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Spikes ready for Rein

By Chronicle Staff

The only tournament of Bozeman's American Legion summer will be in town beginning today. While the Class AA Bucks look forward to the state tournament, which is being held across the state in Miles City, the Class A Spikes are hosting the sixth annual Howard Rein Tournament, which runs through Sunday night.

The eight-team tourney gets underway this morning at Heroes Park with the Butte Muckers playing the Kalispell Lakers at 9 a.m.

"This is a great opportunity for the town to see some of the Class AA feeder teams that we'll be facing over the next couple of years," said Spikes coach Rick Phillips, who celebrated his 50th birthday Wednesday.

The Spikes, who finished 3-2 at last year's Rein, open with an 8 p.m. contest against the Billings Blue Jays, a finalist a year ago. Ean Weaver will start on the mound for Bozeman.

The Spikes are 16-26 on the season, and despite a 1-7 conference record, swept conference foe Gallatin Valley Outlaws in what was a non-conference doubleheader on June 23.

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Alex Bradford and Trevor Shellenberg have been swinging hot bats lately for the Spikes, and Matt Hape struck out 10 over six innings in his last outing.

The tournament is named after Howard Rein, who was a Bozeman teacher for nearly 30 years before suffering from Lou Gehrig's Disease, also known as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), which forced him to retire in 2002. He started Bozeman High's fastpitch softball program and coached football and basketball.

On Saturday, a special tribute will be paid to Rein and Gehrig at Heroes Park. The day's events coincide with Major League Baseball, Minor League Baseball, and four ALS organizations' nationwide tribute on the 70th anniversary of Gehrig's famous "Luckiest Man" speech. Planned activities include the reading of Gehrig's farewell speech, free Gehrig cards, the Heroes Park Hitting Challenge, and a 50/50 raffle, with Bozeman

Rein Tournament

TODAY'S GAMES

9 a.m.

Butte Muckers vs. Kalispell Lakers

11:45 a.m.

Meridian, Idaho vs. Butte Muckers

2:30 p.m.

Billings Cardinals vs. Meridian, Idaho

5:15 p.m.

Missoula Mavs vs. Lethbridge

8 p.m.

Bozeman Spikes vs. Billings Blue Jays

Baseball's half being contributed to the ALS Association.

Rein died two days before Thanksgiving in 2003. His ashes were mixed with petals from memorial bouquets and scattered at, among other places, the shortstop position at Chicago's Wrigley Field.