“We do not stop playing because we grow old.
We grow old because we stop playing.”

NSS Regular Season Final Standings

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Well, there are only two teams left standing after a 32 game season and a couple of weeks of playoffs. We’ve seen some great softball, some heartbreaking defeats and some heart stopping wins, not only in the playoffs but also during the regular season and we all should be thankful for having the opportunity to play in those games. By Wednesday of next week the league champion will be crowned and
teams will be prepping for the Cape Cod Classic which starts on Friday, September 9th in Harwich.

There will be one more newsletter published in two weeks, after the Classic, and that will be the last one I will be writing so I want to thank everyone who has said kind words about my efforts over the last 5 or 6 years. I’m glad you enjoyed it and I’m sure that whoever handles it next will do a fine job, keeping you entertained and informed in the process. Until next April...Stay Well...Play Well.

**Playoffs**

**August 26, 2016**

**Hanson’s Automotive 10, Calvary Saints 6**

Hanson’s, fighting for their playoff life having dropped a game early on to this very Calvary squad, wanted some revenge and they got it. Starting strong with 7 runs in the first two innings they carried a 7 - 4 lead into the fourth when Calvary seemed to realize what was at stake and took the sheaths off their bats, getting doubles from Gary Boyle and Rob Rich and singles from Butch Dunham and Greg Grote to chase three runs home and make a statement that they weren’t ready to retire quite yet. But while the Saints were hitting the Mechanics weren’t, not scoring in three straight innings, and Calvary sniffed a comeback when they scored two in the sixth, moving within one of a tie.

Sometimes teams rely too heavily on the top of their order to get the big hits and score the big runs but that wasn’t the case with Hanson’s, at least not in this game, as the middle of their order stepped up with the game quite possibly on the line. They had to take the wind out of
Calvary’s sails and make a statement and they certainly did with four hits, scoring three runs and giving them the cushion of a four run lead into the seventh. With Calvary now having to score four times, not one, they pressed a bit and it cost them as a lead-off single was followed by a liner to the pitcher and a pop up to second turned into a double play when the runner moved a bit too quickly on the ball.

Hanson’s well-balanced offense produced hits from 10 of their 11 batters with three from lead-off man Bob Lamontagne and sub Ted Theos and two each from Mark Lara, Woody Woodward, Al Lamontagne, Zeke Zarakotas and rookie Al Czernicki. Of those hits, the big ones were back to back doubles by Lara and Woodward in the first, a two-run homer by Lamontagne and a Lara double in the second. Calvary’s offense, unlike Hanson’s, was clustered near the top of their order with Grote’s three hits joining those of Dunham and Boyle, Calvary’s “Bruise Brothers”, who had three and two, respectively.

**Jok’s Auto Sales 9, Dr. Dionne’s Seniors 3**

With both teams facing elimination with a loss and both teams with a potent batting order, this one could have been a corker with big clouts to the fences and double digit runs scored. Especially since coming off a loosely played loss to the Deerfield Leathermen, Dr. Dionne’s should have been up to the task at hand, but they weren’t, as Hap Webster’s pitching and some slick fielding kept them off the board until they scored a lone run in the fourth and a soft two in the seventh. While the Seniors looked to be off their meds, the Car Guys certainly weren’t, scoring in every inning but the second, constantly keeping pressure on the Medics, pressure that they simply couldn’t handle. With men on base in every inning, the Seniors couldn’t muster more than two hits in
any of their innings except the last, pop-ups and fly balls the only prescriptions they seemed to follow.

While the Seniors were having a hard time, Jok’s batters weren’t, particularly Webster who had a perfect day at the plate to go along with his fine pitching. He went up four times and managed three singles and a seventh inning double, moved up on a grounder by Harry Doutt and scored on a Rusty Schwarzenberg sac fly. Schwarzenberg and Don Fusco added three hits each to Jok’s offense and Ron Monteiro, Charlie Mooradian and Rich Stockdale touched Seniors’ pitching for two apiece. Harold Murphy’s 3 for 3 was at the top of the hit list for Dr. Dionne’s, followed by two each from Mike Albano, Mike Ford and Joe Lamy.

August 29, 2016

M&N Sports 5, Deerfield Leathers 3

The playoffs often bring with them hard fought contests, low-scoring and well played and this was one of them. The Leathermen filled their scorecard in the first three innings while the Sportsmen kept it suspenseful waiting until their last two at-bats to score. Deerfield came out hot in the top of the first and went up by two runs after only three batters as their Jeffs, Porter and Fuller, belted a single and a homer in that order, so things didn’t look good for the Sportsmen against a team that has been on a roll in the last month of the season. It got a little darker for M&N when three of the next four in Deerfield’s lineup banged out hits, loading the bases, but a fielder’s choice and a strikeout on a foul ball slowed the offense and got M&N off the field. Neither team scored in the second but Deerfield’s top of the order produced in the third when Dennis Cassily, Porter and Fuller, all hit singles, the latter scoring the fleet-footed Cassily and giving them a 3-zip lead.
M&N’s offense was almost non-existent in the first four innings, consisting only of a Frank Willey double in the first and lone singles in the next three but Willey’s pitching and some good defense muted Deerfield’s bats as well, keeping them off the board and freezing their lead at three. A lead-off single by Gerry Moore in the home half of the fifth gave an inkling of what could come if M&N loosened up and John Poulos, Jerry Levin and Al Ross took the hint, whacking singles, scoring Moore and leaving two men on for Rod Wood who promptly lined a ball over the infield, plating Poulos and bringing M&N within one. Deerfield’s half of the sixth saw Fuller, yet again, and Paul Valdanbrini stroking singles but two flies to left and one to left center kept a zero up in the runs column, keeping a win within M&N’s reach as they batted in the home half. Frank Sommer, M&N’s lead-off man, started their rally with a single and George Mosnicka followed with one of his own setting the stage for Willey’s big bat and he came through with a blast to right center almost reaching the chain link but certainly plating Sommer and Mosnicka and giving the Sportsmen their first lead of the game. Greg Gougian’s sac fly scored Willey but three hits by Paul Poisson, Poulos and Ross couldn’t produce a run, the inning ending on a fielder’s choice with M&N on top by two. When Deerfield went out 1-2-3 in the top of the last M&N breathed a great collective sigh and chalked up a big, comeback win. Willey’s 3 for 3 lacked only a homer for the cycle and was the best for the Sportsmen followed by two hits apiece from Moore, Poulos and Levin. Fuller led Deerfield and matched Willey’s output but with two singles to go with his homer while Porter and Steve Stitt had two hits apiece. Greg Grote, subbing for an injured Kip Ferguson, Poulos and Levin played some fine defense in helping to
keep Deerfield close and Fuller returned the favor, garnering seven assists and a put-out.

**Jok’s Auto Sales 9, Hanson’s Automotive 6**

Charlie Howe led off the top of the second with a single for Hanson’s and crossed the plate with their first run after singles by Al Lamontagne and the always dangerous Zeke Zarakotas but Jok’s, leery of falling far behind early (a position they have had some trouble recovering from) answered another Hanson’s run in the third with a score of their own in the bottom of the that inning. When the Mechanics couldn’t score in the fourth, Jok’s batters saw an opening sending nine men to the plate scoring three of them on six singles and taking a two run lead. Hanson’s answered with a run in the top of the fifth when Joe Richards, Tom Mandra and Bob Lamontagne all singled. Wally Hedlund then belted a fly to deep left but Harry Doutt ran it down leaving two men on. Rookie Larry Milana started Jok’s fifth off with a single and Hap Webster and Doutt followed him with singles of their own, scoring Milana. Rusty Schwarzenberg then belted a double, scoring both Webster and Doutt. A walk to Rick Latham was followed by a fly ball off Ron Monteiro’s bat that pushed the fleet-footed Schwarzenberg to third and moved Latham to second. Lester Johnson, having a great year at the plate for Jok’s, then stroked a single scoring both runners and giving them a six run lead. With neither team scoring in the sixth, Hanson’s entered their last at bat with the middle of their order coming up. Al Lamontagne and Zarakotas promptly proved they didn’t want to go home by blasting singles and when rookie Al Czernicki belted a double to center both runners scored, the lead shrinking to four. Fred Mapplebeck’s single moved Czernicki to third and Paul Bergeron knocked him home with yet another single, this time to left. But that was the closest they would
come as a pop-up to Latham at third turned into a double play catching the pinch runner off base and ending the game. Webster and Johnson went 3 for 3 for the winners with Schwarzenberg, Don Fusco and Larry Hersh following with two hits apiece. Bob Lamontagne, leading off for Hanson’s, went a perfect 3 for 3 while Howe, Al Lamontagne and Zarakotas touched Webster’s offerings for two hits each.

**August 31, 2016**

**Jok’s Auto Sales 7, Deerfield Leathers 4**

Six hits in the top of the first, including doubles by Rusty Schwarzenberg, Rick Latham and Les Johnson, started Jok’s off on a four run inning, threatening to make the game a runaway but Deerfield answered with a couple in their half on three hits and a free pass to halve the lead. After that frenetic first, things slowed down to where neither team scored on their next three chances but that changed quickly and for the better for the Car Guys when lead-off man and manager Hap Webster helped his own cause mightily by stroking a gap shot that went all the way to the fences. It’s hard enough to throw out Webster on a grounder, still very fast down the line, and it’s impossible to throw him out when he hits a ball in a gap and so was the case here as he touched them all. Left fielder Harry Doutt, inspired perhaps by Webster’s blast, took an inside pitch to the gap in left and ended up on second, setting the stage for the third big bat in Jok’s lineup, Schwarzenberg, who then smoked a shot to right center for a two-run homer, giving the first three batters in the inning 10 total bases and the team a five run lead. Deerfield’s Bill Simmons touched Webster for a single in the fifth but they went quietly after that on a fielder’s choice and a 6-4-3 double play but they weren’t done quite yet. Jok’s, perhaps
exhausted from their offense in the fifth, went out 1-2-3 in the sixth letting the Leathermen take a breath and get their legs under them. Bill Ohm and Joe Deluca took advantage of that respite, each stroking singles to put two men on with no outs. A fly to left and a sacrifice moved them both up a base with Jeff Fuller coming up but with two outs. Fuller, clutch hitting all year, blasted a Webster pitch deep, scoring both runners and ending up on third base with a triple. A deep fly to left kept him there but they had made a statement that they weren’t ready to call it a season quite yet. Larry Hersh’s single in the seventh was erased with a double play, keeping Jok’s off the board for the fifth time in the game and leaving Deerfield trying to score only three runs to get to bonus softball. And try they did with back-to-back singles by Steve Stitt and Simmons but after two were out. Miguel Miranda then belted a deep fly that looked for a minute that it might find grass but Don Fusco managed to get under it to end a great game and Deerfield’s quest for a championship. Doutt’s double and two singles completed his perfect day at the plate and Webster, Schwarzenberg, Latham, Johnson and Hersh all reached two times in three times up. Simmons had a perfect three-hit day for the Leathermen with Deluca contributing two and Fuller reaching twice on his big triple and first inning walk. Miranda made the web gem of the day with a great sliding catch in foul ground of a fly ball off Schwarzenberg’s bat in the third, helping to keep Jok’s off the board once again.

With the win, Jok’s gets to play for the league crown against M&N Sports. Having had an early playoff loss, Jok’s needs to win two in a row from the Sportsmen while a win in Friday’s game will give M&N the crown. Come down to the field and root them on.
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