

## BLACK ASH SPORTSMAN LITTLE LEAGUE

I need to preface everything I have written here with an apology to all that were involved for not having a better recollection of the people and events of the Black Ash Little League program when it began 56 years ago (I think).

I believe it was 1958 when my dad Paul Wentworth, and Leo Mailliard decided to start a Little League team so their sons and others could experience organized youth baseball. If there were others involved, I was not aware of it. I'm sure they consulted with Ray Armstrong but I don't think Ray was directly involved.

Butch Gross was the manager for the first year and Paul Crago assisted him. I played for three years and I know Paul was there and possibly became the manager before I left.

We constructed a ball field on Shafer Road on property now owned by Gary Glunt and Jill (Mailliard) Glunt. This was the same property that the first skeet field and rifle range were later constructed. I do not know if the property was donated to the Black Ash Sportsmans Club by Leo Mailliard or if they paid Leo some money for it, or if he just allowed us to use it (liability was not a big issue back then). This could probably be researched in the County records for clarification. The other thing I am not sure of is where the money came from for uniforms, equipment, and the ball field. I know a lot of time was donated on the construction and materials for the dug outs, backstop, home run fence, bleachers and the concession stand. Everything was made from rough sawn lumber, so I'm sure Leo donated this and it came directly from his lumber mill. I'm not sure exactly sure where the money came from for the things that needed to be bought. It could have come from from several people or from Dad and Leo personally. I don't think any came from the Club's coffers. The club pretty much ran on the dues and donations of the membership at the time.

Some of the members of the teams during the first three years were: Dale Bogardus, Walt Johnston, Paul Gross, Dick Gilbert, Bob Gilbert, Gary Heath, Ronnie Mailliard, Bill Young, Jim Elmen, Charlie Meyers, Roger Walter, and Bill Wentworth. We played in the Suburban Little League which included teams from Little Cooley, Townville, Vernon, Harmonsburg, and Black Ash.

The Black Ash uniforms were white with dark blue trim, caps and socks. The hats featured an intertwined "BAS" insignia. The team dressed up for one of the annual Guys Mills 4<sup>th</sup> of July parades and rode in Wentworth's fishing boat on its trailer.

Paul Crago and Butch Gross continued to coach along with Ray Smith. About 1963 coaching was taken over by Alden Loper and Richard Smith. At this time some of the teams on the play roster were Little Cooley, Chapmanville, Diamond and Tryonville.

I lost track of the Black Ash team after a few years, but I believe that the team moved and became Frenchtown around 1966 then eventually Guys Mills.

There are others that can add to or correct the information here if we can find them. Again, I apologize to all that I have missed, and I'm sure there are several that were there at the beginning of Black Ash Little League.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Wentworth  
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