

# WYBI Dreams Closing In On Reality

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No longer is it a Field of Dreams. Now, it's a Field of Reality.

It's been that way since the evening of May 23, when Wooster Youth Baseball kicked off its 1994 campaign.

That opening night was no different since any night since the Miller Fields opened for action in 1958 except for one reason. Instead of two fields, there was play on three, as two years of sweat and time finally reached fruition when Bank One and Lehr Plumbing squared off on the first game ever played on the new diamond.

The new diamond, long dreamed of by WYBI officials and which will benefit countless Wooster youth in the years to come, finally came into being because of a hotly disputed event in Wooster.

"The first thing that happened in 1991 was, after (long-time WYBI coordinator) Bill Wile died was they started working on Portage Road," said Brian Smith, the current coordinator of the league.

"They took a lot of material off that hill ... so we asked the construction company if they would dump it on our property," Smith said. "We needed a lot of fill, and they were happy to do it because it saved them a lot of trucking costs. They filled the area up three times and leveled it."

"That was the major thing that got this going," Smith added. "Then, when they built ~~that~~ they had a pile of topsoil, and we had it trucked in."

Even though it was dirt, nothing — including the dirt — was cheap.

"We did have to raise quite a bit of money and we did get some grants to help," Smith said.

Ralph Jones and Don Buehler helped in the fund raiser, and their two Farm League

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LYNN NICKLES OF NICKLES CRANE Service secures one of the scoreboards for hoisting with help from Dick Davis and Jim Parris (right) Friday afternoon at Miller Fields in Wooster. All three Wooster Youth Baseball fields are getting electronic scoreboards.

Steve Stokes phot

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teams — Wooster Glass and Buehler's Markets — kicked off the Farm League season.

The renovation at Miller Fields has extended to the original two fields as well.

"We've been doing two things at once," Smith said. "We were doing the new field and we had to re-work the lights on the north and south fields. There's just so much going on."

One of the new additions to the field was Friday, when the installation of three new electronic scoreboards began.

That may have been a major project, but "There are a lot of little things going on," Smith pointed out. "We've had hundreds of people doing work."

.. That has been the major reason, Smith said, the new field project has succeeded. Smith has been in the WYBI program since 1984, and is only the third coordinator in the program since Denton Fuller ran it beginning in 1948 before being succeeded by Wile in 1967.

"The biggest change since I've been involved in the program is we had 160 kids playing (in 1984) and this year we've got 350," Smith said. "We now have 12 teams in each

league and we've gone from 14 to 24 teams. We have, a lot more kids playing.

"We really needed that third field desperately."

Now they have it, but already changes are in store for it.

"We want to put lights on the field" so the league can play two games a night on it instead of just one, Smith noted.

"We don't have the money for the lights yet," he said, noting that will run in the neighborhood of \$25,000.

But, if and when that that does come about, it will be the icing on the dirt, so to speak.

Right now, the important thing is that a dream has become as real as dust and grass.