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## Senior League Baseball Returns to St. Croix, Reviving Youth Engagement and Mentorship

Senior League baseball returns to Isaac Boynes Ballpark, providing structure and opportunity for young athletes. Honoring Crucian legend Jerry Browne, the league fosters engagement, discipline, and motivation, offering youth a positive path through sports

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Senior League baseball (ages 13-16) made its return to the Isaac Boynes Ballpark on Friday, February 21, marking the start of an exciting new season under the lights. The league, comprising five teams, is named in honor of Crucian native and retired Major League Baseball player Jerry Browne.

**A Special Night with Jerry Browne**

Jerry Browne, who was born and raised on St. Croix, attended the opening event and was given the honor of throwing out the first pitch. He also presented a signed baseball to Senator Franklin Johnson, a longtime umpire who later officiated the game.

Adding to the excitement, Miguel "Poppy Pops" Santos Jr. provided live play-by-play commentary. Santos, who is also one of the coaches, contributed to the energy of the evening as fans from surrounding communities, parents, and supporters gathered to witness the return of competitive baseball to Grove Place.

### **Baseball's Legacy in Grove Place**

The resurgence of Senior League baseball at Isaac Boynes Ballpark is a nod to the rich baseball history of Grove Place. The community has long been a powerhouse in local baseball, producing talented players who made their mark in the sport. The Grove Place Vikings, a dominant force in the league, have secured more than 20 championships over the last four decades.

### **Opening Game and League Structure**

The season opener featured a matchup between the Cardinals, led by head coach Norbert Pickering, and the Diamond Defenders, coached by Milligan. Though the Cardinals emerged victorious, the Diamond Defenders played with intensity and passion.

The league is a collaborative effort involving multiple organizations, including the Office of Gun Violence Prevention, Team Cardinals, Jerry Browne, and the Department of Parks and Recreation. Games will be played on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 6:00 p.m., providing a consistent schedule for players and fans alike.

The British Virgin Islands' Senior League team (ages 13-16) is scheduled to visit St. Croix for a weekend tournament from March 7-9, 2025. This international matchup will give local players an opportunity to compete against their regional counterparts.

### **The Impact of Baseball on Youth**

Beyond the game itself, organizers noted the positive influence baseball can have on young athletes. The sport instills discipline, dedication, and direction—qualities that can help players make better life choices and stay on a positive path. By reviving the league, the community aims to provide a structured and meaningful activity that keeps youth engaged and motivated.

For more information about the league and upcoming games, interested individuals can contact League Director Pastor Dexter Skepple at (340) 201-1134.