

## Weston Park – The Softball Years

In the early 70's a new league was formed and traditional baseball was replaced by slow pitch softball. The same main diamond with its below grade dugouts was used. There was a smaller diamond at the back of the park that was only used by the kids divisions.

T-ball was played Saturday mornings for kids up to 8 years old. This was the first introduction to baseball for many kids who then graduated into the older divisions. Boys and girls leagues existed for ages 9-16 playing Monday to Wednesday evenings. A women's league was also played one evening each week.

Sunday was set aside for the men's league. Many of the same boys who played competitive baseball in the 1960's were back on the field once again. This time they were bringing their wives and kids to cheer them on. The quality of play was very high as the players carried the passion of their youth and their knowledge of the game with them. Most stores were closed on Sundays back in the 70's and 80's so Sunday afternoons at the ballpark became a tradition for many families. Weston park became the social hub for the community.

At the end of the season there was a big BBQ and fun day for players and families of all age groups. The parking lot was filled beyond capacity and many cars were forced to park on the side of the road. Hotdogs and hamburgers were provided by Weston Abattoir across the road. Playoff games for many of the divisions were also played on this day.

A second diamond for men was added in the early 80's at the back of the park, across the little ditch. Stadium lights were added around 1990 to allow for night games to be played.

The number of players and teams began dwindling in the 90's as other softball leagues in the area were formed. This drew players away from Weston park. In 1999, Sandwich South was dissolved and the land became part of the Municipality of Tecumseh who still maintains and operates the park.

A huge debt of gratitude is owed to the Weston family. Not only for donating the land for the ball fields, but for their countless hours organizing and making the league such a success. Brothers Neil, Jack, Bob, and Jim Weston all played in the

men's league over the years. It was Bob though that was the most active and present. From taking care of uniforms, to maintaining the diamonds, to making up all the team rosters, to filling in when teams were short a player – Bob was always there. He was well liked and well respected by everyone involved with the league. He likely never received the appreciation he deserved but his efforts did not go unnoticed.