

## **Opening Day at our Field of Dreams**

**- as reported by Robson's accomplished journalist, Liz Malone:**

The excitement had been building for weeks. The banners had been unrolled. The field had been dragged and mowed and dragged again. The teams (all EIGHT of them!) had been practicing, and the managers had reworked their lineups no less than a dozen times each! There was even a new concrete slab under home plate. No more hole for the batters to fall...I mean...dig in. It was a brand new season, and the long awaited day had finally arrived. Opening day at Robson Ranch!

After our very own Rhonda Gunther gave a beautiful rendition of the national anthem from the pitcher's mound, Sharon Deputy got things started, tossing in the first pitch to the speedy Scott Wilson, who beat out a ground ball to third for an infield single. The new season was officially underway. Coco Ondina followed with a hard hit double, sending Scotty to third, and setting things up for Pete Martin who would send them both home with a double to left field. Not to be outdone, the mighty Johnny Blecher stepped up to the plate and pounded a triple out to right field, sending Pete scampering home for the third run of the inning. Gary Warrick then hustled his way to an infield single, allowing Johnny to score run number four. Tracey Kucharski, one of our newest stars on the Field of Dreams, made her debut with a base hit up the middle, moving Gary over to second, and setting things up for power hitter, Jeff Rumberger, who promptly drove the ball to right center, driving in Warrick for the 5th run of the inning. State Farm had had their fun. Now it was Adams Furniture's turn. But would they have what it took to overcome the magic of veteran pitcher, Bob Kuhfuss, who was returning from retirement to enjoy one more season of glory? Only time would tell. First up? Mick Calverly, who would lead Adams off with a sharp ground ball past the shortstop for a single. Mike Flatt followed with a high fly ball to left field, but George Keller tracked it down for out number one. Lisa McGlaston then slapped a grounder to short for a fielder's choice. Two down, Lisa on first, Mike Braam up to the plate. Mike drove a sharp ground ball out to right center field, sending Lisa (the rabbit) McGlaston to third. Pete Day then stepped up to the plate and drove a screamer toward short that, on any other night, would have made its way through the infield for an extra base hit. Unfortunately for Pete, it was hit directly at Coco, who was scooping up everything in his path. Coco gobbled it up, throwing it to first just in time to nab the final out of the inning.

Inning number two. State Farm got right back to work with a lead off single off the bat of Spencer Folson. George Keller, Arnie Randall, and Carol Rumberger followed suit with singles of their own, but the Adams Furniture defense held tight, limiting State Farm to just one run. Time to play some catch up ball. Jerry Bennett got the ball rolling for Adams Furniture with a leadoff double. Joyce Basse followed suit with a single of her own. Two on...nobody out! Scott Lasater stepped up and dropped one behind second base. Jerry hustled home. Adams Furniture was on the board! Louis Berthold then sent a shot out to center field. Another run scored. A couple of hits later, including one hard hit ball off the bat of Mike Slocum, had Adams Furniture with a total of 3 runs on the board, and threatening more! Sharon Deputy stepped up to the plate to make it happen, but Pete Martin had other ideas. Sharon drove the ball to the left side of the infield; Pete scooped it up, stepped on third for the out, then threw home for double play, ending the inning and preventing the run. Stellar defensive play! End of two...Adams furniture cut the lead in half, but State Farm still led 6-3.

In the third inning, State Farm continued their offensive onslaught with a lead off triple courtesy of Coco Ondina followed by three singles (Pete Martin, Gary Warrick, Tracey Kucharski) and a double (Johnny Blecher). When the dust settled, State Farm had added three runs to their tally while holding Adams Furniture to just one run off three singles (Mick Calverley, Mike Flatt, Lisa

McGlaston) for a score of 9-4 at the end of three. The fourth inning was all State Farm, with five runs off five hits. George Keller led off with a single to get things started. Arnie Randall and Carol Rumberger joined the action with infield hits that put three runners on base for Scott Wilson who drove the ball hard all the way to the fence. Boom! Two runners scored. But State Farm wasn't done yet. Coco swaggered up to the plate, gazed around the outfield considering his options...you know the look... and promptly drove another ball all the way to fence! Everybody came home. Inside the park home run! End of four, State Farm was starting to pull away, 14-4. Time for a pitching change.

In the fifth inning, Mick Calverley took over for Adams Furniture and Gary Warrick took the mound for State Farm. Sharon must have appreciated the relief because she smacked the ball hard up the middle for a single and an RBI for Adams Furniture. State Farm scored two in the fifth, making the score 16-5 going into the sixth. Now, if you are new to Robson Ranch softball, you might be thinking this game is in the books. But here at the Ranch, ANYTHING can happen...and usually does...so stay tuned.

Top of the sixth...Adams Furniture defense kicked into high gear. Despite singles off the bats of Bob Kuhfuss, George Keller, Arnie Randall, and Carol Rumberger, Adams Furniture didn't let any gray jerseys cross the plate. The first goose egg of the night for State Farm. Now it was Adams Furniture's turn to get hot. Mick and Mike led them off strong with a single and double...two men on. One out later, Mike Braam drove both men home with a hard hit double. The lead was cut to nine. Pete Day hit a fly ball to center field. Man on first. Jerry Bennett then dribbled one down the third base line and scampered his way to first base, beating the throw, while Johnny B. was heard yelling from the dugout, "Look at that POWER!" Joyce Bass followed with a grounder to short. She was thrown out at first, but another run scored. Lead was down to eight. Scott Lasater stepped up to the plate. Warrick wound up, threw his best fast ball, but Lasater took him to the fence for a triple! At the end of six, five runs had scored, and Adams Furniture had cut the State Farm lead to six.

At this point, in the interest of time, sunlight, and good sportsmanship, the flip flop rule was put into play. Adam's Furniture led off the top of the seventh inning, leaving State Farm on defense. Three outs left. Six runs to tie...seven to take the lead. Opening day had lived up to all the hype. Sparkling defense, powerful offense, friendship, laughter, and a few more special memories in the play book. But in the world of softball, only one team can come out on top, and today, that team was State Farm. Despite a valiant comeback effort by Adams Furniture, the final score remained State Farm 16 - Adams Furniture 10.

Thanks to all the players for a great effort! What a game!

And to our supporting cast...

In the booth...Jim Reese, announcing the game and providing crowd entertainment in the form of trivia questions...and answers! George Wendt, keeping the scorebook, without which this write up might not exist! And Kirk Douglas, doing a stellar job on the scoreboard. Thanks guys!

And finally, to our unsung heroes in blue, we couldn't do it without you! We started off the season with a top notch crew. Don Andrews calling the balls and strikes at home plate, Stu White down the line at first base, and veteran Mike Conley anchoring the crew at third. It's a tough job. Thanks for all you do!

That's it folks. Come out and join us the rest of the week. We'll be here through Thursday night playing ball and having fun. It won't be the same without YOU