

Week of Monday, July 21, 2025

The Henderson County Senior Softball Association had two travel teams playing the week of July 25th. On Monday, July 21st, the Henderson County Hickory Games team sponsored by **American Legion Post 77** and coached by Sonny Johnston traveled to Stanford Park in Hickory to battle the Hickory 65+ squad. In game one Henderson County had a team batting average of 0.559 but managed to pull out a 12-7 victory over Hickory. Dwight Moore was the winning pitcher. Sonny Johnston was the only Slugger to achieve perfection going 3-3 with a double. Eight other Sluggers were nearly perfect: Bud Bonnema 2-3, Frank Johnson 1-2 with a walk, Kevin Doyle 2-3, Mark Hammer 2-3 with a double, Robert Novak 1-2 with a walk, Scott Searle 2-3 with two doubles, Steve Strusowski 2-3, and Tom Welbourn 2-3 with a double. Game two turned into a slugfest with Hickory edging out Henderson County 21-20. Dwight Moore suffered the loss on the mound. The team batting average increased 100 points to 0.659 in game two. Bud Bonnema (4-4 with a double) and Steve Strusowski (4-4 with three doubles) led the offense. Aiding the cause were Dwight Moore 3-4, Frank Johnson 3-4 with a double and a triple, Kevin Doyle 2-3 with a walk and a double, Robert Novak 3-4, Roger Helm 3-4 with a double, Sonny Johnston 1-2 with a walk, and Tom Welbourn 2-3 with a double and a walk. After the split the Hickory Games Sluggers have a 3-1 record on the year.

On Thursday, July 24th, the Henderson County 60+ Sluggers welcomed the Upstate 60+ team to Jackson Park. The Sluggers were coached by John Musser and sponsored by **State Farm Insurance Skip Sawyer Agency**. John's entertaining account of the games, in his own words (or maybe AI) follows:

Edgar Allen Musser reporting (moniker dubbed by the player formerly known as The Great StrusWOWski, now to be referred to as Lil' Bow Wow: rapper gone Slugger {per his wife's dubbing}). Let's start with a shout out to mother nature. In a streak of imposing heat, we had a very pleasant day to play ball. Temperature started off mild, then the clouds rolled in, the breeze picked up and the game commenced with a breath of fresh, cool air! The Sluggers were facing a common foe, The Upstate Joes (Wow, that rhymes. Edgar would be so proud). And, as cool as the breeze, so were the Sluggers performance in Game 1 which trotted out the Sluggers as the visitors. Some would call it a rout. Peter Fama just called it "standard". Four of the six innings, the Mixed 60s pushed five runs across the plate with only needing seven hits or less to do so. Dwight Moore took the mound. His daunting frame casted a shadow most would tremble fearing to touch. Inning after inning, pitch after pitch thrown disoriented batter after batter. By the time the Upstate Mojoes collected their wits, the game ended 22-7, Sluggers victory. Dwight Moore was robed with the victory.

Four batters stood with a glow of glory having attained perfection: John "The DJ Mixer" Mix, Kirk "Montezuma" Hall and Norm Royo (henceforth, by decree of awesomeness, knighted Royale) all went 4/4. Scot "Here Comes the Boom" Webster went 3/3 with a walk. Lil' Bow Wow and Chris "The Crusher" Culberson (who both had an in-the-park Home Run), Dwight

"The Shadow" Moore, Tom "Hoops" Welbourn (all 3/4) and Bill "Sugar" Kane (1/2 and a walk) was one hit short of the glowing glory. While the bat must have been too heavy to hold for some bringing down the team's batting average, nonetheless it was still near vaunting. As a team, the batting average was .740 while the infamous Sluggers D allowed a squeamish .385.

Game 2! Now this game drew everyone to the edge of their seats! The Mixed 60s Sluggers, in typical fashion, chose to be Home Team in the second game. One run shy of the tri-fecta 5 run per, the 60s Sluggers put up 14 runs by the time the third inning was stamped while holding the travelling Mojos to seven runs. Then, as if a voodoo doll was crafted in the form of Hendersonville's Mixed 60s Sluggers, an alien mist seemed to form over the Sluggers home field (insert eerie music here). The Sluggers became more slug than slugger. The Mixed 60s would go on to put up an alarming 1 run tally over their next 3 innings. A voodoo curse too strong to overcome? Quite possibly! In their imposed state of mortification, the Upstate Mojos put up an astounding nine runs putting the Sluggers in uninhabited territory: (Please cover the children's ears) A DEFICIT ... (You may now uncover their ears)! Down by 1 run going into the 7th inning, the Sluggers reputation was now being fully vetted. Could the now world-wide chanted Steel Curtain of Soft ball defense rise to hold back the onslaught of the voodoo-laceing Mojos? Possibly. The Sluggers D allowed only one run to see the other side of home plate thus deepening the deficit to two runs. Before the game, the coach's lineup strategy was announced. Having received shrouded intel that Upstate was indeed beefing up their line-up, the coach doubled down on variables that might be faced influencing setting up the batting order, if you will, with two "top of the order"(s). After having given a highly motivating pep talk, the 60s Sluggers trotted out the first batter. Whack! More like "pew"! One batter down. Batter two- pop... up to 2nd baseman! Two down, still needing 2 runs to tie, 3 to win, Lil' Bow Wow steps to the plate. With ice so cold in his veins, people sighed as he walked by, stared down the Mojos enchanted-armed pitcher. Nails a line drive rope allowing him to reach third uncontested. The Crusher approaches the plate. Having already gone 0/3 prior to this appearance, settles down. Digs his feet in the dirt. Steadies himself and waits for "his" pitch. What a crushing blow! Sails to third himself while scoring one! A shadow has casted itself across home plate. Pitch comes... bat readied... ROPED! Now on one, two runs in, game is tied and Hoops approaches the plate. A triple, a flyout and a fielder's choice later one must wonder whose taking this pitch? DUH! A deep ball pounded between Right center and Right! The winning run just moonwalks home for the WIN! What a victory! Now onto Game 2 notes. Three batters basked in the glow of perfect glory. Dwight "The Shadow" Moore (4/4), Royale and Musser going 3/3 with Musser scoring a single RBI in-the-park Homer. Nearing the glow of that perfect glory was "Sugar" Kane, DJ Mixer and Lil' Bow Wow going 3/4. Shout out to Norm "Royale" Royo going 7/7 on the day being the only 1.000 batter! On an affectionate note, I want to say after this comeback, I was so proud of the team's tenacity. It was said that management won this game. Only the LORD knows for sure. Management or not, you can't make a silk purse from a pig's ear. I truly held back tears having shared the field with the level of warriors that held fast and took the mound! Final score was Mojos 17, Mixed 60s Sluggers 18. John Musser started on the mound and relinquished the outcome to "The

Shadow". As is typical, controversial judgement calls by the umpire stifled the edge-skirting pitching of the aforementioned Musser who humbly took his leave of the mound. One last note. A double play was negated by the umpire's discretion in the sixth inning that would have left the game a walk-off win for the Sluggers by the end of the seventh inning. Had the call been made the other way, where would this telling be? With the pair of wins the 60+ Sluggers extended their record to 20-1 on the year.

Next week the Henderson County 70+ Sluggers will be the only travel team to take the field. The Sluggers will travel to the Maples Sports Complex in Marion, NC to face the High Country 70+ team from Boone. Also next weekend our league will have four players participating in the National Senior Games in Des Moines, Iowa. Gene Reiser and Roger Helm will be playing with the Upstate Joes in the 70+ tournament and David Keith and Gary Warren will be with the South Carolina Stars in the 75+ tournament.

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>.