

Little League's Equipment Goes into Storage Until '62

By JOE CADARIU
Sports Editor

Little League has become a byword in almost every Birmingham area home with boys from 8 to 12 years old.

Little League is what the boys do in between "school's out" and "back-to-school."

In Birmingham alone, nearly 80 per cent of all boys 8 to 12 participated in some type of Little League program this summer.

IN THIS area the program is divided into three classes. The major leagues are for the more advanced players and tryouts determine who makes the team.

Minor leagues are for boys who fail to make the major roster and is more or less a "farm system" for the advanced clubs.

Tee-ball is strictly for eight-year-olds. No pitcher is used in this game. Instead, batters hit the ball from an elevated tee at the plate.

In the major leagues, Birmingham has four leagues with eight teams each.

THERE WERE 42 minor league teams in Birmingham and 16 Tee-

Ball squads.

Each of the four leagues, American, National, Continental and Federal, had a president, vice president, equipment director and director. Then, there was a joint board which ruled the complete system.

President of the joint board was Bob Spitznagel.

Bloomfield also ran a Little League program with 18 major league squads. Other area communities with boys' baseball programs included Lathrup and Southfield.

AT THE END of the regulation season, a team is declared champion of its division because of having the best won-loss record. An all-star team is selected from each of the divisions and intra-league playoffs begin.

When a league champion is decided, that team takes part in district playoffs against all-star teams from nearby communities. The winner of that tourney goes to a bi-district tourney and if victorious, to the state tournament.

After a series of playoffs between champions, the field is narrowed down to two teams. These two meet at Williamsport, Pa.,

home of Little League Inc., in the "Little League World Series."

Lately, the Little League program has been the subject of criticism. There are some who say that the program has lost quite a bit of its original intent and purpose—that of fun for all participants.

THE CRITICS say that sportsmanship and fun now is secondary to the desire to win.

This may be explained by the pressure put on the players by some parents who want their boy's team to win at all costs. It's not unusual to see a 12-year-old throw down his bat after striking-out and sit on the bench and cry.

It's also not unusual to hear a mother or a father yell uncomplimentary remarks at the umpire, and sometimes at the managers and coaches.

IF THE RIGHT kind of attitude

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is taken by parents and coaches, the Little League program can be one of the most beneficial factors in the growing-up process of young boys.

A game can also provide quite a bit of entertainment and excitement for spectators, of which sometimes there are quite a few. Boys who grow-up from Little League to the Babe Ruth League to Pony League to American Legion, and so on, can develop their baseball skills into such excellence that they may qualify for a minor league team and sometimes a major league squad.

There are top-flight ballplayers in the majors today who got their start with Little League.

But now the Little League season is at an end, and only the memories remain. The first few days of school will provide a different scene for baseball talk, but when the bell rings, the conversation turns to history, English, arithmetic and geography.

But, there's always next season.

On June 1, 1931, the Navy's first autogyro was delivered at Anacostia, D. C.

School Districts Are Reorganizing, Merging in State

Statistics released from the Michigan Department of Public Instruction indicate a steady trend in the reorganizing and merging of Michigan's school districts.

As of July of this year, the number of school districts was 1,980. In 1957, when Dr. Lynn M. Bartlett became state superintendent, there were 2,866 school districts.

IN THE PAST four years, according to the department, some 886 districts have joined with other districts in consolidation and reorganization or have gone out of existence.

Approximately 1,400 of the present number of school districts are primary school districts—they do not offer a complete kindergarten through high school program.

Time To Think of Books & Looks



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