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## Top Stories

### Vintage baseball comes to Simsbury

By: Jay Nowakowski , Correspondent

06/10/2004

**There's a new baseball team in Simsbury called the Simsbury Taverneers, but in actuality, there's really nothing new about it at all.**

In fact, the team prides itself on embracing all things about baseball that are old and outdated by today's standards. Their uniforms and their manner of speech hark back to the era of baseball's earlier years - the mid to the latter part of the 19th century, to be exact. They use terms such as hurler, striker, foul tick and rooters. In today's baseball lexicon, these terms refer to the pitcher, the batter, foul balls and the fans. At Taverneer's games, it may help to have a vocabulary cheat sheet with you to follow along with the action!



"I actually got the idea to establish a team here in the Valley when I went to see the Hartford Senators (another vintage team based in Hartford) play last year and I enjoyed it so much," said team co-founder John Lucker of Simsbury. Over the course of the winter, Lucker met and spoke with other people whom he thought would be interested in forming a vintage team.

In all, 21 players have come together to form the Taverneers. With an average age of 40, this club has a fair amount of experience behind them.

"There's really no special criteria to play," said Lucker, "just desire, a familiarity with the game and wanting to have fun. The difference with vintage baseball is that it tends to be more recreational and although it's competitive to a certain degree, it's not as competitive as some of the more traditional baseball leagues in the area. It's also really family-oriented and a lot of families come out for the game."

The Simsbury team is the first Farmington Valley team and only the seventh vintage team in the Hartford area. Most of the players come from Simsbury, with a few coming from the surrounding towns of Avon, Canton and Bloomfield.

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Practice began in early March and since then, the team has begun to gel. The players are becoming more familiar with the unique rules and strategy of vintage ball. There is particular focus on catching throws and hits without a baseball mitt and hitting with bats that are much larger than modern bats.

The team held its first game in early May and more recently, they played the Providence Grays on home turf on Saturday, June 6. While they lost the first game by a score of 9 to 6, they went on to win the second game 13 to 12 in 10 innings. It was their first win in the five games they have played.

"I'd like to see us end the season with a .500 record," said Lucker, "but right now we have a ways to go with a record of one win and four losses."


With time and practice, they hope to change those statistics and increase their visibility and support in the community as well.

"I'd really like to see us have the attendance at between 200 to 300 at our home games," said Lucker.

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