

'Greatest show in softball' opens ¹⁹⁷⁸

By Val Monson

Will the Olson brothers find success and happiness with Gigi's? Will Phil Wilkerson get back on the winning trail? Will Winterset be able to cool off the red hot bats of Butt'r Topp?

The drama starts tonight at Bomber Park with the opening of the men's state fast-pitch softball tournament, otherwise known as "the state's greatest show in softball," according to Mark Jennings, state commissioner of the Amateur Softball Association.

The pitching Olson brothers, Gene and Dean, have switched uniforms since last year's state tournament. Formerly of the Des Moines Bombers, they now are throwing for Gigi's and are probably the main reason the team has been tabbed the

Tonight's Games

AT BOMBER PARK
7:00 — D.M. Bombers vs. Bussey (Lovilia)
8:15 — Gigi's (D.M.) vs. Stadium Lounge (Emmetsburg)
9:30 — Butt'r Topp (Clear Lake) vs. Winterset

Friday Night's Games

AT BIRDLAND
7:00 — Ackley vs. Halverson Construction (Iowa City)
8:30 — Collins Radio (C.R.) vs. Henry J's (D.M.)
AT BOMBER PARK
6:30 — L and L Boosters (Webster City) vs. Fosters (C.R.)
Reames (D.M.) vs. Siouxland Sports (Sioux City)
9:00 — Truckers Insurance (Elkhart) vs. Sovereign (Cresco)

favorite in the double-elimination meet.

The Bombers may face another former teammate before the four-day tourney concludes Sunday night. Roger Buddin now plays for hard-hitting Butt'r Topp of Clear Lake.

"Without a doubt, Butt'r Topp is the best-hitting team in the state," said Jennings, "and probably one of the best in the nation."

Wilkerson had few problems in the regular season for Reames, but was stung with two losses in the Des Moines substate and the team finished third behind the Bombers and Truckers Insurance of Elkhart.

Reames also can counter with another excellent pitcher in Denny Linderbaum.

Defending champion Modern Piping of Cedar Rapids isn't entered because, as host team of the regional over Labor Day weekend, it automatically qualifies for that meet. The new state champion earns a slot in the regional, too.

Gigi's state fast-pitch favorite

By VAL MONSON

Register Staff Writer

Back in 1933, Franklin Roosevelt had just moved into the White House, John-Boy was just starting that novel and Iowans were getting ready for their first men's state fast-pitch softball tournament.

Many presidents have since lived in the White House and you don't see much of John-Boy anymore, but softball is still going strong, with another state fast-pitch tournament opening tonight at Bomber Park.

Sixteen teams from four substate meets are competing in the double-elimination event that runs through Sunday at Birdland and Bomber Parks. It's the biggest field in the meet's history.

A new state champion, which will move to the regional over Labor Day weekend, is guaranteed because defending champion Modern Piping of Cedar Rapids already has secured a berth in the regional by serving as host team.

So, the favorite tag has been issued to Gigi's of Des Moines, only in its second year of competition. Gigi's success can be, at least partially, attributed to the addition of pitching brothers Gene and Dean Olson, formerly of the Des Moines Bombers.

Don't worry, the Bombers have survived. The Des Moines substate

Tourney Facts

FIRST ROUND TONIGHT

At Bomber Park
7:00 — D.M. Bombers vs. Bussey (Lovilia)
8:15 — Gigi's (D.M.) vs. Stadium Lounge (Emmetsburg)
9:30 — Butt'r Topp (Clear Lake) vs. Winterset

FRIDAY NIGHT

At Birdland
7:00 — Ackley vs. Halverson Construction (Iowa City)
8:30 — Collins Radio (C.R.) vs. Henry J's (D.M.)
At Bomber Park
6:30 — L and L Boosters (Webster City) vs. Fosters (C.R.)
7:45 — Reames (D.M.) vs. Siouxland Sports (Sioux City)
9:00 — Truckers Insurance (Elkhart) vs. Sovereign (Cresco)

champions feature Tom Stokesbary, Wendell Blankenburg and Gene Knop. The Bombers will open the tournament against Bussey of Lovilia at 7:00 p.m. at Bomber Park. Gigi's faces Stadium Lounge of Emmetsburg at 8:15, followed by Butt'r Topp of Clear Lake meeting Winterset.

If it's slugging you want, Butt'r Topp probably will accommodate. Led by shortstop Bob Sturgis, the tournament's most valuable player the past two years who won that honor in the 1975 regional meet, Butt'r Topp has been called one of the country's best-hitting teams.

Pitching Below Par?

Word has it that Butt'r Topp's pitching isn't quite on a par with its bats, however. Dallas Slagle and Dale Root, the team's top hurlers, are out to prove that wrong.

The featured first-round matchup doesn't take place until Friday night when Siouxland Sports and Reames of Des Moines collide.

Leo Morris, a member of the Amateur Softball Association's Hall of Fame, is now making his presence known as coach of Siouxland, paced by first baseman Steve Maguire. Reames can expect to face either Bob Brady or Dennis Quade on the mound.

Reames has got an outstanding pitcher of its own in Phil Wilkerson, who is trying to rebound from a pair of stunning losses in the substate. Reames finished only third in its substate, but still is considered one of the favorites.

Another Collins Bid

Collins Radio, headed by catcher Steve Calvert and outfielder Barry Ernst, hopes to recapture the state crown it won in 1976. Truckers Insurance of Elkhart and Sovereign of Cresco are back in the field again also.

Kirby of Cedar Rapids, however, isn't among the finalists. Kirby, considered one of the state's top teams, didn't enter because its leading pitcher, Loren Algar, isn't eligible. All players must live in the United States for a year before competing in the tournament and a year ago Algar was still in New Zealand.

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Bombers upset Gigi's, 7-4, in state fast-pitch tournament

By VAL MONSON

Sunday Register Staff Writer

In case Don Keene ever gets tired of pitching, he's always got a future as a designated hitter.

The Bomber reliever survived a shaky fourth inning and then fueled the winning rally with the first of two triples as the Bombers ripped tournament favorite Gigi's, 7-4, Saturday night at Bomber Park before 3,000 fans.

That moved the Bombers into today's championship of the winners' bracket against Butt'r Topp of Clear Lake, which edged Collins Radio of Cedar Rapids, 1-0, on Bob Weber's seventh-inning single.

Keene might have been the most surprised at his sudden success with the bat. A native of Dallas Center, he moved back to the Des Moines area this summer after spending 11 years in Spokane, Wash., where designated

hitters were used.

"This (season) is the first time I've batted in five years," said Keene, who also saved the Bombers' 10-5 victory over Fosters of Marion Saturday afternoon.

The reliever was bothered by charley horses much of the night. "I'm not used to this baserunning," he said.

Keene was called upon in the second inning with Gigi's threatening to expand its 1-0 lead off starter Mike Clark. Keene immediately got out of the jam and one inning later was given a 3-1 advantage as the Bombers pounded three hits, highlighted by Tom Peterson's triple to right field.

Keene couldn't hold the lead, however, as Gigi's bounced back on Steve Forrester's double and a two-out infield single by Ben Edwards.

Keene led off the fifth with a triple and scored on Leroy Sullivan's single. The Bombers proceeded to load the bases for John Kelly who tripled. Gene Olsen took over for his brother, Dean, on the mound, but by that time it was too late.

Not that Keene didn't want some more runs. He lashed his second triple in the sixth inning, only to be stranded. It didn't matter. Gigi's, which lost for the sixth time in eight meetings with the Bombers, couldn't do much else the rest of the night.

Butt'r Topp took a different route to gain in the double-elimination meet. The Clear Lake team broke a scoreless duel between its pitcher, Dale Root and Collins veteran Jerry Raifs, with a hit by Bob Weber in the final inning.

Rick Kriz got the rally started by turning a hit into a double with some alert baserunning. That was the fourth hit off Raifs, who then intentionally passed Lance Dreesman. Weber followed with a single over the head of second baseman Steve Worcester.

Butt'r Topp pitcher Dale Root has yet to give up a run in two complete games and a relief appearance. He saved Butt'r Topp's 3-2 victory over Halverson Construction of Iowa City earlier Saturday afternoon.

Butt'r Topp, which has been rated

as high as sixth nationally this season, extended its winning string to 21 games by shutting down the high-scoring Collins team that had erupted for 26 runs in its first two games.

Collins needed only five innings to whip Truckers Insurance of Elkhart, 15-0, as Dale Larson spun a one-hitter. Butt'r Topp, which also had outstanding fielding, was the first team to score off Collins in the state meet.

Gigi's slammed city-rival Reames, 8-0, while the Bombers thumped Fosters in their afternoon contests. Reames, however, remained alive in the meet as it won a pair of games Saturday night and will face Collins at 10 a.m. at Bomber Park before Gigi's meets Halverson in losers' bracket action.

Tourney Facts

WINNERS' BRACKET QUARTERFINAL ROUND

Butt'r Topp (Clear Lake) 3, Halverson Construction (Iowa City) 2

Collins Radio (C.R.) 15, Truckers Insurance (Elkhart) 0 (five innings)

D.M. Bombers 10, Fosters (Marion) 5
Gigi's (D.M.) 8, Reames (D.M.) 0

SEMIFINAL ROUND

Butt'r Topp 1, Collins Radio 0
D.M. Bombers 7, Gigi's 4

LOSERS' BRACKET FIRST ROUND

Winterset 2, Ackley 1
Sovereign (Cresco) 8, Henry J's 5

L and L Boosters (Woolstock) 13, Bussey (Lovilia) 3

Sooland Sports (Stoux City) 7, Stadium Lounge (Emmetsburg) 6

SECOND ROUND

L and L Boosters 10, Truckers Insurance 1
Halverson Construction 6, Sooland Sports 5

Sovereign (Cresco) 4, Fosters 3
Reames 3, Winterset 2

QUARTERFINAL ROUND

Reames 2, Sovereign 0
Halverson beat L and L Boosters, no score reported.

WINNERS' BRACKET

Halverson..... 020 000 0 - 2 5 0
Butt'r Topp..... 000 201 x - 3 7 1

Schroeder and Condon; Slagle, Root (6) and Smith. W - Root.

Truckers..... 000 00 - 0 1 5
Collins..... 165 3x - 15 10 - 1

Taylor, Cory (4) and Owen; Larson and Calvert. L - Taylor.

Fosters..... 110 300 0 - 5 10 2
D.M. Bombers..... 313 102 x - 10 9 2

Knop, Kean (4) and Zediker; Hoyt, Maahs (4) and Waechter. W - Knop; L - Hoyt.

Gigi's..... 202 013 0 - 8 10 1
Reames..... 000 000 0 - 0 5 2

G. Olson and Forrester; Lindenbaum, Wilkinson (3) and Brown. L - Lindenbaum.

Collins..... 000 000 0 - 0 3 1
Butt'r Topp..... 000 000 1 - 1 5 0

Raiff and Calvert; Root and Smith.

Gigi's..... 100 030 0 - 4 10 1
D.M. Bombers..... 003 040 x - 7 9 1

D. Olson, G. Olson (5) and Forrester; Clark, (2) and Zediker.

1978

Beefed up Butt'r Topp solves its paltry pitching problems

By VAL MONSON

Register Staff Writer

CEDAR RAPIDS, IA. — There aren't many people talking about the paltry pitching of Butt'r Topp anymore.

The Clear Lake softball team quashed those rumors while wrapping up the men's state fast-pitch title two weeks ago in Des Moines, but since then has beefed up its pitching staff even more for the regional tournament which opens here tonight at Ellis Park.

Butt'r Topp opens the double-elimination event at 6:30, taking on defending champion Ken's Pizza of Springfield, Mo. Modern Piping of Cedar Rapids faces Broken Bow of Nebraska at 8 o'clock, followed by a clash between Kurtis Funeral Home of St. Louis and Plantation of Kansas.

Add 2 Pitchers

Dale Root earned Most Valuable Pitcher honors while claiming all five

Butt'r Topp victories at the state meet, and Root should get much more help this time because teams are allowed two additional players to regional rosters.

With that, Butt'r Topp has gained the services of a pair of outstanding hurlers in Phil Wilkinson of Reames of Des Moines and Gene Olsen of Gigi's of Des Moines.

If those three can't get the job done, Butt'r Topp also has Dallas Slagle, its leading pitcher in the regular season.

Modern Piping Bid

Butt'r Topp hardly has a monopoly on fine pitching. Modern Piping of Cedar Rapids, which automatically qualified for the meet as the host squad, features a superb duo in southpaw Gregg Bosch and righthander Al Rausch.

Modern Piping is the only club in the nine-team field which earned a bye into the meet. The others are

either state or metropolitan champions from the Midwest, vying for a berth in the national meet at Springfield, Mo., Sept. 8-16.

Many of Modern Piping's players were part of the team which won the national crown under Welty Way in 1971. Butt'r Topp, in its third regional tournament, has yet to gain the nationals, but one of their newest additions, Wilkinson, has tossed six victories there.

Familiar Opponent

Wilkinson also is quite familiar with Butt'r Topp's first-round opponent, Ken's Pizza. Last year Ken's, then named Horton's, went to the national meet with Wilkinson on the pitching staff.

Both Iowa teams will need all that pitching to survive the meet, especially if they meet one of the favorites, Kurtis Funeral Home, a regular-season participant in a rugged Chicago league.

Sports

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Butt'r Topp to regional final

CEDAR RAPIDS — Butt'r Topp of Clear Lake was to play either Hall's of Kansas City, Mo., or Kutis of St. Louis, Mo., at 1:30 p.m. today in the finals of the American Softball Association Western Regional fastpitch softball tournament.

Butt'r Topp was seeking its first regional title ever. Earlier this year, the Bakers won their third state title in nine years.

After Dale Root's shutout pitching carried Butt'r Topp to a 4-0 first-round win over defending champ Ken's Pizza of Springfield, Mo., on Friday, the Clear Lake power disposed of Kutis 3-0 Saturday as Gene Olson, a pickup from Des Moines for the regional, pitched a four-hitter and struck out six.

Then Sunday evening, before an estimated 4,000 fans, Butt'r Topp gained the finals by topping Hall's of Kansas City 5-2. Hall's and Kutis were to play at noon today in the loser's bracket for the right to meet Butt'r Topp. If the Butt'r Topp wins the first game of the finals, it's all over, but a Butt'r Topp loss would force a second game to decide the title.

"This is the best we've played all year. If we blow it today, well ...," manager Paul Espinosa said, not wanting to talk about losing a chance at a goal his team Topp has coveted so much in recent years.

Saturday, Butt'r Topp scored twice in the first inning on singles by Rich Smith

and John Ege, Bob Sturges' run-scoring ground out and Rick Kriz's RBI single.

The Bakers added an insurance run in the fifth on a sacrifice fly by Ron Foell.

Hall's scored just one run in the first inning against Butt'r Topp Sunday despite loading the bases with none out. Butt'r Topp came back with one run in the second on consecutive singles by Sturges, Kriz and Bob Harken but fell behind 2-1 when Hall's scored again in the bottom of that frame.

However, Butt'r Topp struck twice in the third on Foell's double, an infield single by Ege, a walk and Sturges' two-run single. A walk, sacrifice bunt and Foell's single in the sixth provided another run while Lance Dreesman's sacrifice fly in the seventh drove in Butt'r Topp's final tally.

Root relieved starter Phil Wilkinson, Butt'r Topp's other tourney pickup, in the fifth inning and whiffed five batters while allowing just one hit over the final three frames. His teammates finished with a total of 11 hits while Hall's totaled just three.

Butt'r Topp was 77-23 heading into the finals.

	R	H	E	
Kutis.....	000	000	0	— 0 4 1
Butt'r Topp.....	200	010	x	— 3 4 0
Andreas and Graff; Olson and Smith.				
Butt'r Topp.....	012	001	1	— 5 11 2
Hall's.....	110	000	0	— 2 3 0
Wilkinson, Root (5) and Smith; Fiene, Hernandez (5) and Poindexter.				



Kriz



Sturges



Root