



The Will Dicus Memorial Baseball Tournament

Initiated in 2007, the Will Dicus Baseball Tournament has grown year by year into a very successful community fundraising effort. As a 100% non-profit event, the success of the tournament can be attributed directly to the support of the volunteers and the leadership of Tournament Director Marty Lambert.

The first year of the event featured six teams and had a goal of raising enough money to purchase a Public Address system for Optimist Park, home of youth baseball in Boone, North Carolina. That year's event netted \$1100.00, enough to purchase the \$850.00 PA. "I thought I had raised the most money that was possible," states Bill Dicus, Will's father and founder of the event. "I had no idea it could blossom into what it has been done today."

But blossom it did. Marty Lambert, a close friend of the Dicus family, took over the event and has grown it year by year. The 2014 tournament grossed over \$24000.00. After expenses the net was over \$15000.00. The entirety of funds raised have gone to benefit youth baseball in the High Country of North Carolina. The tournament has made contributions to the local high school baseball and softball programs, local rec league programs and has also benefitted members of the local "baseball families" with children facing life-altering diseases. But the largest beneficiary has been to fund an indoor baseball and softball facility at Watauga High School. Over \$100,000.00 has been directly contributed to this project. As of summer 2017 the project is 95% complete and will be finished by the fall of 2017.

The 2016 tournament attracted over 40 baseball and softball teams to Boone. With the addition of both a t-ball and 8u coach pitch division, this year's event promises to be the biggest and best ever. It features a carnival atmosphere with hot and cold concessions, inflatables and a home run derby. A new defensive skills competition will be unveiled for 2015. Attendees regularly state that this event is the highlight of their all star and travel seasons.

And it all started because of a need for a PA system.

About Will Dicus

Born to play baseball. That characterizes Will Dicus the best. From an early age Will loved all competitive sports. He excelled and any one he tried, once scoring 29 of his team's 31 points in pee-wee basketball. But baseball was his love. A rocket-armed pitcher he would go through complete seasons without a loss. As a 10 year old he gave up one hit during his entire 10 year old season. But the rules changed shortly after he turned 13. Initially diagnosed as a stress fracture, his left leg wouldn't get better. A local orthopedic surgeon whose son had played travel basketball with Will ordered x-rays and a bone scan. Will was diagnosed with Ewing's Sarcoma, a rare bone cancer. Faced with the choice of amputation or tibia replacement surgery, Will opted for the surgery. Though successful, the surgery required an 18 month rehab program with excruciating pain. All this time he was undergoing both chemotherapy and radiation treatments to deal with the metastasis of the disease. He eventually returned to the mound even pitching a one-hitter in a high school JV game. As conventional therapies failed, Will did research-based therapies at the National Institute of Health in Washington and the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. After five years, Will lost his battle. Nothing would suit him better than to see an indoor baseball facility that could benefit both high school and youth baseball.