



By Michael English—Jupiter Courier Sports Editor



## Jupiter Baseball History

Sports had its place in Jupiter history also. Among the sports that are popular, was the American sport of Baseball. As you read on, you will discover how baseball affected the young youth in Jupiter. Back in the mid-1930s, a group of young men set aside their fishing poles, neglected their farm chores, and decided to play baseball during their summer off from school. The Pennocks and others played baseball where Jupiter West Plaza is today.

Roy Rood said the Pennocks donated the equipment. The local boys played on an American Legion Baseball team and it was the first organized sport in Jupiter. Actually, the sport wasn't organized here. There weren't any real ball fields in Jupiter, so the Legion team, made up of 14 to 16-year-old players, played on a field at the north end of the Breakers Hotel golf course on Singer Island. It wasn't until 1955 that a more permanent youth baseball league was organized in the community.

The Hobe Sound-Jupiter Kiwanis Club was behind the effort and Roy Rood was one of the club's biggest boosters. We just had enough kids to make one team between the two towns, recalled Rood, who played on the Legion team in the 1930s and coached the Kiwanis team decades later. We had to play in Hobe Sound

because we didn't have a diamond (in Jupiter). The first team played in the Stuart Babe Ruth League and home games were played in Hobe Sound.

In 1959, the Kiwanis Club took title to 41 acres of state land along County Line Road and began building the first permanent ball field in the area. The complex was later to become known as Tequesta Park became home to the [JTAA](#) baseball and softball programs until the mid-1980s.

By 1965, the Jupiter-Tequesta Little League opened its season with six teams. The league quickly grew and in 1967, league founders officially organized as the Jupiter-Tequesta Athletic League. There were only 3,500 residents and one stop light in Jupiter at the time the organization got off the ground. Softball was added to the JTAA ranks in the spring of 1970, with basketball and tackle football programs coming aboard later that year.

The first five JTAA softball teams played at the Jupiter Elementary and Jupiter High School fields. I can remember playing the outfield with the grass up to my knees, Peggy Wagner, one of the original JTAA softball players, recalled. She played for the Lund Construction team in the 12 to 18-year-old high school division. They

called it the Cardinal League, Wagner said. Her team was coached by Bill Dwyer and finished the season with a 16-1 record.

In 1992, it had 450 girls and 35 teams, and in 1993, when it hosted the NSA Youth Girls Slow Pitch World Series, the league had 600 players on 47 teams. Chris Fuller is the JTAA softball director. The Seahawks travel program also has grown.

In 1992, it had five teams, growing to eight for the World Series in 93. In 1995, it had 100 girls on six fast pitch and one slow pitch travel team. In 1998, the Seahawks had eight teams in the field.