

OMAHA CLASSIC LIVES UP TO THE NAME

THREE CHAMPIONS CROWNED IN DAY LONG TOURNEY

(AP) Ralston, NE – Under sunny skies and comfortable temperatures, ten teams converged on the Seymour Smith Softball Complex for the annual Omaha Classic tournament on September 9th, 2017.

Tournament Director, **Ed Tworek**, spearheaded the event which featured one team from Waterloo, Iowa and 88 local players from the Nebraska Senior Softball league.

Ed remarked, *“this event is a timely tune up for teams headed to the National Championships in Dalton, Georgia next week and the World Championships in Las Vegas at the end of the month”*.

Three divisions, based on experience and tournament rating, began play in the guaranteed 3-game, round-robin competition.

DIVISION 1

Midwest Connection, managed by **Paul Hamel**, claimed the title with a perfect 3-0 record but it wasn't entirely easy.

Hamel's club started the tourney against a vastly improved and scrappy RECO team that has notched quite a few victories throughout the Midwest in 2017.

In the first contest of the day, the Omaha 60s gave MC a scare and held a 12-9 lead after 4 innings in the opening tilt. However, Midwest Connection stormed back in the last two innings, highlighted by a combined 3 home runs from **Vince Bruce** and **Joe Johnson**, to eke out a 19-14 win.

Hamel's club then squared off against a vastly improved and scrappy RECO team that has notched quite a few victories throughout the Midwest in 2017.

With skipper **Steve Quinn** leading the way, RECO gave Midwest Connection all they could handle before falling, in a very exciting game, by a score of 23-19. RECO was snake bit by having 3 potential runs cut down at home plate.

MC brought out the power in this game with 5 dingers and the game ended on a web-gem with first baseman **Vince Bruce** turning an unassisted double play.

In game 3, MC took on the One-Time Wonders coached by **Duke Burgess**. The Wonders were competing in Division 2 and took the field with upset on their mind.

Due to a change in the fields, this game was played in a stiff breeze blowing towards home plate cutting down on the MC power lineup. That didn't stop **Jim Pettit** from launching one round tripper for the Connection.

The Wonders hung in for quite some time but couldn't put a stop to the offensive juggernaut of the Midwest Connection boys who scored the maximum of 5 runs in 4 of the first 6 innings to earn a 25-16 victory to claim the undefeated championship in Division 1.

NSS players on the MC squad included: **Jerry Imig, Darryl Berry, Dave Boyer, Jeff Ford, Roger Clapper, Paul Hamel, Vince Bruce**, and **Joe Johnson**.

Coach Hamel stated after the tournament, *“what a great setting to play with and against old and new friends on a beautiful day. We wanted to get some at bats before the World tournament in Las Vegas and we will be back next year to play in the Omaha Classic.”*

Other highlights from Division 1 included RECO coming back from a large deficit by scoring 12 runs in the bottom of the 7th inning to steal a victory away from the Fossils 65s.

Vince Bruce and **Jeff Ford** each went 10 for 12 and the MC squad hit a total of 8 home runs in 3 games.

DIVISION 2

Burgess' One-Time Wonders, despite the loss to Midwest Connection, walked off with the Division 2 championship with a 2-1 record after victories over the Fossil 65s and NSS Spartans.

“The impressive thing about the players on the Wonders”, said Burgess, *“was that they had never all played together as a team. Yet, they competed as if they had right from the start.”*

Division 3

NSC Chets, co-managed by **Lee Towle** and **Al Pfeffer**, grabbed the division crown with a perfect 3-0 record and pushed across an amazing 39 runs in the final game of the day.

In game 2, Chets pulled off a comeback with an extra innings, walk off victory over the Midwest Express 70s. The ME 70s squad had several NSS players on their roster: **Duane Carolus**, **Bob Williams**, **Ed Raskovski**, **Rod Kidder**, **Larry Peterson**, **Al Chamberlain**, **George Scott**, and **Bob Kubat**.

Lee was hot all day at the plate and hit safely in all but two at bats in three games. Other NSS players who were part of the championship squad included: **Mike McKnight, Dan Cutler, John Cannon, Bob Dalziel, Danny Fields, Craig Long, and Tom Cave.**

The tournament concluded with a free lunch consisting of fried chicken and side dishes for all players and volunteers.

The Fossils 65s were applauded for making the long trek from Waterloo to get some competition in before they head out to Vegas for the World Masters tournament.

Other managers from NSS were **Steve Bessey** (Softball Nuts), **Ron Franck** (NSS Spartans), and **Milt Scurlock** (Handpicked).

Tournament standings and game scores below:

Final Standings 2017

	<u>Team</u>	<u>Won</u>	<u>Lost</u>
Division 1			
1	Midwest Connection	3	0
2	RECO	2	1
3	Omaha 60s	0	3
Division 2			
1	One-Time Wonders	2	1
2	Fossils 65s	1	2
3	NSS Spartans	1	2
Division 3			
1	NSC Chets 65s	3	0
2	Midwest Express 70s	2	1
3	HandPicked	1	2
4	Softball Nuts	0	3

Game Scores				
Game No	Team	Score	Team	Score
1	RECO	14	Omaha 60s	13
2	Softball Nuts	6	Chets	12
3	Midwest Express	18	HandPicked	14
4	NSS Spartans	18	Fossils 65s	21
5	Omaha 60s	14	Midwest Connection	19
6	HandPicked	14	Softball Nuts	8
7	Midwest Express	21	Chets	22
8	Fossils 65s	18	One-Time Wonders	23
9	RECO	19	Midwest Connection	23
10	NSS Spartans	14	One-Time Wonders	16
11	Softball Nuts	5	Midwest Express	6
12	HandPicked	23	Chets	39
13	(MW Connection) Seed 1	25	(OT Wonders) Seed 1	16
14	(RECO) Seed 2	29	(Fossils) Seed 2	28
15	(Omaha 60s) Seed 3	16	(NSS Spartans) Seed 3	17