

Topeka Decker Oilers semi-pro baseball team

Members of the Topeka Decker Oilers semi-pro baseball team are shown in this photo from 1951. The team reached the state semi-pro tournament final, but lost the July 28 championship game to the Boeing Bombers of Wichita. Pictured in the front row are (l to r): pitcher Tom Saffel; third baseman Lou Tickel; pitcher Junior Coffman; outfielder Bob Crites; manager Vern Coffman; second baseman Don Farmer; left fielder Ed Coffman; catcher Ted Morgan; and, right fielder Ray Johnson. In the back row are (l to r): right fielder Paul Perry; shortstop Don Kirkwood; catcher John Burkhardt; pitcher Frank Logan; first baseman Henry Alberg; center fielder James Reaugh; pitcher Jim Warren; and, first baseman Butch Nixon. In the center front is Ed "Butch" Coffman, Jr., the bat boy. During the late 1940s and 1950s, the Decker Oiler team was a perennial contender for the state semi-pro title, competing each year in the state tournament held in Wichita. The team won the state championship in 1948, placed second three consecutive years (1950-1952), and finished third in 1955 and 1957. Digital reproduction of the photograph was accomplished through a joint project sponsored by the Kansas Historical Society and the Shawnee County Baseball Hall of Fame.

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