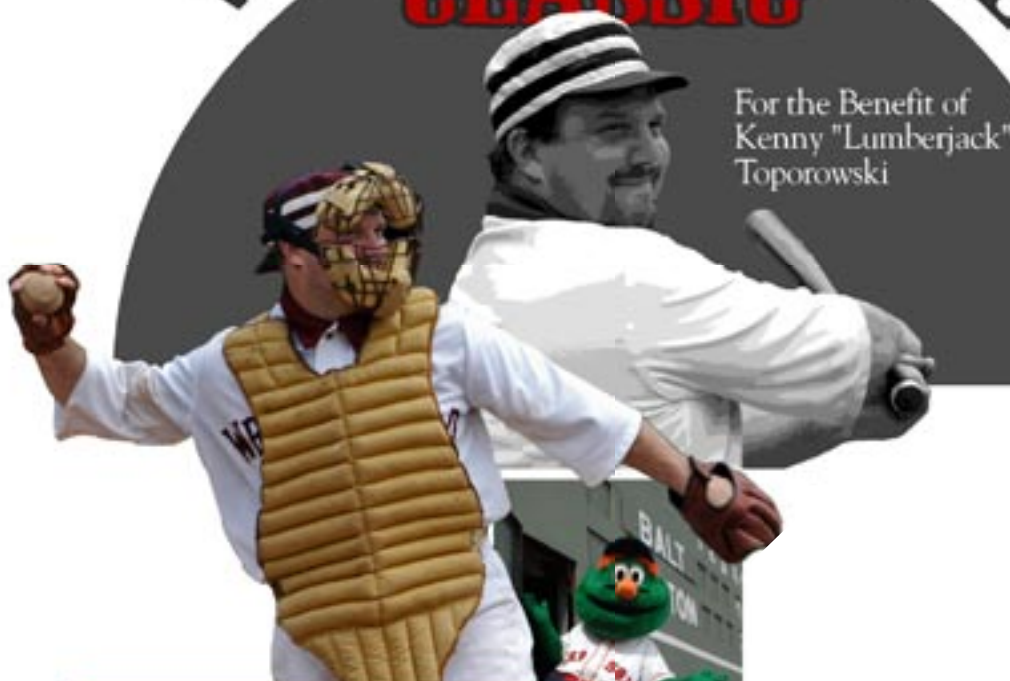


AUG 8 BULLENS FIELD
WESTFIELD

LUMBERJACK

VINTAGE BASE BALL

CLASSIC



For the Benefit of
Kenny "Lumberjack"
Toporowski

Schedule Of Events

Home Run Derby 5pm-7pm

Wally The Green Monster Arrives 6pm

Pre-Game Introductions 7pm

National Anthem - Stephanie Morgan 7:15pm

Base Ball - Wheelmen vs. Latin Stars 7:20pm

Barbara Russell 5th Inning - God Bless America



WESTFIELD WHEELMEN
VINTAGE BASE BALL CLUB

VS

LATIN STARS
Baseball Club



Ken, Natalie & Ciara Toporowski

Kenny “*The Lumberjack*” Toporowski A Powerful Inspiration

On an early February evening at the Extra Inning batting cages in Agawam, little did we know that would be the last time for a while that many on the team would see the “old” Kenny we knew and loved as within just a few days he was fighting for his life. When the news came that Kenny had cancer we were stunned and in disbelief. We had been told he had Glioblastoma Multiforme Stage 4 brain cancer. When we saw him again, just a few days after the initial surgery, we were in shock. I guess it takes a man of his physical strength to go through the hours of surgery to remove as much of the tumor as possible. One of the first things he said to me, in slurred speech in a haze of pain medication, was “When is opening day?” For some reason I knew he wasn’t joking but to see him laying in the state he was in, you would not think it was even remotely possible...no way.

We appropriately gave Kenny his nickname (as all players had back in the early days of baseball) the “Lumberjack” as Kenny was the owner of Tops Tree Service which he has since sold-off due his illness. He was our catcher for most of the 2007 season and all of 2008 which was a godsend for me as I had assumed the duties early in the 2006 season. Having never caught before in my baseball career let alone vintage style was a humbling and painful experience. When Matt “Matches” Avery introduced him to me, his hands were like bricks...exactly what you need for this position. This would allow me to get back to my regular position in the outfield. Kenny was a two-time All-Western Massachusetts catcher and at one time scouted by the Cincinnati Reds organization having both superior catching skills and a great bat. To this day, according to Clem Fucci, Kenny’s baseball coach at Westfield Vo-Tech, Kenny holds the record for the highest batting average in a season, by a wide margin.

Kenny was a wall behind the plate and would take a beating, foul tips of his body like they were pebbles...and laugh. When he occasionally got hurt and was asked if he wanted to come out, he would tell me to %#@*! That’s Kenny, he loves this game.

As the spring rolled around and the Wheelmen prepared for the season, Kenny was fighting though radiation, chemotherapy and rehab while occasionally showing-up at a practice or two, an amazing form of inspiration and strength. He would sometimes bring us good news and sometimes bad news...he was brining us on a roller coaster of emotions. We kept on telling him to fight, fight, fight...he can beat it. By mid-May Kenny’s visits to practices became more common, he was itching to play. He would try a few things but his coordination was so far gone it was not safe. At that point we would not let him touch a ball or bat, much to his dismay, unless Natalie (his wife) said ok. He would even tell me that Natalie said “it was ok” when she wasn’t around. I told him not until I hear from Natalie. After much consultation with his doctor, Natalie gave me the green light.

At first he would come to games in full uniform, ready to go but his coordination was still way off so he opted to coach third. He felt he needed to be a bigger part of the team and while coaching third in his first game he would promptly steal the signals from the catcher, studied the pitcher as he gripped the ball announce to our batter as loud as possible of the forth coming curve ball much to the dismay of the opposing hurler. I had to tell Kenny to keep quiet.

In early June Kenny got his first chance and in his first at-bat promptly went down swinging. A victory to the millionth degree as you can imagine (and we all breathed a huge sigh of relief he didn’t get hit). I started to give Kenny playing time in the field, at least a few innings at a time, mostly in right field. He continued to struggle at the plate but his coordination was improving. In the following weeks we entered the weekend benefit wiffle ball tournament played at the new Fenway Westfield off of Western Avenue. This was perhaps the best opportunity to give Kenny lots of at bats and let him go behind the plate (even it was wiffle ball, this was the best conditioning drill to improve his hand-eye coordination and get him running in game-like situations).

By early July Kenny’s motor skills were improving but his reflexes at the plate continued to lag behind but in mid-July, on a recent road trip into New Jersey, Kenny would get the medication he needed. While playing in the first game of a double-header at New Jersey’s Rahway River Park against the Elizabeth Athletic Club, the Wheelmen found themselves in a rare battle and were tied at seven apiece late in the game when with two outs and a runner at third, Kenny sent a drive into right field to score what would be the eventual winning run. The Wheelmen and cranks that made the trip celebrated at what Kenny had just achieved...**The Lumberjack Is Back!**

Keep fighting my friend.
Captain Genovese

The Westfield Wheelmen

The Westfield Wheelmen take their name from the original Westfield Wheelmen dating back to the 1880s and 1890s who have, over the last four years, honed their skills to the point that they are the premier vintage base ball team in the United States playing base ball the way the game was actually played. In years past, the Wheelmen have thrilled local fans with such events as the Adonis Terry Day tribute game played in



Westfield, appearing in the Vintage Base Ball Federation World Series played in Westfield against such teams as Bill Lee and His Green Mountain Boys and last year against Luis Tiant and the Latin Stars.

The Wheelmen of today live and work in Westfield and the surrounding area (as they did in 1886) and if you happen to see them out on the town, give them a grand Huzzah!

Base Ball Card Photos

Photos by Jaime Caron, Jeff "Hypo" Hockenberry, Ron "Gator" Dumont and Ray Shaw.
Design by CustomSportsCards.com

Latin Stars Baseball Club

Latin-American ball players are today some of the best major leaguers with the likes of Albert Pujols, Carlos Beltran, and David Ortiz and arguably the greatest player in baseball history, the legendary Roberto Clemente.

The Latin Stars share the same passion for the game as the legends noted above and is an exceptionally talented group playing in the various adult leagues in and around metro New York led by their manager Dr. Ray "El Gato" Mota, a cancer survivor. Ray's story is certainly an inspirational one as his biography explains.

Dr. Ray Mota, currently of Reno, NV, is a two-time cancer survivor. First, a brain tumor in early 2000 and currently he is in remission from Castleman's disease, a form of cancer similar to a Lymphoma. Since his diagnosis Ray has written the book Maximum Ability of which he donates all of the proceeds to special events for children diagnosed with cancer. He has also played and coached in five amateur baseball World Series titles. Ray attributes his success in battling cancer to his support system. "I believe it is essential to surround oneself with a strong supporting cast. I have family, friends, medical professionals and community, all whom are positive, caring, knowledgeable, and/or loving individuals. An important lesson I learned from my experience with cancer is that it affected not only my life, but everyone in my family. We became a family with cancer." Ray believes it is important to initially take stock when a diagnosis of cancer is received. "Anyone not on the BEAT CANCER team must be replaced with a new team member. A team is only as strong as its weakest link, and cancer is a formidable opponent."

Latin Stars Roster

Micky "I'm Not the Water Boy" Garcia
Ray "El Gato" Mota
Richard "Fuego" Simon
Ad "Poder" Rios
Stuart "Papi" Juarez, Sr.
Stuart "Fuerte" Juarez, Jr.
Sam "Inteligente" Juarez
Frank "Suave" Pinto
Angelo "El Capitan" Lees
Carlos "Looth" Sadala
Mike "Cavesa" Herring
Kenny "No-No" Noe
Alex "Maestro" Torres



Photo By Scott Tidlund

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