

## **Sandlot baseball still has its appeal in York County**

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Sandlot baseball teams don't play in brand-new stadiums.

The players don't get paid, and the crowds number, on a good night, in the hundreds, not the thousands.

Sandlot teams conduct fund-raisers in the offseason and pass the hat during games to help pay for bats and other equipment.

The Central League and Susquehanna League, two York County sandlot leagues, have been part of the local sports fabric longer than most people have been alive.

The Central League began play in 1931, and the Susquehanna League, in 1950.

But there's no guarantee they're always going to be around.

Times change. York County had nine sandlot leagues at one time.

And both of the remaining leagues have one less team than they did last season.

The Central League has eight teams, and the Susquehanna League, 10.

Keeping sandlot ball alive requires more than players, coaches and fans.

It also needs a dedicated group of people who will take care of the field, run the concession stands, help with the fund-raisers and do other behind-the-scenes stuff.

Hopefully, those people, many of whom volunteer their services, will always be available.

Town teams co-existed in the past with a professional team, and they can do so again.

While it's enjoyable attending a game in Baltimore (Oriole Park remains a jewel 15 years after its opening), and York Revolution games are a lot of fun, sandlot ball has its charms, too.

The players, who range from high-school age to middle age, compete for community and personal pride.

There are very few bells and whistles (no between-inning contests or cannons firing after a home run). Just baseball.

The Central and Susquehanna leagues do have something special this year: two red-hot pennant races.

Glen Rock leads the Central League at 18-4 followed by Mount Wolf, 14-5, and Manchester, 16-6.

York Township is the Susquehanna League leader at 20-4, and Hallam is 11/2 games back at 18-5.

Glen Rock is the defending regular-season champion, and Mount Wolf won the playoffs and Colonial York Tournament last year. Manchester is enjoying one of its finest seasons in recent years.

Hallam is bidding for a three-peat in the regular season. York Township has won the last two playoff crowns.

Central or Susquehanna, there should be a bunch of good sandlot games for fans to choose from in the upcoming weeks.

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