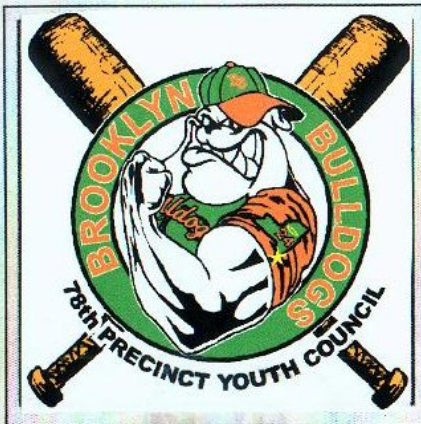


IN THE NEWS

June 6, 2005: Brooklyn Heights Courier and Park Slope Courier: An article about our Bulldogs and their leader, Marc Lussier

Marc Lussier Leads Bulldogs to Bklyn Baseball Glory



Brooklyn Bulldogs Director Marc Lussier designed his league's snappy logo.



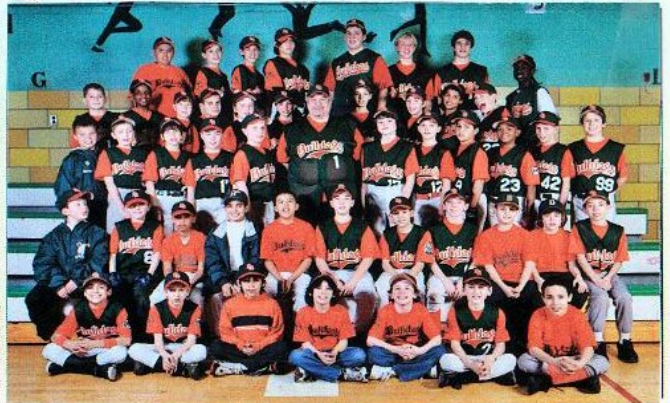
Two generations of bulldogs: Marc Lussier with his son, Marc Jr.

It has been 10 years since the Brooklyn Bulldogs first took the field in Prospect Park. In the wake of the 1995 baseball strike, few would have given the Bulldogs a chance to make it to 1996. The popularity of baseball was at an all-time low. Of those polled by Gallup after the strike, 58% said they were disgusted, 38% even said they were angry. But apparently the roots of baseball run deep in Brooklyn: neither strike, excessive salaries, nor steroid use has stopped the growth and success of the Brooklyn Bulldogs.

The Bulldogs are the competitive baseball teams, of the 78th Precinct Youth Council, the largest youth sports organization serving kids in the neighborhoods surrounding Prospect Park, and one of the largest in the nation. Over the past 10 years, the Bulldogs, with one team for each age group from 9-15, have won more than 30 championships. Last year the 12 year old team made it to State finals in the Cal Ripken tournament and the 14 year old team went to the State finals in the Babe Ruth tournament, making both teams the city-wide winners.

The Bulldogs can attribute a great deal of their success to the fact that they have benefited greatly from one mentor. Under the tutelage of their director, Marc Lussier, the Bulldogs have quickly become a force in Brooklyn youth baseball. Without him, it is doubtful that so many kids would have had a chance to play so much baseball. Lussier is not merely a coach but the soul of the program.

Lussier became involved with 78th Precinct Youth Council as a coach for his son's seven year old team in 1991 and became a board member of the council in 1993. Since then he has been Vice President, Treasurer, Baseball Commissioner, founder of the travel teams program (the



Team members surround their director, Marc Lussier. The Bulldogs are the competitive baseball teams of the 78th Precinct Youth Council, the largest youth sports organization serving kids in the neighborhoods surrounding Prospect Park.

Bulldogs), and Director of the Travel Teams. For the past two years he has been coaching Bulldog travel teams, even though his own son aged out three years ago. Along with other former Bulldog players who moved on to successful high school and college baseball careers, Marc's son, Marc Jr. is now a starting pitcher for St Francis College varsity baseball team, as a freshman.

Since Lussier has become involved in the organization's programs, it has grown by leaps and bounds with a roster of 900 kids registered to play baseball in the 2005 season. This growth is a direct result of the well-honed philosophy of Lussier and other board members about how to make the experience right for the kids.

Lussier's contribution can be measured objectively by the success of the Bulldog teams and the growth of the program. They can also be measured by the many players who have gone on to play high school baseball at Xavierian.

Continued on page 27

Brooklyn Bulldogs Make Baseball Diamond Their Home

Continued from page 18

FDR, Poly Prep, Packer Collegiate, St. Edmunds, Telecommunications, Midwood, and Berkeley Carroll. But these accomplishments are merely products of his unique personality. Lussier has a heart the size of Texas and a true affinity for the kids. And the kids feel it and respond to it in a positive way. He has inspired many, both on and off the field with his embodiment of the true essence of the game and his commitment to fair and pure sportsmanship.

Lussier has the innate ability to subtly instill in all players, his own ethical standards regarding the game. He abhors cheating and refuses to accept over-age play. He was behind the organization's creation and consistent enforcement of rules forbidding negative rooting, disrespect for other players, coaches and officials, and the use of negative coaching techniques. And Lussier has translated these ethics to his travel teams, whose records prove that you can be respectful and successful at the same time.

To continue year to year, let alone to grow takes a lot of work. Players must be evaluated, coaches secured, and equipment, uniforms, fields, schedules, and instructional materials purchased and distributed. Once again, in front of the line has been Lussier, not only directing but doing.

There is no task that, for the sake of the kids, he considers beneath him. He fixes broken shin guards and catchers masks. He even built an entire backstop from scratch using

PVC tubing for the 8 year olds. He has stepped in to help instructional teams when no parent would step forward to coach. And every Saturday morning at 7:30 a.m. you will find him helping to prepare and maintain the fields: filing holes, creating the base lines, and pumping water. If you need him, he is there. Lussier is the one constant in a world of ever-changing volunteers.

His success in keeping the Bulldogs alive and well has made him a dean of sorts in the world of Brooklyn youth baseball. Unlike most regions where baseball is a "Little League" phenomenon, Brooklyn youth baseball has its roots in the local church organizations. As a result, it has traditionally been very fragmented. After 15 years attending meetings on and off the fields with most of the youth baseball organizations in Brooklyn, Lussier's understanding of all the organizations and the subtle machinations that characterize their relationships is unique to but a few people in all of Brooklyn.

In any given week before and during the season, Lussier will spend up to three nights at the meetings of the various organizations in which his intramural and travel teams play. He is one of Brooklyn baseball's most ardent ambassador and skillful diplomat. This season, for example, he helped orchestrate the union of two leagues whose numbers had so diminished that individually their season for the 13 and 14 year olds was at risk. Now these kids not only have the

opportunity to play ball, but the winners can look forward to the possibility of Babe Ruth and Federation tournament play.

Lussier's contributions do not stop on the field, however. A talented professional graphic artist, Lussier created the Bulldog logo, the logo for an affiliate league, the South Brooklyn Baseball League, and other artwork enjoyed by the kids and used on the jerseys and website.

Filling a void created by the inability of our school system to provide sufficient athletic outlets for our children, Lussier has devoted thousands of hours without pay or the need for accolades, all for the benefit of our children.

78th Precinct Youth Council Executive Director, Eddie Albert says of Lussier, "he is one of those hidden treasures you find when you dig deeply into the roots of our community. He has touched the lives of tens of thousands of children and adults in more ways than I can imagine. The 78th Precinct Youth Council and the many thousands of boys and girls in Brooklyn have been very lucky to have had Marc on their side."

Albert recently met with 78th Precinct's trophy supplier. Incredulous at the size of the order, the supplier, one of Brooklyn's oldest and largest, commented that soccer had long surpassed baseball and that "youth baseball is dead in Brooklyn." Apparently that news hasn't reached the 78th Precinct Youth Council and it Bulldogs led by Marc Lussier.