

## Author's Note

I have been researching and writing about baseball history for many years and in 2016 I wrote a book called *Lots More Fun That Way: The First Thirty Years of Amateur Baseball in North Dakota*. The project started accidentally. One day, while scanning old issues of the *Bismarck Tribune*, I noted that a man named Burl Dutt had been a very good ballplayer in town in the early 1950s. One day I looked in the local phone book, found a number for Burl, and called him. He invited me to his home, and we sat around one Saturday afternoon and talked about baseball. He was in his late eighties then, but Burl had clear memories of games and players from sixty or sixty-five years earlier. Every time he talked about a former teammate, there was a story associated with that particular player, and sometimes Burl would pause and say, "I haven't thought about him in years". I came away from that visit thinking that the early years of amateur baseball was a mostly unknown part of North Dakota history that should be recognized and remembered.

A short time after that I learned that there was an amateur baseball Hall of Fame in Jamestown and one day I stopped and picked up a list of the inductees. I Googled the names and found that many of the men who played during those early years had passed away, so the search turned up only an obituary. For those men (who were now in their eighties or nineties) for whom I could find an address or phone number, I reached out and contacted them. Over the next year or so I met with about a dozen men in person and talked to another forty or so by phone and each man was gracious and willing to share stories and memories of the time when they played amateur baseball in North Dakota. I decided to put the information I was collecting into a book, but the more I talked to these men the focus of the project shifted. I didn't care if I sold any books, all I wanted to do was to put something in writing that these gentlemen could have so they could read about the time they were young men playing ball.

As mentioned earlier, the state amateur baseball association began in 1939 and from that year forward I summarized team and league structures, state tournament results, player achievements, and the workings of the state association more or less in a chronological order. During the year or so I was researching the book I kept hearing of more and more players who had died. I decided that I needed to complete the book so that surviving players could have it while they were still living. By the late 1960s, amateur baseball had begun a transition. For reasons that will be described elsewhere, there were now fewer players, meaning fewer teams and leagues, and fewer participants in the state tournament. I arbitrarily decided to end the first book at the conclusion of the 1969 state tournament.

Many of the more recent Hall of Fame inductees played most of their careers after the 1960s, past the time covered by *Lots More Fun That Way*. In many ways these men faced more challenges than their earlier predecessors and I thought it was important to recognize their efforts and achievements as well. What follows is a chronological summary of amateur baseball over the fifty-year period from where I left off in 1969 to 2018. It covers state tournament results,

but I also added information about the struggles faced by the state association to keep amateur baseball alive in North Dakota, and a little detail about some of the more prominent players.

I probably gave away more copies of the first book to former players than I sold. I'm fine with that because I do this not to make money, but because I enjoy the research and love baseball, and wanted to document the history of something that I think is interesting and important to North Dakota. That was my only goal in putting *For All the Right Reasons* together. When amateur players from the 1950s and 1960s that I wrote about in *Lots More Fun That Way* told me, "I read the book and it brought back so many good memories" that was more rewarding to me than selling any number of books. If someone reading this book says to themselves, "Hey, I remember that game", or "I remember playing against that guy", I will have accomplished what I set out to do.

Like with *Lots More Fun That Way*, I had to decide to stop somewhere so this goes through the 2018 season and state tournament. One reason for that choice was that I attended the Saturday semi-final games in Jamestown that year. Another was that I noticed a dramatic change to the way the *Jamestown Sun* covered the tournament, and amateur baseball in general. The primary source of information for the first book was the *Sun*, and I remembered the early years when the paper provided a summary story and a complete box score of every tournament game, sometimes taking up two or three pages of the paper over a week or more. By 2018 it had changed to where it was even difficult to find the results of tournament games unless I happen to find "Yesterdays Scores" in the sports section. By now even the championship game had only a brief paragraph of game highlights, a line score, and the following instruction: "for more information, go to [Jamestownsun.com](http://Jamestownsun.com) & click on sports."

I hope those that remember those years enjoy it.