

## Week of Monday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025

The Henderson County Senior Softball Association had two travel teams in action this past week. On Monday May 5<sup>th</sup>, the Henderson County 68+ Sluggers coached by Stan Steinberg and sponsored by **Carolina Ophthalmology** traveled to the Parker Meadows Complex in Franklin, NC to face the North Georgia Patriots in Clayton League action. Henderson County jumped on the Patriots with five runs in the top of the first inning, featuring an over-the-fence clout from Sonny Johnston. The Patriots responded with five runs of their own to knot the score. That would be the last time the teams would be tied in the game as the Sluggers scored five runs in every inning while holding North Georgia to eight runs over the next six innings to pick up an impressive 30-13 flip-flop win. David Keith was the winning pitcher, and he received lots of support as the Sluggers had a team batting average of 0.800, an on-base percentage of 0.813, and a slugging percentage of 1.244 for the game. Six Sluggers were perfect at the plate: Sonny Johnston 4-4 with a double and a home run, Tim Epley 4-4 with two doubles and a home run, Gary Ayers 4-4 with a triple, Gene Reiser 4-4 with two doubles and a home run, Roger Helm 3-3 with a walk, and David Keith 2-2 with a double and a walk. Three more Sluggers were near perfect: Scott Searle 4-5, Bob Drew 3-4 with a double, and Gary Warren 3-4 with a double. Game two started out in a similar fashion to the first game as the Sluggers scored five runs in each of the first three innings to make nine consecutive innings of scoring the maximum allowable five runs. Although the streak ended in the fourth inning, Henderson County was able to coast to a comfortable 20-10 victory. David Keith was again the winner on the mound. The team batting average tailed off somewhat in game two, but the Sluggers still had a team batting average and on-base percentage of 0.700 and a slugging percentage of 1.100. Two players achieved perfection in the second game, with Scott Searle 4-4 with two doubles, and Jerry Austin 3-3 with a double and a triple. Eight other Sluggers were near perfect: Mark Hammer 3-4 with two doubles and a triple,

Sonny Johnston 3-4 with a double, Gene Reiser 2-3, Gary Warren 2-3, Tim Epley 2-3 with a double, Roger Helm 2-3 with a double, Gary Ayers 2-3 with a double, and David Keith 2-3 with a triple. With the pair of wins, the Sluggers maintained their hold on first place in the 68+ Clayton League with a record of 6-0. Furthermore, Henderson County has yet to bat in the seventh inning of any game this year, having won three games as the home team and picking up three flip-flop victories. The only downside of the games this day was that we played on the lower field meaning the bathroom was a long ways away which constitutes cruel and unusual punishment for senior citizens.

On Wednesday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, the Henderson County mixed 60+ Sluggers traveled to the Maples Sports Complex in Marion, NC to face the High Country (Boone) 60+ squad. The mixed 60+ Sluggers were coached by John Musser and sponsored by

**Allstate Insurance Tim Hoffman Agency.** The remainder of this game report is taken verbatim (almost) from the notes received from John so all platitudes and criticisms, if any, should go directly to him. Averaging twenty one runs per game while allowing an average of nine runs per game after six games played this match up produced similar results. Going into these games, the mixed 60+ Sluggers have played forty-two innings and held their opponents scoreless in twenty-three of those

innings. This impressive display continued in both games today. In game one, Tom Welbourn was 3-3 with a triple and a walk while Bud Bonnema was 4-4. In game two, John Musser and Norm Royo were both 4-4, and Chris Culberson was 1-1 in his only plate appearance, having come in to sub for Dwight Moore after he suffered a calf strain. Sonny Johnston made his presence known in game two, going 3-4 with two triples. Unfortunately, he was too late arriving for the first game to make the starting lineup. Rumor has it that he was flirting with a State trooper in an effort to get out of a speeding ticket. Two players provided evidence of why we are called Sluggers, as Norm Royo has an inside-the-park home run, and Scot Webster clouted one over the fence after it hit the top railing and bounced over. In addition, he had a triple and two doubles. Kevin Doyle and Steve Strusowski each had a triple. Several Sluggers had doubles, with John Musser leading the way with three. Tom Welbourn, Norm Royo, Bud Bonnema, and Scot Webster had two doubles each, while Sonny Johnston, Kevin Doyle, Dwight Moore, and Bill Kane each produced a double. Dwight Moore was the winning pitcher in game one, keeping High Country off the scoreboard in five of the seven innings in the 21-5 Sluggers victory. John Musser picked up the victory on the mound in the second game as the Sluggers rolled to a 22-5 win. The Sluggers did not bat in the seventh inning of either game. Kudos to Rachel and Bill Kane for bringing the equipment, and a solo gold star to Rachel for keeping the scorebook.

Next week, there are three games on the schedule, although the current weather forecast makes it doubtful that any of the games will be played. On Monday, the 68+ Sluggers will again travel to Franklin in a showdown for first place in the Clayton League as they will face the second-place Rabun County Relics. On Tuesday, the mixed 60+ Sluggers will play host to the Tri-Cities 60+ team at Jackson Park in Hendersonville. According to Team Snap, players are to arrive at 2:35 am presumably to secure the dugout of their choice. On Wednesday, the mixed 70+ Sluggers will welcome their counterparts in Tri-Cities to Jackson Park.

The Henderson County Senior Softball Association 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 828-606-8556 or go to Henderson County Senior Softball at <https://hcssoftball.com>.