

Softball is a big part of this small town tradition

Spirit of Carson Valley Days continues

Story and photos by Robert Perea

GARDNERVILLE, NV – Minden founder H.F. Dangberg Jr decided in 1910 that his new town needed a big party. That was the beginning of the Carson Valley's oldest and biggest party, Carson Valley Days. Only war prevented the parade and events from happening as not even the Great Depression stopped the party. Every year in June the annual parade treks from Minden Park to Lampe Park where there is a carnival and softball tournament. A rodeo, 5K/10K run, youth softball and the inaugural grass volleyball tournament also brought out the crowds to the Minden/Gardnerville Valley.

Nowhere was the competition hotter than the softball fields at Lampe Park.

Sixteen teams took part in the men's softball tournament over the June 13-14 weekend as part of the 99th version of the Carson Valley Days festival.

Turbulence takes top spot

Facing the pre-tournament favorite was no problem for the champions of this year's Carson Valley Days Outlaw Invitational as Turbulence came back through the loser's bracket after losing in the semifinals to win the title, capping the run with 12-2 and 4-2 wins over Aftermath for the championship.

Aftermath cruised into the championship round undefeated behind a thunderous offense. They defeated Wilson Construction, 17-2, Battle Born, 14-13 and D-12, the favorite coming into the tournament, 16-6, to reach the semifinals, where they beat Turbulence, 8-6 for a berth in the championship from the winner's bracket.

While the players from Aftermath sat back to see who they'd face in the finals, Turbulence bounced back to eliminate D-12, 16-4.

Turbulence had opened the tournament with three straight wins, including 19-12 over War Party and 6-4 over Buck's, the defending tournament champions.

Turbulence pitcher Bryan McKee said it was his team's defense that allowed them to get rolling.



Bryan McKee of Turbulence turns a double play in front of Aaron Gonsalves of Aftermath.



Shawn Crozier of Turbulence dives into third as Richie Diaz of Aftermath waits for the throw.

"My ERA was probably about five," McKee said. "For softball, that's good."

The Turbulence infield turned double plays in each of the first three innings of the first game of the championship round, while they built a 7-0 lead. On one of the twin killings, McKee himself covered second base while shortstop Rick Garska played deep into the hole.

"Our infield was tough and our outfield was great," Turbulence shortstop Rick Garska said.

After forcing the if-game with the 12-2 win, Turbulence continued to flash the leather in the finale, and got all the offense production they needed with three runs in the fourth inning.

It was the second time in the last three years Turbulence, based in Minden, NV, has won the Carson Valley Days tournament.

"We take this one personal," Garska said. "It's our home ground."

Garska and McKee were among five Turbulence players named to the All-Tournament team. They were joined by Randy Loff, Ronnie Marwin and Austin Leck.

Sean Seaman was voted the tournament's MVP.

Aftermath third baseman David Cruz represented his team on the All-Tournament team.

H.F. Dangberg, Jr. would have been proud that the home team won.