

## **OUR SPORTS BASEBALL**

In 1995, the Poland Community Baseball Association, Incorporated (PCBA), celebrated its 45th anniversary of providing baseball and softball to the youth of the community. The PCBA is a chartered, non-profit educational organization with one objective: to implant firmly in the children of the community the ideas of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage, and respect for authority, so that they may be well-adjusted, stronger, and happier children who will grow into good, decent, healthy, and trustworthy citizens. To achieve this objective, the PCBA provides a supervised program under the rules and regulations of Little League Baseball, Incorporated, and PONY Baseball/Softball, Incorporated. The PCBA offers baseball to boys ages six through eighteen, and softball to girls ages seven through sixteen.

The management of the property and affairs of the PCBA is vested in a 40-member Board of Trustees, with a President; Vice-President, Baseball; Vice-President, Softball; Treasurer; and Secretary. These Executive Committee members are assisted by Player Agents and League Directors who oversee certain leagues, make schedules, and conduct the player draft for the respective league or division. There are approximately 26 committees that conduct the business of the PCBA and bring their findings and reports to Board of Trustees meetings, which are held monthly.

One of the first teams in Poland was the Poland AC, which was formed around 1940. At this time, the team had many sponsors. The ACS were Area Champions for three years in a row, and played at many fields throughout the area. The team stayed together until 1944, when the last members of the team went into service during World War II.

In 1950-51, Little League was initiated in Poland. The Poland Fire Department was asked by its Chief, Ivan Blackman, to sponsor a team. At this time, the league, called the Tri-Township League, consisted of four teams: Poland Firemen, New Middletown Ohlin Brothers, North Lima Crouse Mills, and the New Springfield Merchants. Tri-Township League President was Howard Wilson of Howard Wilson Pontiac, and Bill Wolfgang was supervisor and Poland representative. Sal Guappone was Poland's first manager. When Sal became the first manager of Pony League, Dick Taffee became manager of the Little League team. Later, The Poland Polecats and the Poland Jets teams were added. The early teams played on the Fireman's Field on Riverside Drive. In 1959, the North Field was built; supplies were donated by the Youngstown Sheet & Tube Company.

Poland Baseball became incorporated into Williamsport, Pennsylvania, and Little League Baseball, Incorporated in 1968. In 1982, the PCBA first offered the Matt Hardy Memorial Baseball and Softball Scholarship to one male and one female student at Poland Seminary High School. Five hundred dollars is currently awarded to each scholarship winner who meets the criteria by receiving the highest number of points for: number of years played in the PCBA, grade point average, years receiving a Varsity Letter, and being named to All-Conference teams.

In 1985, the Poland Community Baseball Association, Inc., won its first State Championship. The Little League Softball All Stars were victorious over Portsmouth Clay in Bucyrus, Ohio, to win the State Crown. The following year, with some of the

same players, the Senior League All Stars won the State Title with a victory over Tallmadge in Austintown, Ohio. 1990 the PCBA won its most recent State Championship Game, which was played in Kenton, Ohio; this game was halted for four hours because of rain.

In 1992, the PCBA opened its newly constructed Community Center located at the North Elementary Sports Complex. The \$50,000 project was funded by donations from within the community, with much of the labor donated. In 1994, two new fields were dedicated at the North Elementary Sports Complex. Once again, much of the labor to construct these fields was donated. Only softball games are played on these new fields.

The PCBA maintains 13 fields within the community, and boasts some of the finest facilities in the state. PCBA fields are located at the North Elementary Sports Complex (three softball fields and one Pony baseball field), Fireman's Field (Minor League), Knights of Columbus (Pee Wee Softball), the John D. Hirshbeck Memorial Sports Complex (three Pee Wee Baseball fields), Poland Union (various leagues), Poland Seminary High School (Colt Baseball), and Dobbins Sports Complex (two Little League fields). Located at the Dobbins Sports Complex is Sully's Field, named after David Q. Sullivan, a long-time PCBA coach and member of the Board of Trustees. This field is one of the finest playing facilities in the state of Ohio.

In 1988, Sully's Field was the site of the Senior League Softball Ohio State Tournament. In 1993, Sully's Field was used for the first time for night games, with local businesses donating funds for the installation of the permanent concrete block bleachers. In 1995, Sully's Field again hosted the State Championship games. The Little League Baseball Ohio State Tournament came to Poland for the first time, and a Poland team participated in the event. All teams were impressed with the work of Tournament Director Bob Richards, Assistant Tournament Directors Bill Esposito and Jeff Vrabel, the playing facility, the Tournament Committee, and the general hospitality of the citizens of Poland, Ohio.

Not only did Poland have its first Little League Baseball team in a State Tournament, but the PCBAs 9-10 Year-Old Little League Baseball team also competed for the state crown in Dayton, Ohio. The 9-10 Year-Old team was the 1995 Little League Baseball 9-10 Year-Old State Runner-Up, while the Little League team finished eighth.

In 1994, members of the Mahoning Valley Umpires Association worked regular season and post-season contests. Prior to the employment of the MVUA, volunteers worked the games at no cost to the league. Early umpires included Lewis Greene, John Rovnak, Bud Penny, Russ Brown, and Tony DuPonte. More recent PCBA umpires include Dan Santelli, Larry Tusinac, Dennis Reardon, and a host of volunteers from Poland Seminary High School. Current MVUA umpires working for and living in Poland include MVUA President Ken Mills, MVUA Associate Umpire Assignee Jeff Vrabel, Rodney Aey, Dave Sullivan, Mike Schwartz, Dave Gebhardt, Dan Scharville, Kevin Bilkie, Sean Dolan, and Joe Romano.

Past Presidents of the Poland Community Baseball Association, Inc. include:

C. Hunt	1959-1962	Marty Martini	1974
Carl Hallquest	1963	Patty Martzial	1974-1975
Ray Oppe	1964-1965	Phil Allen	1976
Thomas Brett	1966	Cecil Dornbrock	1976

Harold Black	1967-1968	Dave Longmore	1977-1980
Jim Cook	1969	Bob Cramer	1981-1982
Dan Santelli	1970-1972	Sam LaLama	1983-1989
Art DeCenso	1973	Bill Galla	1990-1992
		Bob Richards	1993-Present

As of October 1, 1995, the 40-member PCBA Board of Trustees included Bob Richards, President; Bill Esposito, Vice-President Baseball; Dave Naymick, Vice-President Softball; John Berg, Treasurer; Sam Fisher, Secretary; Earl Banfield, Ron Benson, Paul Bevilacqua, Doug Carlson, Jeff Davis, Rocky Delisio, Dom DeLuca, Rick DiNunzio, Myron Dobkowski, Cindy Dota, Earl Ducay, Tom Fender, Bill Fonagy, Dan Frum, Dan Fussel, Bill Galla, Atty. Paul Gambrel, Hank Grover, Jim Keenan, Sam LaLama, John Leson, Dan McLaughlin, Ken Mills, Chuck Moore, Ken Price, Dennis Reardon, Diane Russell, Ted Russell, Dave Sullivan, Jim Timko, Larry Tusinac, Art Varie, Jeff Vrabel, Gary Wiery, and Lou Zitello. American League Umpire John Hirschbeck, #17, is an Honorary Trustee. Hirschbeck umpired the 1995 American League Division Series between the Cleveland Indians and the Boston Red Sox, the 1995 American League Division Series between the Seattle Mariners and the New York Yankees, and the 1995 Major League World Series between the Cleveland Indians and the Atlanta Braves.

## POLO

In 1932, five horse owners, Chad Johnson, Clyde Kelly, Dick Fithian, Bronc Cover, and Jack Zedaker, began to play with polo mallets and balls in a pasture. They cleaned off a level spot in a big meadow on the McClure farm, site of the present Methodist Church. They played every Sunday afternoon. In 1936-37, the first regular team was organized and played Salem here in their first official game. It wasn't long before Polo became a community event. Spectators lined their cars along the field, some sitting on blankets, others on the hoods of their cars and some brought their refreshments in wicker baskets.

When Polo first started, the players had only one horse per man for the whole game. It wasn't long before more horses were acquired. When the McClure farm was sold, the club moved across the street and later played on Youngstown Sheet & Tube land on Route U. S. 224. When the original Poland Club reorganized again, the games moved to Canfield.

In July 1945, the Polo Club of Poland opened the polo season against the Pennsylvania All-Stars, at a new field on Poland-Boardman Road. This team was formed to participate in the new league of six teams. The members were: Orville Stoner, George Serville, LeRoy Wells, and Chad Johnson. Six contests were staged at the Poland field. The new field was regulation size, three times larger than a football field.



Polo

Polo was still a big thing in the 1950's. Games were played on the 2nd field located west of Poland on Boardman-Poland Road.

## **POLAND HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS**

The 1995-96 year has been an outstanding year for Poland Seminary High School boys and girls. They excelled in most sports bringing home more trophies than any other year.

FOOTBALL MSC-DISTRICT  
GIRLS TENNIS MSC  
GIRLS SOCCER MSC  
BOYS BASKETBALL MSC-DISTRICT  
GIRLS TRACK MSC  
BOYS TRACK MSC  
SOFTBALL MSC-DISTRICT  
BASEBALL DISTRICT



1952 First year of Tri-County League  
No. 35 ? 40 Dan Smoldon 11 Tom Smoldon



1929 Girls Basketball Team

1902 Football Game  
Poland 11 Canfield 2



1936 Basketball Team