

R-E-L-I-E-F: Westminster *Lightning Bolts* 12, Colorado Territorial *All-Stars* 9

As in the old advertisement for the heartburn medicine "Rolaids", the major theme of this year's annual match at Westminster was "relief" -- as least for the beleaguered *Lightning Bolts*. They haven't had too much success in this second oldest of continuing CVBBA rivalries, and especially the past two matches weighed heavily on their captain, *Happy* -- coming oh-so-close to victory both years, dominating really, only to see the *All-Stars* snatch victory from the jaws of defeat in the final frame. This year looked to be a carbon copy, but not quite.

On their beautifully manicured and obstruction free field, tallying aces has always been at a premium -- remembering many results in the 7 to 5 and 6 to 1 range in previous encounters. However, this time out the local boys were determined to at least be on the upper end, as they conducted a practice on the Wednesday prior AND were hard at it again an hour before game time when the *Deacon* arrived to set up the field and distribute the spare uniforms. They had also acquired a couple of regulation balls and two "Phoenix" bats to make that practice time more effective.

In the beginning it seemed to pay off as the *Bolts* tallied seven times in the first three innings while holding the *Stars* to four -- three of those coming on a three-error-assisted four-bagger by *Wheels* Harris (much to *Happy's* consternation). Otherwise, Westminster's fielding generally caused the visitors heartburn.

They held their advantage until the top of the sixth, when it looked again as though the wheels might fall off. Singles by *Digger* Hadix and *Hands* Phelan sandwiched around a double by *Wheels* resulted in only a 7-6 deficit. The *Bolts* responded this time with two of their own to regain the lead. Then the visitors struck again, literally, as *Cannibal* Tinney, *Irish Tom* Valaika, and *Rowdy* Myerly each rang the bell in succession, tying the score. When the *Bolts* went down 1-2-3, it must have brought back memories of past collapses.

This time, though, the young men of Westminster had the final say, throttling the *Eclectics* 1-2-3 in both the eighth and ninth, while rallying for three more of their own (aided by several uncharacteristic lapses in headwork by the more experienced *Stars*) to post the 12-9 victory and get that elephant off their backs.

With only nine tallies, there weren't many offensive highlights for the *All-Stars* -- but at least they were fairly evenly distributed. Seven of eleven ballists tallied once each, with *Crush* Sumner, *Hustler* Nunez, and *Digger* (all of whom arrived on a tardy stage from the Springs) joining those above; *Wheels* tallied twice; and only *Slappy* Heller, *Hands*, and *Fast Eddie* Phelan failed to visit the scoring table. Several ballists (especially *Digger* and *Fast Eddie*) took turns at the tally, as we were short in that department for the first time this season.

The usually good contingent of cranks was on hand, including the suffragists, which this year were without their two most stringent detractors as neither *Fearless* nor *Red* were able to make the journey. This time, the post-match homemade ice cream helped soothe the egos of the visitors, though.