

Jenny McCoy: Palm Bay Little Leagues open 2007 season

Clear skies and fresh, new uniforms marked the scene of Little League Opening days around Palm Bay on Saturday.

Parades, moonwalks, DJs, face painting, dunk tanks, prizes, raffles and baseball and softball games added a little to the festivities as well.

Palm Bay West held its Opening day festivities at West Oaks Park on Lamplighter Drive. The festivity started with team introductions which gave teams the opportunity to show off their creativity and drawing abilities via a banner competition.

"For the little guys, walking around with a hot dog and bag of chips – they're in heaven" said the league's Vice President, Sam Vanderwarker.

Following introductions, players enjoyed sending umpires and league volunteers for a dip in a dunk tank, racing through inflatable obstacle courses, jumping in the bounce house and eating shaved ice and hot dogs. Teams were also able to get their first action of the season in 90-minute scrimmages that began at noon.

"The little kids are just having a blast," said the league's President Tom Stickney. "We've had fantastic weather and a good turnout."

Palm Bay East

Palm Bay East players started their season off with a fun day as well at Knecht Park on Glenham Drive.

The day began with a parade featuring every team. After the parade, players enjoyed an inflatable slide, face painting, DJ, contests and raffles. Players and parents refreshed themselves with shaved ice, hot dogs and cotton candy throughout the day. Players also had their first games of the season during the afternoon.

For Gene Collins' son Michael, a T-ball player, the most exciting part of Opening Day was his new attire.

"My son is all about the uniform," said Collins.

Dylan Kilburn, 6, a machine-pitch player, enjoyed marching in to the event.

"He loves it," said Andy Kilburn. "He likes getting out and he liked the parade."

Palm Bay Fast Pitch

Palm Bay Fast Pitch Softball League players enjoyed a large turnout and lots of fun activities at the league's Opening Day ceremony on Saturday. The league held its event at Fred Lee Park on Emerson Drive.

The day started with a parade of players and featured a velcro wall, bounce house, fingerprinting, Fire Department engine, game stations, contest, dunk booth and softball games

for teams from each division.

"It was really good," said Jill Swain. "Last year only about half the number of girls participated."

In addition to more players, this year's Opening Day also featured more help from league parents.

"Parents were really more involved this year than last year," said Debra Davenport, mother of player Corisa Davenport. "It was more of a family event this year."

Swain has two daughters, Chloe, 9, and Kaitlin, 15, who play in the league.

Senior League player Kaitlyn Herndon, 13, enjoyed the day and the opportunity to get the season started. "I think it was fun," said Herndon. "I liked having my game."

Reach McCoy at jennymccoy06@googlemail.com
