

*CHAPTER
TWO*

*THE
PONYTAIL
DIVISION
1974 - 1981*



A Golden Valley Little League softball player,
1978

Olson Elementary School, on Kelly Drive in Golden Valley, is a victim of demographics. Closed in the early 2000s, it sits empty and unused. After years of abandonment, its large playground and field is now just weeds and grass. Its two ball diamonds are overgrown and

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barely recognizable, their locations marked primarily by the backstops that stand silent sentry. The field was used for soccer for a few years in the 1990s, but it is too rough for kids to play any game on. So it sits, the only noise disturbing its silence an occasional power mower. Someday, the Robbinsdale School District will decide its future.

On June 3, 1974, something big started on this forlorn field. In the first game of the Golden Valley Girls Softball league, the Knicks - a team made up of 9-12 year old girls - beat the Flames 12-10. In a second game, which featured two double plays, the Bucks defeated the Lakers 7-3. Thus started the first season of Golden Valley Girls Softball.

That first year, 1974, there were six teams, each with a schedule of ten games. The league was not known as Golden Valley Girls Softball then, but was a new division of Golden Valley Little League, the venerable boys baseball organization, which had been flourishing in Golden Valley since the early 1950s. It was nicknamed the "Ponytail" Division.

The Ponytail Division was the result of the vision and hard work of several women in Golden Valley, all mothers of girls with athletic talent, and all determined that their girls have opportunities to play sports, just like the boys. Helen Pfefferle and Jean Kastor, who lived on the eastern side of the city in Tyrol Hills, teamed up with Joyce Wold, Helen Denson and Katie Reiser, who lived further west. Helen Pfefferle, now 75, is still active and healthy, and she was able to recount how the league started.