

# Southern Choctaw parents discuss need for baseball field with BOE

By Dee Ann Campbell  
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER — Parents and supporters of the Southern Choctaw High School baseball team addressed the Choctaw County Board of Education during their scheduled work session last Tuesday evening.

Voicing concerns about the fact that the team was been playing without a home field, the group spoke to the BOE about potential methods that they could used to finance the construction of a field. However, the group explained that they were not there simply to request financial assistance, but rather to ask for help and to request permission to act on their own to build one, if necessary.

"I am here to address an issue that we feel is important to us as parents," stated the group's spokesman Tim Pearson. "We know there are lots of things we have to work on in our county. But we're having to play games at Zack Rogers Park right now, and our boys are practicing on the playground at the elementary school. We want to know if there are any plans to rectify the situation for a baseball field at Southern Choctaw."

BOE chairman Isaac Johnson responded by stating that there has been no discussion about providing a field for the team, but that there had been conversations with former board members about the situation.

"Have you come up with a plan on your own?" asked Supt. of Education Sue Moore.

"We're discussing possible things that we can do," Pearson responded. "That's why we came to this work session. Maybe by next year, we can work to have something. There may be other things that have priority. But we need to at least try to provide this for our boys."

SCHS parent Greg Doggett addressed the group, stating that there were possibilities for grants for such a project. In particular, he cited an organization called "Baseball Tomorrow" that could be an avenue to garner funds for a field.

"We have to have a plan to see what we need first," Doggett explained.

Moore asked if the group had looked into the a possible site for the facility.

"We have 3.5 acres where we are practicing," answered another SCHS parent, Rusty Lewis. "That's plenty of room."

However, Moore informed the parents that there would be a problem with that location because of the future construction of new classrooms for the elementary school.

"When we get the bond issue, the new classrooms and library will take that space," Moore stated.

"There are different areas over there," Lewis responded, adding that there are approximately 80 acres adjacent to the high school that could be possible locations for a field.

"I did have a conversation with Mr. (Jerry) Barefield about what we could do," Johnson informed the group. "He thought we could do it for less than \$15,000. But he didn't know for sure."

Doggett added that Coach Larry Boykin had asked contractors to check on the costs. However, with much of the work done by the parents themselves, Doggett explained, they could get the job done for much less.

"Let's see what we're talking about in terms of money," Moore suggested. "We need a cost analysis. We can get all that ground work done and then come back to see what we can do."

"We're really concerned about this," Lewis emphasized. "We'll do whatever it takes. It would be nice if we could come here and you could give us the money. But that's not going to happen. We've got some equipment, and we are baseball people. We can do this."

"If I want to take my tractor to the school and work, am I liable for anything?" asked Doggett.

"As long as you have permission from the principal," Johnson answered. "You have to know where all the lines are and the septic tank."

"If it is donating your time and effort, we'll figure out a way to make it happen," added BOE attorney Fred Boling.

BOE member Sharon Shepherd asked about the possibility of the SCHS team using the Gilberttown Sports Complex. However, Lewis informed her that the town had depleted its funding for the complex before constructing a regulation-size field for high school baseball.

Ronald Hampton suggested the formation of a committee of coaches and supporters to meet and discuss options such as applying for grants.

"We just want you to know that we are here to work with you," Pearson told members of the board. "We want to make our county the best it can be."

# Saints lose, then win thriller

■ Saints fall to Southern on walk-off homer, then beat Escambia in last at-bat

By Colin Merritt  
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER — On Tuesday in Greensboro, Patrician lost a 1-0 decision to Southern Academy when a lead-off home run in the bottom of the seventh broke a scoreless tie. The Saints then turned right around on Thursday, however, and beat Escambia 3-2 in Butler in the final inning thanks to a game winning single off the bat of Barry Meeks.

Meeks actually figured prominently in both contest. In the game against Southern, he was the tough-luck loser in a great pitching duel after throwing a complete game three-hitter with 13 strikeouts. Unfortunately for Meeks though, the super pitching performance went to waste when Southern's third baseman hit a walk-off home run to start the bottom of the seventh. Southern's pitcher also had 13 strikeouts and allowed the Saints just two hits.

In the Saints' 3-2 win over Escambia, Meeks provided some late inning heroics

of his own, plating the game winning run with a single in the bottom of the seventh. The hit gave starting pitcher Lance Gibson the win after a complete game three-hitter. Gibson, who was 2-for-4 and scored the game winning run, struck out nine batters and walked three.

Then on Monday, Patrician beat a red-hot Jackson team 10-1 in Butler to improve to 12-6 on the year. The Saints wasted little time, posting a 8-0 first inning lead against the Eagles, who had beaten top-ranked Clarke Prep in their previous game.

Mikell Bonner got the win after going seven innings with five hits, three walks and six strikeouts. Lance Gibson had two hits in the win, while Barry Meeks, B.J. Bonner, Dallas Anderson and Tony Randolph all had singles for the Saints.

Patrician (12-6) played Marengo on the road after press time on Tuesday. On Friday (4/13) the Saints will travel to play Marion and then return home next Tuesday (4/17) to host Southern.

All three games are important area contest for the Saints, who are 0-1 in area play. The top two teams between PA, Southern and Marengo will make the playoffs.



Barry Meeks



Choctaw Sun photo by Colin Merritt

Choctaw County freshman Trent Rodgers warms up before batting in the Tigers' 8-4 win over the Indians on Saturday. Rodgers had one hit and one walk in four at-bats.

# CCHS JV thump Indians in Butler

■ Tigers use B-team in 8-4 win over Southern Choctaw

BUTLER — On a cold Saturday afternoon at Zack Rogers Park in Butler, the Choctaw County junior varsity squad beat Southern Choctaw's varsity 8-4. The Tigers picked up the win thanks to a 12-hit attack at the plate and a great performance on the mound from Patrick Blakley.

Blakley earned the win after throwing five innings of one-hit ball with 13 strikeouts. The freshman didn't allow a walk to the Indians, who's starting line-up featured mostly seventh and eighth graders.

The young Southern Choctaw squad picked up three of their runs off five walks issued by the Tigers' relief pitcher Jarron Drummond in the sixth and seventh innings.

In the win, Choctaw County got a perfect 3-for-3 game at the plate from Drummond, and two hits each from Patrick Blakley, Brandon Winston and Di'Jon McCorkle.

Trent Rodgers, Kierre Anderson and Dequarius Thomas each had one hit for Choctaw County.



## McDonald and Littlepage bag Big Bird

BUTLER -- Page McDonald, age 6, got his first turkey with the help of his guide, Uncle Joe Littlepage. *Good job, guys!*

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