

June 17/83

PEPP-TALK

with
Harry
Pepper

I came to Rossland in 1951 and at that time the only park on which sports could be played was Jubilee. It was, and is, a very busy place with kids' sports, men's baseball and minor league ball.

There was a swampy piece of ground down on Cook Avenue between the curve in the railroad tracks and the avenue. It took a lot of work but eventually it was turned into a respectable ball field for the Little League teams. Dugouts were constructed and a backstop erected and a small stand behind home plate. It turned out to be the scene of many spine-tingling contests between teams from all over the Kootenays and the U.S.

Later on, land was made available for a full size ball field in the Black Bear area of town and again volunteer labor was a very big factor. I have been given visual evidence of this in the form of pictures taken when the park was being constructed.

This park is now twinned with the Lions Campground and is one of the best ball diamonds in the Kootenays according to people who have a great deal of know-how on the subject.

Now we are going to get down to the nitty gritty. The fans who would love to attend ball games in these parks are severely hampered by the lack of seating capacity. In fact, it is

practically non-existent. Fans who wish to be comfortable through a six-inning slow pitch or fastball game or a 90-minute soccer contest, must bring along their own seating, i.e. lawn chair or blanket or what have you.

In quite a number of towns the service clubs have donated funds for the construction of seating at the various parks used for spectator sports and since we are told that there is no money in the city's budget for this sort of thing, it would appear this is the route we will have to take.

Many service organizations have vast reservoirs of know-how among their retired ranks

and a pool of potential volunteer workers is available if it were to be coordinated.

We are fortunate in Rossland to have a very willing bunch of young men who have been doing a tremendous job of operating what are known as play-for-fun sports — both hockey and ball. The money they use to operate comes mostly from their own pockets and the odd tournament where they can charge admittance.

Just recently these young people found time to vastly improve the facilities at the Cook Avenue Park by installing new waterproof dugouts. Quite an improvement over the leaky

old shacks that passed for dugouts in years gone by.

Now I'm given to understand the Black Bear park is badly in need of some work. Behind the backstop there is a dense forest of young saplings that are rapidly becoming trees and a quantity of underbrush that defies description. Any balls that are fouled over that backstop can be considered long gone and balls today run about \$10 apiece. A couple of power saws and some scrub slashing equipment handled by some willing volunteer labor could turn that hillside into a site for seating a veritable amphitheatre. Some grubbing and some CPR ties could make seating for hundreds of fans who just might go along if there was some place to sit.

Rossland has the potential athletes to be an even better sports centre. Let's try and give the people who would like to go and watch them perform a comfortable place to go to do just that.

Now to golf for a bit, Tuesday was again a fine day on the upper course where once again 52 golfers turned out for Retirees' Day.

The competition was run by Lou Crowe, Percy Cutler and Rich Watkinson and was high and low hidden hole and least putts.

Prizes Tuesday were handed out to Jim Scott for a 42 low gross, Herb Martin had a four on No. 6, a hidden hole. I won a ball for the high score of nine on No. 2, another hidden hole. George

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As we mentioned last week, will those winners who did not pick up a ball do so at their earliest convenience. Next week's competition will be run by Jim Scott and Ernie Primeau with Bingo, Bango, Bongo and the longest putt on No. 9.