



The American Legion created an organized summer baseball league – the first in the world to provide a national baseball tournament for teenagers.

1925

The first American Legion World Series was played in Philadelphia with Yonkers, N.Y., Post 321 beating a team from Pocatello, Idaho.

1926

The program received an infusion of much-needed funds with \$50,000 from Major League Baseball but the league pulled its annual contribution in 1933. It resumed contributions in 1935 and now provides \$40,000 a year.

1928

Shelby fielded its first Legion team.

1931

The Shelby team claimed its first regional title and garnered state championships in 1942, 1943, 1951, 1957, 1958, 2001, and 2014.

1938

The Shelby team claimed its only ALWS championship in Charlotte, N.C., against Trenton, N.J.

1945

American Legion Baseball named its first national player of the year. That player and the eight regional players of the year now share \$25,000 in scholarships from Diamond Sports. The player of the year receives a trip to the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y.

1949

Shelby's Veterans Field was dedicated to veterans after local veterans' organizations raised \$40,000 for the field.

1976

Veterans Field served as a minor league ballpark for the Cincinnati Reds, the Pittsburgh Pirates, and the New York Mets.

1979-82

Shelby hosted the 2002 American Legion Southeastern Regional Tournament on Veterans Field.

2002

Shelby hosted the North Carolina State American Legion Tournament on Veterans Field.

2004

Shelby hosted the 2008 American Legion Southeastern Regional Tournament and the 2008 ALWS on Veterans Field.

2008

Shelby-Cleveland County supporters made the trip to American Legion headquarters in Indianapolis, Ind., to offer a bid for Shelby to become the home of the ALWS. The bid was approved!

2010

Fans purchased more than 86,000 tickets for the tournament in Shelby.

2011

Tickets sales exceeded 100,000 and have never dropped below that marker in the years since.

2012

An anonymous \$1 million challenge donation followed by \$1.8 million from other contributors made possible an extensive upgrade to Keeter Stadium.

2013

More upgrades included installation of netting in front of the grandstands, additional large fans, and a state-of-the-art sound system.

2018

The American Legion negotiated an "evergreen" contract with the local ALWS committee, eliminating periodic reevaluations and stating that either party must give a two-year notice if requesting a release from the contract.

2020

COVID-19 restrictions meant the ALWS was cancelled.

Landscapers laser-graded the entire Veterans Field and installed Bermuda sod and upgraded the irrigation and drainage systems. A fencing company removed the old fence and installed new fencing and new sponsor signage.

2022

A \$2.2 million grant from the N.C. Department of Commerce made possible the installation of two more sections of canopy, LED lights on the field and around the stadium, plus an overhaul of Keeter Stadium's electrical system.