

A-Game With One Winner.

\$2,000 Raised In Benefit Softball Gamf! For Jeff Zurlinden

By TERRY DUSCHINSKI

Suppose for a minute, that you arrived in Delhi Park Friday September 15, without prior warning of the event about to unfold.

In came the rootin'-tootin' team of the Delhi Fire Department, flaunting around the ballfield in some vintage fire vehicle, a whoopin' and a hollemin' and a carryin' on.

The Delhi Athletic Association was more subdued in its arrival. But the kids' coaches soon resorted -to Tom Foolery that they would never accept from knotholders.

The match was on.

The fire department, you might say, featured a stacked lineup. Naw, it's nothing like Murderer's Row of the Big Red Machine.

Their stack had to do with the area of their chests. Water balloons served as some misgven imitation of, *of...oi, a...well, of a girl.*

They were all dressed like girls. Grown men every one of them, the athletic association too, and all of them in skirts! *Gads!*

The occasion was a benefit Skirt Softball Game, the proceeds going to Jeff Zurlinden. The township youth was paralyzed in an accident two years ago. The fundraiser was to help with his medical expenses.

The fire department and the athletic association fielded teams in good-natured fun to bring out the community for a night of sheer slapstick..

A swarming crowd of 500 descended upon the park, participating in a raffle which raised \$2,000 for young Zurlinden.

The stricken youth was in tears most of the evening.

"The only sad part of the night was when the teams went over to see Jeff," recounted Joe Ruhe, coach of the fire department *so-called* team. "He just sat there, knowing the game was for him and crying."

Since his accident, Zurlinden isn't able to speak. Some figured his tears were the overflow of emotion brought by the show of community support.

When he left the park in about the fourth inning, the crowd rose to cheer him and offer encouragement of "Hang in there, Jeff."

Area merchants donated an approximate eighty-five prizes for drawing to help raise the money. Their was no admission charge.

Jerry Thomas, radio personality of WKRC, served as play-by-play announcer.

"Jerry Thomas was absolutely great," lauded Neal O'Leary, who coached the athletic association. "He really kept things going. We had a crowd of 500 people and they stayed for two and one-half hours. They must not have been getting bored."

Thomas' one-liners capped off the antics taking place on the softball diamond. Perhaps you could tune him in for some punch lines you missed.

The fire department team consisted of Carl Witsken, Howard Witsken, Dick Reuss, Bob McGowan, Steve McGowan, Joe Krammer, Larry Sandman, Len Grieve, Greg Schmidt, Denny Baker, Terry Baker, Herb Lipps, Satch Colletta (a Delhi policeman) and Kenny Lipps all under the ~tute leadership of Joe Ruhe.

The athletic association brought out the heavy artillery: Tom Malone, Bill Wegman, Tom Stucker, Bill Inskip, John Lueggering, Ron Fritz, Dick Shipman and LeRoy Rabanis, so capably guided into battle by Neal O'Leary.

Umpiring-or something to that effect-were Delhi Police Chief Howard Makin, Delhi Fire Chief Don Ohmer~ Athletic Association President Dick Marston and Lt. Col. Larry Whalen, Assistant Chief of the Cincinnati Police.

Whalen was umpiring, that is, when not involved in a chase of Colletta, Delhi cop who infiltrated the fire department team. Sometimes it was Colletta chasing Whalen. They ended their dispute with a bucket of water over the head.

Oh yes, the star of the fire department team was Fr. Ray Meyer, chaplain of the department and Associate Pastor at St. Dominic.

Upon Fr. Ray's first appearance at the plate, Thomas introduced him as wearing ...oops, maybe it better not be repeated. But the crowd crunched up in laughter.

The athletic association had the "sexiest catcher in town" in Joe Tony. That's according to O'Leary, who kidded "Joe really looks good as a girl."

Silly.

The game had to be halted for a medical emergency one inning. Willimina Inskip, base runner at second, found it to be the time of life only a mother can know.

Nurse O'Leary rushed out. Within minutes O'Leary was heading back to the bench, Baby Inskip, six pounds, seven ounces, resting comfortably in her arms.

Willimina arose, tucked in her specially-designed maternity jersey, and the game continued.

The fire department cheated throughout portions of the game. The athletic association baserunners were pelted by water balloons.

With the game anybody's contest entering the final inning, the fire department made a number of defensive changes. The change was that they emptied their *bench-everyone* went out in the field.

But the athletic association got even.

The first pitch of the inning was sent on a line to left field...and a long fly to center...and a grounder to short...and a ground ball up the middle...and a fly to left...

Twenty-five softballs came flying from the athletic association bench!

But cheaters never win. With both sides cheating, the game ended in a tie.

"It ended in a tie," O'Leary corrected. "Jeff Zurlinden was the winner."