

## Week of Monday, October 13, 2025

The Henderson County 68+ Sluggers, sponsored by **Carolina Blinds** and coached by Stan Steinberg, concluded their season in Franklin, NC, on Monday, October 13th, at the Clayton League 68+ tournament. The Sluggers opened the day with a game against Upstate South Carolina. Henderson County scored five runs in the first inning to take the lead that they would hold throughout the game, going to the final inning. With the Sluggers holding a six-run lead, it seemed like every Upstate batter got on base, and when the final out was made, our friends below the border had taken the lead. With the pressure on, it would have been easy to fold, but the Sluggers battled back to eke out a one-run victory by 14-13. Don Ward secured the win on the mound, and the Sluggers had a team batting average of 0.585. No Slugger hitter batted 1.000 for the game but several players were one out away: Don Ward (3-4 with a double and a home run), Mark Hammer (3-4), Sonny Johnston (3-4 with a double and a triple), Mike Warner (2-3 with a walk), Roger Helm (3-4 with a double), and Norm Royo (3-4).

While the Sluggers were playing Upstate, Rabun County was battling Franklin on another field. The Relics took a five-run victory over the Old Bones to set up a winner-take-all match for the championship. Henderson County pushed across one run in the first inning while holding Rabun County scoreless. The Relics rebounded with four runs in the second frame while holding the Sluggers scoreless. The Relics expanded their lead to 6-1 before the Sluggers responded with two runs to narrow the margin back to three. As the game progressed, the Sluggers finally started to hit and put up crooked numbers in three straight innings to take an 18-12 lead into the final inning. The seventh inning started to resemble the final inning of the Upstate game as Rabun County scored five runs to trim the deficit to one run. With runners on first and second and no one out, Henderson County was able to turn a double play. Still, the Relics had the tying run on third base when the next batter grounded out to end the game as Henderson County secured the tournament championship with a narrow 18-17 win. Again, Don Ward picked up the win on the mound. The Sluggers upped their team batting average to 0.632 in the final game and had two hitters reach perfection: Sonny Johnston (4-4 with a double) and Stan Steinberg (3-3). Six additional Sluggers were one out away from perfection: Scott Searle (3-4), Mark Hammer (3-4), Don Ward (3-4 with a double), Jim Zitney (2-3 with a double and a walk), Roger Helm (2-3), and Norm Royo (2-3 with a home run). Henderson County captured the regular season championship of the 68+ Clayton League with a record of 24-2. The 5-0 record that secured the tournament championship gave the team a 29-2 record for the entire season. A total of nineteen players (listed alphabetically) made contributions to the success of the team this year: Jerry Austin, Gary Ayers, Randy Bowman, Bob Drew, Tim Epley, Joe Fishleigh, Mark Hammer, Roger Helm, Sonny Johnston, David Keith, Jim Ready, Gene Reiser, Norm Royo, Scott Searle, Stan Steinberg, Don Ward, Mike Warner, Gary Warren, and Jim Zitney. A special salute goes out to Stan Steinberg for coach this team.

Next week's schedule has the Upstate Mojos making a trip to Jackson Park to face the Henderson County mixed 60+ team on Thursday, October 23rd.

The Henderson County Senior Softball Association is always looking for new players aged 50 and older (35 and older for ladies). Regular league games are generally 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>.