



DUGOUT CHATTER

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OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2007

On the Internet: www.gsscs.org

THREE GSSC PLAYERS FORM EXCLUSIVE .800 HITTING CLUB

The .800 club of Golden Seniors hitters was rather exclusive in 2007 as just three players – **John Lack**, **Bob Del Chiaro** and **Monte Miller** – inhaled such rarified air.

This issue of Dugout Chatter begins a series of articles featuring interviews to provide insights or tips from

those who are among the leading hitters and sluggers, pitchers and fielders in the GSSC. We start with the trio who succeeded at least 8 times out of 10 trips to the plate, with at least 50 plate appearances.

Lack, a Tuesday Day League 2 player, hit .818, edging Del Chiaro

by a point to lead all GSSC leagues that kept statistics (Monday Day does not provide stats).

Discussing hitting with the most successful GSSC players underscores the need for physical conditioning and practicing — as well as focusing on pitchers and taking a plan with you to the batter's box. It came as no surprise that the common thread is hard work and determination. In nearly all cases, plenty of batting practice paid dividends in games.

John Lack, however, appears to be an exception to the (See Page 2)

HOME RUN CHAMP: LITTLE HAMMERS 18 'BIG FLIES'

The 2007 home run king was **Monte Little**, who totaled 18 round-trippers, evenly split to pace both League 4 and League 5.

The extremely quick **A.J. Petruzzi**, whose homers were all of the inside-the-park variety, totaled 15, including a League 6 high of 10, plus 5 in League 3.

Other members of the double-digit homer club were **Emilio Lobato** -- 14 (8 in League 5 and 6 in League 4); **Dave Vargo** – 13 (5 each in Leagues 2 & 3; 2 in League 6 and 1 in League 4); **Rich Ganas** -- 11 (7 in League 5, 4 in League 4, as work conflicts resulted in fewer at-bats this year), and **Bob Flink** -- 11 (a League 2-leading 9, plus 2 in League 6).

Barry Mortimeyer led League 3 with eight homers. Meanwhile, **Monte Miller**, who hit for the cycle twice this season, fell shy of the double-digit homer club with 9 (5 in League 4 and 4 in League 5.) #

NEXT GENERAL MEETING:

JAN. 3, 2008

VFW Hall 7:30 p.m.
2764 Stockton Blvd.

MEMBERS APPROVE BUDGET

GSSC members on Nov. 1 unanimously approved a 2007-08 budget spending \$62,700 with a \$15,600 deficit. The 2006-07 budget was about \$10,000 in the red, and bank balances were about \$40,000 as of Oct. 31.

It was noted that a golf tournament is in the planning stages that could be a major fund-raiser for the club. (Stay tuned for more news on this event.)

Other club news:

President Dan Norton and George Hodsdon asked for volunteers to operate the club telephone answering machine, which was disconnected with the death of Fred Rainey. (See Sunshine & Health report, Page 3.)

J.C. Terry resigned from the position of first vice president. President Norton is to be contacted to help find a replacement.

Player Agent Tom Sansone said 12 applications to new players have been mailed out and he has received almost 100 renewals. The trend is multi-leaguers are dropping back to single-league play. Club Commissioner Freddie Miller appointed Tom Bussey as umpire-in-chief with more emphasis on in-service training for umpires before placements and assignments in 2008.

General meetings are scheduled for Jan. 3, Feb. 4, March 3, May 5, July 7 and Aug. 4. Efforts are under way to locate a northern area meeting place to allow for alternating north-south sequence. #

GSSA .800 Club (Cont'd)

linkage of an extraordinarily high degree of success to unusually high doses of batting practice.

Lack, 67, called 2007 a great year with some of the luckiest hitting of his life. Knowing he needed to have a good final game to stay above .800, he got hits his first three times up, finishing at .8182, which is 45 for 55.

Del Chiaro (58x71 for .817) and Miller (56x70 for .800) could be described as softball addicts, taking plenty of BP and playing more than 100 games a year.

Not so Mr. Lack. The former Sacramento fire chief (retired in 1991) said he has never been all that "religious" about spending time in the batting cages, and he's only dabbled in tournament play. He now limits himself to one Golden Senior league -- one game a week. Lack has played 16 years in the Golden Seniors, starting with Tuesday Days when he turned 51 (now you've got to be 60 to play in League 2). He missed two seasons. He had never hit .800 before. He usually bats in the .650s, occasionally in the .700s. He felt he was not the best or even second-best hitter this season on the Jerry Nevis Realty team. His batting practice consists of maybe one or two trips to the batting cages before the season begins. Otherwise, he keeps fit by playing tennis and going to the gym once a week. "I'm pretty active. I keep my weight down. I watch what I eat."

So how'd he hit .818? "I was just luckier than blazes," he said, explaining this year's spike in his batting average. Unlike many of the hitting leaders, Lack didn't play that much until he was about 35. He had three boys go through Little League, so most of his softball experience came later in life, mainly as a participant on fire department teams, even playing third base with and against the younger guys.

Due to outlawed bats and restricted balls, he figures 90 percent of his hits are singles. "I don't mind the restricted balls because I have to catch it at the other end," said the middle infielder.

One reason he plays no more than one game a week is that he still feels "a little hobbled" from a broken ankle suffered as a firefighter.

He credits success to his approach to hitting, along with his overall good physical condition.

"When I'm on deck I'm always telling myself to 'watch the ball' and to 'wait, and take the first pitch.' I'm an aggressive hitter. I have to keep telling myself, 'Don't swing at bad pitches.'"

Lack watches pitchers as they warm up and how they pitch to the hitters ahead of him in the lineup. He needs to know if they tend to throw short or deep. He'll then set himself accordingly in the batter's box. With a runner on first, he said he looks for a pitch to hit to right field, and with runners on first and second, he would rather not hit it to the third baseman. He generally hits the ball toward the middle of the field, but will take a shot down the line if the third baseman is giving him enough space.

He also takes advantage of field and weather conditions. Playing mornings at the Sacramento Softball Complex, the sun can be brutal on the right-center fielder. He takes note of his shadow at the plate. If he can see his shadow pointing to a spot on the field, that's where he tends to hit. Even if he pops up, it can be lost in the sun. Another field is aligned so the batter is somewhat blinded by the sun from right field, making it difficult to hit the ball that way.

Del Chiaro's Love to Hit

Bob Del Chiaro helped lead Bertolucci's to the best regular-season record in League 4. Bob also hit .725 for GSSA, the League 5 (Thursday night) championship team.

Answering the phone on Monday

afternoon (Oct. 22), Bob said he was preparing to load up the car with his dad, Marino, 77, and son, Austin, 9, and head out for some batting practice. Marino is a Monday Day player. Bob was preparing for a tournament later in the week in Phoenix, but said he'd be out hitting even if he didn't have a reason to stay sharp. "If the weather is nice, we'd still go out to hit. Austin likes to hit and it's good for us all."

He said his primary swing thought varies but "if they are playing me really deep, most of the time I don't try to hit it far. I cut down on my swing. It's kind of frustrating. I'm not sure that, at my age (57), I can hit 'em out with the restricted balls and bats we're using." Instead of using the whole body, I use my arms, making it easier to place the ball. It is definitely a different swing for base hits than it is for power." (Bob still managed to hit seven homers this year.)

Besides plenty of batting practice, he said he lifts weights "an awful lot" and runs. He adds "sit-ups and all that" to his workout routine.

Miller: Wrist-Snap Swing

Monte Miller, 53, led the Wednesday night championship team, Bradshaw Ranch Golf. He said he has spent many hours perfecting "wrist-snap" swing mechanics by hitting off a tee in his backyard batting cage.

And he played four nights a week this year. He took batting practice on weekends with friends in Davis, and he also played weekend tournaments.

He was critical of batters who don't adjust to a pitcher who usually targets the front of the plate. "If all you see is the top of the ball, you're going to hit a lot of grounders," he noted.

Before he spent months perfecting the wrist-snap approach, which he saw in a video on hitting, Monte said he had been a right-field hitter with no power. Ability to go deep, even occasionally, will produce a higher batting average as defenders play deep and pop-ups are more likely to show up as hits in the scorebook, he said. #

GSSC PLAYER DAVE RAYDON SUFFERS MAJOR HEART ATTACKS

Dave Raydon, Tuesday night GSSC player, suffered what a surgeon called massive heart attacks on Thursday night, Nov. 1. He had emergency surgery and was recovering at Mercy San Juan Hospital.

Raydon was playing first base for the Sacramento Muckrakers, championship D2 Fall League team at the Sacramento Softball Complex, when he suddenly walked off the field during the second game of a play-off doubleheader. He complained of chest pressure.

Teammate Bob Smartt and his wife, Trudy, both having been trained in CPR as GSSC players, took control until medics arrived. The Smartts followed the ambulance to the hospital.

Trudy said she was told that Dave lost his pulse in the ambulance and was revived with electroshocks. He suffered a second attack in the emergency room.

It was after 1 a.m. when a doctor showed relatives and teammates before-and-after heart pictures “for (Dave’s) scrapbook.” The unclogged artery supplies blood to about 30 percent of the heart.

Friday night, Nov. 2, Al Raydon, Dave’s brother, said Dave was doing much better. He was still in intensive care but might be able to have visitors in three or four days. #

2007 GSSC BATTING LEADERS

League 2 (Tuesday Day) Batting Average: John Lack .818, Bill Enos .797, Roland Stairwalt .783. HR: Bob Flink 9, Vidal Franco 5, Dave Vargo 5, Ron Peck 5. Hits: Merv Mill 60, Frank Bettencourt 55, Flink 55. RBI: Joe Saiz 47, Flink 40, Vic Torres 40.

League 3 (Tuesday Night) Batting Average: Al Raydon .758, A.J. Petruzzi .736, David Raydon .705. HR: Barry Mortimeyer 8, Petruzzi 5, Steve Casarez 5, Vargo 5. Hits: Norm Blackwell Jr. 54, Petruzzi 53, Al Raydon 50. RBI: Mortimeyer 51, Norm Blackwell 41, Bruce Gilmore 41.

League 4 (Wednesday Night) Batting Average: Bob Del Chiaro .817, Monte Miller .800, Monta Litle .795. HR: Litle 9, Emilio Lobato 6, Miller 6, Larry Lagomarsino 6. Hits: Bill Christian 61, Del Chiaro 58, Miller 56. RBI: Lobato 54, Michael Lofton 48, Del Chiaro 47.

League 5 (Thursday Night) Batting Average: Bob Paese .735, Del Chiaro .725, Mike Lofton .717. HR: Litle 9, Lobato 8, Rich Ganas 7. Hits: Del Chiaro 66, Ettore Minor 52, Lagomarsino 52. RBI: Ganas 55, Litle 52, Ettore Minor 49.

League 6 (Tuesday Day Select) Average: Bob Cummings .784, Vidal Franco .714, Doug Peterson .679. HR: Petruzzi 10, Cummings 5, Peterson 4. Hits: Vargo 42, Bill Enos 41, Cummings 40, Franco 40. RBI: Peterson 36, Petruzzi 29, Vargo 26 #

SUNSHINE & HEALTH REPORT

Fred Rainey Sr., the voice of the Golden Seniors, passed away Oct. 7, after a short illness. He was 86. Fred joined the Golden Seniors in 1979 (a charter member) and in 1985 was first vice president. After Vince Demere, club president, passed away, Fred became president, a position he also held in 1986. His wife of 46 years, Pat, who preceded him in death, was club secretary for the first 12 years and, with her records, Fred was able to establish the club’s seniority system that remains in effect. Fred’s father-in-law donated land to the city that became Tahoe park.

Mr. Rainey was the club’s Man of the Year in 1988.

In 1995, he agreed to have the club’s answering machine installed in his house by Steve Pegos, and his booming voice could usually be heard declaring that “games of ... will be played as scheduled!” He would phone Howe Park and the City complex and post the message on the answering machine as soon as officials determined the fields to be playable. “Fred, we thanks you for all your time and efforts. You will really be missed” — George Hodsdon.

Wilfred W. “Fred” Johnson, 70, passed away Sept. 26 after a three-year battle with lung and bone cancer. He joined the GSSC in 1999 and this year signed up for Tuesday morning

in both the 9 a.m. league (Jerry Nevis Realty) and the Select League (VFW Post 67). He also played in the Thursday Sierra League and for the Rebels tournament team. Side-effects of chemotherapy sidelined Mr. Johnson for most of the 2007 season. The retired operating engineer, survived by his wife Kathleen of 52 years, was “passionate about and played senior softball, enjoyed his Packard cars ... and most of all his family,” according to the obituary in The Bee.

Life Member **Bob Cooper**, 80, passed away Oct. 1. An excellent pitcher, he joined the club in 1987. He dropped his membership this year. #

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GSSC October Birthdays

10/2 — Doug Brewer, Ed Caluza, Bob Honda; 10/3 — Dan Norton; 10/4 — Dante Ciardella, Rich Grider; 10/5 — Ettore Minor, Eduardo Monterrubio, Jim Powell Jr.; 10/6 — Nick Hansen; 10/8 — Vic Callen; 10/9 — George Boswell, Bill Sullivan; 10/10 — Robert Cook; 10/12 — Lorenzo Moreno, George Takenami; 10/13 — Mark Cessna, Don Ratcliffe; 10/14 — Jack Presley; 10/15 — Russell Carlson; 10/16 — Ken Fulmer, Tom Marsh; 10/17 — Al Cross, Jerry Kanenaga, Bill Taylor; 10/18 — Gene Shropshire; 10/20 — Joe Kline; 10/21 — Bill Ferguson, Bob Riola, Dan Roncelli; 10/22 — John Cotter, Paul Warner; 10/24 — Robert Dippel, W. Kent Ramos; 10/25 — Larry Windham; 10/26 — Vic Bianchini; 10/28 — Bill Knoblauch; 10/30 — Jim Hoffman.

GSSC November Birthdays

11/1—Frank Bouza, David Bristol, Ken Wallenberg; 11/2—Enoch Benson; 11/4—John Chatfield; 11-5—Ray Cook; 11-6—Eric Boemer, Tony Pina; 11/8—Ted Slauson; 11/9—Walt King, Freddie Miller; 11/10—Ron Cowan; 11/11—Martin Bracamonte, Lewine Freeny; 11/12—Bob Dillon, Bob Nevis; 11/13—Carl Maryland, John McMillan, David Tanner; 11/14—Steve Pegos, Dean Price; 11/16—Arthur Derr; 11/17—Bob Huss, Patrick Morrison; 11/18—Andres Serna; 11/19—John Ashe, Art Granum; 11/20—John Bothne; 11/21—Herb Hereth, Joe Smith; 11/22—Norm Blackwell Sr., Ken Cramer, Jerry Johnson, Don Loesch; 11/23—Bill Felicio; 11/24—Daryl Cook, Ed Garcia; 11/25—Ray Mendonsa; 11/26—Ben Acosta, Jack Jacinto, Jim Upholt; 11/27—Jerry Nevis, Dave Taylor; 11/28—Claude Bob Wilson; 11/29—Richard Black, Albert Hutcheson, Gordon Marshall, Harold Seufert; 11/30—Earl Prawdzik, Jim Wait.

Golden Seniors Softball Club
Daniel Norton, President
1811 Cottonridge Circle
Sacramento, CA 95828

TELEPHONE **“HOTLINES”**

Sunshine & Health
973-8269

Phone/Address Changes
391-3938

New Player Applications
686-1654

GSSC #3912

Blood Bank

456-1500

Dugout Chatter

Ron Roach, editor

422-2500

coachrwr@comcast.net

Field Conditions

& Meetings

(Phone Number Pending)

THE TOURNAMENT PLAYERS ASSOCIATION (TPA) OF SACRAMENTO
PRESENTS THE
SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL DINNER / DANCE CELEBRATION

DATE AND TIMES

SATURDAY, NOV. 17, 2007
COCKTAILS AT 6 P.M.
DINNER AT 7 P.M.
MUSIC 7:30-11:30 P.M.

RAFFLE

LOTS OF PRIZES
\$100 CASH GRAND PRIZE
(MUST BE PRESENT
TO WIN – 10 P.M.)

LOCATION

VFW POST 67
2764 STOCKTON BLVD.
SACRAMENTO, CA
916-453-9209

CASUAL DRESS

DONATION: PLAYERS/MEMBERS – FREE
SPOUSES -- \$6
GUESTS -- \$12

DINNER (3 ENTREES): MEAT LOAF / PORK CHOPS / CHICKEN (PLUS ALL THE “FIXINS”)

CONTACT THE FOLLOWING TPA OFFICIALS FOR INFORMATION:

JIM LORTZ (TREAS.) 916-369-2829

BOB LOWERY (PRES.) 916-428-6755

DICK SEWARD (TOUR. DIR.) 916-922-6028

RICK KNEE (MGR.) 530-756-1592

AL MORALES (MGR.) 916-456-8602

JIM HEALE (MGR.) 530-677-1920

PAUL DENNAN (MGR.) 707-925-5531

ED SHERROD (MGR.) 707-429-3183

NORM BLACKWELL (MGR.) 916-452-1539

MIKE BAYNE (MGR.) 916-967-4268

JODY ANDAGAN (MGR.) 916-428-6755

DON KANAMASU (MGR.) 916-391-3559

RUSS UDA (MGR.) 916-395-2010

RICHARD BACH (SEC.) 916-962-3329

BOB SCHWANN (PAST PRES., MGR.) 916-971-1199 OR CELL 916-201-6155

Announcements

2007 GSSC Christmas Luncheon: Monday, Dec. 10, from 11:30 to 1:30 at Luau Gardens, 1890 Arden Way. \$10 per person. RSVP to George or Virginia Hodsdon (481-9304).

Wanted: Several good cooperative team players who are willing to follow team rules and policy. Also must be able to run at a good pace. This is a semi-travel league. We play doubleheaders on Thursday mornings, some in town, some out of town. Must be at least 60 or have sixtieth birthday in 2008 to be eligible. Season starts in April and ends in September. Please call for further details: Dante Ciardella (453-1921).

2008 GSSC MEETINGS

JAN. 3
FEB. 4
MARCH 3
MAY 5
JULY 7
AUG. 4

CATCHING UP: Bill Hall reports that he also was a multiple league champion on Sept. 15, playing for Bradshaw Ranch Golf and GSSA. Last month's DC listed multiple winners. #

DUGOUT CHATTER ON THE INTERNET: CHECK IT OUT!!!

GSSC members with Internet access are missing a bet if they don't make our website one of their favorites. News and views are posted regularly. You might even see a photo of yourself. For the latest issue of Dugout Chatter, go to:

www.GSSCS.org