

The Decline of Softball

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[Courtesy Cincinnati Softball News]



I agree with some of my colleagues that the manufacturers have had a part in the decline of softball. I disagree with them, however, that this is the only reason why softball is in the condition it is in today, with declining numbers every year since the mid-90s. I believe that we -- the associations, manufacturers, players and complexes -- are all in this together. And until we are able to work together for the common good of the game, this trend will not change.

It has become easy for us to blame problems on other parties. In Chicago, at the **SGMA** Annual Meeting last October, I spoke on the state of softball as I see it. My comments were that the manufacturers blame the associations; the associations blame the manufacturers and complexes; and the players blame both, or in some cases just look for direction from anyone. The player especially looks to the associations because they (the associations) are the ones who are supposed to keep the game safe by rules and regulation requirements.

The hard part is taking a long look at oneself to say what can I do to make this game that we all love better? The manufacturers are only playing by the rules the associations set forth. Both in the past and now we have new companies coming into the marketplace, trying to get their share. What we need is to get everyone in one meeting room, and let the powers that be, the ones who can really make a difference -- hammer out a deal that everyone can live with. What we don't need is to hide our heads in the sand while blaming everyone else for the problems we are facing today.

Again, softball is a dream of mine. I have been at **Midwest Sports Complex** for 22 years now. One thing I know for certain is that when we are dealing with issues that are this complex, there are no easy answers; only the complete and full commitment to the issue by all parties will make a real and lasting difference.

Currently, some parts of the country are doing better at keeping teams than others. Why is this? Because complexes are making changes as Tim Vesa suggested in the last issue of the Cincinnati Softball News. I say these changes are being made because these innovative and caring people want to do what they are doing, and they have passion about it. These are the people that want to make a difference.

Therefore, until the associations, manufacturers, complexes and players all find a common passion, and choose to make a difference, nothing will change. ***