



The Vets From Rec Division 4 Softball Engage On A New Battlefield

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Each year, as Veterans Day nears, vets who play in The Villages Recreational Softball League organize teams and prepare their strategy to defend and uphold their branch of service. On November 7th 2021, Division 4 began their annual veterans tournament at Buffalo Ridge. The tournament continues Sunday the 14th, with the final playoffs on Sunday the 21st. The games begin at 9AM, followed by a 10:30 game each Sunday. The games and their players are competitive on this "battlefield" although the element of camaraderie is maintained regardless of the branch these vets have served.

The early morning opening ceremony on the 7th was carried out in all the military pomp and circumstance expected although, the morning was quite brisk. The teams, with players numbering close to one hundred players, lined the bases from first to third while the US Marines Color Guard presented the flags. The program featured Matt Spanier, D4 Wizards manager, Navy, as Master of Ceremonies introducing a dedicated group kicking off the tournament with respect and honor to all veterans, on and off the field. Included were Division 4's player Art Hines, Marine, leading the Pledge of Allegiance. Larry Rivellese boldly sang the National Anthem. Music continued as D4 players Buck Buchannon, Air Force, played his bagpipes and Dave Czohara, Navy, his trumpet, warming all of the souls in attendance. The opening ceremony concluded with an invocation by Bernie Cook, Army, with his Grandson at his side, dressed in replica WWII uniforms Bernie's father had worn. The games began with the first pitch thrown by Betty, well known for her previous years of dedication as concessionaire at the Buffalo Glen fields. (btw, she put it right over home plate, directly in Arty's glove)

The players took the field and all battled it out to survive the first round. There were three Army teams up against a Marines, Air Force, and Navy team. Sorry, Air Force and Marines, it shall be an Army vs Navy series again this year! Navy swept last year's tournament! Who will be the 2021 Annual Veterans Tournament Champions on November 21st? Come out and support the vets regardless which military branch! And, if it's cold outside remember, all of these fine vets showed up in any kind of weather to support US. We all thank you for your service.





THANK YOU
TO ALL
WHO HAVE SERVED
AND TO YOUR FAMILIES
FOR YOUR SACRIFICES
AND YOUR SERVICE.

