



# History of the Kimball Express



Baseball in Kimball has been around since the early 1900's. Nobody can put a finger on exactly when amateur baseball started in Kimball other than it was kind of an on again off again team through the early years. There are memories of many whom put on the spikes and played ball for the Kimball community whether it was Little League, Babe Ruth, Legion, High School or Amateur.

The current team named the Kimball Express play in the Central Valley League. A league comprised of Class C teams throughout central Minnesota from St. Augusta to Eden Valley, Pearl Lake (Marty) to Kimball and in between is Luxemburg, Watkins, Cold Spring and St. Nicholas. The Central Valley League started up in 1965 with a little different look. Rockville was an original member, not an original member were the Cold Spring Rockies as they were not established until the early 1990's.

How the Central Valley got started is an interesting story. Before the CVL, as it is called by many who have played or been around the league, was formed the Kimball team played in the Central Minny League. The original teams to play in the Central Minny or the teams that lasted the longest were Eden Valley, Kimball, Kingston, St. Nicholas and Watkins. Other teams that were at one time members of the Central Minny include Regal, Litchfield, the Cold Spring Springers, Annandale and South Haven.

In 1964 or 1965 Kingston decided not to field a team. Which left the Central Minny at that time with four teams Eden Valley, Kimball, St. Nicholas and Watkins. This prompted the league to find other teams to join their league. Another league that was struggling at the time was the Sauk Valley League, which had teams from Luxemburg, Pearl Lake, Rockville, and St. Augusta. Both leagues got together and decided to team up to form one league. Legend has it that representatives from both leagues met at a local legion in one of the towns to decide the fate of the league. According to sources players from both leagues sat around and grumbled about joining the other league. Nobody wanted to go under the other leagues name. So they compromised and combined the names of both leagues and came up with the Central Valley League because it sounded better than the Sauk Minny.

From 1965 to the present the Central Valley League has played some competitive baseball. Many teams over the years were making the state tournament and representing the Central Valley very well. Other teams to have come and gone from the league have been Annadale, Dassel, and Litchfield.

Kimball has made seven state tournament appearances, the first in 1968. They would make it again in 1970, 1971, 1972, 1981, 1984 and last making a run at the state title in 1985. Kimball has never won more than one game in any appearance.

Up until 1997 Kimball was known as just, Kimball. The 1997 team wanted to create an identity with the team and voted on a team nickname. They would agree with the name Express. Largely in part that the Kimball park is located just 150 ft from the railroad tracks that rumble through the Kimball community on the south end of town.

The Kimball baseball field, which sits just east off of Hwy 15, kitty corner from the Gannon Elevator, has seen it's better days, thus giving the team a goal of bringing a beautiful ballpark to the community for everyone to enjoy. The current Kimball team has formed the Kimball Express Baseball Association. The board consists of President Howard Pennertz, Vice President Bill Liedman, Secretary Treasurer Tom Marquardt (team manager), Cindy Stelten, John Krippner, Jeremy Kuechle and player representative Pat Arnold along with 18 other members. With the forming of the association comes more organization for the team to get improvements done with the Kimball ballpark along with having a better handle on fundraising for the team and overall making the team a more prominent figure in the community.

Kimball had good teams through the 70's and early 80's. Good things are happening again with the team today, not only on the field but off the field as well. History repeats itself, hopefully for the Express it does in the near future and they can add another state tournament appearance to the record books.