

The Codrington Blue Jays

By Dan Buchanan

The headline says it all:

“Codrington Wins Crown First Year in League”

The Trentonian of September 6, 1963, continued with the following description of the big game:

“Codrington, making its first year in the Brighton and District Softball League a big one, captured the loop playoff championship Monday, downing Gosport 7 – 4. The win gave Codrington the best of five series on three straight games. Paul Houlihan’s solid pitching and the bat of first baseman A. Lellip were more than Gosport could handle Monday. Houlihan stopped the pennant winners on four hits, Lellip banged a pair of home runs off losing pitcher Stan Cooper.

Each team scored once in the first inning and Codrington took the lead for keeps with another single counter in the second. The winners increased their lead to 4 – 1 with a two-run third and then wrapped it up with three runs in the top of the seventh.

Gosport collected its second run in the third and in the bottom of the seventh, the losers rallied for a pair to close out the scoring.

Houlihan fanned seven and walked five on the way to his four-hitter. The Gosport club got men on base in every inning except the sixth but couldn’t get to Houlihan for a safety with it counted most.

Stan Cooper, sweating the distance for Gosport, allowed nine hits. He struck out eight and walked six.

Tops at the plate for Codrington, Lellip scored three times. One of his circuit clouts was a two-run shot in the seventh. R. Hazelwood and L. Massey also banged two hits each for the winners. L. Plue, J. Bacon and J. Korim had the others.

Only hitters for Gosport were J. Payne with a homer and a double; T. Payne and Doug Cooper.

Monday’s win capped a great season for the Codrington squad. The club finished second to Gosport during the regular season. With the playoff title goes the William Adams Memorial Trophy.”

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Also listed were the names of the players of the two teams:

“Codrington: L. Plue 2b, T. Mound rf, Lellip 1b, Hazelwood c, B. Mound cf, Bacon cf, Massey ss, Kirm 3b, J. Plue lf and Houlihan p.

Gosport: J. Payne lf, L. Cooper 3b, F. Payne 1b, T. Payne 1b, T. Cooper rf, s. Cooper p, Doug Cooper 2b, Macdonald c, ostrom ss, H. Cooper ss and Don Cooper cf.”

A little while later we also see this:

“Codrington Softball champions Feted at Community Banquet

A community-sponsored banquet was held in Codrington church basement on September 10 in honor of Codrington Blue Jays softball team, winner of the William C. Adams Memorial Trophy for the playoffs in the Brighton District Softball League. Dinner was served to over 100 guests by Codrington United Church women.

The very capable master of ceremonies, E. R. Mound, asked his brother Jack to introduce the quest speaker, Rev. Joseph O’Sullivan of Wooler. Father O’Sullivan brought a message of special interest to the young men of the team, pointing out how many of the sportsmanship qualities and skills learned could be put to use in the future.

Many head table guests were called upon in completing the business of the evening. Ed Slaght, president of the Brighton Softball League, brought greetings. John Korim, president, spoke on behalf of the Bluejay Ball Club.

Ted Mound made a presentation to Robert and Opal Carlaw on behalf of the team and its supporters in appreciation for their efforts as manager and score keeper.

Robert Carlaw, manager, after expressing his appreciation for the support of the team, coach and community called on Edward Houlihan for his treasurer’s report. After a few anecdotes about how local interest in the team increased during the season, Mr. Houlihan presented his report showing a small balance on hand.

John Plue expressed the appreciation of the team for the banquet. Cory Scriver and Sam Netley expressed a few thoughts on behalf of the league umpires who were present. Following the above community singing of a group of songs composed for the occasion was led by Mrs. John Goodfellow.

The evening was brought to a close by the showing of an interesting film, 1962 Grey Cup Game, by Rev. Fathers Sullivan and O’Sullivan.”

I don’t think it’s too much of an exaggeration to say that this was the most exciting thing to happen in Codrington in decades. At least from my point of view as a twelve-year-old ball player, it was dynamite! Many nights I can recall racing my bicycle through Codrington and down the Morganston road, turning into the Fish Hatchery Road and parking my bike in the

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trees. The crowd of cars and people for those playoff games was staggering – and wonderfully exciting.

Many young ball players around Codrington learned under the tutelage of local character Carman “Friday” Ruttan, star third baseman on Wooler ball teams of decades past who was my next door neighbour in Codrington. For us, the guys in those attractive blue and white uniforms were real heroes of the dog days of summer. We watched Paul Houlihan, calm, quiet and determined, out there on the mound, routinely confounding the opposition batters with pitch after effective pitch. We saw Ronnie Hazelwood squatting behind home plate managing the Houlihan pitches and firing to second from a crouch. Lawrence Massey and Leo Plue worked their graceful magic throwing out batters from third and short. The Mound boys, Ted and Bob, along with John Plue, used young arms and legs to patrol the outfield and cut down runners on the bases. And Ain Lellep had a habit of clubbing softballs over the heads of opposing outfielders.

Behind the bench for the Codrington Blue Jays was Jack Bacon who provided a lot of experience and expertise toward fielding a winning fastball team. Not too far away could usually be seen two men who were the main forces behind the team. Ed Houlihan was the Treasurer and was a founder of the team. It was his land where the ball diamond was built and it was through his efforts, among others, that the team was on the field for the 1963 season. Bob Carlaw was also a very interested spectator at most games. Bob was the Manager of the team and did much that contributed to the team and its success.

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Brighton League Playoff Championship was won by Codrington Blue Jays in the team's first year in the loop. The champions received the William Adams Memorial Trophy recently. Rear, from the left are: Larry Plue, bat boy, Ted Mound, Robert Carlaw (Manager), Jack Bacon (Coach), John Korim, Frances Houlihan, and Ed Houlihan (Treasurer). Front row: Leo Plue, Lawrence Massey, Ron Hazelwood (Captain), Bob Mound (Assistant Captain), John Plue, Ain Lellep and Paul Houlihan. (Photo by E. R. Mound)

As for the players, we can go down the rows on the picture and see who they were. In the back row at the extreme left is Larry Plue who acted as the Bat Boy for the team during that 1963 season. Brother of the other Plue boys who played on the team that year, Larry would soon play an active role as a player on Codrington Blue Jay teams of the following years. Ted Mound is next; he played in the outfield along with his brother Bob. Bob Carlaw of Orland was Manager of the team. Beside Bob is the Coach of the team, Jack Bacon of Peterborough, brother-in-law of Paul Houlihan. Next is John Korim from down the Old Wooler Road who played outfield positions. Second last on the rear row is Frances Houlihan, a brother of Paul Houlihan. Last in the rear row is Treasurer Edward Houlihan, father of Frances and Paul and owner of the farm across the road from the ball park – and the land where the ball diamond was built.

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The second row on the far left end starts with Leo Plue, another of the Orland Plue's and the Blue Jay's second baseman. Lawrence Massey, from west up the Morganston Road, patrolled the ground at short stop. Ronnie Hazelwood of Codrington (holding the trophy with Bob Mound) was the catcher. Bob Mound, brother of Ted, was an outfielder. John Plue was an older Plue brother and covered outfield positions as well. Second last in the front row is Ain Lellep, the slugging first baseman, On the end of the front row is Paul Houlihan, pitcher, brother of Frances and son of Ed. The photograph was taken by E. R. "Ted" Mound, father of players Ted and Bob.

The Codrington Blue Jays continued to play in the Brighton Softball League after that initial 1963 season. In the next season, 1964, the team won the Pennant and the Dove's Lunch Trophy for finishing in first place with a record of 17 wins and 3 losses. Paul Houlihan had 203 strikeouts and the count of runs scored was heavily in the Blue Jay's favour with 155 for and 55 against. Ted Mound had the highest batting average of 0.471 after 70 at bats. Lawrence Massey was second at 0.398 with 68 at bats. Home runs were evenly distributed as Ian Lellep, Ted Mound and Ron Hazelwood all had 4 with Bob Mound at 3, Paul Houlihan, 2 and John Korim with a single. Unfortunately, Gosport came back that year to win the playoffs.

The Blue Jay teams for 1965 and 1966 repeated the accomplishments of 1963 by winning the W. Adams Trophy both years. Several new players participated during these years, namely, Doug Langford, Wayne Ducey, Lary Magnus and Bob Rowe. In 1967 Gosport edged the Blue Jays for the Championship by winning the series 4 to 3. In 1969 they made it to the finals.

In the late 1960's the team and the league changed a lot. The Ball Park behind the arena in Brighton became the central place to play and the small local ball fields reverted back to growing grain or pasturing cattle. In the 1970 season, The Codrington Blue Jays once again won the league championship. The core of Codrington players remained including the Hazelwood's and Plue's but other Brighton and area players made up the roster as well. In 1971 the team won the Series A championship and were in the playoffs in 1972. In 1973 the Blue Jays combined with the Quinte Drive-In team in Trenton and the name "Codrington Blue Jays" was retired.