

Teammates

from Little League to Senior Ball

Story By Scott Oxarart



When Reno, Nev. resident Larry Berger goes down memory lane, he thinks about his time in Little League with buddy Mark Olsen.

The two were teammates on the 1961 Reno Phillies team that was one of the best squads in the area.

Berger played outfield and Olsen, a year older, played shortstop.

Olsen would tuck his glove under his armpit and had a brash air about him like he was seasoned veteran.

"He was extremely cocky," Berger said of his teammate. "Absolutely. But you know what? He was so good he could get away with it."

Now that the two are in their 60s, has anything changed?

"He's always cocky," Berger said. "But he's still a good guy to play with."

After all these years, the two are playing

together for Last Call, a 60-and-over tournament team that travels throughout the country.

They've been to Arizona, California, Florida, Nevada and Washington.

Berger still plays outfield while Olsen plays third base. Sure, they might not be as light-footed running the bases like they used to in the '60s when they were flying high at the Little League fields where the Reno-Sparks Livestock Events Center is now.

But one thing that hasn't changed is that the two love the game and still have fun playing it.

"Playing against him, it's always fun to beat him," Olsen said. "Playing with him, I'm glad he's on my team."

Berger and Olsen played three years together in Little League before they split up in high school — Olsen attended Wooster High and Berger went to Reno High.

After high school, in the '70s, they got together for the team WEDCO, Western Electrical Distributors Co. in Reno. After four seasons, the two went their separate ways.



Top 2011:

Larry Berger, left, and Mark Olsen.

Smedes photo. Left 1961: Mark Olsen top row, second from left. Larry Berger, bottom row, second from right.

It wasn't until 2000 that the two crossed paths. They still knew each other, but never played with or against each other.

The two were in the same 50 and older league and finally in 2007, they both joined Last Call. Now, their homes are separated by about five blocks.

Even now they'll sit down for a beer after a game and reminisce about the old days and the fact that their paths continue to cross. "We've thought that it's awfully strange," Berger said. "We have beers and thought, 'Thank God we're both healthy and thank God we still love this game.'"

"We just know that we're both blessed to play as long as we have and to still play."

One of the reasons the two have played together for so long is that they truly enjoy each other's company.

"Larry hasn't changed much," Olsen said. "He's a great guy, a good competitor. He works hard. He's a lot of fun to play with. He takes the game serious but can have fun after the game."

"Again, I think we just both love to play the game and we love to compete. That's how we've stayed in the same circles."

Asked if they had any stories they can remember as far back as their Little League days, nothing concrete came to mind.

Both took a second to think back and both had the same response. "You probably can't print some of the stories," Olsen said.