

SnakeByte™

A Product of Balls to the Wall Publications

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Keswick Park, City of Chamblee Parks and Recreation

Ever since I trotted out **SnakeByte™** for last year's PST recap, I have been getting requests for an encore. Well...here ya go.

While I know that old school VenomDudes and other vets know what **SnakeByte™** is, we added a couple of new guys to the team this year, so here's a bit of history for them.

Back in the day (1999-2004), I would write a recap of the week's game for the team. In addition, I would put stats (sometimes), the team's record at that point, a schedule and other softball stuff. The concept was blatantly and shamelessly stolen from Rocky McCoy's weekly missive, **The Sports Page**, including the Chris Berman-esque nicknames. Over time, the nicknames faded and so did **SnakeByte™**. Somewhere in 2004, I got too far behind on write-ups and stats and decided to let it go.

Venom's mascot is a cobra, thus the name of the newsletter. We used the cobra on Venom's first jerseys, the purple on gray ones. The classic white on purple unis didn't have it, of course, but it found its way onto the new ones, via the shoulder patch.

Season Recap

At the beginning of Spring 2011 season at Blackburn, the DirectorChick called a big powwow and mandated attendance of all of the managers for all of the leagues on all of the nights that Blackburn had leagues. At that meeting, she told us that Blackburn was closing, effective July 1, 2011, for renovations. The fields were supposed to get new scoreboards, new sod, laser graded infields and other improvements, ostensibly to correct the drainage problems that the fields were known for but also to attract more teams to the program. At this point, October 2011, there have been no signs at all that any work is/was being done but that's really not our problem anymore.

Many of the other teams from other nights just slid on over to other parks but Blackburn was the only park running any kind of open league on Sunday and Venom wouldn't be Venom on any other day. After making some phone calls to some parks, it became clear that we, as in the teams in the Sunday C-Minor league at Blackburn, were going to have to make something happen if we wanted to play on Sundays.

A couple of years ago, after innumerable questionable, and a few outright bad, decisions by DeKalb's administrators, I had presented the idea of a Sunday league to the Chamblee Parks and Rec DirectorDude and he seemed interested but, at that point, I couldn't drum up enough interest from other teams to warrant starting a league.

That all changed when the Sunday teams at Blackburn realized that they were about to be homeless. So, I, Bill from the Lagerheads, Rich from LSD, and the rest of managers in our league banded together, re-visited the Sunday idea with the Chamblee DirectorDude and convinced him that we had enough committed teams to form a league. He went with it and, thus, we started playing at Keswick in Summer 2011.

There was drama, though and served to spice up our Sunday afternoons. One of the teams that came over from Blackburn had a bad reputation for, well, being bad (illegal bats, futzing with the batting order once the game started, protesting silly things like jerseys AFTER they realized they might lose, etc.). In the end, after threatening an umpire, they were ejected from the league and the DirectorDude had to find another team to fill the slot. He did, but it took them a couple of weeks to get fully organized, so there were forfeits here and there. The schedule was shaken up a bit because of all of this and we were getting game times on a week-to-week basis. It all worked out and I assured the Chamblee DirectorDude that, in spite of the incidents that occurred this season, his management of the league was better than anything we had had from DeKalb in the last several years.

So...Venom started off well, run-ruling the opponents in its first game at Keswick and then banging out seven more wins to go 8-0. One of those wins was against the team that was removed from the league. Later, the DirectorDude disallowed any game those guys played but that didn't matter much since they played five and lost four. So, we were officially 7-0 at that point. We lost to the Lagerheads in the next game, which put our run for first place in danger as they were hot on our heels in the standings with two losses and owned the tiebreaker against us. Venom answered the call, however, and won the last two games of the season to finish in first place at 9-1.

While that first place finish was gratifying, the league championship was not in the bag. At Blackburn, the PST is against the top two (sometimes, three) teams from the other C-Minor leagues on other nights and the bracket usually had 16-24 teams in it. At Keswick, the PST is simply a tourney against all the teams in your league with the regular season standings determining the seeding. So, this was going to be a six team tournament.

Venom's first place finish in the regular season earned the top seed and a first-round bye for the PST. Before I get into the game recaps, let me say that, while I have scoresheets to remind me of how the offense performed, I have to go from memory regarding the defense and that memory is fuzzy after the post-game celebration.

PST Game 1 vs. Concrete Donkeys

The Donkeys finished fourth in the regular season at 4-6 and played against Lee Sound Design (1-9) in the first round of the PST. I do not remember what the score of that game. Sorry. Anyway, after the preliminaries were complete, Venom took the field as home team.

The Donkeys hit pretty well in the first and Venom had a few butterflies to contend with but the Donkeys got three. Robbie started off Venom's half of the first with a single, Dusty and Mark followed with B2B doubles and the next five VenomDudes reached with Robert and Ike smacking a two-run double each. By the time the Donkeys got the third out, Venom had batted around and plated eight. After one, 8-3 Venom.

The Donkeys got a couple of runners on in the top of the second but Venom's outfield shut down their attempt at the long ball and sent them back to the dugout with no runs. In the bottom of the second, we picked up where we left off in the first. Dusty walked to lead off and the next six VenomDudes reached. A BOOB and two fly out ended the inning but not before Venom added five more to the total. After two, 13-3 Venom.

The two teams swapped doughnuts in the third and Venom held off a minor offensive in the Donkey's half of the fourth, handing them another goose egg. The bottom of the fourth was fun. David led off with a single, Robert gapped a triple and Charles and Justin slapped singles. A flyout interrupted the string of hits but, after that, Thomas threaded a double between the

shift in right for two ribs. A fielder's choice followed but Robbie started it up again with a single and we kept hitting until we put up 10. At that point, having batted around and well into the second rotation, Blue called ball-game as the score was 23-3 and Venom run-ruled the Donkeys in four. David, Robert and Charles were all 2-2 in the big fourth inning.

Robert Pritchard went 4-4 with two doubles, a triple and 5 RBIs. David Payne was 4-4 with 2 RBIs. Charles Johnson went 4-4 with 3 RBIs. Dusty Randall was 3-3 with a walk, a double and 1 RBI. Justin Crider went 3-3 with an RBI.

Run Rule		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Venom	H	8	5	0	10	X	X	X		23
Concrete Donkeys	V	3	0	0	0	X	X	X		3

Championship Game vs. The Lagerheads

Venom has been playing against the Lagerheads for 19 years now, going back to when they were Mike 'n' Angelo's at the Country Club and we were their bitches. The two teams were roughly even through the early years after the move to Blackburn but Venom has the edge on them over the past three or so years. In any case, they are a very good team and certainly a worthy opponent for the championship. They finished second in the league at 8-2.

Venom was the home team and took the field. The Lagerheads struck first blood by plating two in the top of the first. The Purple struck right back in the bottom half. The first four batters reached and, after a flyout, Robert put one in the dog park behind left field for a three-run dinger. A single, a flyout and two more singles produced another run and a fielder's choice ended the inning but Venom had again batted around and put six in the house. After one, 6-2 Venom.

In the top of the second, the Lagerheads' big first baseman ripped a laser beam down the first base line but our first baseman, David, scooped it and stepped on first. The next batter shot one of the hardest line drives I've seen in some time right at Charles at second base, who promptly gloved it. The next guy rainbowed one to Ike in left and Venom had set down the Lagerheads 1-2-3 in the top of the second. In the bottom half. Robbie led off with a flare to the right side flats. A flyout followed and then Dusty put one over the middle and it got between the LC fielder and RC fielder. RC caught up to it more quickly than it looked like he could and gunned toward third where Robbie was heading. The ball, Robbie and the Lagerhead third baseman all got there at the same time. Blue called Robbie out as the ball dribbled away from the play. We appealed but didn't get the call. The next batter flied out and the second inning closed with Venom leading 6-2.

The Lagerheads got a couple of runners on after a lead-off flyout but Scott, at short, turned a slick double play to get Venom out of the inning and hand the Lagerheads another doughnut. In the bottom of the third, Ike and Thomas each blasted a two-run double amid some singles to pad Venom's lead. After three, 10-2 Venom.

The fourth and fifth were quiet, offensively at least, with good defensive play on both sides. Kudos to Justin here in these two innings for throwing KY-balls or change ups or whatever it

was to keep the Lagerheads' home run hitters not only in the park but in the infield. He got all four of them to pop up. After five, it was still 10-2 Venom.

In the top of the sixth, the Lagerheads manufactured a run. In the bottom half, Venom did the same with the RBI coming from some guy in a Spider-Man cap, although he BOOBed later to end the inning. After six, 11-3 Venom.

Going into the top of the seventh, despite the score, it was still anybody's game. The Lagerheads have basehitters all through their lineup and four long ball guys in the 2, 3, 4, and 5 holes. Venom got the lead-off hitter out but the next two reached. They squeezed a couple across on a gap shot between LC and RC and one of their long ball guys came through by putting one over the LC fence for a three run homer. Venom didn't panic, however, knowing that we'd have our turn in the bottom half. After the dinger, the next guy flew out and the following batter looped a Texas Leaguer to shallow left. Ike needed to cover some ground to get to it. As the ball plummeted down, he reached out, the ball landed in his glove and, with that, Venom won the Keswick Sunday Men's Summer 2011 PST, 11-8.

Robbie Crider was 4-4. Thomas Miller was 3-3 with 3 RBIs. Ike Smith was 3-3 with a double. Mark Reilly was 2-3 with 1 RBI. Charles Johnson was 2-3.

Regulation		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Venom	H	6	0	4	0	0	1	X		11
Lagerheads	V	2	0	0	0	0	1	5		8

To Sum It Up

This was a great season, guys. We looked good in every facet of the game all season. There was one subpar week but we bounced back from that and lit it up when we needed to. I had a good time being out there with the team this season.

From a management perspective, I had a little trouble with the rules and expectations of the new park. Thank you for understanding my acclimation to the situation.

The PST statistics are on the last page.

I can't really say what we get out of this. I've played at Keswick on other teams for five or six years and, traditionally, Chamblee gave gift certificates to the winners. A few people told me today that Chamblee now gives out trophies. Either way, I won't know until I get a chance to talk to the DirectorDude. I'll let you know what the deal is as soon as I can.

Meanwhile, kick back and enjoy the time off.

Keswick Sunday Men's Summer 2011 PST (Overall)												
	G	AB	H	BB	1B	2B	3B	Y	IHR	AVG	OBP	RBI
Robbie Crider	2	8	7	0	6	1	0	0	0	0.875	0.875	0
Scott Faulkner	2	8	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0.250	0.250	1
Dusty Randall	2	7	5	1	3	2	0	0	0	0.714	0.750	2
Mark Reilly	2	7	5	0	3	2	0	0	0	0.714	0.714	4
David Payne	2	7	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0.714	0.714	2
Robert Pritchard	2	7	5	0	1	2	1	1	0	0.714	0.714	8
Charles Johnson	2	7	6	0	6	0	0	0	0	0.857	0.857	3
Justin Crider	2	6	4	0	3	1	0	0	0	0.667	0.667	3
Ike Smith	2	6	5	0	3	2	0	0	0	0.833	0.833	3
Thomas Miller	2	6	4	0	3	1	0	0	0	0.667	0.667	6
Gregg Brooke	2	6	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0.333	0.333	2

Games Played – 2

Total Runs Scored – 34

Total Runs Allowed – 11

Avg. Runs Scored per Game – 17

Avg. Runs Allowed per Game – 5.5