

# LAMORINDA SPORTS

## Moraga Inaugurates Softball League

By Michael Sakoda



Photos Kevin Nguyen

The inaugural season of the Moraga Parks and Recreation Men's 35 and over softball league got under way Sunday. It was only an idea a month and a half ago.

Kim Burrowes and Jay Ingram, the league's organizers, say that for as long as they have been with the Department of Parks and Recreation, about six years, there hasn't been a softball league in Moraga. Orinda's adult softball league used to hold its games in Moraga, but has since moved, leaving some would-be-participants without a venue.

"One of the managers...Brett Lorie, had been talking with me and Kim about starting a league here in Moraga," Ingram says. "He lit the fire under us."

Lorie, a teacher at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School and now the manager of the Seals, notes the benefits of having organized sports in the community. "Aside from the fact that it promotes a healthy lifestyle, it is a great way of meeting other people in

the community."

"The more ways you can link citizens to a community, the greater connection one feels to their home town," says Ed Huber, a vice president at Clorox and manager of Scared Hitless. "Having organized ways to connect to your community makes Moraga feel like home."

The league is sanctioned by USSSA, the United States Specialty Sports Association, which also schedules and provides umpires for leagues in the cities of Martinez and Concord. However, Kevin Moore, manager of the Presidential Suspects, says that on field disputes are likely to be a non-issue. "Most 35+ softball players are competitive," he says, "but we...can temper the competitive spirit to ensure that we have fun, our primary goal."

Despite the quick start up, interest in the league has been encouraging, thanks in large part to good promotion. "We stayed in constant contact, letting people know that we had a

league starting up," says Burrowes.

Four teams will compete this season — in addition to the Seals and Scared Hitless the league will include the Moraga Commons and Presidential Suspects, all of whom signed up with full rosters although the league does welcome free agent sign ups.

"We wanted to start small, certainly don't want to compete with other areas, like Orinda and Pleasant Hill. We want to find our niche," says Ingram. "We don't want to duplicate services, but we do plan to expand... become a specialty league, offering things other districts aren't."

One of those uniquely Moragan experiences: the opportunity to play at the refurbished facilities of Camino Pablo Elementary School, the newest natural turf field in the Lamorinda area.

Players and organizers alike hope to see the league expand in time. Lorie says, "The fall league is for men, but the goal...is to have men's and co-ed leagues in the summer."



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