

## **Lifetime Achievement Award Nomination for Leo MacDonald**

Leo has made a significant contribution to baseball in Saskatchewan for the past 25 years as a coach, builder and park operator. The following demonstrate his commitment, passion and drive to make a difference.

### **Leo the Coach**

**Mosquito to Bantam** - Leo coached both his sons in minor baseball, starting with Mitch in 1995 and finishing with Geoff until 2009. Both sons went on to play college baseball in the US and for the Regina Red Sox in the WMBL. He coached the White Sox when the city was divided into zones (rather than city wide) and his teams won many provincial gold and silver medals and went on to compete at both national and western Canadian championships.

**Midget AAA** – Leo coached both his sons at the Midget AAA (now 18U AAA) level and helped not only Mitch and Geoff, but all the players achieve success through his ability to connect through relationship building and skill development through diagnosing performance gaps and teaching proper technique. Even after both his sons graduated from the Midget AAA program, Leo continued with his passion for coaching baseball at the elite level. He helped coach the 2013 Regina Wolfpack to a provincial championship and after a short hiatus came back to coach the 2017, 2018 and 2019 Regina Wolfpack. Leo dedicated his time as a volunteer for many years to countless athletes in Regina to help them achieve great success at baseball – many of whom have gone on to play baseball at the college level.

**Coach with Team Sask** – Leo was a coach on the Team Sask Canada Cup team in 2002 when the program operated differently compared to now. He also was a coach for Team Sask taking the provincial selects team to tournaments in Arizona for at least 4 different years.

Leo has coached baseball for 25 years, of which 9 years were as a non-parent coach.

### **Leo the Builder**

**SPBL AAA** - Leo became one of the key driving forces in the creation of the Saskatchewan Premier Baseball League. Established in 2011, the SPBL is the best baseball league in the province that connects the top 18U players to compete against one another. Due to its success, in 2020 the league expanded to 13 teams. Teams from North and South divisions compete under one united League in a 30-game schedule. It was Leo's vision to have the best players compete against each other rather than have segregated leagues and divisions in various zones of the province. The SPBL has grown into a respected developmental league among Canadian and US Colleges. Players are advancing at greater rates into CCBA, CCBC, NCAA, NAIA and NJCAA College programs. SPBL alumni have also been selected into MLB drafts.

**SPBL AA** - With the strength and structure of the SPBL AAA league, Leo has recently been the driving force to build the SPBL AA league. This started with 18U AA teams in Regina and surrounding area and grew to cover southern Saskatchewan. The skill and desire to play at this level has been recognized for its success and has recently expanded to 16 teams covering the entire province.

**Board Member** - In addition to his volunteer work as a coach and builder of the SPBL league, Leo has contributed for 15 years as a board member for Baseball Regina. He served many positions over the years including director of the Midget (18U) division and director of sponsorship. As a board member, Leo was always keen on growing the overall enrollment of the league and pushing the organization to stretch the elite levels where we could develop more talent. He knows that the kids will compete and Regina will continue to field successful teams. Prior to his work on the Baseball Regina board, he volunteered as a lead for the RNEBA (Regina North East Baseball Association - Lions) since 1999.

**Fall Ball** - In 2006, Leo started and administered the popular fall ball program in Regina that has a strong following and participation.

### **Leo the Park Operator**

Leo and his wife Jean have been operating Lions Park in Regina since 2004. On most weekends and weeknights you can see Leo riding around on the garden tractor prepping diamonds and getting the park ready for players across the city to play games or practice. Leo (and Jean) is always looking for ways to improve the park on a limited budget. Leo was the first to install grass infields at Lions in the early days. In the past five years some of the improvements at the park include: renovated bathrooms and common area, new batting cages, improved pitchers mounds, extended backstops, irrigation etc. Leo also uses his relationship building skill to get deals on materials from the city and local contractors. All of this hard work and effort benefits everyone else what uses the park.

### **Conclusion**

Leo MacDonald has made a significant contribution to baseball in Saskatchewan for the past 25 years. He has been a successful coach at all levels, he created the top league in the province and has provided a venue for teams and spectators to enjoy. He is very deserving of a Lifetime Achievement Award.