

History of the Rancho Bernardo Girls' Softball League;  
1971-2013



by  
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## Founding and Incorporation

In 1970 a Rancho Bernardo girls' softball team of fourteen players, the RB Raiders, was formed to compete in a league in Poway comprised of five teams from Poway and one from Rancho Bernardo. After a slow start the RB Raiders completed the season with a 31-8 victory over the Lucky Lions to win the 1970 Poway Girls' Softball League with a record of 15-3. *Bernardo Brandings* reported, "The awards banquet held on July 11 recognized all the girls and also gave special awards to the following girls: Most improved, Susana Chambers; Most Inspirational, Dianna Chambers; Most Valuable Players, Kelly Chinn and Kathy Gibby. Others receiving league trophies were Kiki Nellis, Susan Tillerson, Lynn Telian, Ann Tedeschi, Cindy Aufderheide, Kathy Warlick, Moreen Warlick, and Diana Hadden. Manager, Trudi Aufderheide; Coach, Rocky Lucia."<sup>1</sup>

The following year Rancho Bernardo formed its own league, the Rancho Bernardo Girls' Softball League (RBGSL). According to *Bernardo News*, "The league was started in 1971 under the direction of Bill Stewart, who was then Director of Recreation for Avco [AVCO Community Developers, Inc.], and Mary Chambers. That first year Gary Murphy served as its first president and the league took the field with five teams composed of girls 8-14 competing on the same level."<sup>2</sup> Registration took place at the Swim and Tennis Club with Nicki ter Horst and at the Westwood Club with Gary Hargrave,<sup>3</sup> and fees were \$4 per girl or \$10 per family. Seventy-nine players signed up and were divided into five teams.<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Gary Rogers, Secretary of the Board of Governors, noted that "Coaching the teams will be Mrs. Mary Murphy, Mrs. Mary Chambers and others."<sup>5</sup> Opening Day ceremonies were held on May 16<sup>th</sup>.<sup>6</sup> All games were played at Westwood Club.<sup>7</sup> Bob Beeson and Bert Benefiel were the first umpires.<sup>8</sup>

At the close of the inaugural season the *Poway News Chieftain* observed, "The Booster Club team won the Rancho Bernardo Girls Softball League Championship with a perfect record of 8 straight wins. Final standings announced this week follow. Booster Club 8-0, Westwood Men's Club 6-2, Balistreri Land Maintenance 3-5, Ivy Barn Restaurant 1-6, S & C Liquor Mart 1-6."<sup>9</sup> League president, Gary Murphy, credited the success of the first season to "the fine efforts of many RB residents. A special thanks must go to the elected Board, the managers and coaches, the volunteer umpires and scorekeepers. The cooperation of the Little League teams and officials has been great too! I can't fail to mention that many things could not have been done if it were not for the sponsorship of these following people: Joe Balistreri Landscape Maintenance, Ivy Barn Restaurant, S & C Liquor, and the Westwood Men's Club."<sup>10</sup>

Articles of Incorporation were executed on April 9, 1979, by board members Robert Weiser (president), Connie Willemsen, Jackie Phanco (secretary), Shirley Peterson, and Phil Lerch; and the Rancho Bernardo Girls' Softball League was designated as a 501 (c) (3) organization.



### External Structure

RBGSL initially played according to rules set forth by the [Southern California Municipal Athletic Federation](#) (SCMAF), formed in 1949. RBGSL's affiliation with SCMAF lasted from 1971 through 1988.<sup>11</sup>

Today the RBGSL is a local, recreational league affiliated with the North San Diego District of the [Southern California Amateur Softball Association](#) (SOCAL-ASA), and the [Amateur Softball Association](#) (ASA), the national governing body of softball in the United States, founded in 1933. The ASA is the body establishing rules, providing insurance coverage, and hosting district, sectional, and national tournaments. All levels of the organization contribute to the training of coaches, players, and umpires. RBGSL's affiliation with ASA dates to 1989 and has been continuous since then. The transition from SCMAF to ASA took place in the first year of Joe McElroy's presidency, he says, in order to accommodate the initiation of travel teams.<sup>12</sup>

[Rancho Bernardo Community Park](#), a 38-acre park with eight ball fields, is home to the RBGSL. Prior to 1983, the year of the park's dedication, games were played primarily at the small field at Westwood Club and some at RB Swim and Tennis Club.<sup>13</sup> *Bernardo News* commented on the park's inauguration in April of 1983 as follows: "The RB Girls Softball League initiated RB's new community park last weekend with an exciting game between the Bank of RB's Red Socks and RB Realty's Sluggers [the Red Socks won]. Art Belenzon of the San Diego Park and Recreation Department threw out the first ball to inaugurate the new park."<sup>14</sup> Because of its ties to the park, the RBGSL is represented on the RB Recreation Council.<sup>15</sup> The park is managed by the San Diego Park & Recreation Department.

## Internal Structure

The organizational structure of the RBGSL is best understood by examining its [bylaws](#) and reviewing the areas of responsibility of board members. The bylaws stipulate that the board of the RBGSL consist of a minimum of nine members. In addition to the usual officers (president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer) with their traditional areas of responsibility, the bylaws specify other officers and areas of responsibility as follows:

- Player Agent who oversees the annual player selection and draft system;
- Youth Umpire Coordinator who supervises umpires and interprets rules and regulations;
- Ways and Means Manager who coordinates fundraising and organizes Opening and Closing Day ceremonies;
- Equipment Manager who procures, maintains, and distributes playing and field equipment;
- Fields Manager who maintains the fields of play;
- League Division Representatives who oversee activities of their division, assist the Player Agent in player selection and supervision of player transfer, and nominate team managers for recreation and all-star seasons;
- Publicity Manager who publishes the Opening Day program, disseminates board approved communications, and promotes community awareness of the league;
- Uniform Manager who procures and distributes uniforms;
- Snack Bar Manager who supervises the snack bar during league play at Rancho Bernardo Community Park;
- Registrar who produces and distributes the annual registration flyer, organizes the registration process, and keeps records of all players; and
- Sponsors Manager who solicits funds to help finance the league.

The bylaws specify that other officers shall be designated by the board from time to time as deemed appropriate. Additional areas of responsibility currently assigned to board members are as follows:

- All-Star Season Coordinator,
- Fall Ball Season Coordinator,
- Instruction,
- Safety,
- Scheduling,
- Tournament, and
- Webmaster.<sup>16</sup>

## Finance



Funding for the league comprises registration fees (both for individual players and teams entering the tournament hosted by the league), sponsors (including hotel revenue sharing during the tournament), fundraisers, donors, and revenues from the snack bar. Major areas of expense include tournament fees, uniforms, capital expenditures, insurance, umpires, equipment, education, field maintenance, trophies, publicity, and storage.

Registration fees and sponsors have been a source of revenue since the founding of the league. Neither Gary Murphy, first president of the league, nor his wife, Mary, recall any other fundraising activities in the first few years.<sup>17</sup> The first newspaper reference to supplementary fundraising activity was in 1976: "Older participants will be busy washing cars in between swings of the bat as the league's first fundraiser of the season will be held at the Texaco station on the east side of RB and at the Union '76 station on the west side."<sup>18</sup> Connie Willemsen, long-time

coach, board member, and president, recalls the girls selling candy through the mid-1970s.<sup>19</sup>

The first annual dance fundraiser occurred in 1977,<sup>20</sup> and the last in 1984 gave way to golf in that same year. Golf fundraisers between 1984 and 1990 benefitted RBGSL, Little League baseball, and Pony-Colt baseball.<sup>21</sup> A Jog-A-Thon at Westwood Club occurred in 1981. That same year a long-term sponsor relationship was formed with Round Table Pizza.<sup>22</sup> The snack bar opened three or four years after the inauguration of RB Community Park in 1983, but RBGSL began selling hamburgers, hot dogs, soft drinks, and other edibles and potables from a makeshift snack bar from the beginning of play at the park. Connie Willemsen also recalls that this makeshift snack bar for several men's softball events was a big fundraiser. And, she continues, "One of our biggest fundraisers was our concession at the Fourth of July event in Webb Park."<sup>23</sup> A comedy night lightened the fundraising atmosphere on April 16, 1992, at the Rancho Bernardo Inn: "The program, titled 'Four Ladies of the Evening,' will feature four of San Diego's best female comics." Tickets were \$15.<sup>24</sup> In recent years, at least since 2000, Padres Night has been a substantial source of fundraising for girls' softball across the city. Fast food revenue sharing fundraisers have been continuous since at least 2005.

For changes in registration fees and fundraising activities over the years see the linked file, [Yearly Summary of Fees; Ages; Number of Players, Teams, and Divisions; Affiliations; and Fundraisers](#).

### **Positive Coaching Alliance**

The *Rancho Bernardo News Journal* quotes Connie Willemsen, “From its inception, the league has had the stated goals of providing fun and enjoyment for the participants by providing a program of competitive play emphasizing teamwork, sportsmanship and cooperative effort.”<sup>25</sup> Today RBGSL follows the principles of the [Positive Coaching Alliance](#) (PCA). PCA is a national non-profit organization with a mission to provide all youth and high school athletes a positive, character-building youth sports experience. PCA reaches youth and high school sports leaders, coaches, athletes, parents, academicians, businesses, and national youth sports organizations. Since its 1998 launch at Stanford University by founder and chief executive officer Jim Thompson, PCA has influenced more than four million youth athletes. RBGSL board members Marc McIntyre and Wade Mears, the latter a Stanford graduate, attended a PCA lecture in the spring of 2003. They along with Steve Kuptz introduced PCA to the RBGSL in 2004 with RBGSL’s first PCA Coaches Training. Steve Kuptz, another Stanford graduate and a charter member of the PCA, is a former RBGSL president.

Central to PCA’s work are their models: [The Double-Goal Coach](#), whose first goal is winning and whose second, more important goal, is teaching life lessons through sports; [The Second-Goal Parent](#), which concentrates on life lessons, while letting coaches and athletes focus on competing; [The Triple-Impact Competitor](#), which strives to impact sport on three levels by improving oneself, teammates, and the game as a whole.

### **Mission**

Values espoused by the PCA are reflected in the Mission Statement of the RBGSL. The Rancho Bernardo Girls’ Softball League is a not-for-profit organization operated by volunteers committed to the following principles:

- Providing a positive softball environment for all our members;
- Practicing positive coaching, wherein sportsmanship, winning and losing with pride, and teamwork are fundamental;
- Cultivating in our players a love of the game by teaching them the rules and skills of fastpitch softball;
- Encouraging respect for the game and its participants, including players, coaches, umpires, and parents;
- Ensuring that all players in our organization are valued, regardless of skill level; and
- Making sure the youth in our organization have fun. **Positive coaching, Love of the game, All players valued, Youth having fun. Let’s P-L-A-Y softball.**

### Coaching Mission

As part of their approval process RBGSL team managers and coaches sign a [Coach's Pledge](#). This pledge embodies the principles of the league's [Coaching Mission statement](#), which in turn derives from the [PCA's "Double-Goal Coach" Job Description](#).

### Parent Pledge

As part of the process of registering players in the RBGSL parents are asked to read and initial each of six pledges. The pledges have to do with punctuality, perspective, mastery, example, restraint, and negativism. The [RBGSL Parent Pledge](#) derives from the [PCA's Parent Pledge](#).

### Divisions of Play

In its inaugural year, 1971, RBGSL formed a single division for girls eight through fourteen years of age.<sup>26</sup> The second year, 1972, two age divisions were instituted: Minor (8-12) and Major (12-16). These two divisions continued through 1974 with minimal adjustment of the age categories. In 1975 the league added a Senior (16-19) division, a division also referred to as Travel, NC, or North County.<sup>27</sup> A Rookie division was added for 1979 and 1980. In 1981 divisions were realigned as follows: Division I (8-9), Division II (10-11), Division III (12-13), and Division IV (14-15). In 1986 a Division V traveling team, the Rowdies, was added for post-season play by high school age girls.<sup>28</sup> A Tee Ball division was begun in 1991, and a Division II travel team was added that same year.<sup>29</sup> Bob Speights, RB High School Athletic Director, and Rick Rothman started the 12U Rowdies in 1991, a travel team beyond the scope of the recreational league. [See endnote 57 for more details]. Leadership of Gary Small and Steve Kuptz in 1998 led to the formation of the first Rookies division since 1980. Since 2000 the divisions have remained constant as follows: Tee Ball, Rookies, Divisions I, II & III, and Travel, except the last travel team under RBGSL sponsorship was in 2002. RBGSL is currently regarded as a recreational league, and travel teams are a separate entity.



For changes in age eligibility, numbers of players, teams, and divisions over the years see the linked file, [Yearly Summary of Fees; Ages; Number of Players, Teams, and Divisions; Affiliations; and Fundraisers](#).

Today players are divided by age into one of five divisions. Teams are then formed according to the number of players within each of these divisions, each team consisting of approximately twelve players. Players between the ages of four and fourteen may register to play in the RBGSL. Registration is for the calendar year. The ASA determines "league age." The age of the girl on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December prior to the season for which she is registering determines her age for that season of play.

Divisions of play are as follows:

- Tee Ball for players 4 to 6 years of age, often referred to as 6-and-under or 6U,
- Rookies for players 7 and 8 years of age, often referred to as 8-and-under or 8U,
- Division I for players 9 and 10 years of age, often referred to as 10-and-under or 10U,
- Division II for players 11 to 12 years of age, often referred to as 12-and-under or 12U,
- Division III for players 13 and 14 years of age, often referred to as 14-and-under or 14U.

The Tee Ball division is designed for beginning players. This division takes its name from the provision that batters hit the ball off of a tee rather than hitting a pitched ball during the first half of the season. Beginning at mid-season coaches pitch to their players, except that if the batter has not hit the ball after five balls have been pitched, the ball will be placed on the tee. Games last the lesser of four innings or one hour and fifteen minutes. An inning is complete after all players have had a turn at bat. Runners are limited to advancing one base per at bat until the last batter when all runners on base at the time run the bases to home plate. There is no base stealing. The infield fly rule is waived. Bases are set sixty feet apart. Coaches rotate players to as many positions as possible. A ten-inch RIF (reduced injury factor), "softie," softball is used.

The Rookies division teams play with a minimum of six and a maximum of ten players, including a pitcher and catcher. Pitchers are allowed to pitch a maximum of two innings. All players have a turn at bat. Games are six innings or one hour and forty-five minutes, with no new inning starting after one hour and twenty minutes. There is a limit of four runs per inning. Walks are not allowed for the first half of the season. Bunting and stealing are allowed in the second half of the season. The infield fly rule is waived. The pitching distance is thirty feet, and the ten-inch Worth softball is used.

Division I teams play with a minimum of seven and a maximum of nine players. There is a two inning minimum for all players on defense with all players present in the batting order. Games are six innings, and no new inning starts after one hour and twenty minutes. There is a four run maximum for each inning save the last. Bunting and stealing are allowed throughout the season. Players may steal home, and there is no limit on how many bases can be stolen at a time. The infield fly and dropped third strike rules are in effect. Play continues at all times until

the ball is back in the pitcher's circle. According to Joe McElroy, the league made a transition in the late 80s or early 90s from a harder ball to a smaller and more elastic one.<sup>30</sup>

Division II teams play a maximum of nine players but must bat their entire line-up. When short of nine players, teams may borrow players from within their league to avoid forfeits, but these players must be from the same division and cannot pitch. No pitcher can pitch more than four innings (twelve outs) unless the game goes past seven innings. Games are one hour and thirty minutes with a per inning run limit of six, except in the last inning. The pitching distance is forty feet, and the twelve-inch softball is used.

Division III teams play under ASA rules. There are no rule exceptions for this age group, 14U.

### Typical Season



Connie Willemsen described the annual activities of the league to the *Rancho Bernardo Journal* in 1984,<sup>31</sup> a pattern that remained in place from the league's inception at least through the 1980s. Board members were elected in May and assumed office in July. Board meetings were monthly. Rules were reviewed and correlated with those of

SCMAF. Registration took place variously between January and March. Through this same period the following activities took place: field preparation, coaches' and managers' clinics, players' clinics,<sup>32</sup> and umpire training<sup>33</sup> and certification tests, and tryouts and team selection using a draft system.<sup>34</sup> Once teams were determined in late February, scorekeepers' clinics, practices, and fundraisers kept everyone busy until Opening Day. Opening Day was generally held in mid-April, but in the earliest years took place as late as mid-May and early June. The tradition of displaying team banners<sup>35</sup> on Opening Day spans league history, as does speech-making by notables<sup>36</sup> and the distribution of a yearbook.<sup>37</sup> Closing Day was typically mid- to late-June with one in 1974 as late as July 13<sup>th</sup>. Closing Day ceremonies often saw the passing of the gavel and special awards.<sup>38</sup> Participation in the community's annual RB Fourth of July parade spans league history although not on a regular basis.<sup>39</sup> In 1978 RBGSL initiated an All-Star season to follow the spring recreational season.<sup>40</sup>

Currently the spring recreational season begins every year with skill assessments held in early January. Next, a draft process divides players into evenly skilled teams. Practice usually

begins the last weekend in January and each team practices one night per week and every Saturday until Opening Day, the first Saturday in March. Each team plays one game during the week and every Saturday until the first Saturday of May when an end-of-the-season tournament is played. Top skilled players then play until mid-July on All-Star teams against other leagues in the San Diego area in a tournament format. RBGSL hosts its own tournament, the Grand Slam Summer Jam, and has done so since 1984. The All-Star season is capped by a North San Diego District tournament from which the top teams qualify for States, and for those successful there, Nationals. A fall recreation season concludes the calendar year.

### **Number of Players**

Girls' softball in Rancho Bernardo began in 1970 with twelve players on one team playing in the Poway Girls' Softball League. The following year the Rancho Bernardo Girls' Softball League was formed with seventy-nine players divided into five teams. In 1972 three teams formed a Minors division and four teams formed a Majors division. By 1979, its year of incorporation, the RBGSL had grown to 320 players on twenty-four teams in five divisions. 1984, the high-water-mark season, saw thirty-two teams divided into five divisions with 348 players. In 1986 there were 290 players on twenty-five teams, and in 1989 there were 250 girls on twenty-four teams. Bob Moran, coach and umpire in the league for 17 of its 18 years and former league president, musing on league growth from the perspective of the year 1988, said, "The growth of RB softball reflects a general pattern. College scholarships are offered to standouts in the game, and womens softball will be an exhibition sport at the Seoul Olympics this summer...."<sup>41</sup> Among reasons for growth in sports for women is Title IX. Title IX was passed into law in 1972, requiring gender equity for boys and girls in every educational program that receives federal funding, including collegiate athletic programs and scholarships.

Wade Mears, eleven year board member and president of RBGSL from 2008 to 2012, charted the waxing and waning of the number of players through recent years. In 2002 there were 258 players, and the numbers steadily increased to a high of 318 players in 2006. Mears attributes this trend to improving publicity. In 2002 a plain flyer was produced, but there was no distribution of it to schools and no mailing to the previous year's players. The following year the flyer was improved and distributed to schools and a mailing was initiated. These and additional measures such as speakers and contests led into the recent peak year of 2006. However, numbers of players began declining in 2007 and has continued unevenly to 198 in 2012. Mears attributes this trend to two factors: a decline in core school enrollment and especially the growth of the softball league in adjacent 4S Ranch. Core school enrollment dropped by ten percent in 2007, and 4S Ranch softball began that same year. Despite adding private and church schools to the flyer distribution list, RBGSL numbers dropped to 228. In 2009 4S Ranch had grown to 110 players while RGSL dropped to 224. By 2011 4S Ranch stood at 160 and RBGSL declined to 189. Mears adds that in 2011 most North San Diego district

leagues experienced a twenty percent drop from the previous year. Registration stood at 181 in 2013.

For changes in numbers of players, teams, and divisions over the years see the linked file, [Yearly Summary of Fees; Ages; Number of Players, Teams and Divisions; Affiliations; and Fundraisers.](#)

## Tournaments

The end-of-the-season tournament has occurred nearly since the beginning of the RBGSL. In 1973 RBGSL began playing a county-wide tournament hosted by the SCMAF,<sup>42</sup> and in 1982 RBGSL sent three teams to this tournament.<sup>43</sup> Since 1974 league teams have competed during the recreational season for standing in relation to one another, and they have a second opportunity to succeed during the post-season tournament. Patti Ferracone captured empathy of mothers with their daughters in loving doggerel, [Ode to a Softball Mom](#), on the opening page of *Bernardo News*' recap of the season-ending tournament.<sup>44</sup>

In 1978 an All-Star season was initiated.<sup>45</sup> Top players from the various age groups are formed into teams following the recreational season to compete with other leagues in the San Diego area. These teams compete in weekend tournaments throughout the San Diego North County area and southern California. As noted above, the All-Star season is now capped by an ASA-hosted North San Diego District tournament from which the top teams qualify for ASA States, and for those successful there, ASA Nationals.



July 13-15 and 20-22, 1984 RBGSL hosted its first post-season tournament, the County All-Star Tournament, an all-star event that has come to be called the RB Grand Slam Summer Jam.<sup>46</sup> By 1985 it had become the largest girls' softball invitational held in San Diego county. Fifty-two teams from sixteen

associations played a double-elimination tournament in RB Community Park.<sup>47</sup> By 1990 RB hosted sixty teams from San Diego, Riverside, Orange, and Los Angeles counties.<sup>48</sup> Teams hosted reached sixty-seven in 1992<sup>49</sup> and seventy-five in 1995, including the N.S.W. Scots, a

16U team from Sydney, Australia, adding an international flavor to the tournament.<sup>50</sup> Eighty-two teams entered the 2000 Grand Slam Summer Jam.<sup>51</sup> 1993 appears to be the first year RBGSL fielded a team that won a division of its own tournament,<sup>52</sup> and 2002 the second.<sup>53</sup> The addition of lighting to the park in 1986 and 2001 increased the capacity of the park, especially for tournament play.<sup>54</sup> The RBGSL hosted the Southern California Amateur Softball Association's "B" State Tournament July 11-13, 2008.<sup>55</sup>

The RB Rowdies was originally a tournament team put together and coached by Tony Ferracone. Bob Speights established the Rowdies travel team in 1991, and they played four seasons, 1991-1994, with Tony Ferracone, Rick Rothman, Dale Bardin, and Lora & Brian Starry coaching. Thirty-five girls played for the Rowdies over these four years and had a 96-88-3 record of wins-losses-ties.<sup>56</sup> Between 1994 and 1996 RBGSL sent a traveling team, the RB Rowdies, to a national tournament hosted by the [American Fastpitch Association](#).<sup>57</sup>

### Major Tournament Accomplishments

Tournaments and leagues are classified by skill level as "A," "B," and "C" leagues. The "A" level is restricted to traveling teams that select their players by tryouts or demonstration of skill level. "B" and "C" leagues are recreational leagues. Recreational leagues have open enrollment. Demonstration of skill level or tryouts are not required. "C" and "B" leagues are evaluated for placement in one of these two levels by the District Commissioner based on the skill level of the players and their history in championship play. RBGSL has competed at both recreational levels, first winning the "B" District Championship in 2001 and last playing at the "C" level in 2004.

The 2001 8U All-Star team became "B" District Champions, the first in RBGSL history. The manager was Marc McIntyre.

The 2002 10U All-Star team became "C" District Champions and went on to win the "C" States Championship. The manager was Gary Small. For more details see the [Hall of Fame page](#).

The 2003 8U All-Star team became "C" District Champions. The manager was Mary Shea.

The 2003 10U All-Star team took fourth place at "C" District, qualifying for States. They took second place at "C" States and then went on to place second at "C" Western Regionals. The manager was Marc McIntyre.

Also in 2003 the San Diego Rowdies, an "A" traveling team which grew out of the RBGSL and had a number of RBGSL players, became the first local Rancho Bernardo team to qualify for the "A" ASA Nationals, finishing third in the 14U state tournament that year out of seventy-five teams and finishing



thirteenth in the country at the National Tournament in Normal, Illinois. RBGSL players on that team included Noelle DuBois, Jennie Auger, Christy Cavano (whose mother was also a RBGSL player from 1979 through the early 1980s), Kelsey Lysander, and Kate Elwell.

The 2004 12U All-Star team took second in “C” States and second in “C” Regionals. This was the last team to play at the “C” level.

The 2004 8U Blue All-Star team won “B” District. The manager was Bob Nagle. For more details see the [Hall of Fame page](#).

The 2005 8U All-Star team finished second in “B” District. The manager was Steve White. For more details see the [Hall of Fame page](#).

Also in 2005 Rancho Bernardo High School won its first [California Interscholastic Federation](#) (CIF) Championship with the following former RBGSL players on the roster: Jennie Auger, Stephanie Darnell, Noelle DuBois, Suzy Ellquist, Kate Elwell, Melissa May, Melissa Routh, Kristen Tuerk, and Jill Upchurch.

The 2006 10U All-Star team won District, went to “B” States where it finished seventh, and “B” Western Nationals where it finished fourth. This is the first team in RBGSL history to go to ASA recreational league Nationals.

The 2007 10U All-Star team finished third at “B” District, qualifying for States. The manager was Giles Norton.

The 2008 12U All-Star team finished second in “B” District, fifth at “B” States, and fifth at “B” Western Nationals.

The 2008 8U All-Star team won the “B” District Championship. The manager was Mark Reddick.

Rancho Bernardo High School captured its second CIF Championship in 2009 with the following former RBGSL players: Laura Winter, Maddie McIntyre, Maddy Jones, Claire Kuelbs, and Becky Snyder.

The 2010 10U All-Star team finished second at “B” District, qualifying for “B” States. The manager was Rich Dahlberg. For more details see the [Hall of Fame page](#).

The 2010 12U All-Star team finished third at “B” District, qualifying for “B” States. The manager was Giles Norton.

The 2011 14U All-Star team won “B” District, finishing seventh at “B” States and thirteenth at “B” Nationals. The manager was Giles Norton.

The 2012 10U All-Star team took third at “B” District, qualifying for “B” States. The manager was Joe Maier.

In 2013 the 8U All-Star team finished second at the “B” District, qualifying for “B” States, and the 12U Gold All-Star team and the 14U All-Star team also qualified for “B” States, the first time in RBGSL history that three teams have qualified in the same year.



### **Players Who Went on to Play Collegiate Softball**

One of the measures of the strength of the league is the number of players who went on to play softball at more advanced levels, namely, travel, high school, college, and professional teams. A list of RBGSL players who went on to play collegiate softball follows:

Jenny Auger (University of Georgia), Ariel Craig (University of Nevada, Reno), Laura Determan (Villanova University), Summer Downs (University of Iowa), Suzy Ellquist (Florida International University), Kate Ellwell (Notre Dame de Namur), Lisa Ferracone (Palomar College and California State University, Northridge), Stephanie Guerena (California State University, Northridge), Emily Harper Guerra (St. Anselm College), Sterling Hoham (Long Island University), Alex Hutchinson (Palomar College), Sarah Jensen (Biola University), Madison Jones (Iowa State University), Christina Khosravi (University of Pennsylvania), Danielle Knoetze (committed to East Tennessee State University), Janna Kovensky (San Diego State University), Stephanie Leisenring (Vanguard University), Melissa May (Florida State University), Ami McElroy (Claremont Colleges), Maddy McIntyre (The Ohio State University), Lauren Nagle (California State University, Stanislaus), Christy Nelson (Yale University), Tess Paredes (Whittier College), Samantha Pittman (Providence College), Melissa Routh (Colorado State University), Kim Sawyer (University of California, Santa Barbara), Heather Scaglione (University of Oklahoma), Jo Sherlock (St. John's University), Kassy Shiotani (Harvard University), Kristen "Skooch" Shiotani (Concordia University, Irvine), Bridget Starry (Jacksonville University), Nicki Starry (University of Wisconsin), Cathie Stelman (Linfield College), Julie Stelman (University of California, San Diego), and Laura Winter (University of Notre Dame).

### **Presidents of the RBGSL**

The league owes a debt of gratitude to a host of people. Foremost among them are those who served as president. A list of RBGSL presidents follows:

Gary Murphy, 1971; Robert Weiser, 1972-1974; Bob Moran, 1975; George Thornburgh, 1976; Dave Phanco, 1977; Robert Weiser, 1978-1979; Connie Willemssen, 1980-1981; Dave Willemssen, 1982-1983; Ron Lorenz, 1984; Cathy Brose, 1985; Phil Lerch, 1986; B. J. Brose, 1987; Donna Young, 1988; Joe McElroy, 1989-1991; Kathy McNamara, 1992-1993; Jim Clark, 1994; Dale Bardin, 1995-1997; Lora Starry, 1998; Dale Bardin, 1999; Lora Starry, 2000-2003; Steve Kuptz, 2003; Gary Small, 2003-2005; Giles Norton, 2005-2008; Wade Mears, 2008-2012; Wade Wendell, 2012-present.

### Special Recognitions

The Rancho Bernardo Sports Hall of Fame has inducted four former RBGSL presidents into its ranks: Gary Murphy in 1984, Connie Willemssen in 1987, Bob Moran in 1988, and Lora Starry in 1997. Other RBGSL volunteers inducted were Bob Beeson in 1982, Joe Maiden and Claudia Hyden in 1988, Don Herring in 1991, and Gerald "Jerry" Bjork in 1997.<sup>58</sup>

The Glassman-Brown Recreational Leadership Award is presented by the Rancho Bernardo Recreation Council to unpaid volunteers who for five years or more have contributed significantly and provided leadership in recreation or sports in the Rancho Bernardo community. RBGSL is proud to salute the following recipients of this award: Gary Small in 2007, Steve Kuptz in 2008, and Marc McIntyre in 2013.<sup>59</sup>

Each spring in Webb Park a Hats Off to Volunteers event recognizes outstanding service to the Rancho Bernardo community. One category for recognition is Youth Athletics, and RBGSL nominates for this category. RBGSL is proud to salute the following recipients of this recognition: Marc McIntyre in 2010, Wade Wendell in 2011, Mark Reddick in 2012, and Jeremy Schmidt in 2013.

One player, "Karen Moore...notched a league record of 14 strikeouts [in Division IV]."<sup>60</sup> Another player, Nicki Starry had the honor of throwing out the first pitch of the 1994 season of the San Diego Padres.<sup>61</sup> Still another, Brittany Sullivan, was recognized for her sixty m.p.h. pitching.<sup>62</sup>

### Acknowledgements

My granddaughter, Allison Boaz, is a passionate softball player in the RBGSL. She has inspired me to become a hanger-on-chain-link-fences as well as co-webmaster of the league along with her father, Andrew Boaz, who attends the board meetings and often helps with coaching her team. I dedicate this history to her and to her father.

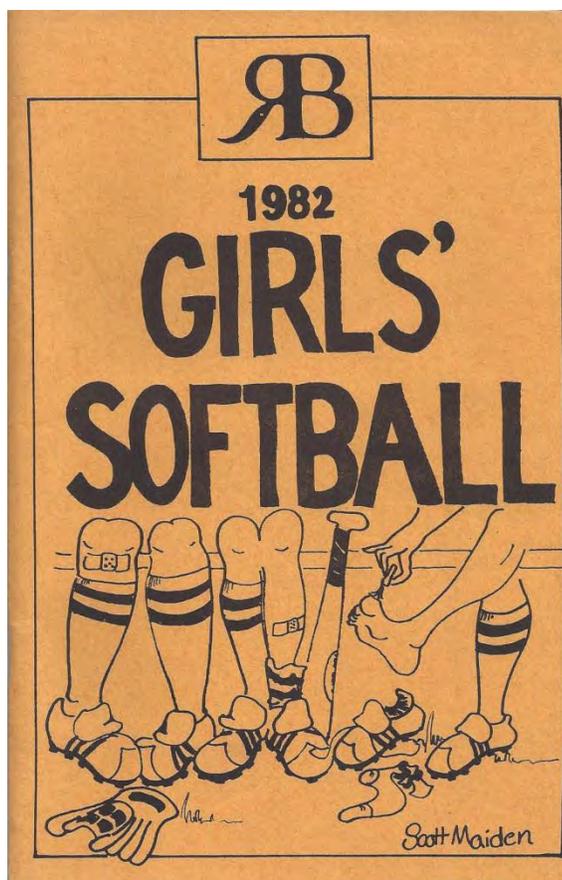
I welcome any additions, corrections, and editorial changes you may wish to forward to me at [jkboaz1938@att.net](mailto:jkboaz1938@att.net). I wish to thank the following persons for



their invaluable help in gathering the information included in this compilation: Wade Wendell (current president, RBGSL); Wade Mears (immediate past president, RBGSL); Gary Murphy, Bob Moran, Connie Willemsen, Dave Willemsen, Joe McElroy, Dale Bardin, Steve Kuptz, and Lora Starry (past presidents, RBGSL); Marc McIntyre, Giles Norton, Bob Nagle, Gary Small, Steve White, Jeff Neyhouse, Chris Menzer, and Andrew Boaz (board members, RBGSL); Mary Murphy, Bob Speights, Mike Stelman, and Joe Maiden (coachs, RBGSL); Dennis Pedrotti (owner of Round Table Pizza in Rancho Bernardo from 1975 to 1999 and longtime sponsor of RBGSL); Bernice Mora (director, Rancho Bernardo Recreation Center); Joe Henderson (former RB Community Park Supervisor); Charlotte Kutzner (friend); *92128 Magazine* (January/February 2013, pp. 38-43); Barbara Warden (former Publisher, *Bernardo News*); Elizabeth Marie Himchak (staff writer, *Rancho Bernardo News Journal*); Barbara Norton (editorial assistant, *Rancho Bernardo News Journal* for her assistance in giving me access to information in past issues of *Rancho Bernardo News Journal*); and Peggy Rossi (collection manager, Rancho Bernardo Historical Society, for her assistance in giving me access to information in past issues of *Bernardo Brandings*, *Bernardo News*, and *Rancho Bernardo News Journal*).

The play action photographs are courtesy of Spark Photography. The Marauders team photograph is courtesy of the Rancho Bernardo Historical Society Museum. The Rancho Design Center team photograph is courtesy of Joe McElroy. Joe McElroy also provided the 1982 RB Girls' Softball League Yearbook and the Red Hots banner.

John K. Boaz,  
October 2013



<sup>1</sup> Pete Elkin, "Swim and Tennis Club Newsletter; Girls Softball—No. 1," *Bernardo Brandings*, August 1970, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Bernardo News*, 17 May 1975, p. 18. One announcement of registration to be "held at the Swim and Tennis Club on March 6 from 1:00 p.m. to 4 p.m." asserts, "All girls between the ages of 8 through 15" are eligible, and "Presently we have eighty girls signed up for this program." *Bernardo Brandings*, March 1971, no page number.

<sup>3</sup> "Swim & Tennis Club," *Bernardo Brandings*, March 1971, no page number.

<sup>4</sup> "Swim, Tennis & Westwood Club Newsletter; Westwood Club; Girls' Bobbysox Softball League," *Bernardo Brandings*, June 1971, no page number.

<sup>5</sup> "Softball Opens," *Poway News Chieftain*, 29 April 1971, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> "Swim, Tennis & Westwood Club Newsletter; Westwood Club; Girls' Bobbysox Softball League," *Bernardo Brandings*, June 1971, no page number.

<sup>7</sup> *Poway News Chieftain*, 27 May 1971, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Paul K. Brown, "Girls Softball—A Scream and a Squeal," *Bernardo News*, 6 June 1981, p. 43.

<sup>9</sup> "RB Softball Champs," *Poway News-Chiefton*, 1 July 1971, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> "Swim, Tennis & Westwood Club Newsletter; Westwood Club; Girls' Bobbysox Softball League," *Bernardo Brandings*, June 1971, no page number.

<sup>11</sup> Connie Willemssen, interview by the author, 21 June 2013. Connie Willemssen is a former RBGSL president and coached from 1974. Willemssen confirmed that RBGSL was never affiliated with [Bobby Sox Softball](#), a national

softball association founded in 1962, despite some confusion over this question in early articles in local newspapers. One article carried a headline implying Bobby Sox affiliation: "Swim, Tennis & Westwood Club Newsletter; Westwood Club; Girls' Bobbysox Softball League," *Bernardo Brandings*, June 1971, no page number. Another emphatically denied affiliation: "The Rancho Bernardo Girl's Softball League is a separate league and is in no way affiliated with the Bobby Socks League." "Softball Opens," *Poway News Chieftain*, 29 April 1971, p. 9. Gary Murphy, first president of the league, recalls that mixing all ages on each of the original five teams was incompatible with Bobby Sox Softball regulations, hence no affiliation was sought. Gary Murphy, interview by the author, 9 August 2013.

<sup>12</sup> Joe McElroy, interview by the author, 6 August 2013. The transition from SCMAF to ASA took place in the first year of McElroy's presidency, he says, in order to accommodate the institution of travel teams.

<sup>13</sup> Connie Willemssen, interview by the author, 21 June 2013.

<sup>14</sup> *Bernardo News*, 16 April 1983, p. B11. The park's dedication ceremony took place 4 June 1983 at 11:00 a.m. with guest speaker Dr. Mary Duncan, Chair, Department of Recreation, San Diego State University. Entertainment featured the Rancho Bernardo Chorale directed by Mrs. Pat Bean. Immediately following the dedication ceremonies a fastpitch softball exhibition was performed by The Joker & The Three Aces. Don Herring, interview by the author, 14 July 2013.

<sup>15</sup> Don Van Ness (president), Don Herring, Connie Willemssen, and Doris Bauer were founding members of the RB Recreation Council. Don Herring, interview by the author, 14 July 2013.

<sup>16</sup> The RBGSL website, <http://www.rbgirlssoftball.org>, was launched in 2000. In 2011 George Galaich, a local artist, contributed his talent to the design of the current RBGSL logo that appears on the masthead of the website and in many other places.

<sup>17</sup> Gary and Mary Murphy, interview by the author, 9 August 2013.

<sup>18</sup> *Bernardo News*, 15 May 1976, p. 14.

<sup>19</sup> Connie Willemssen, interview by the author, 23 July 2013.

<sup>20</sup> *Bernardo News*, 2 July 1977, p. 21. Two years later the *Bernardo News* announced the upcoming annual fundraiser girls' softball dance at the B-100 Disco at the Westwood Club to be held Saturday, May 12, 8:30 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., at a cost of \$5 per person. *Bernardo News*, 21 April 1979, p. 21.

<sup>21</sup> Connie Willemssen, interview by the author, 21 June 2013. She and Dennis Pedrotti, owner of Round Table Pizza in Rancho Bernardo, started the Diamond Golf Tournament at StoneRidge Country Club. Dennis Pedrotti, interview by the author, 13 July 2013. Joe Maiden recalls, "Two of those years the host emcee was Jim LaSlavic, former Detroit Lion and San Diego Charger linebacker and longtime local NBC sportscaster. Joe Maiden, interview by the author, 13 July 2013.

<sup>22</sup> Joe Maiden, interview by the author, 13 July 2013. Dennis Pedrotti, owner of Round Table Pizza in Rancho Bernardo, began sponsoring RBGSL along with other youth sports organizations in the community as a way of giving back to families who patronized his business. He began the business in 1975 at the location of the present day Starbucks in the Rancho Bernardo Town Center, started sponsorship of RBGSL soon thereafter, and left the business in 1999. Dennis Pedrotti, interview by the author, 13 July 2013. Despite the discontinuation of sponsorship, the RBGSL board has recently held its monthly board meetings and social events at the present Round Table Pizza location in the Rancho Bernardo Town Center.

<sup>23</sup> Connie Willemssen, interview by the author, 23 July 2013. "After our marching in the parade, we had our infamous Dunk Tank which everyone loved. The Dunk Tank was constructed by many volunteers, especially Lee Ryden and Mark McConnell, and finished with art work by Scott Maiden who also designed the cover of our program. At the concession we sold sno-cones, water, soft drinks, hamburgers, hot dogs, and lemons with a lemon stick in it (one of our hottest items)."

<sup>24</sup> *Bernardo News*, 8 April 1993, p. B9.

<sup>25</sup> Connie Willemssen, *Rancho Bernardo Journal*, 26 April 1984, p. B4.

<sup>26</sup> One article announcing the opening of registration states girls eight through fifteen are eligible.

<sup>27</sup> Bob Moran, interview by the author, 9 July 2013. Bob Moran coached in RB for twenty-five years, served on the RBGSL board for fourteen years, and served a term as its president. Moran explains, "In 1975 several girls of late high school age told me they would love to play softball but there was no organized place for them in the area. Knowing some coaches in the area, I talked to people in Fallbrook and Mesa del Sol (Claremont) and found they

had the same situation. We talked of forming a league with a few teams in ages 16+ through 19 and contacted other area leagues. After getting approval from the RB board and agreement to reserve some field time, a meeting was held at the WW club with representatives of interested leagues. As a result a league was formed as Division 5 with 3 teams from RB, 4 from Escondido, and 1 each from Fallbrook, Mesa del Sol, and Poway. The following year a team from San Marcos was added. The league operated for another 7 or 8 years but with slowly diminishing teams.” Thus, *Bernardo News* reported, “This year the league has added a senior team which will compete in the Girls Softball Association League. They will compete with teams throughout the County. These girls are 15-21 and they will play from June 1 to July 30.” *Bernardo News*, 17 May, 1975, p. 18.

<sup>28</sup> Joe McElroy, interview by the author, 6 August 2013. By 1987 RBGSL had one Division IV and one Division V team affiliated with the [California Interscholastic Federation](#) (CIF).

<sup>29</sup> “The league has established a Division II traveling team for girls with birthdates between Sept. 1, 1978 and Aug. 31, 1980,” and “[t]he newly established T-ball Division of the softball league is looking for fun-loving participants. This new division is open for girls born between Sept. 1, 1982 and Aug. 31, 1984.” *Bernardo News*, 17 January 1991, p. B9. The first Tee Ball division team of eighteen girls, the 1991 Play Co. Toys Red Hots, was coached by Joe McElroy. Joe McElroy, interview by the author, 6 August 2013.



<sup>30</sup> Joe McElroy, interview by the author, 6 August 2013.

<sup>31</sup> *Rancho Bernardo Journal*, 26 April 1984, p. B4.

<sup>32</sup> For example, a pitching clinic at Westwood Club on March 8th was conducted by Peggy Brose. *Bernardo News*, 7 March 1981, p. 37.

<sup>33</sup> Bob Beeson, Little League Chief Umpire, conducted the third annual umpire school on February 11, 1980, at Westwood School. *Bernardo News*, 1 March 1980, p. 27. An umpire and scorekeeper clinic was scheduled for March 22, 1980, at the Westwood Club. *Bernardo News*, 22 March 1980, p. 29. “All the coaching and umpiring was done by the girls in the softball league.” Connie Willemssen, “RB girls end softball season,” *Poway News Chieftain*, 19 June 1980, p. 17. Joe Maiden and Jerry Bjork formed an umpire association in the early 1980s, picking up where Bob Beeson left off because of illness. Joe Maiden, interview by the author, 13 July 2013. Umpires were paid \$4 per game in 1981. *Bernardo News*, 21 February 1981, p. 38. Joe McElroy recalls that pay for umpires had increased to \$7 to \$12 per game by the late 1980s. Joe McElroy, interview by the author, 6 August 2013. The 2004 Yearbook carried a letter, [Through an Umpire’s Eyes](#).

<sup>34</sup> The *Bernardo News* ventured its editorial opinion critical of the draft system of forming teams. “There must be a better way, and we urge the members of the girls’ softball board of directors to find it so that next season can be launched without the traditional discord.” Editorial, “Girls’ Softball Draft—A Better Way?” *Bernardo News*, 8 March 1980, p. 27.

<sup>35</sup> *Bernardo News*, announcing a banner contest, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, said, “All 25 teams will display their banners at the field starting at 9 a.m. Winners will be announced at 1:00 p.m.” *Bernardo News*, 21 April 1994, p. B9.

<sup>36</sup> For example, "The 1985 Rancho Bernardo Girls' Softball season begins Monday, April 8, with opening day ceremonies taking place Saturday, April 13 at 9 am at the Westwood Club.... RB resident Nate Colbert, community relations director for the San Diego Padres, and former Padres player, will be the guest speaker at the opening day ceremonies.... Colbert will then throw out the first ball officially opening the 1985 season." *Bernardo News*, 6 April 1985, p. B13. Tom Griffin, former major league player, was guest speaker in 1986. *RB Girls' Softball Yearbook*, 1986, p. 5. Joe Radovich, Mt. Carmel High School girls' varsity coach was guest speaker for the 1987 opening ceremony. *Bernardo News*, 23 April 1987, p. C3. Ed Runge, a former major league umpire, was the guest speaker for the season opening ceremony in 1988. *Bernardo News*, 7 April 1988, p. C2.

<sup>37</sup> The 2000 Yearbook carried a poem, [Just a Little Girl](#). The 2004 Yearbook carried a letter, [Through an Umpire's Eyes](#). The 2010 Yearbook carried a poem by Danica Peterson, [I Am](#).

<sup>38</sup> For example, "The RB Girls' Softball season closed last Sunday with a fun day held at the RB Swim and Tennis Club." Festivities included two games, a picnic, an awards presentation, a recognition of sponsors, "and the league's retiring president received a gavel." *Poway News Chieftain*, 29 June 1972, p. 15. Another example, "Sheila Moran received a special award from Bob Weiser, president of the Girls Softball League at closing day ceremonies last Sunday. Sheila holds the distinction of being the only girl who began in the league in 1971 and has continued league play each year." *Bernardo News*, 1 July 1978, p. 18.

<sup>39</sup> For example, "The Rancho Bernardo Girls Softball Team, dressed in full uniform, walked away with first prize in the Girls' Youth Category" at the Our American Heritage, Rancho Bernardo Spirit of the 4<sup>th</sup> parade. *Bernardo Brandings*, August, 1975, p. 12.

<sup>40</sup> Bob Moran, interview by the author, 9 July 2013. "RB selected all-star teams in each division for play in area tournaments. Teams were selected by vote of all coaches in that division."

<sup>41</sup> Steve Waterstrat, "Diamonds are RB girls' best friend," *Bernardo News*, 7 April 1988, p. C2.

<sup>42</sup> "Each team plays twelve times during the season which ends July 13<sup>th</sup>. Play periods are divided into two six-week sessions, with the winner of the first half of the season playing the second half winner. The two victorious league teams are then invited to attend a county-wide invitational tournament in the middle of July sponsored by the Southern California Municipal Athletic Federation. Last year one RB team won its first tournament game before being eliminated." Kathy Ramdin, "Girls' Softball; Equal Time for Equal Play," *Bernardo News*, 15 June 1974, p. 18.

<sup>43</sup> "Three RB squads ousted," *Rancho Bernardo Journal*, 12 August 1982, p. 14.

<sup>44</sup> *Bernardo News* 26 June 1982, p. B1.

<sup>45</sup> "The Rancho Bernardo Girls Softball League selected two all-star teams this season to compete in post-season games." *Bernardo News*, 1 July 1978, p. 19. Reflecting ten years later on this experience, Steve Waterstrat and Phil Lerch, RBGSL coach and president, observed, "The RB softball league first entered tournament play in Escondido in 1978, and did not fair too well against teams from competitive leagues from around the county. 'Based on our disastrous showing in '78, it was clear we had much to learn,' Lerch said." Steve Waterstrat, "Diamonds are RB girls' best friend," *Bernardo News*, 7 April 1988, p. C2. The county-wide tournament was then hosted by the SCMAF in Escondido.

<sup>46</sup> *RB Girls' Softball Yearbook*, 1984, p. 2. "The popularity of the sport spread like wildfire and the league became the hottest all-girl athletic organization on the ranch. By 1984, 348 players filled the rosters on 32 teams. That was also the inaugural year of the annual Rancho Bernardo Girls Softball Tournament, when more than 600 girls came from throughout the county to play in a two-weekend double-elimination tournament." Patti Ferracone, "20 years of Girls Softball is a big hit with RBers," *Bernardo News*, 5 April 1990, p. B10. The RBGSL hosted event was known as the San Diego Invitational Tournament in 1990. *RB Girls' Softball Yearbook*, 1990, p. 36.

<sup>47</sup> *Bernardo News*, 20 April 1985, p. B11.

<sup>48</sup> *Bernardo News*, 26 July 1990, p. B7.

<sup>49</sup> *Bernardo News*, 18 July 1991, p. B7.

<sup>50</sup> *Rancho Bernardo News Journal*, 13 July 1995, p. B7.

<sup>51</sup> *Rancho Bernardo News Journal*, 6 July 2000, p. B1.

<sup>52</sup> "Not only did the tournament net \$8500 for the league, it also had one of its own teams win the championship.... The RB Rowdies, led by the consistently strong pitching of 12-year-old Bridget Starry, cruised to a 15-0 victory over

the PQ Flash of Rancho Peñasquitos, to win first place honors in the Division II, 12-and-under bracket.” “RB Girls Softball Invitational: a tale of two triumphs,” *Bernardo News*, 22 July 1993, p. B9.

<sup>53</sup> Kevin Gemell, “Youth Softball tournaments a boost for players’ community,” *Rancho Bernardo News Journal*, 18 July 2002, p. B1.

<sup>54</sup> RB Community Park installed lights on one of the softball fields in 1986, according to Helen Phillips, Community Park Manager. Brian E. Clark, “Playing into the night; Rancho Bernardo ready to light up playing fields,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 4 May 2001, p. N1-1. Lights were added in 2001 to fields 1, 3, 4, and part of 6 with three more to be phased in at RB Community Park at a cost of \$700,000. “Gary Small, a scheduler for girls softball, said having the lights will not only allow more night games, but when the group’s Grand Slam Summer Jam from July 5-8 attracts 90 visiting teams, the softball league won’t have to rent lighting for the night games, as in the past.” Pat Kumpan, “Finally, lights for the ball fields,” *Rancho Bernardo News Journal*, 10 May 2001. P. A1.

<sup>55</sup> “[Wade] Wendell [tournament director] said the league usually hosts its own tournament—the 28-year-old Summer Jam Invitational—during the week of the state tourney, but that the league opted to cancel the event for the opportunity to host 96 of the state’s top girl softball teams.” Jose A. Lopez, “RB league hosts state tournament,” *Rancho Bernardo News Journal*, 3 July 2008, p. B1. [The league’s invitational tournament actually began in 1984].

<sup>56</sup> Robert Speights, interview by the author, 27 July 2013.

<sup>57</sup> Dale Bardin, a former RBGSL president, recalls it was Bob Speights, RB High School Athletic Director, and Rick Rothman who started the 12U Rowdies in 1991. They took the girls to 14U Rowdies, so Lora Starry and Bardin started a second Rowdies team (12U) in 1994. The Rowdies (12U and those from 14U who were age eligible) took seventh place at the 12U AFA National Championships in 1994 in Chicago. At the 14U AFA National Championship in 1995 in Connecticut the Rowdies finished in second place. At the 14U AFA National Championship in 1996 in Chicago the Rowdies finished in fifth place. Dale Bardin, interview by the author, 29 May 2013 and 21 September 2013. “The Rowdies earned a trip to the [1996] nationals by finishing second place in last year’s tournament, giving them automatic qualification.” The tournament was held July 26-August 5 in Chicago. *Rancho Bernardo News Journal*, 18 July 1996, p. B8. Subsequently Steve Kuptz took over the Rowdies with some help from Bardin.

<sup>58</sup> “Connie Willemsen, a 1987 RB Sports Hall of Fame inductee and a five-term president of the league, volunteered as a novice to coach her daughter Kristen, then age 8, in 1974.” And “Bob Moran, a 1988 inductee...has been part of the institution of RB Girls Softball since its second year, and he’s still enjoying coaching.” Patti Ferracone, “20 years of Girls Softball is a big hit with RBers,” *Bernardo News*, 5 April 1990, p. 12.

<sup>59</sup> Recipients of the Glassman-Brown Recreational Leadership Award are recognized with separate wall plaques in the Rancho Bernardo Glassman Recreation Center in RB Community Park.

<sup>60</sup> *Bernardo News*, 18 June 1983, pp. B11-12. The Sports Hall of Fame of Rancho Bernardo plaque is located in the Rancho Bernardo Glassman Recreation Center in the RB Community Park, and it recognizes those who have made an “Outstanding Contribution to Youth Sports in the Community.”

<sup>61</sup> “Nicki Starry of Rancho Bernardo had a chance to shine Friday night, April 8, when she threw out the opening pitch for the San Diego Padres. Nicki has been in remission from leukemia for nearly five years and was representing the American Cancer Society at the game. The Padres might want to consider recruiting Nicki, a catcher for the Rancho Bernardo Rowdies who continued playing softball even during her illness.” *Bernardo News*, 14 April 1994, p. A1.

<sup>62</sup> In a feature article on five-foot, four-inch Brittany Sullivan, the *Rancho Bernardo News Journal* reported, “This 11-year-old Rancho Bernardo resident has a gift that only teammates appreciate: a 60 m.p.h. fastball. Not only that, she has the control and accuracy needed to dominate from the mound.” *Rancho Bernardo News Journal*, 20 March 1997, p. B8.