

Somers Little League (SLL)

Annual Report

Oct 1, 2014 – Sept 30, 2015



SLL Annual Report

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Year in Review

We are excited to report that the 2014 – 2015 season was one of the best on record for the SLL. We won the both the 9/10 and Junior Division District 8 Championships. The victories represent the first District Championships in league history.

The recent success of the program would not have been possible without the countless hours contributed from the kids, parents and coaches and the financial support from local businesses and the community.

The participation numbers for the SLL continue to be strong. This we saw a participation level of approximately 230 kids over the course of the three primary seasons (Spring, Summer and Fall). We have a solid financial position, strong leadership continued community support and the outlook for the program is great.

Although we have been fortunate enough to experience championships on the field our biggest victories have been the experiences that we provide to the kids. We do our best to provide the facilities and coaching so that every player achieves their potential, no matter what their skill level may be. We are also working to provide the larger life lessons that are even more important than the wins and losses on the field. Our hope is that we are not only developing the kids into solid ball players, but more importantly, helping them grow into wonderful young men and women.

This past year we have spent a lot of money on capital improvements to the fields. A new 50/70 field was created at the town facility on Field Road providing much needed field space given our growing numbers. We must acknowledge Todd Rolland, Bruce Urban and Chris Boucher for their dedication and effort to our league and without their help we would not have the facilities that we do.

Programs

In 2014 – 2015 our program consisted of around 230 kids on 22 teams within 6 divisions over the Spring, Summer and Fall seasons.

We have seen a significant participation pickup in our youngest group (T-Ball), with four teams this year. This can be directly attributed to the recent focus on this group especially shown by the construction of the new T-Ball field at the town hall complex. If you have not seen the facility, please stop down as we are really proud of it.

Our Spring program had 150 kids, Summer 56 kids and the Fall program had 24. Those figures have been pretty consistent over the past couple of years. The new 50/70 field has enabled us to provide that stepping stone to the kids making the transition to the 90 foot diamond. Historically that has been a significant hurdle for the kids at this age, and offering them this transitional period will pay dividends in future years.

Our 9/10 and Junior All-Star teams both won the District 8 championships. The first ever championships for the town. This is a tremendous accomplishment for our small town. The fall season saw the AAA team win the Enfield Fall League and the AA team finished in second place.

Training and Education

In the fall the Board secured the use of the Powerhouse Training facility in East Longmeadow for several Saturday's during the Winter. We also contracted with Tim Mayo from DreamBats to provide instruction during the sessions. There was a \$10 per session fee charged to recoup some of the expense of the facility rental and instruction costs. The sessions were fairly well attended, but for the most part, consisted of a core group of kids. Those who did attend raved about the opportunity to practice and get repetitions in over the Winter and we think that the program was a success. That said as we move into this Winter the Board will again be looking at this option, as well as looking at ways to increase the overall attendance numbers and attract kids who did not participate last year.

Facilities/Field Maintenance

SLL invested a lot of time and money into our facilities this past year. We spent \$7,200 on fencing at the new 50/70 field in order to get the field in acceptable game playing condition. The fencing consisted of the backstop and fencing to run along both baselines providing coverage for the benches. The town installed a temporary outfield fence at no cost to the league. A portable pitching mount was purchased enabling different divisions to use the field. Initial feedback on that set up has been positive.

New signs for the fields behind town hall were purchases as well as new privacy screening for the backstops. John McLellan was kind enough to build the benches for the 50/70 field saving us significant money. We also were able to install a new Family Patio at the town hall fields.

Discussions in past year had led to the determination that spectators wanted a place they could sit and relax while having a treat from the Snack Shack and enjoy the game. The construction of the patio was possible in part from the generous concrete donation by Palazessi Construction.

Over the course of the prior year we had noticed that our fields needed some TLC. In the Fall of 2014, Twin State Turf Farm donated a significant amount of sod, came in and cleaned up the infield sections of both the Majors and Minors fields and re-sodded the T-Ball field. The fields have never looked better than they did this year. The clean lines of the infield grass also provided safer playing fields for the kids, which, of course, is of utmost importance.

Equipment/Uniforms

There were no major equipment purchases during the past season. Scott Raymond worked hard with our suppliers to provide quality uniforms for the kids while keeping the costs in line with the budget. Typical purchases of balls, bats and other miscellaneous items were also included and in line with Plan spending.

Marketing / Communications

During the kick-off meeting last year there was a discussion regarding the fact the website was not as well utilized as it should be. There were significant improvements regarding the layout and content of the site and we feel it was a much more useful tool this year for both the families of participants as well as the coaches and board members. There is still a lot of room for improvement with the website and how we deliver information and we will continue to make the website a helpful place in the coming year. We instituted a board position of Communications Director which was filled by Steve Olearcek. Steve did a great job in bolstering the quality and consistency of our communications.

One comment we frequently heard is the desire to increase the speed at which we can communicate. Often times due to rain outs etc... it is difficult to get in touch with all of the necessary parties in a timely fashion when not everyone has access to the website. Toward the end of the season we created a Twitter account. This account provides us a great way to distribute up to the minute news and messages about all things Somers Little League. But in order for it to be successful we need more followers. Please go to Twitter and follow us @SomersLL.

Hosted Tournaments

This year saw the return of the Somers Wood Bat Tournament, one of the most talked about baseball tournaments in the area. The tournament grew to include 14 teams over three divisions and attracted teams from Massachusetts out to Mansfield, Connecticut. The tournament was again a great success.

We also saw the inaugural Father's Day Tournament. The tournament had 6 teams in its initial year and was spoken very highly of. We look to host this tournament again and given its success, increase the participation level now that the word is out.

Financials

Due to the hard work of the Board and the community, SLL has a stable financial footing. The league has two primary revenue sources, registration fees and the discount card fundraiser. This past year we were able to keep our registration fees the same as the prior year and still provide the higher quality uniforms and many field upgrades. This year we transitioned from an Excel based account method to using QuickBooks. The use of QuickBooks provides us a tool that is user friendly while increasing the quality of data captured making reporting more robust and useful.

Due to some hard work by Chris Duff and Steve Olearcek we were able to obtain a \$12,000 Grow the Game grant from Little League International. The grant was written in conjunction with the Somers Softball Assoc. SLL will be working with the Softball Assoc. and the town to create new softball practice fields at the Field Road facility.

Please see the Actual V. Plan Sept 30 for YTD summary of financials.

Future Plans

The Board is set to meet in November 2015 at which time future capital spending items will be solidified. Some of the items which the board has been in discussions about are:

- Modifying the sprinkler system at the 50/70 field
- Adding water fountains at the Town Hall fields
- L screens at the Majors and Minors fields
- Upgrading the electronic scoreboard at the Majors field to be wireless
- Providing winter training clinics
- Obtaining a new shed at the Town Hall fields
- New field liners
- Batting cage turf
- On deck fencing for dugouts at Majors and Minors fields
- Winter training
- Indoor training facility
- Lighting for the 50/70 field

We are also looking into ways to increase the use and financial contribution of the Snack Shack.

Conclusion

The Somers Little League program has grown significantly this past year, both in terms of progress and championships. The goal of the league remains the same, to provide every child in Somers with the opportunity to play this game we all love and more importantly to safe/fun outlet for the kids to grow. The Board is working hard to provide excellent fields, strong coaching and a great experience for the kids.

This goal cannot be achieved without the continued support of the community, participants and volunteers. Your involvement is what will enable the growth and future success of the program.

On behalf of the Somers Little League than you for your time, donations and support.

Board of Directors

President	Chris Duff
Vice President	Scott Zapolski
Treasurer	John Curran
Secretary	<i>Open</i>
Communications	Steve Olearcek
T-Ball Rep	Patrick Burns
A Rep	Ray Dandurand
AA Rep	John McLellan
AAA Rep	Kevin Schechterle
Majors Rep	<i>Open</i>
Juniors Rep	Kevin Whiteley
50/70	Kevin Whiteley
Umpire Coord	Paul Arcari
Equipment Coord	Scott Raymond
Safety Officer	Steve Gothers
Player/Coach Development	Tony Palazessi

Sponsors

We would like to extend our gratitude to our sponsors. Without their support there would be no Little League program.

All Saints Church

American Eagle Federal Credit Union

Any Time Fitness Somers

Arcari Motor Sales

Avery Septic

Carillo & Howland

Club Fitness

Conval

Devlin, Peters & Tarpey

Dicks Sporting Goods

Dream Bat Company

Family For

Frank's Landscaping

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Juliano Pools

Knights of Columbus

KRL Builders

Maine Fish Market and Restaurant

Manchester Pizza

Mountain Tree Service

Palazessi Construction

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Power Specialists

Powerhouse Training

Pro-Tech

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