Racing Association Super stock car races at Saugus Stadium, Saturday, in front of 4,129 fans.

Hornaday, who has won his third race, came from behind to pass twenty-two of his opponents and made a steady gain with only Gary Whiteman of Pacoima in his way to win.

Going into the white flag, Whiteman, the hard-luck driver, spun out. With Marvin Heinis of Sylmar breathing hard behind Hornaday and the checkered flag only a few feet away for the veteran drivers, Hornaday took the lead and slid in front to win, and Tru Check of Sylmar came in third.

Prize Money Tops \$15,000

The lure of "bread" has multiplied the entries and attracted a top field of AA/fuel dragsters, top competitors in the sport of drag racing, for this weekend's Hot Rod Magazine Drag Racing Championships at Riverside International Raceway.

"Bread" is the dragster's term for prize money, and the pot for the \$15,000 event includes two 1965 Plymouth Barracudas.

Latest of the 200-mile-an-hour club to enter the Hot Rod meet at Riverside are Danny Ongais, formerly of Hawaii and now running out of Carlsbad; Denny Milani of South San Francisco; Ed McCulloch of Portland, and Dick Lechien of San Diego.

Milani, who has been staging ear-shattering duels at Lions Drag Strip in his Gottell Speed Special with Long Beach driver Tom McEwen in the Mongoose, will come south to do battle on the course he and McEwen regard as the fastest in the nation.

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Hard to Pick Favorite in Motorcycles

A wide open race with no favorite listed is the prediction for the 15-lap expert main event of Friday night's flat-track motorcycle sizzlers at Ascot Park, Gardena.

"I can't pick a winner from the field we now have at Ascot," said racing director J. C. Agajanian, "and I defy anyone to do it."

"How can you when there have been seven races decided on the last lap and five different winners in the first eight weeks?" says Agajanian.

Sammy Tanner of Long Beach, Dan Haaby of Lawndale, Neil Keen of Pasadena, Ralph White of Torrance and Cal Rayborn of San Diego all have their many backers, and there's always a surprise rider pop up out of obscurity.

Tordondo Seals Go Undefeated

The first half of the Tordondo Little League minor league baseball title was won by the Seals with an 11-0 record. The Pirates were second with a 10-1 mark.

In the last game of the half the Seals overcame a 7-0 deficit in the fourth inning to beat the Stars, 8-7.

NEW ASSIGNMENT Alf Pike, who coached the Los Angeles Blades' hockey club the past two seasons, will join La Habra businessman Reginald Maquire in a newly-formed corporation, Maquire & Pike, Inc., Builders.

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