

## **The Story of RR Softball's "Field of Dreams"**

Ten years ago, the first pitch was thrown on the newly constructed RR community softball field, and today that venue has only gotten better. Before I was asked to write a short article, I had never given a moment's thought about a 'softball field'. Funny how we accept these facilities as just available for our enjoyment? But when I started my research for this story, it was an "ah-ha" moment.

Mark Aberbach (1<sup>st</sup> RRSA President and current resident) collected approximately 50 signatures in a 2007 petition for a RR softball field. Mark's home computer still stores the original October 30, 2008, letter to RR Arizona. Ed Robson Sr. replied with a unanimous "yes" and the idea became a reality.

Arizona selected the location, and by 2010 a little dirt road led to the fenced grass field, complete with player dugouts and spectator bleachers. However, the location was originally zoned for golf, and it would take till 2012 for the first spring softball game. By the fall season 13 RR softball enthusiasts had trained to become the initial RRSA Umpires. Today our game is still blessed with a group of trained volunteer Umpires. Over the years in typical RR style, residents have "run with the ball" and turned our field into a "first-class" RR amenity.

In 2014 the HOA approved requests for both a scorer's booth and a banner fund. By spring, 2015 the outfield fencing sported 39 vendor banners, and a 40<sup>th</sup> now hangs under the scoreboard. During this time Orange Wood gate was installed extending a paved surface and parking area access to the field. In 2018 the banner fund made it possible to complete both a computerized scoreboard and the scorer's booth that is occupied by volunteers who manage the scoreboard, score keep, and the game announcer whose jokes, trivia and music keep us all entertained. Prior to team jerseys which now proudly sport our sponsors name and color choice, RR softball teams had unusual names like Yellow Jackets, Red Hots and Black Sheep (whose spectators 'baaing' filled the field). One of the best field improvements came in 2019 when porta potties were replaced with a permanent maintenance building housing clean bathrooms.

In recent years our RRSA has continued to improve field aesthetics, playability, and, above all safety. Twice the infield dirt, which is a mixture of sand/silt and clay, has been upgraded to give players improved traction running and avoid injuries. In 2022 a new synthetic turf batter's box and home plate was installed to enhance the pitcher's visibility and player safety.

Even if you don't want to play, come on out and cheer your neighbors on at our beautiful field. Recently a writer for 'The Cross Timbers Gazette' quoted player Clyde Ziegler, "Your mind starts to think 30 years younger ... it's an absolute thrill to play", both ladies and gents are always welcome on the RR **FIELD OF DREAMS!**

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