

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE



It's never too late to pursue a passion and Joe Murano is living proof. He began his softball career at age 54 and is still going strong at age 86. His first contract was with the St. Bart's Old Timer's League, pitching 22 years in the organization. He joined the Union County Over 50 League and then the Over 60 League. For several years he played in all three leagues simultaneously. Now he pitches and sometimes catches for the Union County Retirees League.

Joe was born January 20, 1925 in Newark, NJ and was raised in Belleville. Joe describes himself as a sickly scrawny kid growing up, so he never participated in sports. He graduated from Belleville High School in 1942 and enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1943 at age 18. He served as a Seabee in World War II Pacific Theater for one year and 10 months. He played softball occasionally while stationed on the islands.

Joe was discharged from the Navy in 1946 and worked for the U.S. Post Office for four years. He played in a softball work league but got kneed in the head while tagging out a runner at homeplate. Suffering from a severe concussion, Joe spent time in the hospital after that play and two months recuperating at home.

Joe was able to redeem himself over 50 years later when he reflects on his most memorable play during a championship game. Playing catcher at the time (another position he plays regularly) a batter hit a ball into left field; the left fielder threw the ball home to Joe on one bounce and Joe tagged the runner out at homeplate. Joe attributes his success on the ballfield to hard work and physical activity. Joe delivered beer for Anheuser Busch for over 40 years, has been bowling for some 68 years, and plays golf when he isn't on the ballfield. And Joe isn't going anywhere any time soon. His goal before he retires for good is to hit a homerun, bowl a perfect game and make a hole in one. He's come close a few times but keeps trying, and consequently, continues to pursue his passion.

Notable Quotables

"Bob Gibson is the luckiest pitcher I ever saw. He always pitches when the other team doesn't score any runs." -Tim McCarver

"I never took the game home with me. I always left it in some bar." -Bob Lemon

FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME



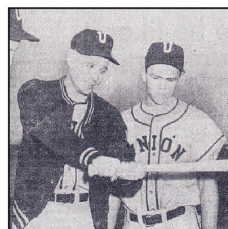
From left to right is my grandson Christopher, my son Scott, my wife of 57 years, Ruth, myself, my grandson Calvin, and my daughter, Denise.

"For the love of the game" sums up Gordon LeMatty's lifetime obsession with our National Pastime. From his days as an outstanding pitcher for Irvington Tech through a legendary coaching career at Union High School to present day as a Senior Softball player, Gordy has stayed between the white lines.

The spry septuagenarian has been a member of the Union County Senior Softball League since its inception. He currently mans first base for Nicolina Pizza in the 60's

division. And he lends his valuable coaching experience to the squad. LeMatty headed the Union High baseball program from 1959 through 1991. During that span, his teams won seven Union County Championships, two Greater Newark Tournaments (when it was the premier tourney in the state) and numerous state sectional crowns. He sent three players to the major leagues including Al Santorini and former Yankee, Elliott Maddox. Both are considered among the finest players ever produced in New Jersey. Santorini was one of only 10 players named to the All-Century High School team by the Star-Ledger in 1999. Gordy was also recognized by the newspaper as the Coach of the Decade for the 1960's. For many years he held the state record for wins with 641, an average of 19 per season. His career winning percentage was a gaudy .702. The Union High baseball field was recently renamed Gordon R. LeMatty Field to honor his outstanding achievements.

Gordy intends to keep on swingin' as long as he can bug around the bases. We also expect he will continue to echo the great Ernie Banks, when he says "Let's play two today!"



NAMI CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES ITS WINNING WAYS

The Nami Construction Co. team from Ocean County, beat Center for Sight, from Florida, to win the 2010 Winter Nationals 75+ Championship in Ft. Myers Florida last November. Then they went to Raleigh, NC in February and won the 2011 Tournament of Champions beating Joseph Chevrolet out of Kentucky to earn themselves the Championship ring. They have been invited to next years TOC to defend their crown.

Standing L-R: Ben Ellis, Bob Nami, Bill Vanderwende, Dick Cero, Art Barns, Bob Sharp, Jim Harris, and Pete Rendina.

Kneeling L-R: Ed Poliski, Jerry Elringham, Russ Booth, Don Cherim, John King, and Karl Horst.



NJSSA Website

<http://njsseniorsoftball.com> or <http://njssa.us> can be accessed from your favorite web browser and either address will bring you to the official website.

Site selections are located along the left hand column. You may select any of the links to see what information is contained in each category. For example: select Leagues, select your county such as Union County and view the desired information.

The selections are arranged with the most likely accessed appearing from top to bottom. Each county is setup differently depending on league organization and information maintained.

Every player should view the website on a regular basis to get the latest schedule, standings and results for their league. Use the Locations link to find field locations and directions. Since almost everyone has a cell phone, managers should set up a group to text their players for rainouts, today's games, etc.

It would be great to have an individual from each county maintain and format their information for me so I can post it. Suggestions on the website can be sent to: njssa@hotmail.com. Have a safe and enjoyable softball season!

Bobby Lorincz

Let's hear from you...

Do you have an interesting story or an experience that you would like to share with us? Something unusual or unique that happened in your life. A story we could use for our "Did You Know?" column (see page 5.) e-mail to : howiemarlin@live.com