

BUCKHEAD BASEBALL

A brief history

1952 – 2002



50TH ANNIVERSARY

by Scott Hanson

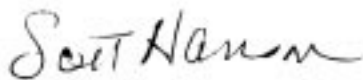
PREFACE

In anticipation of the 50th anniversary of Buckhead Baseball at Frankie Allen Park, I decided to attempt a history of this integral part of growing up in Buckhead. Dads are now coaching on fields where they once played. Stories abound about the early days, as these dads remember their playing days. I thought it would be interesting to research and document how the league has evolved through the years.

Alas, I have not been as successful as I had hoped in developing a detailed history, particularly for the 1960s and early 1970s. The newspapers of those times did not contain much help, and we have not yet identified many participants who might have saved some useful information. Therefore, this history is more of an outline, written in the hope that those who read it will be able to fill in the considerable gaps. It thus becomes an instrument to jog the memory, send one to the basement or attic for old records, or to ask parents about what they remember when their children played.

I believe that with the distribution of this booklet, we will be able to locate the needed material to make this a true history of Buckhead Baseball. This is the first step toward that goal, and I am willing to be the repository of any additional details that will help finish the project.

I would like to thank all those who helped me develop this material, many of whom are mentioned in the text. Two people, Dick Stephens and Ray Mock, had extensive files about the early days and were most cooperative in researching and sharing that material, particularly information from the 1950s. The history of the early days is as much theirs as mine.



Scott Hanson

— 1950s —

When Henry Irby hung the buck's head on his tavern at the intersection of Roswell and Peachtree Roads, he also began acquiring land throughout the area. The baseball fields of today were the farm fields of 1871 in Land Lot 60 of District 17 near the town of Irbyville. Over the next forty years, the land was worked by tenant farmers who may have once been the slaves of the early settlers of the area. They formed the Mt. Olive Methodist Church. When John Owens bought 60 acres from Joshua Crawford in 1909 for \$5000, he excepted from the property a small parcel of land conveyed to the trustees of Mt. Olive M.E. Church. By then, the town was called Buckhead.

John S. Owens was heavily involved in real estate transactions throughout the Buckhead and Atlanta areas. His brother, Frank C. Owens, started Peachtree Heights with Eretus Rivers in 1908. In 1910 E. Rivers and Walter Andrews started one of the premier developments in the Southeast—Peachtree Heights Park—which extended from Peachtree Battle to West Wesley, and from Peachtree Road to Northside Drive. O. F. Kauffmann was the civil engineer who developed the plats for Peachtree Heights and Peachtree Heights Park.

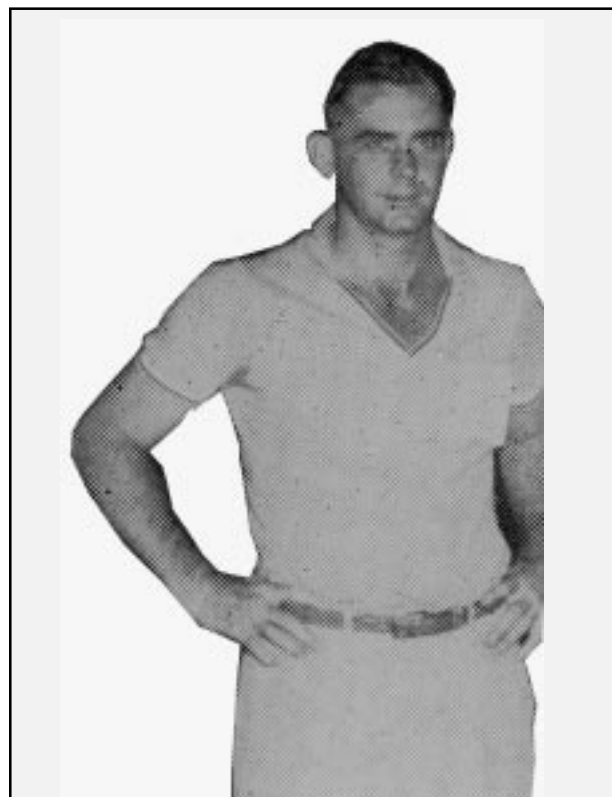
In 1921 John S. Owens decided to develop a subdivision for the black residents of the area, and he called on Kauffmann to prepare the plat. The subdivision was called Macedonia Park and allowed the blacks to own property, unlike other subdivisions which explicitly barred the sale of property “to Negroes.”

In addition to Mt. Olive Methodist Church, the residents added the Macedonia Baptist Church and the Lily Baptist Church. The local

residents could buy groceries at the stores of either William Bagley or Mamie German and could eat at the restaurants of Mary Bailey or Mattie Allan. On Pharr Road, William Bonner ran a blacksmith shop.

As the years went by, the houses of the working class blacks stood in stark contrast to the beautiful homes in the exclusive areas surrounding them. So, in 1945 Fulton County began buying the parcels of land from the residents of Macedonia Park. Having purchased individual lots for between \$225 and \$300 in 1921, the residents were offered up to \$5,000 between 1945 and 1952. By 1953, Fulton County had completed the land acquisition.

Some of the original residents can be found today in the graveyard behind what was once the Mt. Olive Methodist Church.¹ The church once stood where the Women's Club is now, and the graves can be seen under the trees



Buckhead Baseball Founder – Cal Thomas (1952)

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between the building and the entrance to the park.

Fulton County's conversion of the black area along Bagley Road and Old Decatur Road (sometimes referred to as "Buttermilk Bottom") to a park gave birth to the idea of a baseball league for youngsters. In 1952 Cal Thomas, a recreational employee of the city of Atlanta in Peachtree Hills and a believer in the benefits of little league baseball, laid the foundation for Buckhead Baseball at Bagley Park on Pharr Road. Dr. John Mitchell, the president of Buckhead

Baseball during the early years, developed the program along with four pioneer coaches: Tom McGhee, Jim Mock, Bob Blackwell and Cal Thomas. They sought to incorporate the physical and mental growth of the kids, and captivated the parents' interest in doing so.² Cal knew Bob Blackwell from their coaching days with the Buckhead Red Devils little league football team at Peachtree Hills and recruited him to help found the new baseball league.

Four teams sponsored by local civic clubs began play with boys aged 10–12. Each team consisted of five kids from each age, representing Sandy Springs, Brookhaven, Buckhead and West Peachtree.

For the first few years, tryouts and practices started around the first of April, with Opening

Day occurring usually around the middle of May. The season ended about the first week of July. These dates were later changed because families wanted to go on vacation in June (when school was out) and not wait until July.

Opening Day was a big day in Buckhead. The boys always attended church the day before. On Opening Day, a parade began in the

middle of Buckhead and wound through the streets to Bagley Park. Each team's captain rode in a convertible with a girl representing the team's sponsor, and the teams would pile into open-sided army

trucks. U.S. Marine Corps Color Guards marched, as did the Northside High School band. Mayor William Hartsfield often threw out the first pitch.

In addition to the founding coaches mentioned above, early skippers included: Neal Portis, C.C. "Whitey" Whiten, Jr., Tom Murray, and Dub Whitlow. Frank Halberstadt, a local photographer, took team pictures. Everett Roach owned a sporting goods store and supplied the uniforms. The first all-star team included Stan Gann, Ben Ferguson, John Ferguson and "Tiny" Williamson.

By 1955 there were eight teams in two leagues, the American and National. There was no inter-league play at the time. Instead, they had a split season. There would be a winner of the first half in each league and



*Little League's Opening Day Parade on The March Through Buckhead
The U.S. Marine Color Guard from the Chamblee Base ahead of Northside High's Band.*

BUCKHEAD BASEBALL 1952 – 2002



CAPTAINS AND SPONSORS of the Buckhead Little League from left to right are: Steve White, Exchange Club with Sylvia Eason; Dick Stephens, Rotary Club, with Ann Spalding; Sam Franklin, Northside Kiwanis, Vickie Janek;

Larry Rary, Civitans, Anna Willingham; Brad Donahue, Post 140, Sally Teague; Bobby Adams, North DeKalb Kiwanis, Barbara Backer; Randy Edgar, Elks Club, Lynne Rosenkoetter; Philip Dreger, Fifty Club, Nancy Bradford.

another winner for the second half. The winners would then play for the league championship. However, the two league champions did not play to determine an overall champion. At one time they might have played an exhibition game, but it was never official.

In 1959 the leagues grew to six teams each. The upper field was added, initially for practice, then used for games as the league grew.

During this time a senior league developed, as the boys graduated from little league and needed a place to continue playing. This evolved into a Babe Ruth League for the 15–16 and 17–18

age groups. Their games were played on what we now call the softball field. With the found-

ing of Chastain Park's baseball program in 1960, our senior program merged into theirs.

In 1954 a minor league called Dixie League was formed by those ten-year-olds who didn't make the majors. They played on Saturday morning with no uniforms. The teams were grouped according to elementary schools: R.L. Hope, Morris Brandon, Garden Hills and E. Rivers. From this program our current minor

league system developed, as younger boys wanted to get in on the fun.

Some notable players from the early days included Robert Lacy and



1956 – BUCKHEAD ELKS entry in Buckhead Little League. Front row, Lang Chappell, Claude Carter, Eddie Ballew, Buzzy Strasser, Sam Ballew, Ray Mock, Bubber Hopkins, Gary Williams, Guerry Baldwin; 2nd row, Jim Mock, Mgr.; Jimmy Mock, Beth Mock, William Carter, Captain: Mercedes Laycock, Bobby Mitchell, Kenny Squire, Bob Kable and Wylie McCrany.

Leon Perkins, who supplied the home run power, while Duke Shackelford dominated

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from the mound. Duke was the first to throw a curveball and went undefeated as an 11- and 12-year-old. In 1956 he pitched a no-hitter for the American League in the all-star game at East Lake, beating Belvedere 6-0. Duchy Brown and Charlie Hill were also good pitchers during those years. Billy Payne, head of the Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996, also played during the late 1950s.

During the 1950s, Buckhead was in District 4 of the State Little League organization. Other teams included: Belvedere, Glenwood Hills, Decatur and Tucker. In 1959 Buckhead won the District and went on to win the State tournament with the American League team. As today, they went to Florida for the regionals. This team went the next year with their coach, Bob Blackwell, to Chastain to start the Colt and Pony Leagues.

The entire field was composed of dirt in the 50s, and the first night game with lights occurred on June 5, 1956. Only one league president from that period other than John Mitchell is known, and that was Rufus Barnett

in 1955. It is believed Mike Metherringham, Ralph Reed and Joe Davis also served as presidents,, but this needs verification.



From left – Claude Carter; Billy Payne, President Atlanta Olympic Games; unknown.

The early 50s saw the first of several outstanding head umpires work at Buckhead. The first was Hoyle W. Dye, an Atlanta police officer, who passionately loved youth sports. He worked his schedule so he could umpire baseball or referee football and basketball. He often remarked, "It is better to give a boy supervised sports than it is to arrest him for something he might get into through a lack of supervision."

Hoyle played a couple of years of professional baseball, catching for the team in Richmond, Virginia at the time. He was killed in the line of duty while questioning a suspect in a domestic dispute. Ironically, it was not during his usual shift, but a switch he had made in order to umpire a ball game.

— 1960s —

Not much is known about Buckhead Baseball in the 1960s. We do not know any of the presidents from the decade. Some of the coaches were: Bob Brinker (Civitan National), Ralph Reed (Orioles), Rick Roberts (Indians), Jim Mock (Yankees) and Hank Farmer and Tommy Tilman (Athletics). In 1969 Tuck Tucker began a remarkable coaching career of 24 years.

In 1962 Bagley Park and Buckhead hosted the State tournament. When the state officials came to inspect the fields, they saw no grass on the infield, just dirt. This was unacceptable and officials told Buckhead that play could not begin without it. They did not know how we could meet this requirement, so plans were made to move the event. The next day George Small led others to Chastain Park where they got a sod cutter and cut grass from around several greens on the golf course and transported it to Buckhead on an Air



Buckhead Baseball Indians – playing ball.

National Guard truck. George was a National Guard member, and they had loaned him a 60-foot flatbed. The mothers watered the newly planted grass, and amazingly, the fields met the requirement and the tournament proceeded as planned.

One notable player from the 60s was Hank Small, George Small's son. A Buckhead Major Leaguer in 1965, he went on to play one game with the Atlanta Braves. An outstanding coach of the 60s was Bob Brinker. He coached the Civitians and Optimist teams, winning the National League title in 1966, 1967 and again in 1970.

During the 60s there were three leagues: AA minor, AAA minor and the Majors. The minimum age was nine, and each major team had to have two 9-10s and no more than five 12-year-olds.



From left – Coach Jim Mock; Guerry Bladwin, current Head of East Cobb Baseball; Jim Hardesty, Coach.

— 1970s —

The early 70s was another period from which we have very little information. The Northside News of March 8, 1973 indicated that March 10 was the last day for registration, and there was no registration fee. The April 5, 1973 edition indicated that tryouts were to be held for the following leagues:

Connie Mack – ages 13–18

Sandy Koufax – ages 13–14

Mickey Mantle – ages 15–16

These games were played on the large Senior League Field where the softball leagues play today. It seems that sometime during the 60s the senior league came to Buckhead from Chastain. The last year for the senior league at Buckhead was 1978, as it was struggling financially. Boys Baseball of Buckhead playing at Chastain absorbed our league, and that is where it remains today.

The 1973 season began April 14 with two charters and sixteen Major teams with a total of 224 boys. Hank Farmer, Ralph Reed, Bob Brinker and Tuck Tucker were among the managers. Sponsors and various donations financed the league.

The Northside News dated April 11, 1974 reports that April 13 was Opening Day with thirteen teams in the American League but no mention of the National League.

On February 14, 1974 the new T-ball league was founded for 6–7-year-olds.

In the late 70s the Bolton Little League, whose field was on DeFours Ferry off Moores Mill, folded. It seems that in 1979 there was a boundary dispute between Buckhead and Bolton. The nearest large neighborhood was Hanover West, but the children wanted to play



Buckhead Baseball – Look at that catch!

with their friends from the private schools at Buckhead and not at the local ball park. After much discussion, including National Little League, we were awarded the disputed area. [Ironically, in 2001 we signed a lease to use the old Bolton Field as a practice facility.]

Rumors stated that Buckhead suffered financial problems during the late 60s and early 70s, though there is no documented evidence to support this. However, by the time Al Means assumed the presidency in 1976, some strong action was needed to shore up the league.

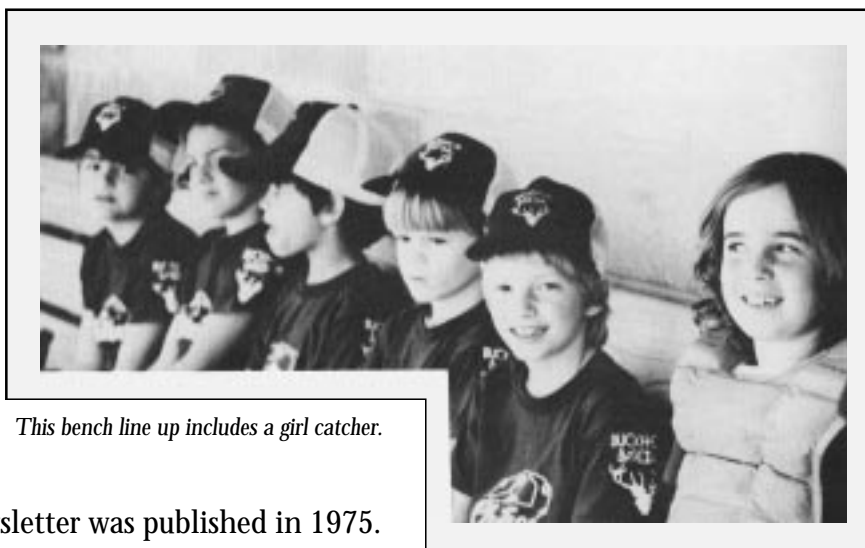
Al became a very creative and activist president. Many of our practices and much of our structure can be traced to Al. He went to a two-day seminar in Athens and found we were doing it all wrong. Some of his innovations were:

- Instituted the minimum play rule.
- Created two divisions in the Majors with a playoff.
- Designed the original logo of a buck's head.
- Created the “I Love Buckhead Baseball” bumper stickers to promote the league.

- Instituted a registration fee to provide some financial stability.
- Started a Braves fundraiser where we bought a large block of Braves tickets for \$1 and resold them for \$2. In return, we would have *Buckhead Baseball Night* at the stadium. The whole league would parade around the field while two T-Ball teams played a quick, ten-minute game.
- Required parents to volunteer. If you didn't, your son could not play. Parents were required to work the concession stand, which had been losing money as one woman tried to run it alone.

One big change Al made for the integrity of the league was to ban a system in which the

Major teams had minor teams in a semblance of a farm system. Under Al, coaches from different leagues could not work together on placing of players.



This bench line up includes a girl catcher.

The first newsletter was published in 1975. It was available each Saturday, with highlights for each team from the previous week and the standings for each league. Announcements were also made and any problems were identified. The players eagerly awaited the newsletter to see their names in print when they had done something special.

Other significant events during the 70s were the introduction of the first pitching machine in 1973 and the inclusion of 9-year-olds in the

Major draft. The pitching machine was used for Rookies who were 7–8-year-olds, until the next year when T-Ball started and the sevens moved down. National Little League rules allowed for the drafting of nines (and tens, for that matter) by major teams, so we agreed in the late 70s. After several years, the nines were dropped from that draft, and by 1989 we believed it was not in the best interest of the league or the kids for tens to be drafted. That practice was reversed also.

In 1979 a rule barring the use of a curveball in the Little League was added to the local rules. This was before the senior league was moved.

In the 70s there was a boundary dispute with the Bolton Little League, primarily over the Hanover West Subdivision. Buckhead won

this dispute despite the fact that the boundaries established for Buckhead by National Little League did not include Hanover West. Also, at that time Buckhead was beginning to draw

players from Vinings. There was no dispute here because no other group claimed Vinings. The impetus behind these moves was that the kids attended private schools together and wanted to play ball together.

— 1980s —

The 1980s saw a rejuvenated league with a new name for Bagley Park. At the urging of Buckhead Baseball, the city changed the name of the park to Frankie Allen Park to honor our longtime head umpire. This was significant because it tied the park to the program itself.

Frankie was one of the outstanding officials in Georgia and was well known for his sports work with children. He founded the Georgia Umpires Association while acting as a minor league umpire. In addition to baseball, he was an avid boxer who fought professionally. He began a boxing program at the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary. His many honors included a presidential commendation and inclusion in the Georgia Hall of Fame.

Frankie was Buckhead Baseball's head umpire for about twenty years. He lived in Augusta, and each spring someone would drive over and pick him up. A small apartment next to the park was rented for several months for his residence.

Frankie would open the concession stand, line the fields and close up in addition to umpiring.

He died in Augusta in 1979, shortly after retiring from active sports.

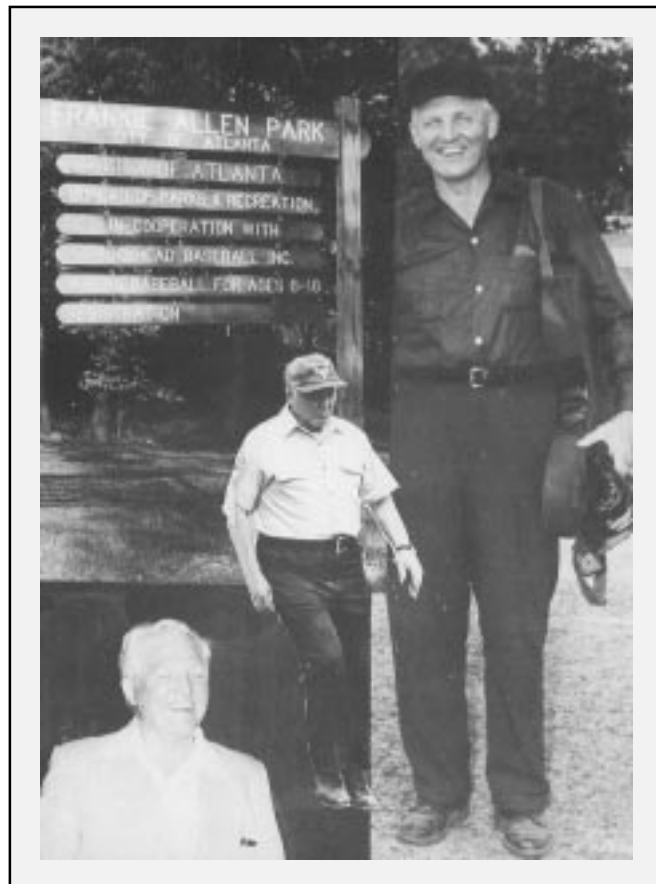
In 1980 Terry Jerden had succeeded Frankie as head umpire and wanted to take an additional step in honoring his mentor. He proposed, and the Board accepted, the idea of a Sportsmanship Award in Frankie's honor. This was a clear message of the true lasting legacy of Frankie. It was to be sponsored and decided by the umpires and given to the player who best exhibited fair play and good sportsmanship.

In the beginning, there were no real guidelines for the award. The umpires simply observed kids that were thought to be good candidates and had weekly discussions. It was

decided to give plaques to the individuals and have a permanent one that would be kept at the park with the names of the honorees.

In 1982 the umpires decided to consider only 12-year-old players in the Majors for the Sportsmanship Award. Later, it was amended to have coaches nominate a player from their teams because they were in a position to monitor the players in both good and bad times. It has been given for 22 years and is still very popular. It

is believed that this was the first such award in our area and was subsequently followed by Murphy Candler and Sandy Springs.



Frankie Allen



Waiting their turn.

The league began the 80s with 36 teams in four divisions involving 518 kids. Special emphasis was placed on getting more parents to volunteer their services. By 1983 there were 44 teams and 675 children. Even with the increased registration we still had a waiting list. Registration was on a first-come, first-served system for new participants (returnees pre-registered for the first time in 1980), and many parents began coming earlier and earlier until some spent Friday night at the park in hopes of securing a place. By 1990 registration was switched to a lottery system with everyone given an equal chance without regard to when you arrived at the park.

Until 1980 we used underground dugouts on the upper and lower fields. These were raised to ground level, and the meeting room upstairs over the concession stand was added.

During 1985 the first fixed batting cages were built beyond the large softball field. This new construction, plus the growth of the program, created animosity with several

neighbors, particularly the one to the immediate rear of the park. For several years culminating in 1989, Mr. Wright fought us in many areas, threatening lawsuits and agitating the local city councilman against us. The Garden Hills Civic Association supported us in part because many of the kids in the area played in the program. The Parks Department at the City supported us because they could not possibly reproduce what we had created and deliver it as efficiently.

In 1989 the building of the T-Ball field allowed more participants, as other fields were freed for the older leagues. T-Ball had been playing on the softball field. The City built the wall with excess rocks, and Buddy Young handled the construction. The cost was minimal to the league, since Buddy either got the materials donated or did so himself. Shortly after completion, the Atlanta School Board claimed the large field for use by North Fulton High School. With the subsequent merger of North Fulton and Northside, we were able to regain the use of the larger field, later dividing it into two fields.



Players with family, friends, and other spectators.

— 1990s —

The new decade began in controversy for the teams in District 9. Buckhead, along with Northside Youth Organization (NYO) and Sandy Springs, filed a protest against the teams from Murphy-Candler (M-C). They were the dominant team in the District during the 1980s, and rumors were rampant that several of their players were ineligible as non-residents of their league. With a certain challenge coming at the state level, the local teams decided to act first. A compromise was attempted, but none was forthcoming. The appeals ultimately reached national headquarters in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, where it was ruled that 23 of the 28 players (M-C had two charters then) were not eligible to participate in the tournament. M-C was not willing to recast the teams, so they withdrew. Five teams proceeded to play, with Buckhead winning its first District championship since 1959.

It was a traumatic and unfortunate three weeks for all involved. We regretted that 28 kids did not get to play and were amazed at what lengths some adults will go to win. All the boundaries of each league were redrawn and strictly enforced. Within two years all was forgotten, as relations between the leagues improved with new leadership. Parity was restored to the District, as each team won the title at least once in the decade.

Buckhead's boundaries changed very little in 1991. However, National Little League did formalize our claim to the Vinings area, which had been disputed with Smyrna. The Brookhaven area, which was previously split with M-C, was consolidated with Buckhead. The biggest problem was the overlap created between Buckhead and NYO when they were issued a charter in 1988. No one was aware of

their new league, and National mistakenly issued a charter without the proper local signoffs. That thorny issue was finally resolved in 2001 when new boundaries with NYO were drawn to reflect where each league best served the players.

An early 1990s event that had a tremendous impact on all little leagues was the success of the Atlanta Braves. By reaching the World Series in 1991, they boosted interest in baseball among all ages, particularly the young. In 1989 we started a fall program for 11-12-year-olds and struggled to find enough players for four teams. By 1993 we had to limit registration because of a lack of fields and coaches. In the first years of Fall Ball, we played with M-C, NYO and Sandy Springs. M-C and NYO had to drop out, because baseball was depleting the football pool to the detriment of that program. Today 400+ kids play Fall Ball at Buckhead at all upper age levels.

The regular spring season has also seen dramatic growth. By the end of the decade, there were 66 teams (including two Challenger teams) with 825 players. The budget was \$200,000 a year. As our league grew, we needed to expand and improve the fields and facilities. The new T-Ball field completed in 1989 allowed for that league to expand and become more flexible in its schedule.

In late 1989 and early 1990 there was a concerted effort by an adjacent neighbor to raze our facilities and greatly restrict our activities. He blamed us for the vagrants and degenerates in the park. A compromise was worked out with the city by adding fences surrounding the dugouts. We assured the city that we would do what we could, but that we were not responsible for the problem.

With the existing facilities secured, we looked to make improvements. Since the city had very limited resources, it was up to us to

BUCKHEAD BASEBALL 1952 – 2002

make them. In 1991 we built the steps from the upper field. Backstops for practice fields were placed in several parks around Buckhead. In 1992 two drains were installed by the batting cages and T-Ball field to drain the swamp that covered that area.

In 1993 Ken Thrasher headed up the first capital funds drive to dramatically improve the park. Over \$100,000 was raised and spent to replace all the lights and wiring, light poles, fencing on all fields, remove the old two-story press box on the upper field, paint everything and build the walls between the dugouts.

Just after completion, a major threat to the park arose. The police department wanted to put a precinct in the building on Pharr Road occupied by the Fulton County Health Department. They were asking for land for 73 parking places. About the same time, they wanted to place a 400 foot radio tower next to the upper field. Some quick research and assistance by Councilman Lee Morris got an opinion from the city attorney that neither was acceptable. When the city accepted some federal grant money in 1983, they had agreed that the park could only be used for recreational purposes in perpetuity. There has been no effort to encroach on the park since.

In 1996 we were able to reclaim the softball

field for use until mid-June. North Fulton High School had used the field for practices and games, but the merger with Northside High meant they no longer needed it. We replaced the underground dugouts and fencing and irrigated the field. The AA Minors moved here, with the Rookies following in 1998 when we built their small field. This allowed each league to have its own field for practices and games. The commissioners were given flexibil-

ity to manage their league accordingly.

At this point the baseball facilities were complete, but the park needed a major

facelift. Dan Patillo spearheaded another fundraising drive to beautify the park. Trees were planted, sidewalks added and storage equipment and sheds were moved. The Pavilion was built by the lower field, and the Coaches Hall of Fame was added on the hill. The bleachers were put on pads to eliminate the weed growth, and flag poles were raised. As the century ended, we enjoyed a wonderful park with a great baseball complex.

An innovative program that began in 1992 was the Challenger League. National Little League requested each league to offer a program for the handicapped, and we responded with two teams. Several other leagues in the district also responded, so a schedule was devised to play each other. Once started, it was an inspiration to all, young and old. The



Opening Day – 1990

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courage those kids showed and the assistance and compassion exhibited by their healthy friends was heartwarming.

The 1990s were successful for Buckhead Baseball. We won the District under the expert coaching of Tuck Tucker and Jim Peters in 1990 and 1991. The teams were competitive in the State but did not advance beyond the loser's bracket. However, in 1997 the District championship was followed by a victory in the State and advancement to the Regionals in Florida. This was only the second State championship for Buckhead and the first since 1959. Upon returning, the team was honored with a resolution and a visit to the Atlanta City Council. While the 12-year-old team was the only one to advance beyond the District, our younger tournament teams have also met with great success in District play.

We ended the decade (or began the new one) with another District championship in 2000. A controversial call in the late innings of the final game cost us the State championship and a return trip to St. Petersburg.

On Opening Day 2000, the new Coaches Hall of Fame was dedicated. This facility recognizes seven men who have over the years shaped our program on the field, molded the lives of countless children and helped bring eternal memories to all of us. At the same time, they taught our children something about baseball, which in many cases was played through high school and college and in several instances into professional baseball. Those inductees were:

Jim Mock—Jim started coaching in 1952, the year the league began, and stayed until 1976. He coached the Buckhead Elks team in the National League. His teams were very successful and as a result, he was often the manager of the National All Stars. Three sons played for Jim. He treated all the boys as if

they were his own. He is fondly remembered by many of the first kids to play at Buckhead. Jim died in 1986.

Bob Brinker—Bob started coaching in 1959 and stayed until 1973. He coached the Buckhead Civitans of the National League. They won titles in 1966, 1967 and 1970, with a second place in 1971. Bob had two boys that played, but he continued to coach for many years after they graduated. He was thanked for his service and dedication by not only the boys who played for him, but by all those in the league during the 60s and early 70s

Tom McGehee—Tom was also one of the original coaches in 1952 and stayed until 1972. He coached the Buckhead Exchange Club in the American League. Tom died in 1999.

Hank Farmer—Hank began coaching in 1968 and stayed until 1981. Along with Tommy Tillman he coached the Athletics to prominence, winning the regular season championship in 1971, '72 and '73. This allowed them to coach the all-star teams. Hank passed away in 2000.

Tommy Tillman—Tommy began coaching with Hank Farmer in 1968 but took a couple of years off in 1974 and 1975 to serve as league president. Having played baseball in college at Virginia and Georgia Tech, Tommy handled the instruction part while Hank did the parent contacts, scheduling and lineups, etc. They were very successful, as their record indicates.

Tuck Tucker—Tuck was one of the longest serving coaches in Buckhead history. He started in 1969, watched his two sons play with great ability and stayed until 1993, long after both had gone on to play in high school. Along with Jim Peters he was very successful, coaching all-star teams in 1985, '88, '90, '91 and '93. The 1990 and '91 teams won the district tournament for the first time in

anyone's memory, advancing to play in the state tourney.

Jim Peters—Jim coached with Tuck Tucker from 1970 until 1993. They were popular coaches, and many future high school players received their early training from Jim and Tuck. Several went on to play in the minor leagues. Brian Farmer, Morgan Roderick, Scott Prather and Frank Lankford, (who pitched for the Los Angeles Dodgers), were the standouts. The biggest change in the program that Jim experienced was the minimum play rule, instituted in 1978.

Sim Doster—Sim began coaching in 1980 and, with a few years off to work with his son on his high school team, stayed until 1995. He coached four all-star teams, which honored the coach with the best regular season record. He actually won six titles but had to defer on the all-star team twice. Along with Tucker and Peters, Sim was one of the most knowledgeable and popular coaches for 15 years.

Robert Hammond—Bobby also started his coaching career in 1980, many years before his son was even born. He started in the Rookie league, moving to the Majors two years later when a vacancy occurred. He coached tournament teams from 10–12-year-olds and helped with the 1997 State Championship team. He retired in 1999 but did assist with the all-stars in 2000 and 2001.

— 2000s —

The year 2001 marked the 30th anniversary of Terry Jerden as an umpire at Buckhead Baseball. The league has been very fortunate to have had three outstanding head umpires as part of our family. Hoyle Dye, Frankie Allen and Terry Jerden have been dedicated to providing an integral part of youth baseball, namely quality and consistent umpiring. These men have come to know the boys and their parents. They have become our friends and, except on rare occasions, we have treated them and their co-workers with respect. That makes for a much more enjoyable baseball program for everyone. Our park is aptly named for one umpire and on April 22 the Upper Field was renamed Terry Jerden Field. It is a fitting tribute to both men.

As we begin the 2002 season, we are again trying to improve the facilities. Plans are being drawn to replace the concession stand and build a new one in the middle of the park. Bathrooms will be included. The vacated space behind the Major League field will be filled with bleachers for better viewing of Buckhead's best baseball.

Acknowledgments

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¹ *Buckhead Baseball & Macedonia Park*,
by Bill Bell

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² *Buckhead Boys of Summer*, by Branden
Friedman - Atlanta Buckhead, June 2000

BUCKHEAD BASEBALL PRESIDENTS

1952	Dr. John Mitchell	1985	unknown
1953		1986	Dick Battle
1954		1987	Bill Earnest
1955	Rufus Barnett	1988	Marion Stafford
1956	Dr. John Mitchell	1989	Alex Porter
1957	Mike Metheringham *	1990	Chris Bracken
1958	Bob Blackwell	1991	Scott Hanson
1959	Bob Blackwell	1992	John Barge
1960	thru 1972 – unknown	1993	John Dinos
1973	John Gualtney *	1994	Ken Thrasher
1974	Tommy Tillman *	1995	David Brown
1975	Tommy Tillman *	1996	Thad Ellis
1976	Al Means	1997	Eric Olsen
1977	Joe Binns	1998	Jerry Woods
1978	Joe Binns	1999	Dan Patillo
1979	Rick Roberts	2000	Stan Brading
1980	Dick Stephens	2001	Bill Holby
1981	Buddy Weston	2002	Kerry O'Brien
1982	Buddy Weston	2003	David Vickers
1983	John Withers	2004	Bill Lellyett
1984	Rogers Lundsford	2005	Jay Jowers

* cannot verify with absolute certainty

Note: Anniversary Issue has been updated to include presidents through 2005

