

Past Eagles Meet Present

By Gregg McMullin

There aren't many high school baseball programs in the area, or for that matter Southern California, that can boast of having 30 alumni games in the past 35 years. It would be even more in El Segundo except for the fact that the game was originally played in February and a number of those games were rained out. The *game* was eventually moved to a May date *that* pits former players taking on the present team.

For a *game* that once had former even-year alumni taking on odd-year players, the current format works better for everyone involved, according to alumni coach Ed Carroll. Carroll, a pitcher on the 1971 CIF championship team said, "The way it is now it gives the current players a glimpse of the heritage and history of a successful program and they're part of it too."

Former players from six different decades that included Tommy Carr (1966) to Max Mendoza and Jimmy Quinones (2010) showed up for this year's game. There were so many former All-CIF players and all-league selections that showed up that it made an impression on this year's team.

"How good were those guys?" asked senior pitcher Josh Bornstein. They were good enough to bring home league and CIF championships. They were good enough to play beyond high school and they were good enough to get their education paid for through scholarships. And for a few, they *were* good enough to get paid for something they loved doing.

There were plenty of former pro ball players, including one former Major Leaguer. Billy Traber (Cleveland Indians, Washington Nationals, New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox) showed, but didn't participate. Other former pros included Craig Cousins (1967), Ed Carroll (1971), Grady Clark (1983), Scott Talanoa (1987), Dennis Reed (1987), Mark Lewis (1990), Rob Croxall (1990), Alberto Concepcion (1999) and Travis McAndrews (1999).

For most of these former Eagles, the years have been very kind to them. They still looked athletic, still had that swagger in their play between the lines and demonstrated that what they had once learned from Coach John Stevenson hadn't escaped them. They lined up for double cuts from the outfield,

threw in front of the runner on defense and advanced runners on offense. They made tough plays seem routine like they once did and it was as if time had halted for these players.

Ed Glotz looked just as solid playing at third base as he did playing alongside Major League Hall of Fame player George Brett on the 1971 team. Mark Lewis made three highlight reel plays at shortstop while wearing sneakers. Derek Earnest, Casey Clark, Tyler Murray and Todd McAndrews were solid behind the plate.

Pitching wasn't a problem for the alumni either. Though their once blazing fastballs and dazzling off-speed pitches have slowed a bit, they still showed a peek of what they once had. Austin Meick (2005 CIF Player of the Year) threw his signature curveball to this year's Eagle, Ryan Pordes. Pordes came back to the dugout after taking a third strike shaking his head and said emphatically, "That was a sick curveball."

"John [Stevenson] would have been very proud of these guys and he would have beamed at the turnout—it's something he always did," said Ed Carroll. Indeed Coach Stevenson would circle the second Saturday of May as the date he looked forward to the most during the season. "He knew he'd see all these guys he'd coached, mentored and help become young men."

The present Eagle teams have pretty much had their way in the past number of games, but this year it would be different. With the alumni scoring single runs in the first four innings and three more in the fifth inning, they went on to win 8-4.

Travis McAndrews doubled and Mark Lewis drove him in to make it 1-0 in the first inning. The Eagles were denied in their half of the first when Trent Miera attempted to score from second base on a single to centerfield by Conner Underwood. McAndrews showed he still has it by throwing a strike to his brother Todd to nail Miera at the plate.

In the second inning Casey Clark, who had singled, scored on an RBI single by Stu Swiggum. In the bottom half of the inning, Clark threw out a would-be base stealer to end the young Eagles' threat.

In the third inning, Jim Zamberelli and Travis McAndrews each singled and Lewis had an RBI

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single. The Eagles' Bobby Dean had an RBI single to make it 3-1, In the fourth inning Max Mendoza's RBI single made it 4-1, but the Eagles wouldn't go quietly. Nick Martinez had a two-run double to close the deficit to 4-3.

In the fifth inning Casey Clark had an RBI double and Dave Combs, who clobbered a home nm at Angel Stadium in the 1979 CIF championship game, had an RBI single to make it 7-3. The alumni would add another run in the seventh and the Eagles scored once more for the final 8-4 score.

Casey Clark was named the Alumni Player of the Game. The former All-League catcher was two for two with an RBI and a run scored and threw out one Eagle attempting to steal a base.

There's something to be said about being part of

the Eagle family. After the game past players met with current players for a photo opportunity when one of the alumni players said, "Once an Eagle, always an Eagle." At that point both teams joined in to break with, "Eagles!"

Eagle Nests and Notes

The baseball team, which won the Pioneer League title, will enter the CIF Southern Section Division playoffs starting today (or Friday) with a home game starting at 3:15 p.m. A win would send them into the second round on Tuesday at a site TBD. It was the 34th league title in the past 53 years for the Eagles. For Craig Cousins, it was his second league title in three years as head coach.

2012 Baseball Team Meets Alumni Team



Past meets present. Former players stand over this year's Eagles.

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2005 CIF Player of the Year, Auggie Meick showed.



Alumni Player of the Game Casey Clark had a big game at the plate.



1990 graduate Mark Lewis connects for an RBI single in the first inning.



Graduate Alberto Conception closes out the game for the Alumni.