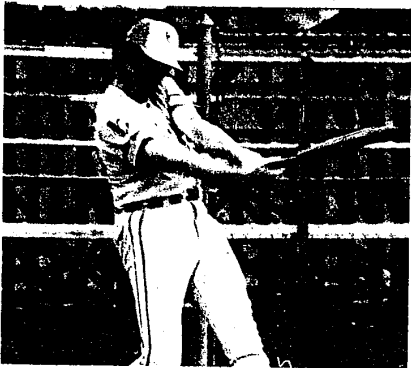


An original Caesar smacks that softball



Mike Gouin displays his home run swing in a recent Caesars game at East Detroit Memorial Park. Gouin is hitting around the .490 mark this year.

By BRAD EMONS

It always tough trying to defend a title.

Just ask Mike Gouin, a member of the world champion Detroit Caesars professional softball team.

Caesars is after its third straight professional crown. Because of numerous injuries to key players such as Gouin, a superintendent of the Canton Township Parks and Recreation Department, Caesars has struggled the first half of the season, trailing Milwaukee in the Midwest Division of the American Professional Softball League.

Gouin, one of the original Caesars' players dating back to their amateur days, has been fighting a groin injury most of the season.

The injury has limited his mobility. He has been shifted from his normal right-centerfield spot to the infield, where he's been playing third and first base.

"I've been trying to get into the infield, but not this way," laughed Gouin, one of the mainstays of the world champs. He was the third leading hitter last season behind Ron Ford and Mike Nye as he batted .605.

"We have as good of team as last year but we've had a disastrous start," said the affable Gouin. "We didn't have any indoor workouts and that hurt us. We've gained some momentum now (21-17 as of July 6) and first place is not out of reach."

The biggest factor is all the injuries. We lost one or two and got psychologically down."

"The slow start has also contributed to a drop in attendance for Caesars' games at East Detroit Memorial Field. The average crowd was around 5,000 last season as compared with 2,500 this season.

"There are a number of factors involved," he said. "We haven't had good weather, and not having any former players out there may be the reason."

Caesars remedied that situation recently by resigning Jim Northrup and inking Mickey Stanley to his first contract. The two players demonstrated their drawing power in their first appearance when 7,239 fans showed up for last Wednesday's doubleheader against Fort Wayne.

Having those two guys will definitely help. A lot of people came out there for the first time. Whether they come

back or not, we'll just have to wait and see."

Gouin said it takes time to become an effective slow-pitch player.

"I think Stanley and Northrup can adjust, but it takes time. They haven't been playing that long," Gouin said.

"The biggest thing about hitting is getting your whole body into it. You have to swing the bat harder and get good leverage. The wrists aren't involved unless you're Ron Ford. He's so strong," said Gouin.

Gouin swings a hefty bat and is known more for his consistency. He also has the ability to hit the long ball.

A NATIVE OF WAYNE, Gouin started playing slow pitch when he was 16 years old. He played baseball and basketball for four years at Eastern Michigan University.

Gouin joined Caesars when the team had amateur standing in 1968. Caesars won the world amateur crown in 1970.

"That team was probably the best I've ever been on," he said. "We were a little stronger defensively."

Now 35, Gouin was glad when Caesars got into the professional ranks.

"I'm getting up in years and pro softball was the best thing that ever could

have happened.

"It gave us exposure and I think people enjoy it. Traveling to those weekend tournaments was getting to be a grind. Playing professional gives me more time for my job."

A few rule changes have been adopted this year to create more interest for the spectator and more balance in the league.

"It's still a power hitters' game but we score 15-20 runs now instead of 40," Gouin added.

With fences less than 315 feet away, a restricted flight ball is used now. That means less homers. The bases have been moved to 70 feet and many of Caesars' opponents such as Cincinnati and Pittsburgh have lengthened its fences beyond 330-foot mark.

"I think they did that because of us," Gouin said. "I think a lot of the rule changes make sense although I like the 60-foot bases better. It's eliminated the inside-the-park homers and some of the action at second base."

Gouin said he has "two or three more years left" in professional softball.

"If pro softball folded I don't think I'd go back down and play in the amateur leagues. That would be it."

What to do if you have a bad day on the courts

By DAVID W. STEWART

When you are not playing tennis well, do not let your opponent know how you are feeling.

Many players get enraged at themselves or their opponents when they can't get their first serves in or their forehands are continually going everywhere but where they want.

Some days you just can't seem to get your game together.

So what do you do when you have a bad day? The most important part of your game to change is your mental attitude. Never let your opponent know how you are feeling.

If you get frustrated and you kick balls instead of picking them up, your racket into the backstop or do any one of a number of things that indicate to your opponent that something is wrong, then your opponent's game will get better.

Your opponent will become more sure of himself or herself because he or she knows the madder you get the worse you are going to play. And the more errors you make, the more points you lose.

A match is never won by who hits the

greatest number of winners but by who makes the least number of errors. This rule of tennis holds true even at the world class level.

So what happens when you have a bad day? Your percentage of errors increases, you destroy your game and your opponent walks off a winner.

The next time you miss an important shot, do one of two things — either laugh at yourself or become expressionless. When a player laughs at himself and makes light of his mistake, his opponent can become unsettled. The next time you lose a number of crucial points, laugh openly at what a klutz you are.

Act confident — act like you are going to win. Act like the loss of an important point doesn't bother you in the slightest.

MAYBE YOU are the type of person who can't laugh at yourself. If this is the case, don't show any emotion at all. Stop all the gestures and the words and phrases you have been muttering and ignore your opponent.

Be cool, be calm, act confident, and you will be amazed at the effect this attitude will have on your opponent.

The person across the net wants to know what you are thinking and feeling. When no reaction can be seen, your opponent starts to worry about what is going on in your head instead of playing his or her own game.

When this happens, the number of errors tends to increase with the person on the other side of the net — not on yours.

Always remain calm on the outside regardless of how you are tearing yourself apart inside. A calm exterior has an amazing effect on your psychological perspective. If you act calm, you feel calm.

You can't be unhappy long if you grin and laugh to the outside world. This is certainly true on the tennis court.

SOMETHING else happens when you get angry — you will start to feel tired. The more angry you become, the more tired you become. The result is that of being a loser instead of a winner.

How many times have you felt down, tired and angry and have been a winner? Only a very few times — if at all.

A winner is confident. When you are

confident, you feel it and your opponent feels it. A feeling of confidence affects the entire complexion of the game.

You can raise the level of your game by feeling confident, and you can make your opponent lose his or her confidence. Your opponent's level of play will deteriorate right before your eyes.

It is all in how you feel.

Salem grad a hit on JC basepaths

By BRAD EMONS

Bob Waite went a long way from home to prove a point.

The Plymouth Salem graduate (1978) enrolled last fall at Yavapai Junior College in Prescott, Ariz. Waite wanted to play baseball there but had to do it as a walk-on.

He batted .434 for Salem his senior year, gaining all-Suburban Eight League honors and all-state recognition.

"I was recommended to 'Yavapai' by the scouting services but I went there as a non-scholarship player," said the 5-10, 170-pound Waite.

Yavapai is a national junior college power. The Roughriders were national champs in 1975 and 1977 and finished second in 1978.

As a part-time player this season,

Waite helped Yavapai to a third place finish this season to go along with a 42-12 record.

Waite, despite reserve duty, proved he could play with the big boys. He batted .320 and stole 20 bases, being used frequently as a pinch runner.

He was a first baseman at Salem but when he arrived at Yavapai, he was moved into the outfield.

"I have good speed so they decided to move me into the outfield," said Waite. "It took awhile to adjust because of the glove change. I like it out there now."

WAITE WILL have to wait and see what he is offered next fall at Yavapai. He's about 50 percent sure he'll receive some kind of aid to play.

"I think I can be a starter there next year," he said. "I'm pretty sure I'll get 3/4 of a full ride."

"We had mostly a sophomore team and had a lot of guys drafted."

Seven Yavapai players were picked recently in the free agent draft. Since 1971, 42 Yavapai players have gone on to the pros.

Waite enjoyed his first year in Arizona. Baseball is a big sport there and is played year-round.

"It's really dry but the fields are excellent and the background for hitters is good," Waite said. "It's a big difference than playing here. It takes time to get used to. We started games back in February."

Yavapai also holds workouts in the fall which was time Waite used to put on his shoulder pads. He was a defen-

sive back for Salem when they went to the play-offs in 1977.

"I wanted to play in college and sort of miss it," he said. "Playing baseball all-year round is kind of monotonous but that is their only sport there."

The national finals were held this season at Grand Junction, Col. where 1,000 to 2,000 fans turned out each night.

"It was a thrill playing before that many people," he said.

Middle Georgia Junior College was this year's champ.

Waite returned home June 2 and began working for the Plymouth Parks and Recreation Department as a summer playground leader.

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