

Remembering legacy of the Galvez Negro Little League

From 1952 to 1969, the Galvez Negro Little League produced many future champions for high school, college and professional sports (baseball, football, basketball, track).



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Those champions have continued the spirit and mission of youth athletics by showing and teaching the

merits of discipline, work ethic and team concept while simultaneously producing winners. Those champions went on to become major contributors and major city officials in Galveston and other cities of this world.

Starting in 1952 at the Wright Cuney Park with five teams sanctioned the Negro Loop Baseball League, teams were: the Oleander Cafe's XXX Dodgers coached by owner Overton O.B. Parker and George Ward; the Palm Terrace Panthers coaches Dad Prater and Herman Bennett; the YMCA Dragons coaches Philip Chaison, Robert "Long-Drink" Johnson and Joel Murphy; the St. Augustine Church Cardinals coach Fred Turner and the Texas City Dodgers coaches Jasper Victorian and others; in 1954, the Texas City Yankees coached by Iverson Godfrey joined.

In 1958, under commissioner Bobby Williams, the league was named Galvez

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Negro Little League and moved to Central High field. The Panthers became the 851 Falcons sponsored by the International Longshoremen's Association (I.L.A.) coached by Gilbert Ward and young Louis Simpson. The XXX Dodgers disbanded, the St. Augustine Cardinals became the St. Vincent Blue Sox coached by police officer Charles Lemon and young Fletcher Baldwin.

Joining teams were I.L.A. 329 Red Sox coached by young fire-

man Joel Bell and Joshua Woodard Sr., Carver Elementary School PTA Rebels coached by Charles Hopkins and Andrew Laws Sr., I.L.A. 1504 Dare-devils coaches Mr. Cobb, Ira Bacon, Fred Alliniece, and I.L.A. 1308 Braves coaches William Chatmon II, Henry Faust Sr. with the YMCA and Texas City remaining, there were nine teams in 1958.

In 1960, the YMCA Team and the Texas City Yankees disbanded. The PTA Rebels became the Colt 45's. I.L.A. 1308 and 1504 locals merged, and became the I.L.A. 1504 Braves. The Dickinson Cubs and Dickinson Dodgers joined. There were then eight teams in

the league.

Coaches changed on some teams. The Falcons were coached by Louis Simpson, O.B. Parker, Gilbert Ward, David O'Neal Sr. and teenage coaches Lawrence "Nan Child" Franklin and Bernard "Sleepy" John. The Red Sox were coached by Andrew Laws Sr., Frank Moultrie, Bill Millican and Joshua Woodard Sr. The Blue Sox were coached by Charles Lemon, Fletcher Baldwin and Harold Lemon. The I.L.A. 1504 Braves were coached by Ira Bacon, Fred Alliniece, Victor Denton and others. The Colt 45's were coached by Charles Hopkins, Bobby Williams and Samuel Stevens Sr.

In 1961, the League moved to the Alamo School campus. The I.L.A. 851 Falcons continued to be the team to beat.

Other league commissioners were Bernard Curtis Sr., Charles "Bubba" Fields, and the last commissioner was Bill Millican in 1969. The Negro Little League disbanded after the 1968 mandatory integration of public schools in Galveston. The reasoning was hoping that young black boys would be picked up in the registered Galveston Little League and thereby unifying the youth of Galveston.

Fred Ferguson lives in Galveston.