



ROCKLAND COUNTY'S GIRLS OF SUMMER: A SOFTBALL STORY



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SOFTBALL IN ROCKLAND COUNTY DIDN'T BEGIN WITH TROPHIES OR HEADLINES — IT BEGAN WITH GIRLS SHOWING UP AT LOCAL DIAMONDS, GLOVES IN HAND, READY TO PLAY.

EARLY BEGINNINGS & PIONEERS LONG BEFORE LOCAL TEAMS CHASED STATE TITLES, GIRLS' SOFTBALL IN ROCKLAND GREW OUT OF COMMUNITY PASSION AND THE BROADER MOVEMENT FOR GIRLS' ATHLETIC OPPORTUNITY IN THE U.S. WHEN TITLE IX BECAME LAW IN 1972, PROHIBITING GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN SCHOOL ATHLETICS, IT OPENED DOORS FOR ORGANIZED GIRLS' SPORTS THAT HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN INFORMAL OR NONEXISTENT. IN ROCKLAND, COACHES LIKE JEAN CARY AT PEARL RIVER HIGH SCHOOL

WERE AMONG THE EARLIEST ADVOCATES FOR GIRLS' INTERSCHOLASTIC SOFTBALL AND HELPED BUILD COMPETITIVE PROGRAMS THAT DREW PLAYERS FROM AROUND THE COUNTY — SETTING THE STAGE FOR GENERATIONS OF ATHLETES TO COME. CARY RETIRED IN 1996 WITH NEARLY 300 CAREER SOFTBALL VICTORIES AND AS ONE OF THE COUNTY'S MOST INFLUENTIAL FIGURES IN GIRLS' SPORTS.

ACROSS TOWN FIELDS AND PARKS IN THE 1970S AND 1980S, COMMUNITY LEAGUES GRADUALLY ADDED GIRLS' DIVISIONS AND INTRODUCED ORGANIZED PLAY. TOWN LITTLE LEAGUES BECAME CENTRAL TO THIS

GROWTH: NEW CITY LITTLE LEAGUE ADDED GIRLS' SOFTBALL IN 1995, OFFERING AGE-DIVIDED PLAY FROM 8U THROUGH 16U THAT GAVE HUNDREDS OF YOUNG ATHLETES THEIR FIRST TASTE OF COMPETITIVE SOFTBALL.

RISE OF LOCAL LEAGUE PLAY & MILESTONES BY THE EARLY 2000S, ROCKLAND GIRLS' SOFTBALL WAS FIRMLY ROOTED IN THE COUNTY'S YOUTH SPORTS CULTURE. PEARL RIVER LITTLE LEAGUE, FOUNDED IN 1953, CONTINUED TO GROW ITS SOFTBALL PROGRAM, DRAWING PLAYERS AND FAMILIES EACH SPRING.

IN 2011, FOUR ALL-STAR TEAMS FROM ROCKLAND — SOUTH ORANGETOWN, STONY POINT, NEW CITY AND PEARL RIVER — WON NEW YORK STATE LITTLE LEAGUE SOFTBALL

CHAMPIONSHIPS IN THEIR AGE DIVISIONS. THE NEW CITY 11-12-YEAR-OLD TEAM WENT ON TO WIN THE U.S. EAST REGION TITLE AND PLACE FIFTH AT THE LITTLE LEAGUE SOFTBALL WORLD SERIES, THE DEEPEST RUN BY A ROCKLAND TEAM IN THAT TOURNAMENT.

IN 2017, HAVERSTRAW LITTLE LEAGUE CELEBRATED CHAMPIONSHIP SEASONS AS BOTH ITS JUNIOR AND SENIOR LEAGUE

SOFTBALL TEAMS WON NEW YORK STATE TITLES, WITH THE SENIOR SQUAD ALSO EARNING AN EASTERN REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP AND A WORLD SERIES FINALS BERTH.

IN 2021, A SOUTH ORANGETOWN LITTLE LEAGUE 12-UNDER TEAM CAPTURED THE NEW YORK STATE CHAMPIONSHIP AND AGAIN QUALIFIED FOR THE LITTLE LEAGUE SOFTBALL WORLD SERIES IN NORTH CAROLINA. TODAY'S SOFTBALL LANDSCAPE GIRLS' SOFTBALL IN ROCKLAND HAS EXPANDED BEYOND LITTLE LEAGUE COMPETITION. COMPETITIVE TRAVEL SOFTBALL ORGANIZATIONS LIKE HERICANES FASTPITCH, FOUNDED IN 2017, NOW FIELD TEAMS FROM 10U THROUGH 16U THAT COMPETE LOCALLY, REGIONALLY AND NATIONALLY WHILE EMPHASIZING SKILL DEVELOPMENT, TEAMWORK, AND SPORTSMANSHIP. AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL, GIRLS' VARSITY SOFTBALL CONTINUES TO BE A VIBRANT SPRING SPORT FOR TEAMS ACROSS THE COUNTY.

TODAY, THE SOFTBALL DIAMOND IN ROCKLAND IS MORE THAN JUST A PLACE TO PLAY — IT'S WHERE COMMUNITY, TEAMWORK, AND DREAMS INTERSECT. FROM NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND VOLUNTEER LEAGUES TO STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS AND NATIONAL TOURNAMENTS, GIRLS' SOFTBALL IN ROCKLAND COUNTY REFLECTS BOTH A PROUD HISTORY AND A BRIGHT FUTURE.

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LEARN MORE ONLINE LEAGUE & ORGANIZATIONAL SITES: - ROCKLAND GIRLS SOFTBALL LEAGUE — LEAGUE INFO, SCHEDULES, REGISTRATION. - PEARL RIVER LITTLE LEAGUE SOFTBALL INFO & HISTORY — PROGRAMS, HISTORY, AND ARCHIVES. - NEW CITY LITTLE LEAGUE HISTORY — WHEN GIRLS' SOFTBALL WAS ADDED. - HERICANES FASTPITCH SOFTBALL — COMPETITIVE TRAVEL SOFTBALL ORGANIZATION. - VALLEY COTTAGE INDIANS GIRLS SOFTBALL INFO — REGISTRATION AND YOUTH DIVISIONS. SUPPORT & OFFICIALS: - LOWER HUDSON VALLEY UMPIRE



ASSOCIATION — PROVIDES TRAINED UMPIRES FOR LEAGUE ACROSS ROCKLAND. - ROCKLAND COUNTY UMPIRES ASSOCIATION — HISTORY AND SOFTBALL OFFICIATING. OTHER LOCAL RESOURCES: - HAVERSTRAW LITTLE LEAGUE — HOSTS SOFTBALL TEAMS AND TOURNAMENTS. - PEARL RIVER GIRLS SOFTBALL HOMERUN CLUB — OFFICIAL NONPROFIT ENTITY FOR SOFTBALL IN PEARL RIVER.