

Rodney Landscaping vs. Farmers Insurance

Fall League Championship, 2022

It was all very Mary Poppins, a Practically Perfect Day for a Championship Game at **The Robson**. Weather has not treated us well, but Commissioner Mike 'Crazy Legs' Braam decided it's a go. It was the right decision to play the Fall Championship Game this Sunday afternoon.

Mike Braam & his team spent hours preparing the field – it showed. Once again the fund raising led by Jerry Bennett pays dividends with a resilient field.

It's a tough time of the year to field a team & get subs; but each team nailed it. Rodney was set for the finals with most of their regulars: minus Daniel Patrick; Bryce Treese & Rojean Cossairt. Coach Jerry replaced these players with Mike Lorenc (Home Tint), Tom Gunther (407) and David Popejoy of Adams Furniture. Farmers were missing valued teammates: Bill Smiley, Bob Wheeler, Jay & Kelly Wissink and John Blattner. Stepping in to bolster Farmers were: John McNemar (Home Tint), Mick Calverley (Adams Furniture), John Coffman (407), Carol Rumberger (State Farm) and Charley Dobson (407).

It was an even match.

We had the A+ umpire crew: 'long time favorite' Bob Collins at home; Jeff Peck at 1st; Mike Braam at second; and RRSA VP, Gary Warrick at third. Joanie Matthiessen was working the scoreboard; Louis Berthold kept the scorebook & Johnny B had the mic.

We were quickly treated to some excellent defensive play. Farmers' SS, Steve Courtney; 2nd baseman John Gauthier & 1st baseman Mick Calverley practiced their double play in warmups. Their first live attempt ended with a force out at second, just missing the double play. Next batter they turned it. Practice makes perfect.

Rodney did just as well defensively. Rodney's Laderach took a bad hop off the edge of the infield on his chest & still forced the out at second. Mike Lorenc dove to his left and flicked the throw to 2nd from his belly for another force. Awesome play!

0 – 0 after 1 inning

Mike Lorenc (3/3, 2 Dbls) opened the 2nd inning with a long drive that smashed the Safe Lifts Banner in the mouth – stand up double for Mike. Mike scored to draw first blood on Jerry Hinson's smash to SS. John Gauthier put an end to any further scoring by laying out to nab Steve Wardlaw's (2/3) hard drive to the right side.

Coach Jerry Hinson squinted into the left field sun to catch John McNemar's high flyer; Lorenc flashed a little leather and the score was:

Rodney 1 – Farmers 0 after 2 innings

David Popejoy (1/2) spanked one over SS to give Rodney's hope in the third, but John McNemar snuffed out Rodney's chances with another 'sun in the eyes' catch. Rodney returned the favor, getting Farmers three up – three down.

The 4th inning felt like it was going to be a blow out for Rodney. Debbie Hinson (2/3) opened with a hit and Laderach doubled. Pitcher George Wendt brought home an RBI and Bill Soule loaded the bases, beating out an infield single. Coach Jerry Hinson pushed across another run for his 2nd RBI and a 3-0 lead. As big of an inning as it felt for Rodney, Farmers held Rodney to only 2 runs and came back with 2 of their own in the bottom of the 4th. Jackie Fox (2/3) singled and Johnny G (2/3, Dbl) doubled bringing Steve Tafoya (3/3, 2 RBIs) to the plate. First base coach, Gary Brown (1/2), said "swing smooth." Steve must have thought he said 'swing hard' because he smoked one to bring in Farmers' first 2 runs.

Rodney 3 – Farmers 2 after 4 innings.

Things looked promising for Rodney in the 5th. Steve Wardlaw (2/3) singled and Luay Ashoo (1/2) drove his second hard line drive to left for a single, but Farmers got a couple of force outs at 2nd base. Randy Matthiessen (1/2, Dbl) doubled and it was looking like runs for Rodney. Jackie Fox fielded Randy's shot, hustled the throw in to Steve Courtney, who let one fly to Gary Brown, the catcher, and they got the runner at

home. Yowser! Cheryl McCally batted next and she laid one down towards SS. MVP Candidate Courtney covered some serious ground and it was a footrace to the bag between his throw and Cheryl's long legs. Steve won and we moved to the bottom of the 5th.

The ever-smiling Danny Thomas (1/2, Dbl) opened up for Farmers with a double. John Coffman (1/2, Trip, RBI) promptly drove in Danny with a triple of his own. Charley Dobson (1/2) singled, Gary Brown (1/2) singled and the bases were loaded. Steve Courtney (2/3, HR, 4 RBIs) capped his defensive gem of a night by finding the gap for a grand slam.

Rodney 3 – Farmers 7 after 5

Rodney led off the 6th with the top of their order. Debbie Hinson hit one deep into the hole at SS and Courtney was still able to throw Debbie out at first (don't think I've ever seen her thrown out). Just shows you what a game Steve had and reminds us what a year Debbie has had. Farmers' Carol Rumberger showed why she and Jackie Fox present such a formidable wall in the sun-drenched right field when Carol coolly gathered in an opposite field lash off the bat of the scooting, Bob Laderach. Two outs! Yikes! Didn't faze George W. George (1/2, RBI) singled and the other MVP on the night, Mike Lorenc, doubled but the rally stalled when Farmers' coach and pitcher, Sean Curry threw a timely strike out.

Farmers came back for three insurance runs on hits by John G (2/3, Dbl), Steve Tafoya (3/3, 2 RBIs) and Mick Calverley (2/3, 2 RBIs). Some nifty footwork by Rodney SS Mike Lorenc ended Farmers' inning.

Rodney 3 – Farmers 10 after 6

Rodney had one last chance in the buffet but it was not to be. Steve Wardlaw (2/3) singled but Steve Courtney got one force out and appropriately ended the game with a double play: Courtney – Gauthier to Calverley.

Final Score: Rodney 3 – Farmers 10

Congratulations to the champs from this Fall's tournament and also last spring's tournament. Both seasons Farmers finished in 3rd place during the season, but won the end of season tournament.

I might have made up a few things. It's late. But, to the best of my memory and if I was wrong or worse, I wronged you: my apologies.

Johnny B