

Winning Is Habit for Girls

By Harold "Rosy" Rosiska
Clay Center Dispatch

CLAY CENTER, Kansas -- Winning state softball championships has been a pleasant habit for a group of Clay Center, Kansas teenage girls. The Clay Center Bees won their sixth state tournament in a row in August to cap another successful season.

The accomplishment rates a nod due to the fact that the Kansas ASA has sponsored state tournaments for the class only six years. For four years the division was the Junior girls meet, then the state classified the tourney as the girls high school state tournament.

Originally the team was known as th Broughton Bees. The club started playing seven seasons ago under the management of Wade Bauer and Bill Mapes, natives of the little community town of Broughton. The two still manage the team, now known as the Clay Center Bees. Broughton no longer exists as it was eliminated by formation of the Milford Reservoir on the Republican River.

In the first season the team did not compete in a state tourney

as none was held. A year later, Kansas commissioner Jerry Stremel added the Junior girls state tournament to softball action. The Broughton team (often called "Bruton" by fans who never heard of Broughton until the team put the little town before the public) won the first state tourney for the age group. The team added three more state Junior titles, then added two girls state high school titles since the division was changed two seasons back.

During the seven seasons of competition, the club has won 204 games and lost only 42.

Four of the girls who played with the team this season, started as members of the original group. Marla Randle and Susan Storm have been leading hitters each season. Elanie Davies is an outstanding catcher who handles pitchers with confidence and poise. Rosalene Evans is a blond pitcher who was on the roster of the first club. The slender hurler won two games in an unbeaten sweep to the state title this season. A year ago Evans was voted the MVP award when she capped a brilliant performance by pitching her team to three wins in 23 innings on the

final day to win the state title in a climb back through the loser bracket.

The road to a state title has not been easy by any means. Twice the team was forced to come up through the loser bracket to continue its monopoly.

A feeder system now keeps talent moving up to the older group as players are graduated by age limit.

A key to the success of the team is the willingness of the girls to work diligently from early in the spring.

"It is not uncommon for the girls to start working out as early as February if the weather turns mild," claims the managers who are always willing to offer assistance to the group.

The 1967 season is over. The Clay Center Bees will be ready to try to make the 1968 campaign another successful one.

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