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LOUISE ERICKSON SAUER

1929–2016

City: Whitehall, Arcadia

County: Trempealeau

Louise Erickson Sauer played in the first-ever women's baseball league, the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, for the Racine Bells and the Rockford Peaches.

Louise “Lou” Erickson was born on June 2, 1929, in Whitehall, Wisconsin. As a kid, she played baseball with her family and would retrieve balls in the outfield for a local boys’ team. The manager of the boys’ team noticed her talent and recommended her to the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League. In 1946, she tried out for the league for the first time, just days after graduating from Arcadia High School. She didn’t make it, but she went home and practiced. She tried out again in 1948 and made it onto the Racine Bells. She started as an outfielder, but her coaches quickly realized she had an arm for pitching. After one season with the Bells, they traded her to the Rockford Peaches, and she became their third starting pitcher. The Peaches won the playoffs both seasons she was on the team, and she was chosen to play in the league's All-Star game both years. She left the league for personal reasons after three seasons and returned to her hometown of Arcadia, Wisconsin. The league disbanded in 1954.

Erickson married Burt Sauer in 1950 and worked various part-time jobs over the years to help support her family. She remained dedicated to her sport, coaching the high school girls’ softball team for many years and the Arcadia women’s fast pitch softball team in the summer. In 1988, she and the rest of her team were inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. Despite this, the girls’ league remained relatively unknown until the 1992 film *A League of Their Own*.

Louise Erickson Sauer died on May 27, 2016, at the age of 86.

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