

ROUND BALL TO SOFTBALL.....150 YEARS OF BALL AT MANASSAS

MANASSAS, VIRGINIA - This year the Battle of Manassas slowpitch softball tournament will be on the agenda of events at Manassas commemorating the 150th anniversary of the first battle of the Civil War. The long standing tournament will also include a Senior Division which will be held on Saturday, July 23 as a one-day recreational senior tournament with a three-game guarantee format. The Saturday schedule will allow "Civil War buffs" to include some of the many other weekend activities with their visit to Manassas. The complete list of weekend activities can be accessed from links on the ISSA Website (CVB link).

The first major battle of the Civil War was fought at Manassas in the summer of 1861. People on both sides thought it would be a short war, lasting 60 to 90 days. No one understood it was going to be the holocaust it became. As the Confederate forces of Northern Virginia moved north toward Washington, DC, the Federal troops moved down to engage them, crossing a little stream called Bull Run. Washingtonians rode out in their carriages with picnic baskets. They thought war could be a spectator sport, they were horrified and slunk back to Washington when they saw their husbands and brothers and sons and fathers killed on the beautiful green landscape of Northern Virginia. Today the Manassas National Battlefield Park is a beautifully restored battlefield with museum and self guided tours.

History tells us that the Civil War soldiers camped at Manassas during the war routinely played a game called "round ball." The game played during the war was very similar to the game of slowpitch softball as it is played today. The pitcher tossed a soft ball underhanded to the batter who used a wood bat. The defensive players did not use gloves and batted balls caught on the first bounce were outs. And "plugging" was allowed (the baserunner was out if the defensive player could hit him with the ball while off the base.) Also, in those days the shirts were numbered 1 thru 9 and designated both the fielding position and batting order. As a side note, Abner Doubleday served with his New York unit at Manassas during the Civil War. Doubleday went on to be recognized as the originator of the game of baseball.

This year during the 150th Anniversary many reenactment activities will be held over the summer. On Friday, July 22 local officials will reenact a Civil War era round ball game. Two

local business owners and longtime softball team sponsors, John Martin (Dudley Martin Chevrolet) and RB Thomas, Jr. (Thomas Engineering) have been asked to organize the teams for a noon-time game. Players will wear period attire for the opening event. The game will be held at the historic Jennie Dean field and will follow a parade in Old Town where many of the battlefield reenactors will be participating.

The ball game has now been a part of the social fabric at Manassas for 150 years. In 1995 the tradition continued with the addition of the ISSA World Championships. This August 12-14 will mark the 17th consecutive year for the senior tournament which annually attracts over one thousand players to Manassas for "The Game."

WEBSITE NOTES:

1. New photos from the ISF Senior World Cup now posted at www.seniorsoftball.org . (Others posted daily)
2. List of senior teams with a berth in the 2012 ISSA/ISF World Tournament of Champions is posted.
3. Entry forms for the Mountaineer Senior Classic and the ISSA World Championships on website.