



Elk Grove Babe Ruth Baseball

Youth baseball ages 13 to 18 years old in Elk Grove, California.

A Special League

Elk Grove Babe Ruth is now registering players, 13-16 for Spring 2021

You may have heard that Elk Grove Babe Ruth registration is open through the website www.eghardball.com. Tryouts this season are a bit later in March and beginning of April 2021. The practice season will start in April and the league's 22 game season starts a bit later in April. But why is it special? We also participated in all the usual post season play offs and All-Star Tournaments that other leagues do. We pride ourselves on teaching the players new to the game. "Teaching Love of the Game Since 1962" is our motto. The league also has an event for a generally unrecognized group of players. These players are the "gamers". They may not have all the skills, or even the natural athletic ability of the perennial "All-Stars". They are, however, the "try harder guys" who are coach-able and exhibit a love of the game.

What Elk Grove Babe Ruth does is to hold a mid-season All-Star game for these journeymen players who have impressed their coaches in the first half of the season with their desire and effort. This All-Star game, scheduled on the first Sunday in May, is named in honor of former player, Tyler Routt. Tyler Routt played in this league from age 12 to age 15 and in our senior league from age 16 to age 20. He wasn't the best player but there was no doubt that he was the player in the league

that loved the game the most. He played with players who excelled in high school, college and beyond as well as with players who never played after leaving Babe Ruth. He approached the game with enthusiasm and was never upset at a player who made a error even if done while he was pitching. He was a constant source of support for his teammates. Sadly, he was lost in a automobile accident shortly after leaving Babe Ruth Senior League in 1998. His parents and Routt Roofing continued to support the league up to this very day.

In 2006, the league added the Tyler Routt Mid-Season All Stars to the regular season schedule. Although the format has evolved over the last 11 years, the idea is the same. That is, the coaches of our 14 to 18 teams identify 3 to 4 journeymen players who are not surefire postseason All-Stars. These players have a "yes coach" attitude. From these players, the league constructs four teams of Tyler Routt All Stars (we always keep the 3 or 4 teammates from one team together). On the first Sunday in May on the 2 diamonds of Jones Family Park, we play separate but simultaneous games pitting the groups of Tyler Routt All-Stars against each other. The teams are usually evenly matched. The ballgames are spirited, and the highest degree of sportsmanship is exhibited. Over the past 11 years the majority of players who have participated in the game, have stepped up their level of play both in the Tyler Routt game and after the games, when they have returned to their regular teams. We have had many instances of players in these Tyler Routt games who had never made a postseason All-Star game before do so afterwards. Below are three examples of Tyler Routt players. They are identified by their nicknames. The league is justifiably proud of them but do not want to invade their privacy.

Rudy: a small sized player, nicknamed after Rudy Ruettiger, the undersized football player at Notre Dame who played with such a big heart. When Rudy came to the league not only was he small, but he was a weak hitter who was not skilled at throwing the ball. In his first season, he learned to bunt and would usually be safe in spite of the fact that the opposing team usually knew he was going to bunt. He developed his throwing arm and started to excel at second base. He was an original

Tyler Routt All-Star as a 13-year-old. In his three years in Babe Ruth he moved from the bottom of the batting order to the top. He became much more skilled at fielding and even started pitching a bit. It was not natural athletic ability but pure desire and determination that allowed him to improve. He still participates in Babe Ruth Alumni events.

Scrap Iron: the first time we saw Scrap Iron, he was playing right field in a practice game. A line drive was hit right at him. The ball actually passed between his head and his glove which was being held up head high. The coaching staff was just happy he wasn't hurt. We found out later that he only had vision out of one eye and that accounted for the lack of depth perception. He was challenged in hitting the ball because of this lack of depth perception. Once again pure desire allowed him to improve to the point where he was playing shortstop or second base on defense and regularly hitting the ball. He made the Tyler Routt All-Star team and eventually played for his high school team on the varsity squad.

Dyn-O-Mike: This was another very small, left-handed player who played the outfield. Because of the lack of arm strength to make throws from the outfield, he was put into left field. He started at the bottom of the batting order. He worked tirelessly on arm strength. He went from a slow runner to a base stealer with better than average speed. He did this on the basis of hard work and learning the mechanics of running as well as base stealing. As a 13-year-old he was a Tyler Routt All-Star. By his 15-year-old year he was an end of the season All-Star, starting center fielder and leadoff hitter. He continued to play in the Senior Babe Ruth league and volunteered as coach for the younger players. Two years ago he coached one of the Tyler Routt All Star Teams.

These players are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to success stories from Tyler Routt players. All three players were exceptional students and all three are turning out to be solid adult citizens. At Elk Grove Babe Ruth, we are justifiably proud of our Tyler Routt program, our regular All-Stars and our work with all levels

of players in "Teaching Love of the Game Since 1962". There is still time to sign up for the upcoming season online at www.eghardball.com.

Doug Penney, Secretary Elk Grove Babe Ruth



Home teams from both fields lining up for the Anthem 2014