

407 BBQ vs Ponder Hardware

Tuesday, 28 March 2023

Rhonda Gunther kicked this game off in exactly the right way with a rousing rendition of the Star Bangled Banner. Warmed our hearts but not our bums; it was downright cold at the Field of Dreams. Even 'Momma' Dorothy Berthold (Louis' momma) had to cover up with a blanket.

Don Andrews patrolled behind home plate with fellow ump's: Gary Warrick at first and Stu White at third. Paul Neal was our mic man, Marti Harnly had the book and Linda Cawley handled the scoreboard.

Ponder Hardware came out of the gates odds on favorites (on paper) to take the championship. At least that's what Big Dog said and a few others who braved the cold. But, they didn't reckon on Steve Courtney and the 407 BBQers. 407 had to hold on for dear life during the flip flopped 7th inning, as Ponder Hardware more than double their score in the buffet.

Kelly Wissink (3/4, RBI) led off for 407 with a line drive single, took an extra base on Tom Neagli's (3/3, Dbl, RBI) single and scored on Mike Flatt's (3/3, 2 RBIs) single. Larry 'LTrain' Lewis, excuse me, Dr. LTrain helped his own pitching cause by driving in the 5th run with his signature grunt and line drive.

Jackie Fox (3/4, 2 RBIs) kickstarted Ponder Hardware with an opening single, but PH could only manage 1 run as Killer Neagli handled all three put outs for 407 including a hot shot off the bat of Bryce Treese.

407 had another big inning in the 2nd behind Rhonda's husband's, Tom (3/3), David Popejoy's (2/3, RBI) and Marc Busboom's (2/3, RBI) singles. Kelly came around for a second time, singled and scored on Mike Flatt's drive through the 5/6 hole.

Dave Riddle (2/3) singled to get on base for PH in the 2nd and after singles by Randy Catron (2/3) and Ty Nelson (3/3); Rojean Cossairt (2/3, RBI) singled & brought home PH's only run of the inning.

Ponder Hardware's pitcher & League President, Sean Curry, shut down 407's first 3 batters in the third with Bryce Treese handling two of the put

outs & Rookie Rick Werstein one put out. Ponder Hardware made it even more interesting in their half of the 3rd. A scrambling Werstein and Bob Riley (3/4, 4 RBIs) produced 2 runs for PH, but Dorothy's son, Louis, ripped a hopper up the middle between LTrain's legs that could have rung that bell had LTrain not timed his hop perfectly. I honestly didn't know he could jump that high, that fast.

407 had one last big inning in the 4th. Wissink singled, Neagli doubled, Flatt drove them both home with a single and Courtney brought the two of them home with a HR. 'Rookie Sensation' Rick Ketring (3/3), pronounced with a soft 'e' and Killer closed out the inning with hits.

Nothing happened for Ponder H in the 4th and it started off the same for 407 in the 5th. Bryce Treese was a one-man band for PH, catching LTrain's hot line drive and pulling off an unassisted double play. Mr. Debbie Hinson pulled one back for PH in the 5th, scoring after a booming triple. Charlie Dobson (2/3) proceeded to put the brakes on PH with a couple of catches on balls that looked sure to be hits and PH finished with one in the 5th.

Score after 5 full innings: 13 - 5 in favor of 407 BBQ. In fact, it was still 13 - 5 after 6 innings which called for the FLIP FLOP. We flip flop when the visiting team is 6 or more runs ahead after the last inning before the buffet inning. Then the Home Team bats first in the Buffet and the Visiting Team only bats if the Home Team caught up or went ahead when they batted.

Simple, right? Well, that's what we did and we had to hold on for a wild finish. Randy Catron (2/3) singled, Ty Nelson singled and Rojean loaded the bases with her second hit. Then Jackie Fox and Mr. Debbie singled and the runs seemed to flood in, SIX of them in all after Treese & Riley banged their hits. Steve Courtney, however, was not buying any of it. After 6 runs, Steve made the 2nd out with an acrobatic force at second then closed out the victory, 13 - 11, for 407 BBQ by catching a line drive.

It was a fun, fun, cold, cold night with some standout play by our rookies: Rick Werstein, Rick Ketring and Marc Busboom. See you at the Field of Dreams hopefully in warmer conditions.

Johnny B