



1970 Little League World Series Commemorative



WORLD CHAMPIONS - In the summer of 1970, the Wayne American Little League team won the Little League World Series in Williamsport, PA. The Wayne Little League will honor the 1970 champions tonight at Dotterwich Field in Wayne, when the league hosts the 2010 District finals. Team members in the photo included: Kneeling, Left - Right - Mike Fantau, Glen Otte, Brian Herтт, Craig Kornfeld, Dave Shaver, Buddy Parrelli and Tom Olsen. Standing - Ron Webb, Bill Lees, Jim Kinney, Mark Epstein, Len Fruci, Steve O'Neill and Rob Houghton. Third Row - Manager Gene Cancellieri and coach Tom DeAngelis.

THE SCORES

DISTRICT TOURNAMENT

Wayne American 12, Clifton Delawana 0
Wayne American 2, Clifton Central 1, (8)
Wayne American 9, Pequannock American 6
Wayne American 8, Wayne National 3

STATE TOURNAMENT

Wayne American 4, Morristown 0
Wayne American 6, Ridgewood National 4
Wayne American 6, Franklin 0
Wayne American 6, Garfield American 1

NATIONAL REGIONAL

Wayne American 8, Boston Park, Mass. 4
Wayne American 3, New Haven, Conn. 1
Wayne American 5, Auburn Maine, 2
Wayne American 3, DuBois, Pa. 2

WORLD SERIES -

WILLIAMSPORT, PA.

Wayne American 10, Valleyfield, Canada 0
Wayne American 4, Highland, Indiana 0
Wayne American 2, Campbell, California 0

WHEN WAYNE RULED THE WORLD

Vivid memories flourish 40 years later

BY DOUG SCANCARELLA
Correspondent

WAYNE - The 1960s is considered one of the most tumultuous periods of the 20th Century. The decade was marked by the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement and massive anti-war protests. Against the backdrop, area sports teams, by the end the 60s and start of the 70s, united many.

In January of 1969, the New York Jets of the supposedly weaker AFL beat the heavily favored Baltimore Colts of the mighty NFL in the Super Bowl. In October of 1969, the Miracle Mets, a laughing-stock throughout the 1960s, won the World Series over the heavily favored Baltimore Orioles. In May of 1970, an injured Willis Reed hobbled onto the Madison Square Garden court and helped the Knicks stun the Los Angeles Lakers in game seven of the NBA Finals. The unexpected was becoming expect-

ed and we didn't need sports to tell us that. One of the most defining moments of human history came when Neil Armstrong became the first human to set foot on the moon in July 1969.

For Wayne residents, though, the single most impossible, unbelievable, and wonderful sports story occurred 40 years ago this summer in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. That's when 14 12-year old boys and two not-yet 21-year old coaches from Wayne, tore through their summertime all-star schedule to win the 1970 Little League World Series at legendary Howard J. Lamade Stadium in Williamsport, PA.

Since then, there have been six more U.S. manned lunar landings, a president has been shot again (not fatally) and the U.S. has been to war again twice.

The Mets won the World Series again and won two additional National League pennants. But the mere suggestion that Wayne could win Little League's ultimate prize again is extremely far-fetched. To

put the accomplishment in perspective, consider:

■ Little League Baseball charters more than 7,000 leagues annually – nearly 6,000 of them are in the United States.

■ Within these leagues, there are more than 2.4 million Little League baseball players in the United States and another 200,000 international players.

■ Only 12 teams from the United States have won the Little League World Series since 1970.

■ Only four teams from New Jersey have ever won: Hammonton (1949), Wayne (1970), Lakewood (1975), Toms River (1998). A Garden State team finished in the runner-up spot three times: Merchantville (1955 & 1956) and West New York (1966).

The 1970 champs, the Wayne Americans, will be honored tonight at Dotterwich Field at 6:30 p.m., when the Wayne



BACK THEN

Median Household Income	\$8,734
Unemployment Rate	3.5%
Cost of a 1st Class Stamp	\$0.06
President of the U.S.	Richard M. Nixon
Academy Award Best Picture	Midnight Cowboy
Number One Song	Close to You - Carpenters
First Top 40 #1	The Love You Save - Jackson Five
Gallon of Gasoline	\$0.36
Gallon of Milk	\$1.15
Cost of a New Home	\$26,600

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Howard J. Lamade Stadium during the 2007 Little League World Series in South Williamsport, Lycoming County, Pennsylvania. Two venues host World Series games: Howard J. Lamade Stadium and Little League Volunteer Stadium. Lamade Stadium has hosted games since 1959, while Little League Volunteer Stadium opened in 2001 when the field expanded to 16 teams. Prior to 1959 the Little League World Series was held at Original Little League on West Fourth Street in Williamsport. Lamade Stadium fences have a distance of 68.6 m (225 feet) from home plate to each of the outfield positions. That distance had been 62.5 m (205 feet) before 2006.

BY THE NUMBERS

4 Only four teams from New Jersey have ever won the Little League World Series: Hammonton (1949), Wayne (1970), Lakewood (1975) and Toms River (1998).

6 Total number of shutouts Wayne American posted in their 16 game run in the summer of 1970.

12 Only twelve teams from the United States have won the Little League World Series since 1970.

14 Fourteen New Jersey teams have participated in the World Series, including eight since 1957.

16 Number of games Wayne American won en route to the 1970 Little League World Series title.

17 Total number of runs Wayne American scored in the three games played in the championship round in Williamsport, PA. Wayne outscored their three opponents, 17-0 to claim Little League's ultimate prize.

40 Number of years that have passed since Wayne American won the Little League World Series. Only two other New Jersey based teams have won the title since.



The Wayne American Little League team's run through the District, State and Regional Tournaments in the summer of 1970 was chronicled in detail in the Wayne TODAY Newspaper the entire month of August. On Sunday, August 30, the front page of the Wayne TODAY (left) featured the Wayne Little League after winning the World title. Other Wayne TODAY headlines are featured on pages 40 and 41.

LITTLE LEAGUE

FROM PAGE 38

Little League hosts the 2010 Little League District finals.

The team was coached by 20-year old Gene Cancellieri, who had played Wayne Little League baseball in the early 1960s and for Wayne Valley, where he had graduated in 1967. In 1962, Cancellieri was a key member of the Wayne Americans that lost in the final of the Section I Tournament.

While in high school, Cancellieri volunteered to coach his brother Perry's team. Perry was eight years younger than Gene and a key player on the 1969 team that won the District 2 Championship before losing to Morristown in the Section I State finals.

By 1970, Perry was too old for Little League and had moved on to Babe Ruth baseball. That didn't prevent Gene from continuing to coach, however.

"We lost a few good players from the 1969 team, but I still knew that we were going to be good in 1970," said Cancellieri, whose 1970 team was the first Wayne Little League team to ever advance to the State Tournament.

Cancellieri was assisted by 19-year old Tom DeAngelis, whose brother Patrick was also on the 1969 team. DeAngelis had also played in Wayne Little League in the early 1960s and went on to play for DePaul, where he graduated in 1968.

Both coaches were confident that Wayne could make it to Williamsport in 1970. At the time, the only area District 2 champion to ever go to the State finals was Pompton Lakes in 1960 in Glassboro, NJ. That team lost the first game of the State final in a close contest. Many of the boys who played on that 1960 Pompton Lakes Little League team were members of the Pompton Lakes Senior Division team that played in the final of the 1963 Senior League World Series in Bethlehem, PA.

But Wayne's quest to advance to Williamsport was almost short circuited in the team's second round District tournament game. They avoided an elimination loss by edging Clifton Central, 2-1. Craig Kornfeld, who would go on to play Double-A ball in the Chicago Cubs organization and now serves as a scout for the Washington Nationals, smashed what turned out to be the winning home run in the top of the 8th inning.

"Craig was 95 pounds - tops," recalls Cancellieri. "He gets up with a wood bat and hits it 250 feet. The Clifton coaches checked his bat. They never saw a kid that size hit the ball like that."

"They thought that I coked my bat," Kornfeld said with laugh. "If it happened today, they would have accused me of being on steroids."

Wayne then marched through the District, State and National Regional tourna-

ments. Another memorable game was an 8-3 win over Wayne Nationals in the District 2 final.

"Wayne was loaded that year with baseball talent," Cancellieri said.

Today, the Wayne Little League's American league is considered the Hills side of town and the National League is the Valley side. In 1970, the Little League boundaries were different. Kids from both the American and National team would go on to play for Valley and Hills.

After beating the Wayne Nationals, the Wayne Americans beat Morristown, 4-0, to avenge the 1969 State final loss.

"I thought our 1969 team was better," said shortstop Len Fruci, who played on both teams. "I was 11 in 1969, so maybe that was just because when you're 11 you think the 12 year olds are studs. Whenever

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Tidbits

■ **Most of the parents wore the same clothes** and sat in the same order for all late rounds game, believing that it would help the team's good fortunes going, according to Jim Kinney.

■ **The team was nicknamed the "Mop Tops" because they didn't cut their hair for good luck** during the District, Sectional and State tournaments. Little League officials forced them to cut their hair prior to taking the field in Williamsport. "We were all annoyed," Shaver said. "But of course we did it. Kornfeld was real mad." Added Kornfeld, "I'm pretty sure forcing us to get our hair cut was illegal."

■ **Mike Fantau suggested that the Wayne Today talk to coach Cancellieri about who did what in Williamsport.** "If you ask the players," he said, "you'll get a lot of modesty." The Wayne Today later found that Fantau made a diving catch late in the championship game. It saved at least two runs. He never mentioned it.

■ **Fantau called centerfielder Shaver "the captain of the outfield"** and did mention getting called off by him on a fly ball to right-center. "I think people in Wayne heard him."

■ Kinney says that **early on in the tournament the Wayne players thought they would have to win 1,700 games** - the rough number of teams qualifying for the tournament worldwide. "That was 12-year old logic," he said. "We did really get the concept of brackets."

■ **Practically the same team went to the seniors league** (14 year olds) State finals in 1973. They lost to Margate.

■ **Wayne Valley and Wayne Hills turned in non-descript performances when this group was in high school.** "Most of us went to Valley, but two of our best players, Kornfeld and O'Neill went to Wayne Hills. We would have had some team if we stuck together," Shaver said.

■ **Prior to the undefeated All Star summer season, the Wayne Americans lost a preseason game to none other than the Wayne PAL All Stars.** "We beat the Wayne National Little League team in the close District game and the PAL beat us in an exhibition," Shaver said. "Some of the guys that played for those teams still remind us about that. We won when it counted. I guess that shows you how good Wayne baseball was that year."

■ **The "home" team in all Regional and Williamsport games was decided by a coin flip.** According to DeAngelis, whenever Wayne won the toss, Cancellieri would choose to be the "away" team. Some might equate that with choosing to "kick" in football's Sudden Death Overtime. "Shaver was a tremendous leadoff man," DeAngelis said. "He always either walked or singled. And then our big hitters - Kornfeld, Fruci, Epstein, O'Neill - usually got him home. Gene's goal was to put the other team behind and it worked."

■ **The 1970 Campbell California team won five extra inning games en route to Williamsport,** prompting then-California Governor Ronald Reagan to call the team "the Cardiac Kids."

■ **Chuck Hildebrand, an announcer/groundskeeper/scorekeeper for the Campbell Little League, penned a book about the Campbell Little League called "The Last Baseball Town."** It chronicles the team's 1970 march to Williamsport, as well as the league's 1976 and 1979 Williamsport appearances. From 1970 to 1987, the league sent 14 teams to Regional tournaments. The Wayne Today reached Hildebrand through the Campbell Little League. He provided contact information for four Campbell players from the 1970 team, including Tom Davis, now a counselor for Boeing in Seattle. None of the Campbell players responded to the Wayne Today's interview requests.

- Doug Scancarella



LITTLE LEAGUE

FROM PAGE 39

er I say that to Gene he says that we had more chemistry (in 1970)."

Wayne wound up beating Garfield in the State final and then went on to topple Boston Park, Massachusetts; New Haven Connecticut; Auburn, Maine and DuBois, Pennsylvania in the National Regional. Wayne then shutout its three Williamsport opponents - Valleyfield, Canada; Highland, Indiana; and Campbell, California.

Steve O'Neill got the team rolling by no-hitting Valleyfield, Canada as Wayne rolled to a 10-0 triumph.

"That set the tone," Cancellieri said. "Steve was un-hittable. That's when it hit us that we could play with anybody else in Williamsport."

Kornfeld got the nod against Indiana and fanned 12 batters. Fruci homered to contribute.

In the championship game win over Campbell, California, Wayne appeared to have its hands full with a fireballer named Tom Davis.

"I'd love to know how his baseball career went after that," Cancellieri said. "I was involved with Little League baseball for about 10 years and that (1970) was about the mid point. I never saw a 12 year old throw like that."

Wayne would not be intimidated, however, cracking five hits off Davis. Wayne's two run explosion in the second inning would be all they would need. Ron Webb started the uprising with an infield single. An out later, Bob Houghton cracked a chopper over the second baseman's head. Dave Shaver knocked both of them home with a line drive double to the wall in left center field. O'Neill earned another shutout, striking out six and giving up just six hits.

"The teams were evenly matched," said outfielder Mike Fantau. "If it wasn't for Dave's timely hit, it really could have swung the other way."

Fruci had been the staff ace all year long and, in fact, threw a one hitter with 17 strikeouts in the district opening win over Clifton-Delawana. Toward the end of that game, he strained his arm

September Song

by Stark



The above cartoon appeared in the August 31, 1970 issue of the New York Daily News. The illustration depicts a Wayne Little League baseball player just days after winning the Little League World Series and a frustrated New York Mets athlete suffering through a dismal 1970 season just a year after winning the World Series title.

and wouldn't pitch again for the rest of the tournament. He shifted to shortstop.

"I'm not sure if the result would have been the same if I was able to pitch," he says. "I was one of the older ones on the team and, at the time, a little bigger than the other guys, so I threw pretty hard. But I was a thrower."

Another thing that jumps out at today's fan is that Wayne beat California in the championship, not an international team. Today, team's qualifying for trips to Williamsport are divided into two brackets, the United States Bracket and the International Bracket. The champion of each

bracket meets in the World Series Final. As of 2009, the United States holds a slight advantage over its International counterparts with a 32-31 edge in World Series titles.

In 1970, U.S. and International qualifiers were lumped into one bracket, with the best two teams advancing. Because Wayne beat a team from California in the final and not an international opponent, a misconception has developed that international teams were not part of the tournament then.

"That's simply not true,"

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Where are they now?

Name	Key Contribution in 1970	Where are they Now?
John "Chick" Choka	Served as president of the Wayne Little League	Serves as president of the Wayne Little League
Gene Cancellieri	Head coach	Vice President of Finance For Oticon, Inc., with operations located in Somerset, NJ
Tom DeAngelis	Assistant coach	Resides in Florida
Mark Epstein	Slammed two key hits in the District final win over Wayne National.	Physician/child neurologist in Ft. Lauderdale, FLA. Many of his patients are Little Leaguers. He usually shows them the 1970 team photo, which is displayed in his office.
Mike Fantau	Made a diving catch with runners in scoring position in championship game	Owens a medical supply distributorship on Long Island.
Len Fruci	Homered in semifinal win over Highland, Ind.	Resides in Woodlands, Texas
Rob Houghton	Singled and scored in title game.	Still resides in Wayne, NJ
Brian Hurtt	Had two key hits in win over Clifton-Delawana in District opener	Resides in nearby Butler, NJ
Jim Kinney	Homered twice in State Tournament win over Ridgewood	Works for Belyeapower. Coaches in the Morristown, Little League.
Craig Kornfeld	Smashed the game-winning homer In the 8th inning of the team's 2-1 District win over Clifton-Central. Earned the win in national semifinal win over, Highland, Ind.	Serves as a scout for the Washington Nationals. Helped sign phenom pitcher Stephen Strasburg.
Bill Lees	His sacrifice fly in the championship, set the stage for Shaver's game-winning hit.	Chief Financial Officer for North America for APCO Worldwide, Inc. based out of Washington, D.C.
Steve O'Neill	Fired a no-hitter in the National quarterfinal win over Valleyfield, Canada.	Still resides in Wayne, NJ
Tom Olsen	Started the championship game in left field. A versatile outfielder	Resides in Florida
Glenn Otte	A steady, all-purpose performer	Resides in Denville, NJ
Buddy Perrelli	Made several key put-outs in Williamsport from his left-fielder position	Pharmaceutical sales. Resides in Wayne, NJ
Dave Shaver	His second-inning, two-run double proved to be the only runs scored in the championship win over Campbell	An attorney for a small firm in Manasquan, NJ
Bill Lees	Singled and scored in championship game	Pastor at Hickory Springs Primitive Baptist Church in Tifton, GA.

L. L. American Stars Win Section Title

Fruci, Kinney Carry Wayne To State Tourney

The American stars won the state title of the Little League World Series in 1970. Fruci and Kinney were the key players in the team's victory over the Clifton-Central team in the national semifinal.



LITTLE LEAGUE

FROM PAGE 40

DeAngelis said. "Those teams (from overseas) were there that year and they were very good. They just didn't advance far enough to play us."

"International had a stranglehold on the Little League World Series," Kornfeld said. "It started in 1966."

Taiwan won its first of 17 championships in 1969. Japan won it all in 1967 and 1968. In 1970, Taiwan was eliminated in the first round by Venezuela. The California team defeated Venezuela, after beating Nashville, Tennessee in the first round.

"I watched Taiwan win it in 1969 on television," Fruci said. "I thought they were Supermen. Then we were jumping up and down on that field the next year. We had a lot of fun with the kids from Taiwan. We played wiffleball with them - I guess we weren't getting enough baseball. We couldn't understand them and they couldn't understand us. But we realized they were nice kids."

"The magnitude of what we accomplished didn't hit me until later," added Fantau. "We were just kids having fun."

According to outfielder Buddy Parrelli, it started to sink in at the end of the trip home, somewhere on either Riverview Drive or Valley Road.

"We're in the bus coming home on Route 80 and we're all thinking that our parents are the only ones waiting for us at the Municipal parking lot (parents drove to Williamsport separately)," Parrelli

said. "On Riverview Drive we noticed that people were honking and waving. Then, on Valley Road we start noticing that people are lining the street. And in the parking lot there are hundreds and hundreds of people."

Added Fantau; "Bus loads of people came to the game. And people came out in droves to welcome us home."

In the weeks that followed, the team was honored with a Parade down Valley Road and was also invited to a Yankees and Mets game, where they were called out onto the field one-by-one. They also visited the White House.

"There are very few things in life that are impossible," Fruci said. "We learned that lesson when we were 12 years old and it sticks with us today."

Kornfeld credits the two young coaches with the team's success.

"It's well known that Little Leaguers are 12 years old," Kornfeld said. "What seems to get overlooked is that our coaches that year were practically kids too. It was their dedication to preparation and to teaching baseball fundamentals that led to a championship. They were also disciplinarians and that was a good thing. Trust me - we needed it."

"Gene and Tom were college kids, but they seemed old to us," added first baseman Mark Epstein. "In retrospect, we could relate to them very well because we had a big brother/little brother type relationship with them."

Cancellieri, meanwhile, says that the coaches were "the maestros," but says the ballplayers "carried out the mission to perfection."

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