

Interviewed: June 11, 1976Tape 69, 1

Mr. Gordie MacDonald,  
1061 Gilbert Road,  
Richmond, B. C.

Darlene Clyne - Researcher

- When I first obtained my sporting goods store, I was asked if I had wanted to sponsor a Little League Baseball team in South Richmond.
- For Public Relations and wanting to get my sporting goods store noticed, I sponsored a team in South Arm.
- I also coached the Little League team for a couple of years.
- At that time in Richmond, there were four sections---South Arm, West, Central, and North.
- The four districts had various teams; the North was the smallest--- they had four teams; the Central was best---was very big and had eight or ten teams; South had six teams.
- At the end of the season they would get their various league winners and then they would playoff and get the Championship of Richmond.
- Explains the change over from Little League to B. C. Minor Baseball.
- When a boy finished playing Little League which was up to 12 years of age, at that time he went up to what was called the Babe Ruth League, which was 12 to 14 years and then up to the next one which was not set up too well, it was called the Connie Mac League.
- Connie Mac League was sort of a dying effort---there was no one actually taking a hold of it, the kids after they reached 14 years old, they had no where to go.
- Myself, Doug McLeod and Alex ? were asked if we would be interested in looking after the Connie Mac League.
- At that time we didn't have anyone else who would do it so we said: "We would give it a shot"; so Doug McLeod who was a very willing worker and he did a lot of work, was the main driving force behind it.
- We kept the Connie Mac League going.
- We went over to Brighthouse Park and set up the diamonds and had games going every night.
- At that time, we had about four or five teams.
- The first year we set up we didn't do too well except we got a lot of activities; we got a lot of kids playing and a lot of parents out but there was no interest in it.

Gordie MacDonald

BASEBALL

- The next year we started being asked from places in Vancouver--- can we enter a team (Vancouver was getting nowhere with their Connie Mac team either).
- We thought this is getting much bigger than what we're looking for, but at the same time, we thought well, if we don't do it who's going to.
- So we ended up for two or three years carrying the Connie Mac League in the Lower Mainland.
- We had teams that all came through our Association in Richmond, which they shouldn't have done technically but there was no one else to do it, so we end up with teams from Marpole, West Point Grey, Mount Pleasant and teams from Fraserview.
- They all played through our league under the Connie Mac Banner in Richmond.
- Actually, it meant a lot more work but we were getting a lot more teams and it made a lot more competitive.
- This went along for a number of years and then as the interest gradually built up in the teams out of Richmond, they eventually got their own league in their own section.
- Then we went back into our own five or six team league.
- Then it came back to the old routine again.
- Where do the kids go after they're 16 years old? No where!
- So this is where they came into the next section (league) which is called Junior Baseball, which is over 16 years---it's run from 17 - 21 years old.
- That's when they started the Junior League out here, and they got a fellow who is a graduate of the Little League in Richmond, to coach the team and Garry Gilmore was the moving light behind that, which was around 1970.
- By this time after Connie Mac League had gone along so far, then we gradually stepped out and other people took over.
- But then it became a big thing with Junior Baseball which had great success and won the Western Championship for three or four years.
- Garry Gilmore was the fellow who took over this team and made the success.
- That's still running but Garry has stepped down and Roger Hopkins is now running it.

Gordie MacDonald

BASEBALL

- Eric Anderson was one of the prime movers when baseball started out here in the Little League and the Babe Ruth League.
- He was also a sponsor and one of those dedicated nuts too.
- He came out time after time and coached a team for years.
- He was out there night after night doing what he had to do.
- Nobody wanted any thanks for it; they just did it because they liked to and they enjoyed doing it, thought they were helping with the community.

SPORT

SOFTBALL

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B. C. UMPIRE-IN-CHIEF:

Mr. Gordie MacDonald,  
1061 Gilbert Road,  
Richmond, B. C.

Darlene Clyne - Researcher

- Have been involved in softball as a player, coach and umpire.
- Played softball in 1939 and 1940 in Senior "A" in Vancouver.
- In War years, played softball in the services.
- After the War, played some softball but then got into umpiring.
- I started umpiring in South Hill in 1946.
- In 1948 I was elected President of the Vancouver and District Umpire Association which included baseball and softball umpires; at that time, we had about 115 members.
- Then a few years later the two fractions split, was getting too big for one outfit, so baseball went into its own and so did softball.
- I was President of Umpires Association of Softball for 15 years.
- Then about 15 years ago I was appointed B. C. Umpire-in-Chief.
- It's my job to test the umpires throughout B. C., give them their grades, their marks, write out tickets, answer questions, telephones, and represent B. C. at the Canadian Umpires Meeting they have once a year.
- For the past three years, the Canadian Umpires Meeting has been held in Saskatchewan.
- Have a very difficult time in getting umpires---always short of umpires.
- On my Roster here on the Lower Mainland, I got about 40 - 50 men.
- Unfortunately, that means only 25 - 30 men are eligible every evening for various reasons: either they are working or are playing themselves.
- B. C. Amateur Softball Association gets a grant from the Provincial Government.
- This helps clinics for umpires, minor league people and coaching.
- This grant goes to the B. C. body which in turn looks after all these clinics.
- Baseball gets the same kind of grant.
- Discusses all about various clinics and problems of umpires and umpiring.