

# Kempsville PONY Baseball

Opening Day ~ March 31, 2007

Opening Day 2007 at Kempsville Pony Baseball was spectacular. The sun was as bright as it could be, the stands were full of cheering fans, and the fields were in perfect shape for the start of the final year at the KPB complex on Kempsville Road. League VPs were on hand to assist Dan Spamer with the team line-ups by the scoreboard in preparation for introduction. KPB faithful volunteer, Lou McKinney, guided guests and VIPs to their seats. Chris Conley served as master of ceremonies and provided opening remarks to commemorate the 49<sup>th</sup> Opening Day Ceremony for KPB – the last Opening Day to be held at the current fields. Chris noted that the 13-year old players who played at KPB in the league's first season in 1959 are now 62 years old. A few historical milestones were highlighted for that same year including the following:

- The Kempsville Borough had only 20,000 residents.
- Dwight D. Eisenhower was President of the United States.
- That year marked the first year of 50 stars on the US Flag.
- Gasoline was 40 cents per gallon.
- A Navy officer and WWII veteran, Richard Garriott, applied to establish six teams as a PONY baseball league and served as the league's first president.
- The first teams of 1959, the team's represented today and all of the teams in between provide a long tradition of Kempsville baseball.

Teams and managers for Pinto, Mustang, Bronco and Pony were introduced and lined the field between first and third bases. Ms. Katelyn Stewart of the Kempsville High School Madrigals performed "The Star Spangled Banner" in full costume from her leading role in the KHS production of "Hello, Dolly!"

Board members were introduced: Tim Gillen (Pinto VP and Manager, Pony Orioles); Donald Olsen, Jr. (Mustang VP and Manager, Bronco Yankees); Bob Schneider (Bronco VP and Manager, Pony Cubs); Robby Evans (Pony VP); Chris Conley (Colt VP); Lou McKinney (Palomino VP and KPB Liaison with the City of Virginia Beach); John Hill (Secretary); Don Spamer (Treasurer and Manager of Colt Orioles); Bernie Kozuch (Player Agent and Manager, Mustang Braves); and Frank Albero (President).

Members of appointed positions were introduced by Frank Albero: Trish Brown (Concession Stand Manager); Mike Anderson (Field and Grounds Manager, Manager of Pony A's); Tom Brown (Uniform and Equipment Manager, Manager of Pony Dodgers); Janet Carter (Webmaster and staff photographer); Jenny Gillen (Promotions Director); and Susan Albert (Ways and Means Coordinator).

An introduction and recognition of corporate sponsors included the following: "As the Ways and Means Coordinator, Susan Albert (with help from Viki Lenz) has done an outstanding job of contacting local businesses and organizations to ask for their help supporting our baseball program. We would like to thank and recognize our sponsors. Their financial support will allow us to provide a quality youth baseball experience this season. Their continued support also helps to address the expenses we face with our move to new fields at Providence Park.

- At the Grand Slam Level with a sponsorship of \$2,000, Mr. Barry Behrman of Q-Master Billiards.
- At the Super Sponsor Level with a new sponsorship of \$650, the Kempsville Ruritan Club (remember that the Ruritan Club is holding its annual Carolina Bar-B-Que today from Noon until 6:00 PM behind the Fire and Rescue Station just across the street!), Ocean Air Heating and Cooling, Scottrade, Coastal Cooks and Catering, Premier Plumbing, Toy Society, and Anna Davis Little of Prudential Decker Realty.
- Returning Super Sponsors at the \$500 Level: Acredale Animal Hospital, Comic Kings, and Met America Mortgage. At the KPB Sponsor Level, with a sponsorship of \$300, Mr. Allen Fabijan.
- At the KPB Supporter Level, with a sponsorship of \$100, Ankeney Fundraising, and Play It Again Sports of Virginia Beach. Play It Again Sports also offers discounts to KPB players and coaches and an end-of-season donation based on KPB sales.

A long-time sponsor of Kempsville PONY Baseball, Mr. Barry Behrman of Q-Master Billiards provided remarks.

Further remarks from Chris included a recognition of special guests: "We have a few other long-time friends of the league here today, who we would like to recognize. Mr. Jim Smith, Commissioner of Umpires for the Eastern Officials Association; Mr. Glen McClanan, who provides his services as the league's attorney; Not present due to baseball commitments of their own, but important links to our baseball program: varsity baseball coaches Paul Shows of Kempsville High School, Monty Hilliard of Tallwood High School, Pete Zell of Salem High School, and Guy Hiatt of Bishop Sullivan Catholic High School. Three of these four local high school baseball coaches played youth baseball here at Kempsville PONY Baseball. Scott Stubbe, the head coach at First Colonial High School, Jason Hatcher, the head coach at Bayside High School, and Brian Conley, the JV coach at Bishop Sullivan Catholic High School, also played their baseball here at KPB."

"We will be making a special effort this year to honor Kempsville PONY Baseball's past on this site for 49 seasons while also preparing for the league's 50<sup>th</sup> season and beyond at Providence Park. In that spirit, we are honored to have the son, the grandson, and the great-grandson of the league's first president, Commander Richard Garriott, to start our season by throwing out the ceremonial first pitches of the season. Please give them a warm Kempsville PONY Baseball welcome... The starter is Dick Garriott... The closer is Richard Garriott, Jr... Also, please welcome Thomas Campbell... Thank you to the Garriott family for being an important part of Kempsville PONY Baseball."

"Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for attending this year's Opening Day ceremony. Today's first game between the Pony Cardinals and the Pony A's will start at 12:15. Have a great season."

Congratulations to everyone who helped make Opening Day a huge success.