

Week of August 11, 2025

After John Musser's best friend, "Mother Nature" forced cancellation of the August 11th game between the Henderson County 68+ Sluggers and the Upstate 68+ squad, as well as the August 13th game between the Henderson County 60+ versus Upstate 60+ the Henderson County Senior softballers were able to get back on the field the week of August 18th. The league-leading Henderson County 68+ Sluggers traveled to Tiger, Georgia, on Monday, August 18th, for a set of three five-inning games in a much-anticipated showdown with the Rabun County Relics. The Sluggers were sponsored by **Carolina Ophthalmology** and coached by Stan Steinberg for these games. As might be expected, game one was a close battle, but the Sluggers were able to pull out a 16-15 victory. Don Ward took the win on the mound. The Sluggers had a team batting average of 0.724 in the game and had seven players achieving perfection: Bob Drew (2-2), Stan Steinberg (2-2), Jim Ready (1-1 with a triple and two walks), Jim Zitney (2-2 with a double and a walk), Norm Royo (2-2 with two doubles), Scott Searle (2-2 with a walk), and Tim Epley (3-3 with three triples). In addition, Mark Hammer (2-3 with a double) and Sonny Johnston (2-3 with a double) aided the cause. Game two proved to be not quite as close as the Sluggers picked up an 18-9 win over the Relics. Again, Don Ward was the winning pitcher. The Sluggers had a team batting average of 0.686 and had four players with flawless batting averages: Jerry Austin (2-2 with two doubles), Jim Ready (2-2 with a double), Norm Royo (3-3), and Stan Steinberg (3-3 with two doubles). Five other Henderson County batters were near perfect: Bob Drew (2-3), Jim Zitney (2-3), Scott Searle (3-4), Tim Epley (2-3), and Mark Hammer (3-4 with two doubles). Henderson County finished off a great day with a 20-12 victory over Rabun County in the third game. The Sluggers had an outstanding 0.800 team batting average with nine players reaching perfection: Bob Drew (3-3 with a triple), David Keith (2-2), Don Ward (3-3), Jerry Austin (3-3), Jim Ready (2-2), Jim Zitney (3-3), Norm Royo (2-2 with a double), Sonny Johnston (3-3 with a double), and Stan Steinberg (2-2 with a triple). It should be noted that Norm Royo, Jim Ready, and Stan Steinberg did not make an out in any of the three games. In the third game, Mark Hammer (2-3 with two doubles) and Scott Searle (2-3) were close to perfection. With the sweep of Rabun County, the Sluggers are well positioned to capture the regular season championship of the Clayton 68+ League. The league is in its fifth year of existence, and Henderson County has taken the regular season championship every season.

On Thursday, August 21st, the Henderson County 70+ Sluggers welcomed the Upstate 70+ squad to Jackson Park. Henderson County was coached by Andy Hinds and sponsored by **WNC Family Medical Center**. The Sluggers had a team batting average of 0.512 in the first game as Upstate pulled out a close 12-11 win over Henderson County. Two Sluggers were perfect in game one: Doug Miller (3-3) and Mark Hammer (3-3 with three doubles), Four other Slugger batters aided the offense: Cliff Coggins (3-4), Gary Smith (2-3), Jim Ready (3-4 with a double and a triple), and Sonny Johnston (2-3). The results were better in game two as Henderson County took a 21-16 victory over Upstate. The team batting average rose

slightly to 0.525 for the Sluggers in the second game. Per TeamSnap, Doug Miller and Mark Hammer were again perfect in the second game with identical statistics as the first game. Nearly perfect were five players, with Bud Bonnema going 2-3 with a double, and Cliff Coggins, Gary Smith, Jim Ready, and Sonny Johnston matching their game one statistics.

Next week's schedule shows only one team in action. The Henderson County 70+ team will travel to the Maples Sports Complex in Marion, NC, to face the High Country 70+ team from Boone.

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>.