



## THE MOST PROGRESSIVE LEAGUE IN ALBERTA

### Dear Sponsors and Advertisers:

As the Commissioner of the North Central Alberta Baseball League, I would like to take a few minutes of your time to introduce you to a special piece of Alberta sports history. As you are already aware, the year 2017 will mark a milestone for Canadians as we celebrate our nation's 150th birthday. In that same year, another memorable birthday will be celebrated, that being the 50th anniversary of an historic baseball league which has grown and prospered alongside many communities within north central Alberta.

The sport of baseball has been around in this region since the time of our early settlers. Known as the game of summer, baseball was played recreationally at almost every Sunday picnic in almost every single prairie town since the early 20th century. As baseball flourished, it became part of the fabric of that agricultural way of life so evident throughout the Sturgeon and Pembina counties. Soon, communities began to rally behind certain sports teams as these teams grew to be identified with the communities they represented. Competition flourished between towns and villages as their baseball clubs sought to gain more and more recognition for the communities they represented. Civic pride could no longer be fed on a diet of recreational baseball. Competitive baseball would soon replace those easygoing times when a home run scored at a local picnic might only raise an eyebrow from a prospective damsel. The need for more structure and a steady diet of baseball became evident. The North Central Alberta Baseball League would rise to fill that need in 1968 following a meeting of local baseball enthusiasts who had gathered in Cunningham School in Morinville, Alberta. It was here that the League's first regular season schedule was drawn up. From this point onward, the game of baseball took on a whole different focus as it moved from being played on a schoolyard field to being played on infields of dirt and clay. The camaraderie remained



and the joy in playing the game also remained; but under the banner of the NCABL, the game of baseball was given new life.

Over our fifty years of history, sixty-three clubs representing almost every town and village in north central Alberta, have joined the League. In more recent decades, cities have joined us as we have grown into one of the most progressive amateur baseball leagues in Western Canada. As many as two thousand athletes have played in the NCABL over the course of our fifty years of existence. And if one looks at achievements as a sign of success, the NCABL has left a legacy worth highlighting with a few examples.

The North Central Alberta Baseball League has always supported the growth of grassroots baseball in rural Alberta. For about a decade, the NCABL organized week-long baseball camps which travelled from town to town offering top flight instruction from American college players brought up to Canada from California to play and to teach the finer points of the game. We also developed and introduced one of the very first baseball skills competitions at our sanctioned tournaments for youths ages 10 - 12. For a time, we sponsored an American college exchange program which brought higher level playing talent from US colleges to our local clubs so as to accelerate our improvement on the field. We wrote and distributed, comprehensive coaching manuals to all baseball coaches within our playing area. We have also promoted and continue to promote the importance of post-secondary education by offering annual education grants to university bound athletes. We have recognized the importance of skill development in the provision of higher quality baseball. To achieve this, we modelled our playing schedule to that of the US college circuit. Since our regular season only provided for about twenty games per season, we introduced a package of League sanctioned tournaments which clubs could opt to play in thereby doubling the number of games they could play in a given season. More games meant that developmental clubs could prosper in the NCABL. The League continues to evolve today by providing annual training to its volunteer staff of official scorers, by retaining the services of an Official Statistician who oversees the delivery of a professional statistical package, by

maintaining a professional website updated on a daily basis during our active season, and by supporting local radio stations and weekly newspapers through frequent press releases. And these are but a sampling of the NCABL's achievements over the course of the past 50 years.

The North Central Alberta Baseball League has grown into a solid and stable sports body that has lived by its motto which states, "An amateur League with a professional attitude". We have much to be proud of. We also have much to be grateful for. It is, therefore, our desire to celebrate our history of accomplishments while recognizing our wonderful communities who have helped support and grow the great game of baseball. Pride and gratitude have combined to motivate the 50th Anniversary Committee to plan six major events for 2017. Everything will culminate on the week-end of August 18 - 20, 2017, when we hope that hundreds of our alumni will be gathering during the Westlock & District Agricultural Fair.

**Synopsis of the Six Major 50th Anniversary Events:**

**Event: Hall of Fame Official Opening**

**Date: April 6, 2017**

**Location: Musee Morinville Museum**

**Admission: By Invitation**

**Morinville, Alberta**

It gives us great pleasure to be the first league in Alberta, in any sport, to officially unveil its own Hall of Fame. With the support of the Town of Morinville, and in partnership with the Morinville Historical and Cultural Society, the NCABL will be overseeing the official opening of its Hall of Fame. Mayors from all communities to ever host one or more clubs in the NCABL will be our honoured guests. Also among our guests will be representatives from our major sponsors along with local dignitaries.

**Event:** 2017 All-Star Game  
**Date:** July 16, 2017 **Location:** Legion Park  
**Admission:** \$3 (10 & under free) **St. Albert, Alberta**

Our second major event will be taking place at Legion Park in St. Albert on Sunday, July 16, 2017. This event will begin at 11:00 AM with a giant tail gate party including an outdoor stage with local entertainment provided, face painting and balloons for the kids, and a pre-game on-field show. The All-Star Game will follow at 3:00 PM.

**Event:** The NCABL Story: Meet and Greet  
**Date:** August 18, 2017 **Location:** Spirit Centre  
8:00 PM - 12:00 **Westlock, Alberta**  
**Admission:** TBA **Cash Bar/Concessions**

The focal point of our celebrations will occur during a three day alumni reunion which begins on Friday, August 18th, and ends on Sunday, August 20, 2017. During this time period, four major 50th anniversary events will be taking place in addition to all of the activities and events being planned by the Westlock and District Fair Board.

The NCABL Story is a meet and greet event to be held at the Spirit centre on Friday, August 18, from 8:00 PM until Midnight. Artifacts from the Hall of Fame will be on display along with over twenty-five years of press book coverage. Some local entertainment will be provided, but the highlight of the night will be the naming of ten impact players from each of the five decades of the NCABL's history. A great opportunity for players, fans, and the general public to mingle in a convivial baseball atmosphere.

**Event:** Mixed Texas Scramble Golf Tournament  
**Date:** August 19, 2017 **Location:** Golf & Country Club  
8:00 AM - 2:30 PM **Westlock, Alberta**  
**Admission:** Pre-registration only

**Event: 50th Anniversary Gala Banquet & Awards**  
**Date: August 19, 2017 Location: Westlock & District Community Hall**  
**Cocktails: 6:00 PM Dinner: 7:00 PM Awards: 7:45 PM**  
**Sports Stories from the personalities themselves: At Intervals**  
**Doors close: Midnight**

On Saturday evening, the doors for the 50th Anniversary Gala Banquet open at 6:00 PM. A cash bar will be open to serve patrons and a memorabilia room will also be open for viewing and for the purchase of souvenirs. Dinner will follow at 7:00 PM and will include annual awards. The evening will be for mingling following the awards, but guests will be treated to a number of personal sports stories as presented by special guests of the League. Names of these sport personalities will be released at a later date.

#### **The Rest:**

Throughout the day on Saturday and Sunday, the League Championship Semi-Final Series A and B will be played at Keller Field. Saturday games are scheduled to start at: 10:00 AM, 12:30 PM, and 3:00 PM. Sunday games will begin at either 11:00 AM or 2:00 PM as the series' will dictate with a final game at 5:00 PM if necessary.

The Westlock & District Agricultural Board will also be hosting a number of rodeo and chuck wagon events along with an agricultural exposition and midway for families who may want a little diversity over the week-end. Refer to local media advertisements for details as to dates, times, and admissions.

Early Saturday morning, over 100 alumni and friends will be playing in our Texas Scramble Mixed Golf Tournament at the Westlock Golf and Country Club.

**Event:** Salute to Our Communities: A Sports Expo  
**Date:** August 19, 2017 **Location:** Spirit Centre  
11:00 AM - 4:00 PM **Westlock, Alberta**  
**Admission:** Free

In appreciation of our fans and of the communities from across the region who have supported baseball and the NCABL throughout the 50 years of our existence, we will be organizing an event called, "Salute to Our Communities". This free event is open to the general public and will be organized in the form of a sports expo where many participating towns and villages will be setting up kiosks. Representatives will be on hand to educate the public on the recreation and sports offerings available in each of these communities. As well, visitors can enter free draws for great prizes being offered at each kiosk. Children and adults alike can look forward to trying their hand at various baseball related skills. There will also be a live baseball panel discussion and an appearance by a special sport celebrity for an autograph signing session. League memorabilia will be on display and 50th anniversary souvenirs will be sold. Don't miss it!

Thanks to our Communities  
Sports + Recreation Kiosks Bsh

- x Signage
- Athletes
- panel

1260 Radio

Jeff Kinsell?