

# Work Begins on Little League Formation in Farmington in 1951

By Ted Chapman

The cry of "batter up" at City Park last Saturday ushered in "Little League Baseball" in its 7th year at Farmington.

How, when and who started this worthwhile youth program in our area?

Back in 1951, Ted Chapman, Ray Fendt, Bob Smith, Jim Warner, Farley Thomson, Jabe Bacon, Ted Smith, Gerald Grace, Joe Gadbaw, Harry Lapham, Don Hossler, Dan Guy, Gene Hymes and Arch McDonald met in Blakeslee's Garage to discuss the possibility of starting "Little League" in Farmington.

The enthusiastic response at this meeting prompted Ted Chapman to sit in on a meeting of October 27, 1951, at Birmingham where Carl Stotz, organizer of the National Little League Program went into details as to organization and promotion of local Little League.

Farmington Little League Baseball was founded soon thereafter. The first officers elected were Ted Chapman, president; Joe Gadbaw, vice-president; Gerald Grace, secretary and Harry Lapham, treasurer.

The program was underway—Farmington State Bank, Star Cutter, Blakeslee Chevrolet and Farmington Dairy volunteered as sponsors. Managers were soon appointed, Don Hossler was named Player Agent, Jim Warner headed the umpires and Dan Guy went to work as equipment manager.

First baseball practice brought over 400 boys to City Park.

One amusing incident relative to the first practice—resulted when the boys were instructed, "Infielders go to the far end of the field, pitchers and catchers go to the north end and outfielders go to the western section of the field." One little boy questioned, "Mister, where do the batters go?"

The real work started with the building of the baseball diamonds. Many hours were spent by young and old in this endeavor. First baseball diamond for major Little League activities was built with the backstop or home plate where the present first base bag is now located. This was changed the next year.

The ideas and objectives of Little League are many, but to quote a few "Little League Baseball is designed for the local community. It must never be commercialized. It is completely amateur and non-profit. Its first objective is for the good of the boys who play on Little League regular teams or farm teams. While good players may and will come out of the ranks of the Little Leaguers, this is no part of the main objective. It is to build good citizens and good Americans and in Little League each boy learns some of the lessons of fair play, discipline and team work. He finds that the other boy, regardless of race, creed or color, is a pretty nice guy after all and this kind of thinking spreads from the boys to their families and thus to the community."

Little League Baseball in Farmington is trying to adhere to these ideals and objectives. The sponsors have been wonderful in their support of this enterprise. Volunteers have cooperated wholeheartedly in many

No Babe Ruth League pitcher may pitch more than seven full innings in any calendar week unless he is pitching in the seventh inning of a tie game.

Lawrence P. Moser of Kalamazoo is President of the Babe Ruth League Board of Directors.

Michigan is a member of the Ohio Valley region of the Babe Ruth organization.

projects. Ralph Banfield and his crew assisted in the construction of the dugouts. The American Legion Groves-Walker No. 246 Post donated the flag and flagpole. Soon after the 1952 program got underway, four major teams were organized and farm teams designated. It wasn't long until we had a complete baseball program for boys going in the Farmington area.

June 14, 1952, the big parade of youngsters in full baseball uniforms with the Farmington High School Band leading, marched from the Township Hall to City Park. Kenn Loomis, the mayor, managed to throw the first pitch somewhere near home plate for Jim Tennant to catch and the Little League baseball program was on its way in Farmington.

Later that summer, Farmington participated in the All Star Game of 1952 playing Birmingham and losing well-pitched and well-fought game.

To complete the season, the mothers of the various boys pitched in for the first banquet and we were honored to have a couple of newcomers to Detroit Tiger Baseball as our first banquet guests — Harvey Kuenn, Billy Hoelt and Manager Fred die Hutchinson.

It goes without saying that those that started Little League in Farmington had an objective and the results speak for themselves. Many thanks to those fathers and non-fathers who have contributed to the program in the years that followed, John Clappison, Carl Wheaton, Jack Tabb, John Murphy, Marshall McKelvey, Frank Nichols, Charlie Bridges, Dave Mills, Carl Hunt, John Hurley, George Sherlock, John Anderson, Fred Buesser, Bob Hug, Mark Banner, Les MacLean, Carl Schultz, Jim Guinan, Keith Willoughby, Dawson Hubert, Steve Droege, Jim Grahek and Hub Barth.

This is still an expanding program and there is always a need for more fathers, and mothers, too, to help. We can be proud of this fine community project—let's keep it a growing one!

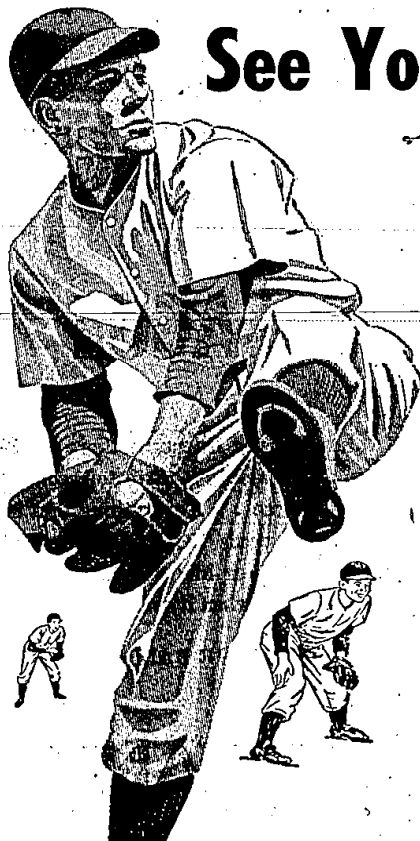


When that future Big Leaguer hits a home run this summer will you be there to see and cheer him? He needs your support and you will never be sorry that you helped him with a cheer and a pat on the back.

SUPPORT YOUR BASEBALL FOR BOYS PROGRAM — SEE ALL THE GAMES

## Farmington Township Lions Club

# See You At The Game



It takes more than bats, balls and bases to make a winner. It takes OUR support.

WE can furnish that cheer that will make a fielder run a little harder or help a pitcher throw a little harder.

SEE YOU AT THE GAME!

## FARMINGTON SAVINGS

The Friendly Institution

10 MILE ROAD at ORCHARD LAKE ROAD

Your savings are on deposit locally and available upon request



EARN 3% ON SAVINGS