

Publisher's Comments by Mark Linnemann

FAQ is, of course, an acronym for "Frequently Asked Questions." Some have also called it "Frequently Answered Questions."

With over 300 teams competing in the ASA Cincinnati Metro Tournament each summer, ASA Cincinnati Metro Commissioner Danney Saylor is obviously going to get asked a lot of questions before, during and after the tournament. And I thought it might be interesting to ask Danney while the Metro is still fresh on his mind just exactly what are the most "Frequently Asked Questions" or "Frequently Answered Questions" he encounters involving the Metro each year.

At the request of the Softball News, Danney compiled a list of the ten most frequently asked Metro questions, and answered them in a recent interview. He elected to answer these in reverse order, beginning with the 10th most "FAQ" and working down to number one.

So without further adieu, here are the the ten "Most Frequenty Asked" questions relating to the Metro that Danney Saylor is asked, along with his answers to each question.

10. When do you start planning the Metro Tournament?

A. We start planning for the Metro a year in advance. First and foremost, we select the dates. Then we review the problems we incur in the most recently played tournament while they are still fresh in our minds. If somethign didn't go right, we change it. And if there was a problem, we ask how can we improve that situation? We've already had one committee meeting. We know it's the largest tournament in the nation, but we feel there's always room for refinement.

9. Does a team have to qualify to get into the Metro?

A. No, you just have to meet the tournament's qualifications.

8. Can we throw a team together and participate in the Metro?

A. No. Only bona fide, rostered league teams participating somewhere in the Metro Cincinnati area can participate. They can be an ASA sanctioned park, a USSSA sanctioned park, or even an unsanctioned park.

7. We'd like to enter the Metro, but we're not from the Cincinnati area. Can we participate?

A. I get calls from Cleveland, Oh., from Tennessee, and this year even from Georgia and Florida. And I am proud to tell them, "no, it's strictly a local event."

6. Where do you get the umpires for the Metro?

A. We begin every January training local umpires with a series of twelve weeks of training classes and at least one, two-day clinic. We also bring in around fifty umpires from several states as far away as Florida and Alabama. Former Amateur Softball Association President Pat Adkiso has umpired in the Metro on several occasions.

5. What is being done about altered bats, shaved bats, loaded bats and painted bats?

A. I'm sorry to say, not enough. But we're working on it. There is a machine that has been developed to test bats, and we hope that it will be accurate enough to use next year. It has various sensors, and you enter the type of bat into the control panel, and this machine will know the exact specifications of the bat. So it can tell us if it's longer than it should be, if the thickness or circumference or diameter of the barrel has been altered, it can check the compression. We had one this year, but it was only rated 87% effective, so we did not feel it was quite sufficient. We feel it if gets about 95% effective next year, at that point we would have enough reasonable suspicion to take the bats. This will provide us with an excellent tool.

4. Why must we use the balls provided by the Metro Tournament?

A. I hear that a lot, and it's as if the tournament is trying to overcharge teams. We pay approximately \$32 a dozen, and we sell them for between \$40 and \$42 a dozen, and we have to handle them and inventory them and store them and stamp them and provide an actual service. We do all that and hope to cover the cost, and we believe it's one of the greatest services we can do for the tournament, because it provides a level playing field. Many teams and players and managers apparently are unaware of the huge variance there is in softballs being manufactured today. There might be ten balls out there that claim to be 44 COR, 375 pound compression balls, but some will go forty feet farther than others. It's our goal to have a level playing field where nobody is getting an unfair advantage with the ball.

3. What bats are legal?

A. We get that question from almost everyone. To be legal, a bat must be ASA certified. This means two things. First, it must be on the ASA approved bat list. Second, it cannot be on the banned list. A bat may not be on the banned list, but that same bat might also not be on the approved list, either. This simply means that the bat has never been submitted for testing.

2. What players are eligible to compete in the Metro?

A. There's a lot involved with this question. First of all, players must be on a team's bona fide league roster. Generally speaking, if they live in our area and if they are on a bona fide league roster, and the player and the team are in good standing with the ASA, they would be eligible. But it's not that simple. For example, if a "D" team has a player from an ASA "Major" level team on their league roster, that doesn't mean we're going to permit that player to compete with that "D" team. This is one of the reasons we have a committee to review such matters.

1. How does the Metro determine what division a team will play in?

A. Our committee doesn't look at it on the basis of "Open" through "E" levels, but rather on a basis of levels one through six. We have "Open," "A," "B," "C," "D," and "E" divisions, but don't place teams based on letters, but rather by numbers. For example, rather than consider a team as an "A" team, we might consider them a level "2" team, or level "3," or "4," and so forth. Our goal is parity, and to place teams where they can compete, and not necessarily win. That may seem like an oxymoron to quite a few coaches, but when I tell a team I've got them matched up against 80 other teams that they would go 40 and 40 against, they're not content with that. They want to play where they can win, not where they can compete.

Dan Saylor says he is always looking for feedback on the Metro Tournament. If you have another question or suggestion please contact his office at 738-1850. Possibly there will be a different top ten list next year.

In My Opinion by Ron Jeffers

"How can an umpire avoid burnout?"

That is another of the topics Mark Linnemann has suggested I write about, but that I have ignored for several years. But now I will finally address it.

Umpires, in my opinion, get burned out for several reasons, and I will try to list them below, and then address how to avoid them.

1. Many umpires umpire far too many games, and too many days or nights a week.
2. Many umpires quit because they can't or don't want to listen to the barrage of complaints and name-calling.

3. Married umpires quit because they get tired of the complaints they get from their wife for being gone from home.

4. Many umpires get into the game for the wrong reason, and soon find that out.

There are as many reasons for umpire burn-out as there are umpires, but my forty-plus years involved in umpiring have taught me that these are the top four.

Professional baseball wanted to hire rookie umpires who were over six feet tall with at least some college, who were single, and between twenty and twenty-five years of age. Believe me, they had their reasons for wanting their new umpires to fall into this category. They hired some exceptional umpires who may have deviated from this mold slightly, but for the most part, all the new umpires they hire meet this criteria.

Most amateur umpires who work every night of the week, and then several tournament games each weekend are not going to last very long for many different reasons. You can name a handful of guys in this area who work all the time, and I knew a guy like that in Atlanta, too, who worked twelve games every Saturday and twelve games on Sunday, but he admitted to me he never moved one step all day either. This guy was young, in great physical condition, in financial trouble, and even with all that he quit umpiring when he got out of the hole financially.

Umpires who love the game, want to do a good job, and want to stay in the game should not umpire more than ten games a week. Limiting your schedule to no more than ten games a week will keep you from getting worn down both physically and mentally. League directors are going to beg you to work more, especially if you are at least half good, but working two weekends per month and three nights per week is smart and will keep you in the game.

When I umpired, there was only one umpire in all of Major League baseball who was still married to his first wife. I am surprised there was one. Why do you think these guys could not keep a wife? Do you think it might have been because they were gone from home too much and too long? You can't keep a wife any more when you are gone all the time, and you are not there for them. They need some of your time, and you need to use your umpire money for some fun family things or vacations together. Believe me I know first hand. I made this mistake and lost my wife as a result of my self-centered selfishness and ignorance. I don't want you to make the same mistakes I did, and I know from what I speak.

Umpire a moderate schedule, and you will have a better chance of keeping your family, and your sanity. The assigner and or league and tournament director are trying to do their job, but you do not want to lose the most important things in your life to satisfy them.

Umpires hate to hear all the cheap shots, threats and vulgarity, and no umpire will ever be able to avoid it completely, but you can minimize it substantially if you will hustle, act like a professional, learn the rules of the games and how to apply them, study the mechanics of the best umpires, and work hard to get rid of those rabbit ears. Getting rid of the rabbit ears was the most difficult for me. The last game I umpired I could still hear those fools and their ridiculous comments, but I finally learned to tune them out and ignore them.

The better you get as an umpire, the easier it becomes and the more enjoyable it becomes. Put some effort and pride into becoming the best umpire you can be, and see if it doesn't get easier and more fun.

Ninety-nine percent of the umpires get into it to make some extra money, and there is nothing in the world wrong with that. I umpired for the money, and I also worked on my nine to five job for the money too. Telling some one you umpire for the money is nothing to be ashamed of. Not hustling, not knowing the rules of the game, and not conducting yourself as a professional are reasons to be embarrassed and ashamed.

When you study the playing rules to where you are certain nothing can ever happen on the field that you do not know the correct rule and how to apply it will give you tremendous confidence in yourself, and that in itself is extremely important to your success as an umpire.

Watch the umpires you see working major league baseball, and study their mechanics and movements. Study the best and most successful softball umpire you can find. Emulate them. Do not ever be content to be average. Average is the best of the worst or the worst of the best. Average umpires will have less fun and burn out quicker than the good umpires.

That, again, is my opinion. What is yours?

What's Your Gripe? By Ron Jeffers

Q. In a fast pitch game we played recently, in a local youth tournament, our catcher was throwing the ball back to the pitcher when she accidentally hit the batter's bat with the ball, and the ball went out of play. The count was one ball and one strike on the batter when this play happened, and there was a runner on second base.

The plate umpire awarded the batter first base, and gave the runner on second base third base. I never saw anything like this before in my life, but the umpire's decision did not seem right to me.

Was the umpire right?

A. The umpire must have been smoking something. The batter remains at bat with the one ball and one strike count on her, and the runner on second base is awarded home. Remember, runners are awarded one base from the pitching rubber, and two bases from a throw from any fielder. The catcher is a fielder, just like the short stop, and if he throws the ball out of play in any way it is a two base award.

This rule is the same in baseball too.

Q. Ron, I watch catchers in professional baseball block the plate all the time, and the runners trying to score usually try to bowl them over. Is the rule different for them than it is in softball?

A. Professional baseball seems to like this rule as it is. They obviously find this play exciting, and do not want this rule changed. When Pete Rose threw his vicious body block into the opposing catcher, Ray Fossi, it virtually ruined his professional career as a catcher, and a few years after that softball made this type of play illegal.

In softball, the playing rules prohibit the catcher, or any other fielder, from blocking any base without having the ball in their possession. If the catcher has the ball in his glove or bare hand the runner can not go into that fielder with great force.

The runner does not have to slide into any base. The runner can try to jump over the fielder or try to run around the tag, but he or she can not go into that fielder with great force. That is illegal in softball, and the runner would be called out for any such act.

Q. This may sound like a weird question, but we have a rule in our youth softball league that says each team gets three outs or ten batters get to bat, whichever comes first.

If we have two runners on base and our tenth batter comes to bat, the inning would be over if they walk her. Can we refuse the walk so she has a chance to hit the ball, and subsequently the runner might score?

A. This is a league rule that someone dreamed up, because they didn't want the game to drag on for hours or they were trying to keep the game competitive. I can understand the reason someone wrote this rule, but it is not a rule in the rules book.

The official playing rules of baseball and or softball do not allow the batter to make a choice to take a base on balls or remain at bat.

The way you describe your league rules you could walk the eighth, ninth and tenth batters of every inning, and end each inning with the bases loaded. The most runs each team could score in any given inning using this tactic would be seven, but I do not believe that was the spirit of the rule for a children's game.

This is what happens when people want to write their own league rules that deviate from the official playing rules. There will always be someone trying to beat the rules to get a win.

Q. I went to some of Ron Jeffers' Umpire Camps back in the 80's. He always had poems to say in those schools. I am just wondering if you could forward this email to Ron. If he wants to respond that is up to him I just would like to know if Ron ever published any of those poems and how I could get a copy or book of them.

I work for the City of Gainesville, Georgia, as an Athletic Director. My name is Hank Heffner. I went to Ron's School in Terre Haute, In. in 1985 or '86 and then again to his school in Indianapolis the following year. He may remember me. I would hope so because he was a big influence in my umpire career.

Thanks, Hank Heffner

Gainesville, Ga.

A. Hank I never finished my book of poems I wrote over the years, but I will send you a few of the ones you heard me use when I was at the umpire schools you attended.

All teachers love students who are overachievers, and you were an overachiever much like the late great umpire, Les Treitel. I observed hundreds of umpires who had more athletic ability and talent than Les Treitel, but what he lacked in physical ability, he more than made up for it in pride, dedication, effort, integrity and a strong work ethic.

I remember you well, and you are one of the finest umpires I ever had the privilege of working with. If most softball umpires had one tenth of your heart for the game softball would be a much better game.

If you ever leave Georgia and travel north, you know you are welcome in my home. I hope you are doing well, and thank you for your interest in an old man's poetry.

These yankees up here didn't even know I wrote poetry. Thanks for allowing me to be a part of your life. May God Bless and be with You, Hank.

June 9-10 Stories...

M&M Connection/Saints Pad Resumé In Worth/Bud Light/USSSA Men's D State-National Qualifier At Riverstar

By Andy Zureck

Cincinnati, Ohio - M&M Connection/Saints racked up another tournament championship by going a perfect 3-0 in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men's D State-National Qualifier at Riverstar Park on June 10th. It was their seventh tournament title of the season.

In game one of pool play, M&M /Saints took on JB's. The Saints took a commanding lead in the 3rd inning when they plated 13 runs. Greg Riddel, John Erdman, and Brian Erdman each drove in two runs in the at

bat. John Erdman and Bruce Mattingly drove in two more apiece as part of the six-run 5th. That increased the lead to 20-11. JB's made a game of it with five in the bottom of the 5th and four more in the 6th. However, M&M scored two in the top of the 6th and that proved to be the margin of victory in the 22-20 final. John Erdman and Greg Riddel led all hitters, each going 5-for-5 in the game. John Tomlinson was 4-for-5 while Brian McDonald went 3-for-4.

Game two versus Pitt Ohio Express was more of a defensive struggle. After Pitt Ohio Express opened the game with two runs in the top of the 1st, the Saints put three on the board in the bottom of the frame. They would never trail again. All three of those runs scored on a Scott Barber homer with two runners on. John Tomlinson capped the scoring in the game with a two-run single in the bottom of the 5th. Tomlinson also tossed two scoreless innings to end the game at 9-5 in favor of M&M. Tomlinson was 3-for-3 at the plate while the trio of JJ Hipsher, Bruce Mattingly, and Brian McDonald were all 3-for-4.

The championship game was a rematch between those same two teams. With the score standing at 10-7, John Tomlinson and Scott Barber both drove in two in the five-run 6th. It proved to be a knock out blow as Pitt Ohio Express failed to score in their final two chances. The final score was 16-7. Mike Lamb, John Tomlinson, and JJ Hipsher all turned in 4-for-5 performances in the contest. Bruce Mattingly, Scott Barber, and Brian McDonald each chipped in three hits in five at bats.

Tomlinson, also the Saints' manager, finished with a team-best batting average of .847. "I expect that out of myself," he confessed. "That's the whole reason I play softball – I can still hit a little."

Just behind him was Ron Williams at .786 and JJ Hipsher who hit .715. Other notables included Brian McDonald (.693), John Erdman (.643), Bruce Mattingly (.572), and Greg Riddel (.539).

Williams and Mattingly were also standouts in the field. "Bruce was playing left field. We picked him up about a month ago," explained Tomlinson. "He hasn't gotten to play a lot, but when he plays he's great defensively. He's a real good addition. Ron's one of those guys who's intense from the time he walks on the field. He's all business."

"We had a tough time throwing strikes the first game, but settled down. Offense was the key, especially in the championship game," concluded Tomlinson.

M&M, along with all of the other participating teams, came into the day having already qualified for the state and national tournaments. Therefore, no postseason berths were awarded.

June 23-24 Stories...

Minus Big Guns, Champions Sweep, Fend Off Shooters 11-8 In Finals....

Patchwork Hill & Griffith Team Runs Table In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Queen City Classic Women's "C" At Pastime Park

Harrison, Oh.--Hill & Griffith just wanted to get some games in.

What they wound up with was a surprising first place finish.

Playing without their second, third and fourth hitters, Hill & Griffith mowed down five opponents en route to a first place finish in the class "C" division of the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "Queen City Classic" Women's National Invitational Tournament June 23rd at Pastime Park.

Hill & Griffith polished off the Shooters 11-8 in the deciding contest. Both teams entered the game with a 4-0 record.

"Our team did a great job playing without our three big guns in the middle of the order," summed up Hill & Griffith coach Bob Booher. "We went into the tournament knowing we were going to be missing those

hitters. We just wanted to get some games in to get ready for the state and national tournaments. It's important for us to play together whenever we can.

"We had people playing out of position," continued Booher. "But we had clutch hitting throughout the line-up. Somebody came through with a big hit whenever we needed it."

Mandy Hansen led H & G with a hefty .778 performance. Becky Hicks batted .750, Tracey Cooper .611, Kristin Shirk .600 and Heather Sauerbeck .500 with a team high nine rbi's.

Booher tabbed Hansen as his team's unofficial MVP, "although Heather Sauerbeck did a nice job doing the things she had to do," said Booher. "Mandy normally catches and she had to play 1st base two games, and we used Heather at 1st base one game and she AH'd one game, and our back-up pitcher, Sandy Beamer, did a nice job.

"But it seemed like Mandy was in the middle of ever rally we had," said Booher. "She's been a catcher for me for seventeen years, and every now and then I have to put her in another position if we're short players, and she went over to 1st base, and played flawlessly."

A big key, said Booher, was "clutch hitting throughout the line-up.

"We had seven people with between six and nine rbi's," he noted.

Hill & Griffith eased past the Battin' Bullets 9-3 in game one, taking a 1-0 lead in the top of the 1st on a Heather Sauerbeck rbi single. Sauerbeck tripled to make it 2-0 and scored on a Mandy Hansen single to ignite a five run 3rd as the lead swelled to 6-0. The Bullets cut it to 6-3 after four, but Christy Hensley connected for a three-run homer in the top of the 5th to seal the win.

Sauerbeck, who scatted eight hits from the mound, combined with Hansen and Jenn Webb for nine hits to pace H & G's offense.

Team Crosley seemed intent on ending H & G's winning streak at one as they jumped out to a 9-4 lead in the top of the 2nd. But Hill & Griffith battled back to take the lead for good at 12-11 on the strength of a four run 4th, then added three in the 5th to build their advantage to 15-11. Team Crosley scored three more runs before succumbing 15-14. Heather Sauerbeck's rbi single put her club ahead to stay at 12-11 in the 4th. Becky Hicks had the big blow in the 5th, a two-run double. Sauerbeck, Hicks, Mandy Hansen and Tracey Cooper combined for a dozen hits.

Hill & Griffith trailed Dented Bats 6-4 after two and a half innings in game three, but H & G rallied for three runs in the bottom of the 3rd, then added five in the 4th to take a commanding 12-6 lead and Dented Bats never recovered as H & G rolled to a 14-9 victory. Christy Booher's rbi single capped off the three run 3rd and put her club ahead for good at 7-6. Heather Sauerbeck delivered a big two-run double in the 4th. Booher, Tracey Cooper, Kristin Shirk and Becky Hicks banded out three hits apiece for the winners.

Ray Pfaff grabbed an early 3-0 lead in game four, but in the bottom of the 2nd Hill & Griffith erupted for five runs, going up to stay on Jenn Webb's two-run double. Becky Hicks followed with an rbi single to plate Webb. The lead mushroomed to 9-3 in the 3rd on rbi singles by Christy Hensley. Ray Pfaff walked fourteen H & G batters in the game, forcing in two of those on bases loaded walks in the 3rd. Hicks and Mandy Hansen collected three hits each.

That set up a showdown between Hill & Griffith and the Shooters. The finalists battled to a 3-3 stalemate through two, but pushed across lone runs in the 3rd, 4th and 5th, then blew open a 6-5 contest with a five run explosion in the 6th. The Shooters scored the last three runs of the game in the bottom of the 6th to make the final 11-8. In the 3rd with the score knotted at 3-3, Becky Hicks tripled to lead off the inning, then raced home with the go-ahead run on a Linda Wiesenhahn sac fly. Kristin Shirk tripled and scored on a two out single by Christy Booher to make it 5-3. Back-to-back triples by Christy Hensley and Becky Hicks pushed H & G's lead back to two at 6-4. Then in the 5th rbi singles by Booher, Hicks and

Wiesenhahn, a ground out by Hensley and a bases loaded walk to Webb helped the advantage to surge to 11-5.

The Shooters rallied for three runs in the 6th, but then Heather Sauerbeck pitched out of one-out bases loaded situations in the 6th and 7th to preserve the win.

Kristin Shirk pounded out four hits, and Hicks and Hansen each went 3-for-4 to power the champions.

“It was a good tournament for us,” summed up H & G’s Bob Booher. “The weather was great. There was no humidity and the sun was not really out that day, and we were able to play five games with only ten people.”

WORTH-BUD LIGHT-QUEEN CITY CLASSIC USSSA NIT WOMEN’S CLASS “C” DIVISION FINAL STANDINGS

1. Hill & Griffith, Cincinnati, OH 5 0
2. Shooters, Dayton, OH 4 1
3. Battin’ Bullets, Indianapolis, IN 3 2
4. Ron Pfaff Electric, Strongsville, OH 2 2
5. Dented Bats, Mooresville, IN 1 2

Barney’s/Ramrods, Young Gunz, Rolling Thunder Capture Queen City Divisions

West Chester, Oh.--Barney’s/Ramrods and the Young Gunz each went 3-0, while Rolling Thunder posted a 2-1 mark to capture their respective divisions in a twelve team, three division Sunday morning round robin June 24th at Queen City Sports Complex.

Barney’s/Ramrods used a smothering defense to dispose of Cincinnati Nationals (1-2) 3-2, Coach’s Grill (0-3) 13-3 and Buffalo Wings & Rings (2-1) 12-2 in the deciding game in division one.

Defense also carried the Young Gunz, who mowed down the Cincinnati River Rats (2-1) in a key first round match-up with the eventual division two runner-up, PAC (1-2) 9-3 and Master Batters (0-3).

While in division three, Rolling Thunder routed Bad Company (0-3) 15-8, then stumbled against Moose 501 (2-1) before spanking Eddie’s Home Wreckers (2-1) 12-4 in the deciding contest.

June 30-July 1 Stories...

Mo’s Riders, A1 Trophy, Arsenal 3-0 In Queen City Divisions

West Chester, Oh.--Mo’s Riders, A1 Trophy and Arsenal each swept to a 3-0 record to claim their respective division titles in a twelve team, three division Sunday morning round robin July 1st at Queen City Sports Complex.

Mo’s Riders ran roughshod over their division one opponents, outscoring their victims 54-10 en route to the title. The Riders shelled the Master Batters (1-2) 21-2 and PAC/CTI (2-1) 23-8 before shutting out RTFS (0-3) in their finale.

A1 Trophy also trampled the division two field, routing Boot Hill (1-2) 15-4, then whitewashing Caribbean Storm (0-3) 17-0 before polishing off Outcasts (2-1) 18-3 in the deciding contest.

While in division three, Arsenal battled past Allstars (0-3) 10-8, then blasted ETP 13 Sport (1-2) 22-11 before drilling Accurate Masonry (2-1) 14-3 in the deciding game.

July 7-8 Stories...

Winners Romp In All-Columbus Finals...

EZ Cash Steamrolls HLS Bonding 21-5 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "C-D" NIT At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--In an all-Columbus finals, EZ Cash mercy-ruled HLS Bonding/Big Sonny's 21-5 to complete a five game sweep of a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "C-D" National Invitational Tournament July 7-8 at Expressway Park.

The victory wrapped up a 5-0 weekend for the champions, who netted \$600 in USSSA travel expense. A paid berth to the USSSA "C" World September 20-23 in Kissimmee, Fl. passed down to Brock Restoration/Hot Wings/Schmoe's. Adis' Place and D-Town Softball were each awarded a berth to the USSSA "D" World Tournament September 20-23 in Sterling Heights, Mi.

A big offensive effort - especially at the bottom of the order, the pitching of tournament MVP Mark Jones, and a solid defense carried EZ Cash to the title, said player-manager Eric Saxton.

"The bottom of the order - Dan Siddle, Doug Shaneyfelt Jr., Jay Woodward and Cory Devlin - really hit well for us," said Saxton. "Even the outs we made were very productive in moving the runners. We had key home runs - most were three or four-run shots. Our pitcher only walked one person the whole tournament. And I don't think our infield made one error the whole tournament."

Saxton led his team offensively, going 18-for-21 for a robust .857 performance. Brad Cahill followed at .722, Cliff Bostrom hit .700, Dan Siddle .684, Billy Moore .682, Jay Woodward .667, Doug Shaneyfelt Jr. .600 and Cory Devlin .555.

Cahill, Bostrom and Woodward were selected to the All-Tournament team.

Pitcher Mark Jones was named MVP "for his defense," said Saxton.

"In the 3rd inning in our third game, he got hit with a line drive up the middle," recalled Saxton. "The next guy hit the same kind of shot and he fielded it and turned a double play. The very next batter did the same thing and he knocked it down and threw the guy out at 1st. That set the tone for the whole course of the game. That got all of us excited and they only scored one run from there on out and only four runs in the game.

"He only gave up 42 runs in five games and only walked one batter the whole tournament," continued Saxton. "He threw a lot of first pitch strikes and made the opponents hit with strikes on them."

Defensively, Saxton said shortstop Jay Woodward and centerfielder Billy Moore gave Jones plenty of support.

"Jay fielded every single ball hhit to him and made some diving plays in the hole. He probably had fifteen balls hit to him and he made every single play," said Saxton.

"And in the outfield, Billy ran down several balls in the gaps and saved some extra base hits."

EZ Cash roughed up NKY Thunder 27-7 in four innings in their opener. The winners exploded for thirteen runs in the bottom of the 2nd to overcome a 3-2 deficit and never looked back. Eric Saxton launched a three-run homer to put his club ahead to stay at 3-2. Billy Moore followed with a two-run shot, and Dan Siddle a three-run double and suddenly it was 10-2.

Saxton collected four hits in the game, and eight teammates, including Moore, Siddle, Doug Shaneyfelt Jr., Carl Hicks, Brian Blount, Brad Cahill, Cliff Bostrom and Mark Jones, chipped in with three each.

EZ Cash scored two in the 1st, six in the 2nd and seven in the 4th to take a commanding 15-1 lead over Design Concepts in game two and coasted to a 21-12 victory. Brad Cahill's two-run sac fly put his team on

the board in the 1st. A two-run Billy Moore triple highlighted the 2nd, and Cliff Bostrom's three-run bomb was the big blow in the 4th.

Moore and Dan Siddle were both perfect in four trips to the plate, and Eric Saxton went 3-for-4.

EZ Cash met their toughest opponent in PRI/Easton in game three. A five-run 1st proved pivotal, as EZ Cash would score only two runs thereafter in a narrow 7-4 victory. Brad Cahill cracked a three-run homer and Doug Shaneyfelt followed with a two-run swat to account for their team's five runs in the 1st. PRI answered with two in the bottom of the 1st, but Jay Woodward singled and scored on an Eric Saxton single, then Billy Moore's base hit plated Saxton to push the lead back to five. PRI added lone runs in the 2nd and 6th to complete the scoring. Pitcher Mark Jones scattered ten hits. Saxton banged out three hits to pace the offense.

That set the stage for a showdown with Columbus rival HLS Bonding/Big Sonny's in the winners' bracket finals. EZ Cash jumped out to a 7-0 lead in the top of the 1st, but didn't put HLS away until blowing open a 12-7 contest with an eight-run 7th. Eric Saxton went solo to put his team on the board in the 1st, Brad Cahill followed with a two-run crank, then Cory Devlin capped off the inning with a two-run double. Carl Hicks contributed a huge pinch-hit two-run, two-out double in the 7th, and Jay Woodward followed with a three-run triple as the lead swelled to 18-7.

Brad Cahill pounded out six hits, Dan Siddle added four, and Cory Devlin three to lead the winners.

HLS bounced back to dispose of the last local team in the tournament, House Rules, by a 16-10 score, but never got on track in the finals. Brian Blount cracked a two-run homer to give EZ Cash a 2-0 lead in the top of the 1st, then Cliff Bostrom had a slammer to help fuel an eight-run 2nd as the lead mushroomed to 10-1. EZ Cash added two in the 3rd and three in the 4th, then put the game away with a six-run 5th. Eric Saxton's three-run double closed out the scoring.

Saxton and Doug Shaneyfelt combined for eight hits, and Brian Blount added three to power the champions.

Saxton said it was special to meet another Columbus team in the finals.

"Everybody was talking about how nice it was to have two Columbus teams in the finals. That was great," said Saxton.

"It was a well-run tournament, the weather was great, and there were lots of good teams," he concluded.

WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA MEN'S "C-D" NIT FINAL STANDINGS JULY 8-9, 2007 - MILFORD, OH

1. E Z Cash, Grove City, OH 5 0
2. HLS Bonding/Big Sonny's, Reynoldsburg, OH 4 2
3. House Rules, Cincinnati, OH 5 2
4. Brock/Hot Wings/Schmoe's, Cincinnati, OH 3 2
5. BCP Associates/Mr. Tint/TPE, Columbus, OH 3 2
- PRI/Easton, Milford, OH 2 2
7. Adis' Place, Cincinnati, OH 3 2
- D-Town Softball, Delaware, OH 3 2
9. NKY Thunder, Burlington, KY 3 2
- NKY/Cincy Bandits, Florence, KY 2 2
- Chico's/Fox Premier Hardwood, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
- Design Concepts, New Richmond, OH 1 2
13. Chiefs, Louisville, KY 1 2
- Hitmen Softball, Hillsboro, OH 1 2
- Ice Softball, Blanchester, OH 1 2

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|--|
| | Union Savings Bank, Cincinnati, OH | 1 2 | |
| 17. | Trailblazers, Amelia, OH | 1 2 | |
| | Beef O'Brady's/Bruster's, Highland Heights, KY | 0 2 | |
| | EZ Cash, Grove City, OH | 0 2 | |
| | Putter's Tavern & Grill, Milford, OH | 0 2 | |
| | Triple L, Columbus, OH | 0 2 | |

WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA MEN'S "C" NATIONAL INVITATIONAL ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM

Sean Melampy	PRI/Easton
Dave Grooms	BCP/Mr. Tint/TPE
Kyle Sullivan	Brock/Hot Wings/Schmoe's
Jeremy Kramer	House Rules
Mark Shepherd	House Rules
Bob Smith	HLS Bonding/Big Sonny's
Brent Hiles	HLS Bonding/Big Sonny's
Chris Gostrom	EZ Cash
Jay Woodward	EZ Cash
Brad Cahill	EZ Cash
Eric Saxton - ODP	EZ Cash
Mark Jones - Co-MVP	EZ Cash
Mark Johnson - Co-MVP	HLS Bonding/Big Sonny's

Team CI Mercies Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "Dash For Disney" E World Qualifier Field At Queen City

West Chester, Oh.--Team CI mercy-ruled their final three opponents en route to a five game sweep of the 15-team Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "Dash for Disney" Class "E" World Qualifier July 7th at Queen City Sports Complex.

Team CI disposed of three round robin opponents before routing Players 15-5 and Budweiser 13-3 in the semi-finals and finals. Both contests were called after five innings.

The victory gave Team CI a berth into the USSSA Men's Class "E" World Tournament September 13-16 in Kissimmee, Fl. Budweiser qualified for the Ohio USSSA "E" State Tournament August 18-19 in Dayton along with Fairfield Tavern and B. K. J. Stars, and for the U-Trip Great Lakes Division "E" National Tournament Labor Day Weekend in Milford, Oh.

A deep bench, the hitting of Andy Mohler and Ben Schaaf, and solid defense carried Team CI to the title, said manager Darin Crowe.

"Having all of our guys there for the first time was a key," said Crowe. "It was a hot tournament. We were able to rotate guys in and out to keep them fresh."

Andy Mohler hit .780 and Ben Schaaf .750 to pace the offense.

"We picked up Andy this year and that is the reason we're playing so well," said Crowe. "He's a natural hitter...he can roll out of bed hitting."

Crowe said that Schaaf "gets on base a lot because he's extremely fast.

"He can run like the wind," said Schaaf.

The defense was anchored by Ryan Fiely, Chad Henry and Ben Schaaf, said Crowe.

“We have a nice double play combination in Ryan (ss) and Chad (2b). And Ben made some nice plays in the outfield and threw out two runners,” said Crowe. “He also went 12-for-16. If we had to pick an MVP for the day, it would have been Ben.”

Other hitting leaders for Team CI included Corey Welbaum (.667) and Tyler Hinkle (.600).

Team CI came out of the gate slow, needing two runs in the bottom of the 5th to shake free from a 7-7 tie with the Outcasts and pull out an eventual 9-8 victory. Tyler Hinkle singled home the go-ahead run, and Rob Finch doubled in what proved to be the game-winner. The Outcasts answered with a run in the top of the 6th, but pitcher Corey Eagle held them scoreless in the 7th to preserve the win.

Hinkle and Ryan Fiely combined for six hits.

Next Team CI erased 12 Angry Sluggers 11-5, breaking open a 4-4 contest with three runs in the top of the 4th and two in the 5th to grab a 9-5 lead. Ryan Fiely’s two-run triple put his club ahead to stay at 6-4 in the 4th. Chad Henry drove in both runs with a double in the 5th.

Henry, Ryan Thompson, Ben Schaaf and Caleb Hoops each went 3-for-4 to lead the winners.

Pitcher Corey Eagle took matters into his own hands in game three, shutting out American Home Land Title 10-0 to complete pool play. Team CI exploded for eight runs in the top of the 2nd. Caleb Hoops put his team on the board with a two-run double, and Corey Eagle capped off the inning with a bases loaded triple.

Chad Henry and Ben Schaaf shared six hits, and Corey Eagle contributed a double and a triple.

In the semi-finals, Team CI used a seven-run 2nd and a three-run 3rd to forge a 10-2 lead over Players and went on to post an easy 15-5 win. Jerrod Depoy’s two-run single erased a 2-0 deficit in the 2nd. An rbi single by Tyler Hinkle gave his team the lead for good at 3-2. Andy Mohler’s two-run triple capped off the inning. Team CI finally put the game away in the 5th, plating four runs to invoke the run-rule. A two-run double by Ben Schaaf brought down the curtain.

DePoy, Mohler, Schaaf and Corey Welbaum combined for a dozen hits.

Team CI never trailed in the finals, jumping out to a 5-0 lead in the top of the 1st, then breaking the game open with six runs in the 4th. Corey Eagle’s two-run single ignited the scoring in the 1st. Jerrod Depoy and Tyler Hinkle each contributed a two-run single in the 4th as the lead swelled to an insurmountable 13-3.

Hinkle banged out three hits, and Andy Mohler and Ben Schaaf had two hits apiece and a walk.

Amore, McCune Power Bomb Squad to Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Mixed NIT Title At Armco Park

Lebanon, Oh.--Kevin Amore batted .814 and Tammy McCune .778 to help power Bomb Squad to a first place finish in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Mixed “C-D” National Invitational Tournament July 7th at Armco Park.

Bomb Squad routed 2006 USSSA “D” World Champion Dented Bats 16-8 in the championship to wrap up a 4-1 weekend. The Columbus club went 2-1 in round robin play to earn a berth into a four-team, single elimination playoff round, where they mercy-ruled Brady’s Bunch/Cherry Grove Lanes 16-1 in five innings before polishing off Dented Bats.

Amore and McCune were named co-MVP’s.

“Kevin led off for us and had an on-base percentage of .850, so he was constantly on base for us,” observed Bomb Squad player-manager Chris Rowe. “He set the table the whole tournament.”

Amore also contributed to his team's success from the mound.

"Kevin and Mike (Rizzo) are our two pitchers," said Rowe. "They don't walk a lot of players and that makes teams earn their runs against us. If we don't walk a lot of players, it makes them try to get hits and they don't get any freebies."

Rowe said McCune was his team's "unanimous pick for our female MVP.

"She batted .780, and we would not have been in the finals if not for her clutch hits," said Rowe.

Rowe said that in his team's first game, they trailed Our Gang 12-9 going into the bottom of the 7th.

"Tracy had a base hit up the middle that tied the game for us with two outs, and that was huge," said Rowe. "If we would have lost that game, we would not have made it to the finals."

Also named to the All-Tournament team were Rowe (.780), Rizzo (.700), Chea Romine (.640), Kim Riley (.550) and Lee Anna King.

Defensively, Bomb Squad was led by Riley and Romine, said Rowe.

"Kim was our defensive MVP," said Rowe. "It was her first time playing for us, and she played great defense in the outfield and hit the ball really well.

"And Chea makes all the routine plays at short," added Rowe. "As far as I'm concerned, when there's a ball hit to short, it's an out. He's like money in the bank."

Bomb Squad never trailed in either the semi-finals or finals. They scored in every inning against Brady's Bunch, including three in the 1st and 2nd, two in the 3rd, and four in the 4th and 5th to cruise to an easy 16-1 victory. Chris Rowe's two-run double highlighted the 1st. Mike Rizzo delivered the big blow in the 2nd with a two-run single.

Kevin Amore pounded out five hits, Tammy McCune added four, and Rowe and Kim Riley shared six hits.

In the finals, Bomb Squad used an eight run 1st, a three-run 3rd and a four-run 4th to build a 15-6 lead over Dented Bats and romped to a 16-8 win. Trina Gerhard's two-run single and a two-run double by Chea Romine accounted for four of their team's eight runs in the 1st. Leanna King contributed a big two-run single in the 4th.

Rowe, McCune and Amore combined for a dozen hits to power the champions.

River Rats, Wolf Pack, Express Health Take Queen City Round Robins

West Chester, Oh.--The Cincinnati River Rats went 2-1, while Wolf Pack and Express Health Care swept to 3-0 marks, to claim first place in their respective divisions in a twelve team, three division Sunday morning round robin July 8th at Queen City Sports Complex.

The River Rats routed RTFS (2-1) 15-5 to open play in division one, then stumbled against Lindenwald's Finest (2-1) 7-3 before rallying to knock off the Master Batters (0-3) 15-9.

Wolf Pack used a solid defense to hold three consecutive division two opponents to single digit scoring, as they disposed of Hard Knocks (1-2) 11-7, Pacific Bombers (0-3) 13-1, and Bad Company (2-1) 7-5 in the deciding contest.

While in division three, Express Health Care spanked Rounding 3rd (1-2) 14-4, then battled past Caribbean Storm (1-2) 14-12 and A. T. Excavating (1-2) 7-5 to complete the sweep.

July 14-15....

HLS Bonding/Big Sonny's Rallies Back For Share Of Louisville Slugger/TPS-USSSA "C-D" NIT At RiverShore

Hebron, Ky.-HLS Bonding/Big Sonny's rallied all the way back from a second round loss to share first place with Dizzy Roosters in the Louisville Slugger/TPS-USSSA "C-D" National Invitational Tournament July 14th at RiverShore Sports Complex.

Union Savings Bank derailed the Columbus club in a 21-5 rout. But HLS/Big Sonny's roared past five opponents in the losers' bracket to earn a share of the title. HLS/Big Sonny's was awarded \$600 in USSSA travel expense, and runner-up Dizzy Roosters left with \$250 to their credit. Third place JLC/Legends/Countrywide earned a paid berth to the USSSA "C" World Tournament September 20-23 in Kissimmee, Fl. M & M Connection/Saints and Best Way Frame/Nasty Boys qualified for the U-Trip "D" World in Sterling Heights, Mi.

The pitching of tournament co-MVP Roger Bias "was the big key" to HLS/Sonny's success in the tournament, said manager Sam Kirk.

"After we got beat in the second game we were just flat and Roger took over for us the rest of the day," said Kirk.

Did HLS give any thought of throwing the towel in after taking a loss so early in the tournament?

"Not really," insisted Kirk. "We were kinda down. But we just fought back and got on a roll. The big game was against Line Drive. Because of their national ranking we were pumped up to play them. They got up on us early and we battled back for a hard-fought win and played well the rest of the night."

All-Tournament selections Troy Rawlins (.765), Mark Johnson (.708), Corey Hogle (.677) and T. J. Speakman (.615) paced the HLS/Big Sonny's offense along with tournament MVP Roger Bias (.667) and Rick Edington (.611).

"We picked Roger as co-MVP for his pitching performance and he had a good weekend hitting the ball with some home runs.

Defensively, Kirk said outfielders Hogle (cf), Speakman (rf) and Robby Smith (lf) "played well all day," and noted that middle infielder Mark Johnson "made a couple of big plays in the line drive game."

HLS/Sonny's looked unstoppable in their opener, a 28-14 laughter against Nu-Way Drywall. HLS scored two runs in the top of the 3rd, seven in the 4th, four in the 5th and eight in the 6th to break open a 3-3 contest and take a commanding 24-7 lead. Rick Edington's two run double put his club ahead to stay at 5-3 in the 3rd. Roger Bias cracked a three-run home run in the 4th, then added a two-run shot in the 5th. T. J. Speakman and Cory Hogle combined for ten hits, and Bias and Mark Johnson chipped in with four apiece.

But that was as far as HLS got in the winners' bracket, as Union Savings Bank slapped a lopsided 21-5 loss on the central Ohio power.

HLS/Sonny's came back with a vengeance their next two games, mercy-ruling Franchise 21-3 in five before disposing of Sentry Fire/APEX/LBYC 15-5.

After falling behind Franchise 3-0 after an inning and a half, HLS exploded for six runs in the bottom of the 2nd, five in the 3rd and ten in the 4th to close out the scoring at 21-3. Brent Hiles singled home the go-ahead run to give his team a 4-3 lead in the 2nd, then Chris Murdock followed with a two-run double. Jim Conley and Cory Hogle each connected for a three-run blast in the ten run 4th. Hogle, Hiles, Troy Rawlins and Mark Johnson were all perfect in four trips to the plate.

A three-run Rick Edington swat highlighted a five-run 1st against Sentry Fire in game four. HLS didn't shake free of Sentry, however, until a four run 6th made it 15-5. Cory Hogel belted a two-run homer to cap off the inning. Brent Hiles and Bob Walker shared eight hits, and Mark Johnson chipped in three for the winners.

HLS needed seven runs in the bottom of the 6th to topple nationally ranked Line Drive/SSS/Perkins 14-11 in game five. A two-run double by Brent Hiles knotted the score, then Rick Edington's sac fly gave HLS the lead at 12-11. Chris Murdock then double home a pair of insurance runs. Roger Bias held Line Drive scoreless over the final four innings to preserve the win. Murdock banded out four hits, and Hiles and Troy Rawlings each went 3-for-4.

HLS followed up a four-run 1st with a seven-run 2nd to jump out to an 11-1 lead over Xtreme Moose/Shirtworks/Fent Roofing in game six, but didn't put the game away until scoring four runs in the top of the 7th to go ahead 21-12. Rick Edington's three-run homer put his club on the board in the 1st. T. J. Speakman also socked a three-run dinger in the 2nd. Jim Conley's two-run double capped off HLS' 7th.

Conley pounded out five hits, and Edington, Roger Bias and Chris Murdock each went 4-for-5.

That pitted HLS against JLC/Legends/Countrywide in the losers' bracket finals. HLS scored in each of the first five innings to take a 13-5 advantage, but JLC outscored HLS 6-1 over the last two and a half innings to cut the deficit to 14-12 before Roger Riley shut them down in the bottom of the 7th. Jim Conley's two-run single capped off the five run 1st for HLS. T. J. Speakman cracked a three-run homer in the 3rd, and Troy Rawlins launched a two-run shot in the 5th.

Conley, Speakman and Robby Smith each went 4-for-4 to power the champions. Rawlins and Corey Hogle added three hits each.

HLS/Big Sonny's manager Sam Kirk said his team is ready for post-season play.

"We've played well all year and we're on a pretty good roll right now going into the states and nationals," said Kirk.

Kirk concluded by thanking his sponsors, Big Sonny, Jeff "Muscles" Harper, HLS Bonding and Troy Speakman. He also commended tournament director Patty Amrein. "She treated us well all day, and it was a long, long day trying to get it done," said Kirk.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Co-Champion Dizzy Roosters lost their scorebook and was unable to report their tournament highlights to the SOFTBALL NEWS.

Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati Stingy On Defense In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men's "D" Super State-National Qualifier At Queen City

By Andy Zureick

West Chester, Ohio – Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati won six games with no defeats in taking the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men's "D" Super State-National Qualifier at Queen City Sports Complex on July 14th. Despite solid hitting and run production, it was their play in the field that paved the way to the championship. "We blew some teams out," noted team manager Terris Allen, "but the defense was there all day. Nobody scored 10 runs on us. We've thrived on defense all year." Opponents averaged fewer than six runs per game against Good Guys.

In the opener of the round robin portion of the event, Good Guys faced Pitt Ohio Express. A pair of two-run singles from Nick Bibbins and Matt Turner led the way to nine runs in the top of the 3rd. That broke

open what had been a 6-2 game. Good Guys finished it off in five innings at 17-4. Bibbins and Turner were 3-for-3 in the game. Teammate Brian Sandlin was also 3-for-3. Brent Hopkins went 3-for-4.

Accurate Welding/Laptops Plus was up next for Good Guys. Rob Feldman singled in two runs in the top of the 1st as Good Guys jumped out to a 3-0 lead. Five more in the top of the 3rd increased the lead to 8-0. Adam Carr and Matt Turner each drove in two in the at bat. Accurate Welding/Laptops Plus never challenged in the 12-3 final. Brian Sandlin and Scott Goetz were both 4-for-4. Carr and Brent Hopkins went 3-for-4.

Going into the bottom of the 5th against the Royals, the Good Guys found themselves in a tied game, 7-7. Doug Murphy broke that tie with a two-run double. Adam Carr later added another double that drove in two. In all, they plated six runs to take a 13-7 lead. The Royals managed only one more in their last two at bats for a 16-8 final. Nick Bibbins led the way at the plate going 4-for-4. Scott Goetz and Doug Murphy were 3-for-3. Brent Hopkins and Chaz Goetz each collected three hits in four at bats.

Good Guys completed an undefeated round robin with a fourth win against Tri-State Air Filters. Through the first five innings, the game was a defensive struggle as the score stood at 4-2. Then in the top of the 6th, Good Guys scored six runs to pad the lead. Adam Carr had a two-run double in the at bat. Andy Birkenauer capped the scoring with an inside-the-park homer. They tacked on five more in the top of the 7th for a 15-2 final. Brent Hopkins, Chaz Goetz, Scott Goetz, and Nick Bibbins all were 3-for-4 in the victory.

The single-elimination round started with Good Guys facing SW Bombers. In the top of the 3rd, Brian Sandlin broke a 2-2 tie with a two-run single. Rob Feldman and Nick Bibbins drove in one more each to increase the lead to 6-2. SW Bombers tallied only one more run over the final five at bats, making it an 8-3 final. Sandlin led all Good Guy hitters by going 3-for-3. Feldman and Bibbins both finished at 2-for-3.

The championship game matched Good Guys with Accurate Welding/Laptops Plus, a team the Good Guys had already beaten once earlier in the day. Jeff Setters doubled in a run in the bottom of the 2nd to break a 2-2 tie. They tacked on three more in the 3rd, two of those coming home on a Scott Goetz double. Three more in the bottom of the 6th increased the lead to 9-3. Accurate Welding/Laptops Plus rallied for five runs in the top of the 7th and had bases loaded with two outs. But then pitcher Adam Carr coaxed a routine fly ball out of the last Accurate Welding batter, ending the game at 9-8 in favor of Good Guys. Jeff Setters was 2-for-2 in his best game of the day. Six of the Good Guys – Brent Hopkins, Chad Goetz, Scott Goetz, Brian Sandlin, Rob Feldman, and Nick Bibbins – went 2-for-3.

Brian Sandlin, described as a “cagey veteran” by the team manager, topped the Good Guys offensive honor roll with an .823 batting average in the tournament. “He’s led us in hitting all year and continued his hot hitting,” noted Allen.

Just behind him, going 17-21, was Nick Bibbins with a .809 batting average. “His average would have been even better than that had it not been for two questionable calls at first.”

Brothers Scott and Chad Goetz finished at .722 and .651, respectively.

According to Allen, their defense was especially strong up the middle. “We probably turned ten double plays with Chad Goetz (shortstop), Scott Goetz (middle infield), and Nick Bibbins (second base). Adam Carr on the mound didn’t give up many runs. He had five innings where he only threw six pitches. He threw strikes all day and stayed ahead of the hitters.”

The outfield of Jeff Setters (left field), Brent Hopkins (centerfield), and Ryan Hayes (right field) was solid in the less-than-perfect weather conditions. “The entire outfield played well considering it was a windy day. The wind played a lot of tricks and they held their own.”

Lamb Powers M & M/Saints In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “D-E” At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--Mike Lamb batted a red-hot .857 to power M & M Connection/Saints to a first place finish in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men's "D-E" State-National Qualifier on Sunday, July 15th at Expressway Park.

M & M/Saints went 2-0 in the four team round robin affair, knocking off Lykins Contracting 13-9 and Auggies Chuggers 15-7 before inclement weather washed out game three.

Berths to the Ohio USSSA Men's "D" State Tournament August 18-19 in Harrison, and to the U-Trip Great Lakes "D" Nationals were awarded to Lykins.

M & M benefitted from a line-up that boasted three .800 hitters and the hitting an pitching of Mike Lamb, who held both his team's opponents to single digit scoring.

"We scored when we needed to, and Mike pitched and hit really well for us," summed up M & M manager John Tomlinson.

Tomlinson and Greg Riddel followed Lamb's .857 performance with an .833 effort. John Erdman and Mike Dittmer chipped in at .715, Brian McDonald batted .667 and Justin Charlton .572.

McDonald and Ron Williams anchored the defense, said Tomlinson.

"Brian usually doesn't play outfield and played left field and held that position down well for us," said Tomlinson. "Ron Williams stood out at 3rd base for us. He caught everything coming his way - anything that got close."

M & M/Saints never trailed after jumping out to a 7-0 lead over Lykins in the top of the 1st. Back-to-back two run singles by Mike Lamb and John Tomlinson made it 4-0, then Ron Williams plated runs five and six with a triple. Lykins cut the deficit to 7-5 in the bottom of the inning, but M & M answered with three, then held on for a 13-9 victory. Mike Lamb's two run triple highlighted the 2nd.

Lamb, Tomlinson, Mike Dittmer, John Erdman and Justin Charlton each went 3-for-4 for the winners.

Auggies Chuggers grabbed an early 7-4 lead after an inning and a half in game two, but M & M roared back to take a 9-7 lead in the 2nd, then used a four run 4th to seal a 15-7 win. Justin Charlton cracked a three-run homer to knot the score at 7-7 in the 2nd, then Greg Riddel tripled in a pair of runs to give his club the lead for good. Two-run doubles by Mike Barone and Brian Erdman accounted for the Saints four runs in the 4th.

Riddel, John Tomlinson, Mike Lamb and Brian McDonald combined for a dozen hits to pace the champions.

Dixon Softball Overcomes Early Adversity In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men's "E" District IX Championship At Expressway Park

By Andy Zureick

Milford, Ohio – Dixon Softball started slow but improved as the day went on to win the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men's "E" District IX Championship at Expressway Park on Saturday, July 14th. They won four straight games in single elimination play after a very lackluster 1-3 performance in the opening round robin.

Dixon Softball lost back to back games to get the day underway. The first was a 16-9 decision to OC Softball; the second was 16-14 to Cincinnati Diamondbacks. Their lone victory was a 19-8 besting of The Mound Café. In their worst offensive performance of the day, Dixon Softball dropped their final game of pool play to Playmakers, 11-0.

But from that point on, a different Dixon Softball team began to show up. “Guys were getting tired of losing,” explained team manager Rob Dixon. “They figured we might as well win some money for our trip to Florida [for the World Tournament].”

The opening game of elimination play pitted Dixon against Tru-Staff. Jeremy Snider singled in a run as part of the three-run 4th that allowed Dixon Softball to overcome a 12-10 deficit. In the next inning, they exploded for nine runs and never looked back. Matt Hosterman, Jeremy Snider, and Josh Cooper each drove in two runs to help fuel the inning. The final score was 27-15 in six innings. Aaron Brewster was a team-best 5-for-5. Todd Hawks and Jim Cliburn were each 4-for-4. Jeremy Snider, Matt Hosterman, and Josh Cooper all went 4-for-5. Snider also drove in six runs.

Game two between Dixon Softball and the Hawks was a defensive struggle. In the bottom of the 6th, Dixon Softball scored twice to tie the game at 7-7. The Hawks failed to score in the top of the final frame. Dixon then got back-to-back doubles from Jeremy Snider and Scott Hornsby to score the game winning run. Snider was a perfect 4-for-4 in the contest; Jim Cliburn was 3-for-3. Aaron Brewster, Josh Cooper, and Scott Hornsby were each 3-for-4. Pitcher Chris Perry tossed shutout softball for the final five innings of the game.

The semifinal was a rematch between Dixon and Playmakers, the team that had blanked them in the round robin. Matt Hosterman and Jeremy Snider each collected an RBI in the bottom of the 1st as Dixon jumped out to a 4-0 lead. They added one more in the 3rd to make it 5-2. Dixon put the game away in the 4th with nine runs. Scott Hornsby administered the big blow, an inside-the-park grand slam. Jim Cliburn pitched in a two-run single. Hosterman and Josh Cooper were 3-for-3 to lead the way.

Dixon Softball got a chance to avenge another opening-round loss in the finals when facing OC Softball. OC Softball opened the game with one run in the top of the 1st. Dixon Softball answered with eight runs to take control of the game. They tacked on four more in the 2nd and nine more in the 3rd. Matt Hosterman capped that inning with a solo inside-the-park homer. Dixon won going away, 24-6 in five innings. Team captain Rob Dixon was 4-for-4. Josh Cooper, Aaron Brewster, and Jim Cliburn all went 3-for-3.

Based on the results, Dixon got stronger as the day went on. “Everybody else was tired and wanted to go home. The guys hung in there and beat the heat,” explained Rob Dixon. “We played eight games in a row without a break. We tried to get everybody rotated in. Whether a guy just came in and caught or sat out an inning, we tried to give everybody a two-inning rest. It wasn’t a lot, but it was better than nothing.”

Rob Dixon, Scott Hornsby, and Jeff Thompson each batted .714 for the tournament. Aaron Brewster bettered them at .750. The team-leader was Jim Cliburn at .778. “It was a surprise to everybody when the averages were figured out. He’s not usually a .700 hitter.”

Brewster was voted team MVP for the tournament. “He had six or seven walks in a row at one time. In our last tournament he batted 1.000 and this time .750, so he’s kind of on a roll.”

As a team, Dixon Softball hit .640 as nine of the twelve team members batted .600 or better.

Diamond Freaks Escape Sports Reach, Capture Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “D-E” Qualifier At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--The Diamond Freaks outlasted Sports Reach 15-14 in nine innings in their second game, then blanked Tammy’s Cafe 12-0 to complete a three-game sweep of a four team USSSA “D-E” State-National Qualifier on Sunday, July 15th at Expressway Park.

Diamond Freaks had rallied from behind to knock off J Tapps 15-12 in their opener.

Shane Wells tripled home Ryan West with the go ahead run in the top of the 9th against Sports Reach, then scored an insurance run on Kyle Moberly’s single. Sports Reach mustered up a run in the bottom of the 9th before succumbing, 15-14.

Beating Sports Reach was “the big key” to winning the tournament according to Diamond Freaks’ manager Jim Cramton.

“Our nine and ten hitters hadn’t had a hit to that point, and they had an rbi single to put us ahead in the 9th,” said Cramton.

Defense, pitching, taking the extra base, and the come-from-behind win in game one also contributed to the championship, said Cramton.

“Our infield turned six or seven double plays,” said Cramton. “Shane Wells (2b) flipped a bunch of double plays on balls that I didn’t think we had a chance of turning. And we had a good pitching performance by Mark Young.

“We also took a lot of extra bases on teams who were lollygagging in the outfield,” noted Cramton. “Our leadoff hitter took second base pretty much every time he got on. Our whole team took the extra base, hustled out ground balls and ran out everything.”

Cramton said his team showed a lot of poise after falling behind four runs in the 1st inning of their first game.

“When we got down we didn’t lay down,” said Cramton. “We came back and won after being down 5-1.”

Cliff Doyle paced the offense with a hefty .833 effort. Ryan West followed at .777, Derek Moberly and Shane Wells batted .750, Cramton .700 and Mark Young .615.

Diamond Freaks scored in every inning except the 7th to outduel J Tapps 15-12 in their opener. After falling behind 5-1 in the 1st, Diamond Freaks plated two in the 2nd and four in the 3rd to take the lead for good at 7-6. Matt Boggs cut the deficit to one with a two-run triple, then Brian West cracked a two-run home run to put his club ahead to stay. Cliff Doyle’s two-run double capped a three-run 4th as the lead swelled to 10-6. A four-run 6th pushed the advantage to 15-8 and J Tapps never recovered.

Cramton, Doyle and Shane Wells combined for a dozen hits, and West, Derek Moberly and Mark Young chipped in three apiece.

Next Diamond Freaks squared off against Sports Reach, where they needed nine innings to pull out a 15-14 victory. With the score tied 13-13, Ryan West drew a walk to lead off the 9th, and scored on Shane Wells’ triple. Kyle Moberly singled to make it 15-13.

Wells and Cliff Doyle shared eight hits, and Derek Moberly and Matt Boggs each went 3-for-5.

In their finale the Diamond Freaks exploded for ten runs in the bottom of the 1st and went on to shutout Tammy’s Cafe 12-0 in five behind the pitching of Mark Young. Two-run singles by Jim Cramton, Matt Boggs and Kyle and Derek Moberly highlighted the 1st.

Derek Moberly and Mark Young banged out three hits each to lead the champions.

Fat Batz/Team Xplosion Win Rain-Shortened Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “E” State-National-World Qualifier At Riverstar Park

By Andy Zureick

Cincinnati, Ohio – The Fat Batz/Team Xplosion topped a 10-team field to take first place in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “E” State-National-World Qualifier at Riverstar Park on Sunday, July 15th. Despite the championship game being rained out, Fat Batz/Team Xplosion still earned a paid berth to the USSSA “E” World Tournament in Kissimmee, Florida to be played September 13th –16th.

Fat Batz opened play against Big Gunz. After five innings of play, Big Gunz held a 9-8 lead. Then in the top of the 6th, Team Xplosion put up four runs to take a 12-9 lead. Rob Cooper, Eric Furamoto, and Rick Barton each drove in one run in the inning. Furamoto, the pitcher, held Big Gunz scoreless in their last two at bats and that is how it ended. Josh Vaughn, Rick Barton, Ray Nelson, and Thomas Murr were all 3-for-4 in the victory.

Eric Furamoto continued to dominate on the mound in game two versus Lights Out, pitching an 11-0 shutout. In the top of the 1st, Ray Nelson and Mike Ballard drove in one run each when Fat Batz jumped out to a 2-0 lead. Jim Roberts drove in two more in the four-run 3rd. Roberts, along with teammates Rick Barton and Ray Nelson, was 3-for-4. Shannon Dixon was a perfect 3-for-3.

In what would be the final game of the day due to inclement weather, Team Xplosion faced Renegades. Fat Batz drew first blood with four runs in the top of the 1st. Thomas Murr got the scoring at the started with a bases-loaded triple. Murr then came into score on a sacrifice fly from Mike Ballard. After Renegades came back to tie it up in the bottom of the opening frame, Team Xplosion reclaimed the lead with three runs in the top of the next inning. Mike Owens picked up two RBI with a double. Josh Vaughn singled in the other run. Fat Batz tacked on two more in the 4th while Renegades failed to score again after the 1st. The final was 9-4 in favor of Team Xplosion. Josh Vaughn was 3-for-3 with two runs batted in. Ray Nelson and Eric Furamoto collected two hits apiece.

Vaughn and Nelson both batted .750 to lead Fat Batz/ETP on the day. “Josh is our leadoff hitter and he’s come through all year; Ray is one of the best shortstops I’ve seen, he always comes through in the clutch,” said team manager Shannon Dixon.

Dixon was a major contributor himself, hitting .700 in the three games. Mike Ballard also hit .700. Pitcher Eric Furamoto finished at .727.

“Thomas Murr didn’t let anything go by him at third base. Mike Owens did a good job in rightfield and Josh Vaughn in left field, they ran down everything,” noted Dixon when speaking about the team’s defensive standouts.

Dixon also pointed to his team’s enthusiasm as being a major factor in their success. “Talking kept the team alive the whole day. We figured it out that when we don’t talk we don’t win.”

Defending Champions Fall 16-1 In Finals...

Riemeier Lumber Mercies UAW #863 In EMR Group-ASA Metro Industrial “A” Finals At Rumpke Park

Crosby Township, Oh.- After Cooper Sports/UAW #863/Veterans halted a nine tournament run in the Industrial “A” division of the EMR Group/ASA Cincinnati Metro last year by Cincinnati Local #392 Blue, it looked like a new power had emerged to begin another dynasty.

Look again.

With industrial softball aficionados anticipating another UAW-Cincinnati Blue showdown in the finals, 2006 industrial “B” division champion Riemeier Lumber ambushed both teams en route to a first place finish July 14-15 at Rumpke Park.

Riemeier manhandled both teams, spanking Local #392 22-9 in their opener, then later mercy-ruling UAW #863 16-1 in five innings.

UAW #863 didn’t go down without a fight. The 2007 “A” champs upended Riemeier 15-2 in the first finals.

But in their two victories, Riemeier took advantage of early leads, the pitching of Pete Stokes and offensive leaders Joe Resing and John Trimpe to claim the title.

“We jumped out early in the games we won,” observed Riemeier manager Curt Clark. “Also Pete Stokes pitched really well and had some big hits, and in the games we won, Joe Resing was 9-for-10, and John Trimpe had three, three-run homer runs.”

Resing, who led Riemeier in hitting in the 2006 “B” Metro, did it again in this year’s “A” division with a hefty .750 mark to earn MVP honors.

“It was a tough call,” said Clark. “He and John drove in a lot of runs, and Pete Stokes had some big hits and pitched great.

“But besides his hitting, Joe made some really big plays in our three-man outfield and ran down a lot of balls. And he threw a guy out at 2nd and got us out of an inning.”

Outfielder Mike Bedel also turned in a big defensive gem for Riemeier, noted Clark.

“In our first game when Local #392 was trying to keep up with us, Mike made a diving catch to end the 2nd inning, and I feel that kinda took the steam out of them,” said Clark.

Clark added that 2nd baseman Christ Witt “was outstanding all tournament.”

Following Resing’s team-high .750 average were Matt Bectel and Mike Stoecklen at .667, John Trimpe at .636, Brian Colliers at .625, Richie Jones and Steve Atkinson at .600 and Pete Stokes at .500.

Riemeier scored four runs in each of the first three innings to build a 12-6 lead over Cincinnati Blue in game one, and later added five in the 6th and four in the 7th to nail down a 21-7 victory. Back-to-back doubles by Joe Resing and Ken Wilp ignited Riemeier’s four-run 1st. Richie Jones clubbed a three-run homer in the 2nd, and a Steve Atkinson solo and Xen Schneider two-run single were the big blows in the 3rd. Three-run blasts by John Trimpe and Pete Stokes highlighted the 6th and 7th, respectively.

Joe Resing collected five hits, and Trimpe drove in six runs and shared fifteen hits with Jones, Atkinson, Wilp and Mike Bedel.

UAW #863 then sent Local #392 packing in the losers’ bracket finals to earn a re-match with Riemeier, and they promptly saddled the eventual champions with a lopsided 15-2 setback.

But the second finals was all Riemeier. Riemeier put the game away early with three in the 1st, five in the 2nd and seven in the 4th to nail down a 16-1, five-inning rout and the title. John Trimpe launched a three-run homer to account for all the scoring in the top of the 1st. Joe Resing and Mike Stoecklen sandwiched solo shots around a three-run Pete Stokes dinger in the 3rd, then Trimpe cracked another three-run homer and Richie Jones went solo in the big seven run 4th.

Resing and Trimpe combined for six hits to pace the champions.

Riemeier’s Curt Clark said his team “had a lot of fun” and “really played well. It was a nice weekend.”

Clark concluded by thanking the team’s coaching staff of Bill Ramsey, Jason Schriber and “coach” Lucas Clark.

“We couldn’t have done it without them,” stated Clark.

EMR GROUP-ASA CINCINNATI METRO INDUSTRIAL “A” DIVISION FINAL STANDINGS

1. Reimeier Lumber 2 1
2. UAW #863 2 2
3. Cincinnati Local #392 Blue 1 2

O’Conner, Ober, Williams Power Champions...

Builders First Source Escapes CWA #4400 In Second Round, Sweeps EMR Group-ASA Metro Industrial “A” Finals At Rumpke Park

Crosby Township, Oh.-After rallying for three runs in the bottom of the 7th to escape CWA #4400 13-12 in the second round, Builders First Source swept to a 4-0 record to capture first place in the Industrial “B” division of the EMR Group/ASA Cincinnati Metro Tournament July 14-15 at Rumpke Park.

Builders First Source romped past A-1 Lumping 14-7 in the winners’ bracket finals and CWA #4400 13-5 in the championship game to complete the sweep.

John Gamble delivered the game winning hit against CWA #4400 in the second round with a two-run double.

But it was a couple of big home runs by Dave Williams that kept BFS within striking distance, pointed out manager Jeremy Hampton.

“Dave played a real big part in that win with a three-run homer and a solo home run,” said Hampton.

Hampton said Williams was “one of two veterans along with Neil Pierani who kept the guys in the game and helped the younger guys out,” added Hampton.

Williams cracked four home runs in the tournament and batted .500. Sean O’Conner and Marty Ober each went 12-for-16 (.750) to pace the offense. Hampton and Matt Haggerty chipped in with a .692 weekend.

A relentless offense and the camaraderie that has evolved over five years of playing together helped carry Builders First Source to the title, said Hampton.

“We just has constant hitting and we played well as a team,” said Hampton. “We’ve played together for five years and everybody knows everybody.”

Hampton said Marty Ober returned to the team from an injury just in time.

“It was Marty’s first time back (in the lineup) from a broken foot after eleven weeks, and he hit .750. That’s pretty good.”

Hampton called Sean O’Conner, who shared hitting honors with Ober, “a solid hitter who always hits well.

“He’s almost automatic,” said Hampton.

The tandem also contributed big defensively, added Hampton.

“Marty made quite a few nice catches and putouts and digs at 1st base, and Sean played solid defense at shortstop, going to his left and right,” said Hampton.

Game two hero Dave Williams also stepped up defensively, remarked Hampton.

“He ran down a lot of balls in the outfield for us and got the ball back in.”

Pitcher Dave Huber “is a really good pitcher and he kept us in each game,” added Hampton. “He pitched well in every game of the tournament.”

Builders First Source used a five run 5th and a five run 6th to blow open an 11-5 game and level Lopez Drywall 21-7 in game one. BFS never trailed after jumping out to a 6-0 lead in the top of the 1st. Dave Huber put his club on the board with a three-run blast. Dave Williams delivered a three-run homer to cap off the 5th as the lead swelled to 16-5, and Jeremy Hampton got in on the act with a three-run swat in the 6th.

Wayne Lung collected five hits, Sean O'Conner four and Williams three for the winners.

BFS needed three runs in the bottom of the 7th to escape round two opponent CWA #4400. With BFS trailing 12-10 going into the bottom of the 7th, Wayne Lung and Marty Ober singled and Brian Gamble walked to load the bases. Mike Ratliff hit into a fielder's choice to score Lung, then John Gamble came through with a clutch two-run double to left-center to plate Ober and Ratliff with the tying and winning runs.

Ober banged out four hits, and Sean O'Conner and Neil Pierani each went 3-for-4 to fuel the offense.

BFS had to rally from behind again in the winners' bracket finals, taking the lead for good at 7-6 with a four run 3rd, then pulling away to a 14-7 victory by scoring four in the 5th and three in the 6th. Brian Gamble singled in two runs to put his club ahead to stay at 7-6 in the 3rd. An rbi single by Mike Ratliff capped off the 5th as the lead grew to 11-6. A two-run double by Wayne Lung highlighted the 6th.

Lung, Matt Haggerty and Marty Ober combined for a dozen hits.

Builders First Source only needed two innings to seal a 13-5 win over CWA #4400 in the finals, erupting for six runs in the bottom of the 7th and four in the 1st to take a commanding 10-1 lead. CWA #4400 never recovered. Sean O'Conner got the scoring underway with a solo shot in the bottom of the 1st, then Dave Huber followed with a two-run double. Huber also had a big blow in the 2nd, as he and Matt Haggerty each connected for a two-run single.

Veteran Neil Pierani showed the way with four hits, and O'Conner, Huber, Haggerty and Jeremy Hampton shared twelve hits to help power the champions.

EMR GROUP-ASA CINCINNATI METRO INDUSTRIAL "B" DIVISION FINAL STANDINGS

1.	BFS	4	0	
2.	CWA #4400	3	2	
3.	A-1 Lumping	2	2	
4.	Hamilton Co. Sheriffs Department	2	2	
5.	Viox	1	2	
	Lopez Drywall	0	2	
7.	Cincinnati Local #392 Red			0 2

Opponents Score Only Eleven Runs In Four Games...

Defense Carries Masters RX To EMR Group-ASA Metro Industrial "C" Title At Rumpke Park

Crosby Township, Oh.-Masters RX held four opponents to four runs or less en route to a first place finish in the Industrial "C" division of the EMR Group/ASA Cincinnati Me-tro Tournament July 14-15 at Rumpke Park.

Masters RX knocked off Ohio Army National Guard 9-2 and 11-3 in the winners' bracket finals and finals to complete the sweep of the eight team affair.

Masters RX was never seriously challenged on their way to the title, as they outscored their opponents by a combined 49-9 margin. No team came closer than six runs to besting the champions.

“Solid defense” was the key to winning the tournament, summed up manager Jason Smith.

“We only gave up nine runs,” observed Smith.

Smith said that shortstop Brandon Cameron and left-centerfielder Brian Gray anchored the defense.

“Brandon is the key to our success in the infield,” said Smith. “He’s a young player who has come a long way in the last year. And Brian didn’t make a single error. He also led our team in rbi’s.”

Smith said his team got a big boost following an injury in the winners’ bracket finals.

“Our 3rd baseman went down in the semi-finals and Rob Ballinger moved to 3rd and played tremendously for us.”

Smith and Trent Purnhagen paced the offense with a sizzling .750 average. Scott Lynch chipped in with a .687 mark.

“Trent’s a key leader on this team,” said Smith. “He’s our strongest left-handed batter. He has the ability to pick holes and hit the ball where he wants to. He’s probably the most versatile hitter on our team.”

Smith said his team “had a lot of base hits” and won with “teamwork.”

“We gave our MVP award to the coach of the National Guard team, because you win as a team and you lose as a team,” said Smith. “It’s too tough to single out one guy in a tournament. Everybody stepped up at different times. Besides, with all they do for our country, they are our MVPs.”

Masters RX broke open a 2-2 contest with seven runs in the 3rd, six in the 4th and four in the 5th to mercy-rule Denier Electric 19-2 in their opener. Brian Gray’s rbi single broke the tie in the 3rd. Trent Purnhagen cracked a three-run home run. Mike Warner delivered the big hit in the 6th with a bases-clearing double. Warner and Jason Smith collected four hits each, and Kenny Neace and Scott Lynch chipped in with three.

Next Masters RX scored four runs in the bottom of the 1st to overcome a 2-0 deficit, then added three in the 2nd, one in the 4th and two in the 5th to dispose of Budweiser 10-4. Rob Ballinger singlehandedly erased Budweiser’s lead in the 1st with a three-run double to put his club ahead 3-2. Rob Ballinger singled home two runs in the 2nd, and Mike Warner doubled home both of Masters’ runs in the 5th.

Ballinger, Scott Lynch and Jason Smith each went 3-for-4 to pace the offense.

That pitted Masters RX against Ohio Army National Guard in the winners’ bracket finals. Masters RX never trailed after jumping out to a 6-0 lead in the bottom of the 1st. Two run singles by Mike Warner, Ken Neice and Gabe Rodriguez accounted for their club’s six first inning tallies. The lead swelled to 8-0 on Rob Ballinger’s two-run double in the 2nd. OANG answered with two in the top of the 3rd, then James Zurlinger drove in the final run of the game with a single in the bottom of the inning to close out the scoring at 9-2.

Jason Smith banged out three hits, and Warner and Brandon Cameron went 2-for-3 for the winners.

OANG drew first blood with two runs in the finals, but Masters RX came roaring back with six in the bottom of the inning to grab a 6-2 lead. Brian Gray’s two-run double put his club ahead for good at 3-2. Gabe Rodriguez singled home two runs to cap off the inning. Brian Gray belted a home run in the 3rd to make it 7-3, then Rob Ballinger single home a run in the 4th as the lead grew to 8-3. A three-run triple in the 6th by Brian Gray closed out the scoring.

Gray pounded out four hits to lead the champions. Lynch and Trent Purnhagen shared six hits.

EMR GROUP-ASA CINCINNATI METRO

INDUSTRIAL "C" DIVISION FINAL STANDINGS

1.	Masters RX	4 0	
2.	OHARNG	3 1	
3.	Rumpke Bad Boys		3 2
4.	Team VBE	2 2	
5.	Local #212	1 2	
	Bukd	1 2	
7.	Denier	0 2	
	American Scaffolding		0 2

Pierce Powers Riverside/Red's/Allied Astros/Sports Den/Boombah/TPS Romp In ASA Grand Slam "B" At Eggleston Park

Colerain Township, Oh. "Dennis Pierce has been working on his game," says Riverside/Red's/Allied Astros/Sports Den/Boombah/TPS manager Robert "Red" Moore.

"And evidently, a whole lot, because in our first tournament of the season, he was getting a little air under the ball. But in our last two tournaments, he's hit nothing but line drives unless we ask him to put it out of the park."

Pierce hit .875 to power the Riverside/Red's/Allied Astros/Sports Den/Boombah/TPS 40-over softball team to a four game sweep of the ASA "B" Grand Slam July 14th at Eggleston Park.

Riverside/TPS trampled the nine-team field, besting every opponent by at least ten runs. The champions mercy-ruled their first three victims, then polished off Mike Foulks Auto Body/Team Insanity 27-16 in a seven inning finale. Riverside/TPS outscored their opponents 95-42 en route to the title.

"Overall great hitting, good pitching and great chemistry" carried Riverside/TPS to the title, said Moore.

Moore remarked that "forty and over teams won't play quite as good of defense," so his club made up for that at the plate, averaging almost 24 runs per game behind the hefty averages of All-Tournament selections Pierce (.875), Doug Shanefelt (.759), Darrell Hall (.765), Pat Shanks (.765), John Steele (.733), and Phil Hardy (.692).

Mike Kinnett and Brad Jones chipped in with a .688 mark, David Crawley batted .643 and Brian Garrett .600.

Shaneyfelt was named MVP.

"We have two pitchers, a left-handed one and a right-handed one," said Moore. "And our right-handed one was not available. So even though Doug's leg was injured, he pitched for us anyway, and made only three outs, so that was outstanding. Only Dennis Pierce made fewer outs. When you combine his pitching and hitting, he was outstanding. And he had a great attitude."

Moore said veteran David Crawley anchored the infield defense.

"He's showing shades of his old self down there at the third sack," said Moore. "He fielded it extremely well and played a smooth 3rd base."

In the outfield, Moore said that "Darrell Hall (cf) and Pat Shanks (lf) both played well.

"Our outfield was really doing some good tracking," said Moore.

Riverside/TPS used a fourteen run 4th to break open a 9-6 contest, and went on to brush aside TPE 23-6 in four innings. The winners scored all fourteen runs with two outs. A two-run single by Brad Jones, a John Givens' three-run blast, and Phil Hardy's two-run double highlighted the inning.

Mike Kinnett collected three doubles and shared a dozen hits with Brian Garrett, Darrell Hall and Pat Shanks.

Riverside/TPS capitalized on another big inning on their way to an 18-8, six inning rout of Dawg Pack/Wessel in game two, erupting for nine runs in the top of the 2nd to overcome a 6-2 deficit. Doug Shaneyfelt, who limited Dawg Pack to just one run after the 1st inning, doubled in two runs to put his club ahead to stay at 8-6 in the 2nd. A two-run double by Dennis Pierce capped off the inning. Riverside/TPS put the game away with a five-run 6th. Pierce cracked a three run homer to close out the scoring.

Pierce and Mike Kinnett were both perfect in four at bats, and Pat Shanks and Bruce Hacker each went 3-for-4.

Riverside/TPS needed only four innings to dispose of EA Sports Fitness 27-12 in the winners' bracket finals. EA Sports led 9-7 after two, but Riverside exploded for twenty runs over the next two innings to take a commanding 27-9 lead and seal the win. Brian Garrett launched a three-run bomb to break a 9-9 tie and put his club on top for good in the 3rd. Brad Jones added a three-run shot in the 4th. A two-run Pat Shanks' double capped off the inning.

Darrell Hall and Pat Shanks combined for eight hits, and John Steele, Bill Hardy and David Crawley each went 3-for-3.

Mike Foulks/Team Insanity jumped out to an early 10-2 lead in the finals, but Riverside/TPS outscored Team Insanity 18-1 over the last four innings to pull out a 27-16 victory. Back-to-back rbi doubles by Brian Garrett and Phil Hardy put their team ahead to stay at 17-15. Doug Shaneyfelt followed with a two-run double, then Dennis Pierce belted a grand slam, and suddenly it was 23-15, and Team Insanity never recovered.

Pierce and Hall pounded out five hits each for the champions, and Phil Hardy, Pat Shanks and John Steele pitched in with a 4-for-5 effort.

Was Riverside's Red Moore surprised by the ease with which his team romped through the tournament?

"Very much so," said Moore. "All the teams we played were quality teams. The guys played together and got their base hits and didn't worry about their individual stats and home runs, but about doing exactly what we needed to win ball games.

"I'm awfully proud of them," continued Moore. "We're a first year team. I didn't have any idea how they'd be, and they've blossomed into a great team."

Moore said his team will participate in three masters world tournaments, including the NSA 40-over in Panama City, Fl., the ASA 40-over in Decatur, Al. and the NSA 35-over in Indianapolis.

Riverside/Red's/Allied Astros/Sports Den/Boombah/TPS Fifth In Cincinnati Major NIT - Colerain Township, Oh.--Riverside/Red's/Allied Astros/Sports Den/Boombah/TPS posted an outstanding 4-2 mark to capture a fifth place finish in the USSSA Cincinnati Major NIT July 20-22 at Eggleston Park.

Riverside/TPS mowed down four straight teams before falling to the number one and number three ranked teams in the nation. Resmondo rocked Riverside 32-11 in the winners' bracket semi-finals, then Team Combat/Benfield/Dalsandro's spanked the Kentucky club 26-4.

Riverside/TPS routed B & B Productions in their opener, then battled past Wisconsin Worth 23-18 and Brooks Sports/Beef O'Brady's 26-18 before ambushing nationally ranked BW3/Columbus Pipe/Mojo/Easton 12-11.

"We played tremendous defense," commented Riverside manager Red Moore. "Casey Stewart played an extremely good 1st base for us, and Jim Perry did an excellent job pitching. Also the whole team hit well. We played the complete game."

John Steele and Casey Stewart paced the Riverside offense with an .833 and .824 weekend, respectively. Shane King followed at .722, Scott Beverly hit .684, Johnny Leep .643, Matt Reynolds .611 and Tom Stevens .600.

July 21-22...

Nation's Top Team Avenges Smoky Mountain Classic Setback...

Wallace, Purcell Lead Resmondo To USSSA Cincinnati Major NIT Romp At Eggleston Park

Colerain Township, Oh. --Jeff Wallace went 23-for-27 (.852 OBA) with a dozen home runs and 30 rbi's, and pitcher Andy Purcell held six opponents to less than 13 runs per game, to lead Resmondo Softball to a six game sweep of the USSSA Cincinnati Major NIT July 20-22 at Eggleston Park.

Resmondo steamrolled arch-rival Bellcorp/Belcher/TAI/Backman 44-26 in the winners' bracket finals and 41-14 in the finals to avenge their runner-up finish to Bellcorp the previous weekend at the Smoky Mountain Classic.

Resmondo manager Frank Webb acknowledged that the Smoky was "fresh on our minds" during a critical winners' bracket final showdown with Bellcorp on Saturday night.

"After an inning and a half they had a ten-run lead on us, and we came back and answered with 20," recalled Webb. "If we didn't answer in that 2nd inning, we probably would have gotten left behind in the winners' bracket finals game. These guys had just beaten us a week ago, and that was pretty fresh on our minds when we reached Saturday night.

"We didn't make it out of the losers' bracket a week ago," said Webb. "You don't want to play from the losers' bracket, but that happens."

Jeff Wallace (23-for-27), Brian Rainwater (20-for-24), Andy Purcell (18-for-22) and Jason Kendrick (21-for-25) paced the offense, and were named to the All-Tournament team along with Don DeDonatis III, Dal Beggs, Bryson Baker and Howie Krause. Wallace and Purcell shared MVP honors, and DeDonatis claimed the Defensive MVP award.

"Offensively, the guys were on their games, so we were fortunate there," remarked Webb.

Webb said that Wallace was named MVP "for his on-the-field leadership, especially when we were struggling in the 1st inning of the winners' bracket finals game Saturday night. He was and has been one of the guys who pats everybody on the back and yells a few words of encouragement. When he starts to get fired up, he spreads it to the others, and he backs it up as well. And without that, it's nothing special. But when you do that and back it up, you have the complete effort.

"His leadership ability is what all teams look for and all teams need," added Webb.

Webb also pointed out that Wallace led the team in OBP.

Purcell was selected co-MVP for his performance against Bell, said Webb.

“We had four players who only made four outs. So when you get to that point, making selections is very difficult,” said Webb. “But the effort that Purcell put forth both on the mound and offensively needed to be recognized. He held Bell Saturday night after we caught them and put us in a position to get the job done and allow us to get rolling offensively. They’re an offensive team. They had rolled last weekend, and we were rolling this weekend.”

Defensively, Webb applauded the efforts of infielders Don DeDonatis III and Bryson Baker.

“They were (tough as) nails all weekend,” said Webb. “With the cool weather and the lively balls, everything was in fast forward all weekend, especially in the infield.”

Resmondo exploded for thirteen runs in the 1st and nine in the 2nd to take an insurmountable 22-1 lead over Community Cab in lopsided 26-6 win in game one. Bryson Baker erased a 1-0 Cab lead with a slammer. Brian Rainwater and Jeff Wallace each contributed a three-run blast in the inning. Baker, Dal Beggs and Andy Purcell each launched a three-run shot in the 2nd.

Rainwater and Wallace combined for six hits, including four home runs.

Steve’s Drywall/Jeds/R & L Concrete hung tough for four and a half innings in game two, and trailed only 12-9 going into the bottom of the 5th. But then the wheels fell off the wagon, as Resmondo struck for twelve runs to invoke the mercy rule at 24-9. Resmondo never trailed, as Bryson Baker and Brian Rainwater each cracked a three-run homer to account for six of their club’s eight runs. Rusty Bumgardner and Vince Bisbee went back-to-back with three-run swats in the 5th. Dal Beggs’ walk-off solo invoked the mercy rule.

Jason Kendrick banged out four hits and homered twice, and Bumgardner and Beggs each went 3-for-4 with a pair of homers.

Next Resmondo used an eight run 1st, and nine run 2nd and a fifteen run 3rd to dispose of HLS Bonding/Big Sonny’s in four, 32-10. Bryson Baker’s three run belt put Resmondo on the board in the 1st. Andy Purcell’s three run dinger was the big blow in the 2nd. And Jason Kendrick, Brian Rainwater and Jeff Wallace delivered three run blasts in the 3rd.

Howie Krause homered twice and went 4-for-4 along with Jason Kendrick to pace the offense. Wallace, Bisbee and Baker also cracked two home runs and went 3-for-4.

After taking a 4-0 lead in the top of the 1st on a Bryson Baker slammer, Resmondo blew game four open with a dozen runs in the 2nd and eleven in the 3rd to forge a 27-0 lead over Classic/Boombah/Red’s Boys/TPS. Don DeDonatis III and Howie Krause each connected for a three-run home run in the twelve run 2nd, and Jeff Wallace had a three-run swat to cap off the 3rd.

Wallace, Brian Rainwater and Rusty Bumgardner combined for twelve hits and six home runs. Bryson Baker went 3-for-4 with two homers.

Fresh off an impressive Smoky Mountain Classic championship just one weekend prior, Bellcorp/Belcher/TAI/Backman appeared focused on making it two in a row after jumping out to an early 11-1 lead over Resmondo after two and a half innings in the winners’ bracket finals. But home runs by Jason Kendrick, Brian Rainwater, Jeff Wallace and Rusty Bumgardner quickly cut the deficit to 11-10 in the bottom of the 2nd, then Dal Beggs put his club ahead to stay at 12-11 with a two-run double. Rainwater followed with a grand slam, Wallace a three-run tater, Rusty Bumgardner went solo and Jason Kendrick had an rbi single, and suddenly it was 21-11. Bell chipped away at the lead, outscoring Resmondo fifteen to eight over the next two and half innings. But in the bottom of the 5th, Resmondo erupted for fifteen runs to invoke the mercy rule, 44-26. The inning featured three-run homers by Bumgardner and Bisbee, and a walk-off slammer by Bryson Baker.

Rainwater and Bumgardner shared ten hits and six home runs to lead the winners.

Resmondo took control early in the finals with a twelve-run 1st and never let up, adding five in the 2nd, seven in the 3rd and seventeen in the 4th to steamroll Bellcorp 41-14. A pair of grand slams - one by Jason Kendrick and one by Jeff Wallace - accounted for eight runs in the 1st. Kendrick and Brian Rainwater each had a two-run dinger in the 2nd. Rainwater's three run blast capped off the 3rd. The 4th started with a Wallace solo, and ended with a Howie Krause slam.

Wallace pounded out five hits, including three home runs, and Kendrick and Krause each went 4-for-5 with three homers.

Resmondo's Frank Webb had nothing but Kudo's for tournament operator Eggleston Park and Conference USSSA.

"That was the most teams I've seen in years, and everything went off on time," remarked Webb. "They put forth quite an effort organizing that thing it was quite an effort by Jim Wessel and his crew and USSSA.

"The conference has pumped life back into men's slow pitch softball," praised Webb.

CINCINNATI MAJOR USSSA MEN'S NATIONAL INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT FINAL STANDINGS

1.	Resmondo Softball, Winter Haven, FL	6 0
2.	Bellcorp/Belcher/Tai/Backman, Tampa, FL	5 2
3.	The Scene, Commack, WA	6 2
4.	Team Combat/Benfield/Dalsanders, Seattle, WA	7 2
5.	BW3/Columbus Pipe/Mojo/Easton, Cols., OH	4 2
	Classic/Boombah/Red's Boys/TPS, Verona, KY	4 2
7.	HLS Bonding/Big Sonny's, Columbus, OH	3 2
	Pace/TPS, Rochester, NY	3 2
9.	Spitz Seeds/Mizuno, Mt. Washington, KY	5 2
	Mike Foulks/Team Insanity, Covington, KY	3 2
	Taylor Made/Mizuno, Spotsylvania, VA	3 2
	GTL/Combat, Othello, WA	2 2
13.	Pure Romance/Easton, Milford, OH	4 2
	Damage Control/Miken, Union Grove, WI	3 2
	Hollands/Terry's/Easton, Wilkesboro, NC	2 2
	K A. Softball, Chicago, IL	2 2
17.	Elk & Elk/Crete II/Easton, Geneva, OH	3 2
	Total Package Express, Cincinnati, OH	3 2
	Blitz/Watanabe/TTP/Wessel/A&K/Easton, C. O.	2 2
	EZ Cash, Columbus, OH	2 2
	Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putters, Cincinnati, OH	2 2
	Brooks Sports/Beef O'Brady's, Louisville, KY	1 2
	DO/Butch's/Hype Athletic, Melvindale, MI	1 2
	Steve's Drywall/JEDS/R & L Con., P'Burg, OH	1 2
25.	Community Cab, Cincinnati, OH	2 2
	D-Town Softball, Delaware, OH	2 2
	Loveless Hardwood/Conveyor Sols., Cinti., OH	2 2
	House Rules, Cincinnati, OH	1 2
	TPE/Backstabbers, Cincinnati, OH	1 2
	JLC/Legends/Countrywide, Elsmere, KY	0 2
	M & S Drywall/Easton, Cincinnati, OH	0 2
	Two-N-Out.com, Florence, KY	0 2
33.	Dawg Pack/Wessel/A-1 Fab, Cincinnati, OH	1 2
	Emanon/Cartesprings/Pediatrics, Hamilton, OH	1 2
	BCP Associates/Mr. Tint/TPE, Columbus, OH	1 2

All In Softball, Cincinnati, OH	0 2
B & B Productions, Taylor Mill, KY	0 2
Design Concepts, New Richmond, OH	0 2
Extreme/Turner Property, Cincinnati, OH	0 2
Game Time Softball, Cincinnati, OH	0 2
Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati, Edgewood, KY	0 2
J Taps Sports Bar & Grill, Cincinnati, OH	0 2
Meyer Logistics/TAI/Elite, St. Louis, MO	0 2
Prime Time/MOS/RAL/Easton, College Pk., GA	0 2
Team Softball, Louisville, KY	0 2
Trailblazers, Cincinnati, OH	0 2
Union Savings Bank, Cincinnati, OH	0 2
Wisconsin Worth Softball, Weyerhaeuser, WI	0 2

CINCINNATI MAJOR USSSA MEN'S NATIONAL INVITATIONAL ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM

Brad Reckart	Team Combat/Benfield/Dalsanders
Shane Hatfield	Team Combat/Benfield/Dalsander
Shawn Harkins	The Scene
Justin Valenti	The Scene
Kyle Moyer	The Scene
Rod Hughes	Bellcorp/Belcher/TAI/Backman
Jeff Hall	Bellcorp/Belcher/TAI/Backman
Brian Wegman	Bellcorp/Belcher/TAI/Backman
Greg Connell	Bellcorp/Belcher/TAI/Backman
Jason Kendrick	Resmondo Softball
Dal Beggs	Resmondo Softball
Bryson Baker	Resmondo Softball
Brian Rainwater	Resmondo Softball
Howie Krause	Resmondo Softball
Don DeDonatis III - Defensive MVP	Resmondo Softball
B. J. Fulk - Offensive MVP	Bellcorp/Belcher/TAI
Andy Purcell - Co-MVP	Resmondo Softball
Jeff Wallace - Co-MVP	Resmondo Softball

M & M/Saints Rally Past Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "Super D" Field At Queen City

West Chester, Oh.--After suffering an 18-15 setback to Maxed Out Mudcats in the opening round, M & M Connection/Saints roared back to knock off three opponents and capture first place in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "Super D" State-National qualifier July 21st at Queen City Sports Complex.

M & M battled past the Hitmen 10-8 and Team Chaos 11-7 before leveling JAFT 24-3 in their finale.

John Tomlinson paced the champions with an .834 day. He was followed by Brian Erdman at .750, Mike Barone at .734, Mike Ditmer at .706, Brian McDonald at .648, Mike Lamb at .643 and Tim Duffey at .600.

Barone (cf) and Ditmer (middle infield) also stood out on defense, said player-manager John Tomlinson.

"Mike (Barone) threw out one runner at 3rd and another at home," said Tomlinson. "He covered a lot of ground, and caught everything that was hit close to him."

Tomlinson said that Ditmer was "unbelievable" at middle infield.

"He got to everything that got past the pitcher," said Tomlinson. "He was covering stuff on the other side of 2nd base."

The Saints got off to a slow start, falling to Maxed Out in an 18-15 slugfest. Then in game two they found themselves in a 7-7 stalemate with the Hitment until Mike Barone's solo shot in the bottom of the 5th. Brian Erdman plated a pair of insurance runs with a double in the 6th, and M & M held on for a key 10-8 victory over the eventual tournament runners-up.

Darrin Block and Mike Lamb were both perfect in three at bats.

M & M/Saints never trailed in an 11-7 win over Team Chaos in game three. John Erdman's two run double highlighted a four-run 1st. Mike Lamb had a two-run single as the lead swelled to 7-2 in the 2nd. Justin Charlton had a big two run triple in a three-run 6th to give his club a 10-3 advantage. Team Chaos rallied for four runs in the bottom of the 6th, but went scoreless in the 7th. Mike Ditmer banged out four hits, and Mike Barone and John Tomlinson added three each.

After giving up a run in the top of the 1st to JAFT in their finale, the Saints erupted for fourteen runs in the bottom of the inning, then plated eight more in the 2nd to build a 22-2 lead and JAFT never recovered in a 24-3 laugh. John Tomlinson doubled home two runs to give his team a 3-1 lead in the 1st. Tim Duffey picked up two rbi's with a double. A three-run blast by Mike Barone capped off the inning. Mike Ditmer and J. J. Hipsher each contributed a two-run double in the 2nd.

Duffey, Ditmer and Brian McDonald pounded out four hits each for the champions. Tomlinson and Hipsher shared six hits.

Bats On Fire For M&M Connection/Saints In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men's "D-E" State-National Qualifier At Expressway Park

By Andy Zureick

Milford, Ohio - M&M Connection/Saints had nine men hit better than .600 while scoring 55 runs in three games as they capture first place in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men's "D-E" State-National Qualifier at Expressway Park on July 22nd.

Game one in the event between M&M /Saints and Combat Softball was the closest of the day for the eventual champs, with the winner not being decided until the 7th inning. Getting things started in the top of the 1st were Mike Lamb and Ron Williams who both drove in two runs. They tacked on three more in the 5th. Three more runs in the 6th, including two on another Mike Lamb double, increased the Saints lead to 11-5. Combat Softball got five back in the bottom of the inning to cut the lead to 11-10 going into the final frame. In the top of that inning, Mike Ditmer padded the lead with a two-run double. Combat Softball made a run at it in their chance, but fell just short in the 13-12 final. JJ Hipsher was a perfect 4-for-4 in the game. Mike Ditmer had four hits in five at bats. Mike Lamb and Ron Williams were both 3-for-4.

In the next two games, M&M won going away.

Facing Cincinnati Sizzle, the Saints jumped out to a 5-0 lead in the bottom of the 1st and never looked bat. John Tomlinson and Tim Duffey each had two-run singles in the inning. JJ Hipsher and Greg Riddel got in on the action with two RBI apiece in the bottom of the 4th. That raised the lead to 16-5. Cincinnati Sizzle managed only one run in the top of the 5th and the game ended 16-6 thanks to the mercy rule. Hipsher and teammate John Erdman both went 4-for-4 in the victory. Ron Williams collected three hits in as many plate appearances. John Tomlinson and Mike Lamb were 3-for-4.

The final game of the day had M&M matched up against Champion Cleaners. After scoring two in the 1st, the Saints exploded for 13 runs in bottom of the 2nd. Mike Ditmer drove in three with a bases loaded double. Tim Duffey and Kelly Sledge each had two-run triples. Champion Cleaners never got on track, losing 26-1 in four innings. Ditmer and Mike Lamb were both an impressive 5-for-5. John Tomlinson and Brian McDonald each went 4-for-4.

Mike Lamb finished the day hitting a team-best .847. “He’s a veteran,” noted team manager John Tomlinson. “He’s been playing for years and it shows.”

The list of top offensive performances was a long one for the Saints as eight other members of the team hit .600 or better – Ron Williams, .834; Mike Ditmer, .786; John Tomlinson, .667; Brian McDonald, .667; JJ Hipsher, .667; John Erdman, .616; Tim Duffey, .616; Kelly Sledge, .600.

Despite the prodigious hitting display, Tomlinson insisted it was his team’s play in the field that was most significant. “[Key was] the pitching between myself and John Erdman. We just hit our spots and controlled where they were hitting the ball.”

Tomlinson also singled out Mike Ditmer, the middle infielder/centerfielder, as the outstanding defensive player in the tournament. “Being able to move him around is such an asset. He’s just an athlete who can play anywhere and he’s always willing to give you 110%.”

“Defensively, this is probably one of the better teams I’ve ever coached, but offensively, we’re steaky,” admitted Tomlinson.

Unfortunately for other area teams, it looks like M&M are putting it together at the right time. “Some of the younger guys are starting to learn from the veterans and are starting to come along.”

No postseason berths were awarded in the tournament as all participating teams had previously qualified.

Waialae, Snider Power Dixon Softball In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “D-E” Qualifier At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--Ivan Waialae batted .750 and Jeremy Snider .700 to power Dixon Softball to a first place finish in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men’s “D-E” State-National qualifier on Sunday, July 22nd at Expressway Park.

Dixon outslugged Team Chaos 20-15 in their opener, then disposed of Mound Cafe 11-3 to clinch the title. Caribbean Jerks ambushed Dixon in the finale, 7-4.

Big innings and a hefty .617 team batting average carried the champions to the title, according to manager Rob Dixon.

“We had some big innings and held our opponents to low runs,” said Dixon. “We got out big in a couple of innings with six or seven runs.”

Following Ivan Waialae’s team high .750 mark and Jeremy Snider’s .700 effort were Matt Hosterman and GERAL Dixon at .667, Chris Perry and Aaron Brewster at .625 and Scott Hornsby at .600.

Dixon said Waialae led his team on both sides of the chalk.

“He’s usually not our leadoff hitter, but we needed to move him up in the order since he’s our fastest guy and he’s patient,” said Dixon. “Also he played a good shortstop for us.”

Defensively, Dixon said his outfield “made the plays” they needed to, while the infield was anchored by Steve Floccari and Jim Acuff. “They did the pitching and fielded the middle well all day,” said Dixon.

Dixon Softball barely survived their first game, needing seven runs in the bottom of the 6th to break a 13-13 tie with Team Chaos. Aaron Brewster’s two-run single put his club ahead to stay at 15-13. A Jim Acuff rbi single capped off the inning and gave Dixon a 20-13 advantage. Team Chaos mustered two runs in the 7th to make the final 20-15.

Ivan Waialae collected five hits, Matt Hosterman added four, and Brewster, Jeremy Snider, Steve Floccari, Scott Hornsby and Gerald Dixon shared fifteen hits.

Mound Cafe drew first blood with two runs in the top of the 2nd in game two, but Dixon roared back with four in the bottom of the inning and five in the 2nd to take a commanding 11-3 lead. Jeremy Snider's rbi double knotted the score at 2-2 in the 1st, and Steve Floccari put Dixon into the lead for good with a sac fly. A two-run, inside-the-park home run by Matt Hosterman and a two-run Brian Walton single accounted for four of Dixon's five runs in the 2nd. Rbi singles by Walton and Chris Perry closed out the scoring for Dixon. Mound Cafe mounted a threat in the 6th, loading the bases with no outs. But the Dixon defense tightened up and held Mound scoreless.

Once again Ivan Waialae paced the offense with three hits. Snider, Walton, Perry, Josh Cooper, Scott Hornsby and Jim Acuff combined for a dozen hits.

Caribbean Jerks then saddled Dixon with their only loss in a 7-4 decision.

"Everybody went flat," observed Rob Dixon. "We knew we had won the tournament before that game started. It was almost like the game didn't matter, so that's how we played."

Eagles 423 Trims Budweiser 10-9 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" Finale At Queen City

West Chester, Oh.--Eagles #423 trimmed Budweiser 10-9 in the deciding game of a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" State-National-World qualifier July 21st at Queen City Sports Complex.

The victory gave the Eagles a 3-1 record - one win better than runner-up NAPA Middletown (2-2) - and berths to the USSSA State Tournament August 18-19 in Dayton, USSSA Great Lakes National September 1-3 in Milford, Oh. and to the U-Trip "E" World tournament September 13-16 in Kissimmee, Fl.

NAPA also qualified for USSSA State Tournament play.

Team speed and solid defense carried the Eagles to the title, said player-manager Jeff Smallwood.

"Our speed was the big thing," said Smallwood. "We don't go base-to-base. We go first to third. If we hit grass, we're on third. We're a team who can go first to third or second to home if we can get it through the infield."

Defensively, Smallwood said his team was "pretty solid.

"We didn't have a whole lot of errors," said Smallwood. "Justin Jones played good ball in right center. He caught anything that came his way. And Brian Perrill played a good first base. He caught anything hit hard at him, and any bad throws he would scoop out of the dirt."

Perrill and Brady Bryant paced the offense with a .714 performance. Smallwood was next at .687, and Cody Malott batted .607.

"Brian and Brady hit the ball well," commented Smallwood. "They found the gaps, and hit the middle pretty hard. They were finding the holes."

The Eagles scored five runs in the 2nd, two in the 3rd and three in the 5th to grab a 10-2 lead over Budweiser in their opener, then eased to a 10-3 victory. Brian Perrill's rbi single broke a 1-1 tie in the 2nd and put his club ahead to stay. Cody Malott followed with a two-run double. Jeff Smallwood closed out the scoring for the Eagles with a two-run single in the 5th. Malott banded out three hits, and Justin Jones added two for the winners.

Next the Eagles jumped out to a 9-0 lead in the top of the 1st and never looked back in a 25-4, four inning laughter with the Hawks. A. J. Cooper had a two-run double and Jeff Smallwood a two-run single to

account for four of the nine runs in the 1st. Smallwood collected five hits altogether, and A. J. Cooper chipped in with a perfect 3-for-3 performance.

NAPA Middletown ambushed the Eagles 12-11 in game three, but they stormed back to mercy rule the Hawks for the second time in the tournament, 11-1, then battled past Budweiser 10-9, to nail down the title.

Tony Butcher's rbi single broke a 1-1 tie and put the Eagles ahead for good at 2-1 in the top of the 3rd. The lead swelled to 4-1 on a Brady Bryant two run single in the 4th. Then in the 5th, the Eagles erupted for seven runs to break open a 4-1 contest. Justin Jones had a bases-clearing triple, and Tony Ferguson a two-run double to drive in five of the seven runs. Ferguson and Brady Bryant each went 2-for-2 to lead the offense.

The Eagles never trailed in the finals, breaking out to a 6-0 lead in the top of the 1st, then fending off a late four-run rally in the bottom of the 6th by Budweiser to preserve a narrow 10-9 win. Tony Malott had a two run triple in the 1st, and Tony Butcher capped added a two-run single to cap off the inning. Budweiser chipped away at the lead with two in the 1st and 3rd and one in the 5th, but the Eagles used a four-run outburst in the top of the 6th to give themselves some breathing room at 10-5. Tony Butcher's two run double highlighted the inning.

Late Rallies Lift Shooters Past Springdale Classic-USSSA Women's "B-C" Field

Springdale, Oh.--The Shooters sandwiched a pair of come-from-behind, last inning victories between two mercy-rule wins en route to a first place finish in the "B-C" division of the Springdale Classic-USSSA Women's Invitational July 21-22 at Springdale Community Center.

After routing American Legion 18-7 in five innings in their opener, the Shooters rallied for two runs in the bottom of the 7th to outslug Hill & Griffith 22-21 in game two, then used a three-run rally to stun Ty-1-On 11-10 before romping past Tilton Trucking 18-6 in their finale.

"We have a never-say-die attitude," said Shooters' manager Fred Dunson, commenting about his team's come-from-behind wins. "It was nice to see that. We've had games this year when we've had the tying or winning run on base in our last at bat and we weren't able to execute. It was rewarding to come over the hump and win those games in our last at bat. That helps build our confidence."

While the Shooters may have needed a confidence booster to help them rally in the late innings, they certainly didn't need one to spur their offense. No fewer than nine players hit over .600, and four batted over .700.

"We've been fortunate the last few years to have a good hitting team," said Dunson. "We scored 69 runs and batted .635 as a team, and had 106 hits in our four games, which is a lot. We averaged over 20 runs per game, and the least we had was 20.

But most importantly, said Dunson, "we hit well when it mattered.

"Our players have stepped up because two of our players are on maternity leave. So our veteran players along with our younger players are starting to step up."

Misty Sellars and Julie Unsinger hit a torrid .765 to pace the champions. Heidi Gildow followed at .714, Terri Shepherd batted .706, Jenn Yontz .692, Mary Beth Brust .667 and Katie Weiss, Arlene Harris and Trish Hudson chipped in with a .625 mark.

Dunson attributed his club's success to "pretty good defense" and timely hitting.

"I only counted three errors the whole tournament," said Dunson. "And we didn't leave many people on base. We had big innings and we all hit together. That helps."

Dunson said his pitchers, Becky Back and Trish Hudson, “did a great job.

“They only walked four batters. That makes a big difference and keeps the pressure off your defense.

“And we played pretty sound fundamentally,” added Dunson. “We hit our cutoffs very well and kept the runners split most of the day, which kept the other teams from having big innings very often.”

The Shooters erupted for seven runs in the top of the 3rd to overcome a 3-0 deficit to American Legion, then added seven runs in the 4th to seal an 18-7, five inning victory. Julie Unsinger’s three-run double put her club ahead to stay at 4-3. Misty Sellars and Arlene Harris both contributed a three-run double in the 4th.

Jenn Yontz and Becky Back each collected three hits for the winners.

The Shooters demonstrated championship poise in game two. After yielding six runs in the top of the 7th to allow Hill & Griffith to grab a 21-20 lead, the Shooters answered with a Julie Unsinger single and a Misty Sellars home run to pull out a 22-21 victory.

Unsinger pounded out five hits, Sellars went 4-for-5, and Trish Hudson, Katie Weiss and Jenn Yontz each went 3-for-4 to fuel the offense.

Next the Shooters rallied for three runs in the bottom of the 7th to stun Ty-1-On 11-10. Jenn Yontz singled, went to 2nd on a Terri Sherrill base hit, then scored to cut the lead to 10-9 on a Julie Unsinger single. Misty Sellars then singled home Sherrill to knot the score at 10-10. Then with two outs Katie Weiss singled to juice the bases, setting the table for an Arlene Harris single up the middle to drive in Unsinger with the game winner.

Sellars banged out four hits for the second straight game, while Yontz, Harris, Terri Shepherd and Gildow combined for eight hits.

Tilton Trucking hung close to the Shooters in the finale, as they trailed by only one run - 7-6 - after four and a half innings. But in the bottom of the 5th, the Shooters blew the game open with an eleven run outburst. All eleven players scored for the Shooters, who batted around before making an out. Katie Weiss and Heidi Gildow each had two hits in the inning.

Nancy Pope ignited the rally with a three-run double, Julie Unsinger contributed a two-run double, and Trish Hudson a two-run single for the winners. Giglow and Terri Shepherd shared eight hits, and Weiss, Unsinger, Hudson and Mary Beth Brust added three each to power the champions.

Shooters’ manager Fred Dunson said he was particularly pleased with his team’s win over Ty-1-On, a USSSA “B” team.

“They’re an excellent team,” said Dunson. “And to come back and win 11-10 was a great feat by our hitters. We were able to hold them scoreless in the 3rd, 4th and 5th innings while we came back in the game. We trailed 8-4 and held them steady while we chipped away at the lead.”

Dunson said his team is “meshing at the right time.

“We’ve gotten better as the season has gone on,” said Dunson.

2007 USSSA WOMEN'S SPRINGDALE INVITAT. CLASS B-C DIVISION FINAL TOURN. STANDINGS

1. Shooters, Dayton, OH 4 0
2. Hill & Griffith, Cincinnati, OH 3 1
3. Ty-1-On, Cincinnati, OH 2 2

4. Tilton Trucking, Urbana, OH 1 3
5. American Legion, Sidney, OH 0 4

Milford Hit-Hers Rally Past Intimidators In Springdale Classic-USSSA Women's "D" Finals

Springdale, Oh.--The Milford Hit-Hers overcame a 9-1 deficit to defeat the Intimidators 15-12 in the championship game of the class "D" division of the Springdale Classic-USSSA Women's Invitational July 21-22 at Springdale Community Center.

After giving up eight runs in the bottom of the 2nd to fall behind 9-1, the Hit-Hers scored in every inning and outscored the Intimidators 14-3 over the final five innings to complete a five game sweep of the 17-team field. The Hit-Hers went ahead to stay on the strength of a four-run 6th that gave them a 14-12 lead. Linda Mullins' two-run single broke a 12-12 tie and put her club on top for good.

"That was huge," said Hit-Hers coach Becky Taylor of her team's come-from-behind victory.

Taylor attributed her club's comeback and championship to teamwork, a never-say-die attitude, defense and pitching.

"It comes down to teamwork and not giving up," said Taylor. "One of the best attributes of our team is the fact that we are a team. And as a team, when we hit poorly, as our stats show, our defense more than makes up for it. And we are a team in the aspect that we are able to pick each other up, not put each other down. We see a lot of other teams doing the opposite."

Taylor called her team's pitching, which held the Hit-Hers' first four opponents to seven runs or less, "awesome.

"We're fortunate to have a couple of good pitchers, and we have three if necessary. A lot of teams only have one," said Taylor.

Taylor, who came in to pitch for the Hit-Hers after they fell behind 9-1 in the finals and held the Intimidators to only three runs over the last five inning, led her team in hitting with a .579 average. Linda Mullins followed with a .571 mark, Nicki Massey batted .556, and Leslie Gentil .529.

Defensively, Taylor said the Hit-Hers' outfield came up big.

"Leslie Gentil was solid. Without her we would have given up a lot more runs," said Taylor. "Kristen Votapel, the newest addition to our team, gave us a fresh set of legs and played an awesome right field. And Karen Rieck also played solid for us in right-center."

Kelly Taylor and Susan Council helped anchor the infield, said Taylor.

"Kelly dove to catch a couple of line drives, and Susan Council played a solid 1st base.

"Also Christy Yeager did an awesome job pitching," added Taylor.

The Hit-Hers used a nine run 1st and a six run 4th to help mercy-rule the Nasty Girls 22-7 in five innings in their opener. Nicki Massey's two run single put her club on the board in the 1st. Massey collected five rbi's, and shared nine hits with Kim Maynes and Kelly Taylor.

Things got tougher quickly in game two, where Milford needed a run in the bottom of the 7th to clip James Arnold 8-7. Susan Council led off with a single, then raced around to score the game winner on a Kim Maynes rbi double. Emily Molina homered in the game and went 2-for-3 along with Leslie Gentil and Kelly Taylor.

Next the Hit-Hers scored three runs in the 3rd and three in the 5th to overcome an early 4-2 deficit and went on to best the Battin' Bullets 9-4. Nicki Massey's cracked a three-run homer to put her club ahead to stay at 5-4 in the 3rd. Kelly Taylor delivered a big rbi triple in the 5th. Pitcher Christy Yeager held the Bullets scoreless over the final five innings. Taylor paced the offense with four hits.

In the winners' bracket finals, Emily Molina single-handedly made up a 5-2, 5th inning deficit against Pelle's with a grand slam home run. Once again Christy Yeager preserved the win by pitching five scoreless innings after the Hit-Hers fell behind 5-2 in the 2nd. Leslie Gentil went 2-for-3 to lead the winners.

In the finals, the Intimidators appeared set on forcing an "if" game after jumping out to a 9-1 lead in the bottom of the 2nd. But the Hit-Hers kept their composure, chipping away at the lead with one in the 3rd, seven in the 4th and one in the 5th before grabbing a 14-12 lead on the strength of a four run 6th. The Intimidators proved to be their own worst enemies in the 6th. After retiring the first batter of the inning on a fly out, Nicki Massey and Becky Taylor reached on an error. Caryn Rieck and Marie Belcher made the most of the miscues with rbi singles to knot the score at 12-12. Then, with two outs, Linda Mullins came through with her clutch two-run single to give her club the lead.

Mullins drove in four runs in the game, and combined with Massey, Leslie Gentil and Emily Molina for a dozen hits.

2007 USSSA WOMEN'S SPRINGDALE INVITAT. CLASS D DIVISION FINAL TOURN. STANDINGS

1. Milford Hit-Hers, Cincinnati, OH 5 0
2. Intimidators, Batavia, OH 6 2
3. Pelle's/BW3's, Cincinnati, OH 3 2
4. James Arnold, Cincinnati, OH 4 2
5. Battin' Bullets, Indianapolis, IN 2 2
- Meissner's Insurance, Cincinnati, OH 2 2
7. D & S Engineering, Loveland, OH 2 2
- Fruth Pharmacy, Wellston, OH 2 2
9. Dirt Devils, Hamilton, OH 3 2
- Andy's, Circleville, OH 1 2
- Columbus Jams, Columbus, OH 1 2
- Wilson Concrete, North Vernon, IN 1 2
13. Crosley's Sports Bar, St. Bernard, OH 0 2
- Hart Environmental Service, Springfield, OH 0 2
- Nasty Girls, Newport, KY 0 2
- Yadda/Pure Romance/Roosters, Milford, OH 0 2
17. Kurtz, Cincinnati, OH 0 2

Fairfield Tavern 3-0 At Kolping Park

Mt. Healthy, Oh.--Fairfield Tavern survived a pair of one-run games, then polished off Tribe 10-5 in the finale en route to a first place finish in a four team round robin on Sunday, July 22nd at Kolping Park.

Fairfield escaped with a 13-12 win over both Name Tag Softball (2-1) and Bushwacker (0-3) before routing Tribe (1-2) 10-5 in the deciding game.

July 28-29...

Hadden, Schultz Lead NKY Ballers To Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D-E" Title At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--Garrett Hadden hit a blistering .833 and pitcher Brad Schultz limited two teams six runs or less to lead NKY Ballers to a first place finish in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D-E" State-National Qualifier July 29th at Expressway Park.

The Ballers mercy-ruled Strictly Business 18-4 and Hooters 16-6 before earning a 7-0 forfeit victory over Team Punishment to complete a three-game sweep of the four team affair. The title gave the champions a berth into the USSSA "D" National Tournament Labor Day Weekend in Indianapolis.

"Good hitting and defense" carried the Ballers to the championship, according to player-manager Ryan McIntyre.

"We have a pretty solid defense and we hit when we needed it," summed up McIntyre.

McIntyre applauded the performance of his entire outfield - Josh Brune (lf), DeWayne Webb (cf) and Danny Nelson (rf). "They cut down the gaps and played really well," remarked McIntyre.

McIntyre also saluted pitcher Brad Schultz.

"He's not an every day pitcher," said Schultz. "He's usually in the outfield but he pitched very well."

Following Garrett Hadden's hefty .833 effort were Danny Nelson at .778, Schultz and DeWayne Webb at .750, Teddy Franzen and Josh Brune at .667, Ryan McIntyre at .600 and Rodney Sullivan at .583.

McIntyre commented that leading hitter Garrett Hadden simply "just did his regular thing and hit like he always does."

Hadden collected five hits, Teddy Franzen went 4-for-5, and Rodney Sullivan, DeWayne Webb and Brad Schultz shared nine hits as NKY Ballers overpowered Strictly Business 18-4 in six in game one. A pair of eight run innings - the 1st and the 6th - proved too much for the losers. Rodney Sullivan launched a three-run blast in the 1st and closed out the scoring with a two-run double in the 6th.

Hooters fell next, 16-6, in five, as the Ballers jumped out to an 8-0 lead after two innings and never looked back. DeWayne Webb's slammer capped off a six-run 2nd. The Ballers added three in the 4th and five in the 5th to invoke the mercy-rule. Ryan McIntyre's bases-clearing triple brought down the curtain.

Webb, Brad Schultz and Teddy Franzen combined for a dozen hits, and McIntyre and Garrett Hadden each went 3-for-4 to power the champions.

Was McIntyre surprised that his team won so handily?

"Actually, I was," he admitted. "We knew the Metro was going on, but we still figured there would be a lot of good teams in it that had some talent."

Revenge Sweet As Brady's Bunch/Cherry Grove Lanes Knocks Off Summerville 12-8 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Mixed "C-D" Finals At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--After falling hard to Summerville Bank 17-2 in round robin play, Brady's Bunch/Cherry Grove Lanes knocked off Summerville 12-8 in the championship game to capture first place in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Mixed "C-D" Mid-Summer Classic NIT July 28th at Expressway Park.

Brady's Bunch/Cherry Grove went 2-1 in their round robin division, finishing behind 3-0 Summerville. But their runner-up finish gave Brady's/Cherry Grove a berth into the tournament's elimination round, where they mowed down three opponents to claim the title.

The championship gave Brady's/Cherry Grove a berth into the USSSA "D" State Tournament August 25-26 in Cincinnati, the "D" Nationals September 29-30 in Dayton, and the U-Trip "D" World Tournament October 19-21 in Kissimmee, FL.

Summerville also qualified for State and National Tournament play. State berths were also awarded to Slice of Stainless/Venom, T & T Mortgage and Speed Kills.

Brady's/Cherry Grove player-manager Lisa Leonard attributed her team's victory to "good chemistry" and called it a "total team effort."

"It was very difficult to pick an All-Tournament team," said Leonard. "Everybody had games where they went above and beyond the call of duty."

Tournament MVP honors went to Jonathon Bonham (.578) and Sue Lane (.529). They were joined on the All-Tournament team by Steve Ogden (.545), Chad Chisman (.682) and Shelly Chisman (.550).

"We felt like Jonathon made very few mistakes at shortstop and batted .578 and played a key part in our winning the tournament," commented Leonard. "And Sue hit well and played a tough first base."

Leonard said that Ogden "pitched well in all six of our games and batted .545."

"And even when he made an out, he was advancing runners, and he came right back and got a hit next time," said Leonard.

Leonard said that Chad Chisman "led us in hitting and with his speed on the bases and in the outfield," and that Shelly Chisman "played second base and made very few errors, threw a runner out at the plate and led the women in hitting."

A big key, said Leonard, was that Brady's/Cherry Grove never lost their composure after being spanked by Summerville 17-2 in their final round robin contest.

"That didn't seem to bother anybody," said Leonard. "Everybody stayed real calm. We didn't hit real well, so we said okay, let's just do it the next time."

"After our second game we just decided we were going to win the tournament," continued Leonard. "Our attitude the whole day was positive."

In pool play, Brady's drilled Slice of Stainless/Venom 16-4 and the Wizards 15-8, but then suffered a humiliating 17-2 setback to Summerville Bank.

Brady's/Cherry Grove then roared into the elimination round, exploding for eleven runs in the first two innings en route to a 13-3 rout of Mergis Group. Back-to-back walks to male batters forced in the first run in the bottom of the 1st, then Chad Chisman doubled home two runs for a 3-0 lead. Jonathon Bonham's two-run single made it 6-0 and capped off the inning. Six consecutive base hits, including rbi singles by Joe Wallach, Bonham and Lisa Leonard accounted for three of Brady's five runs in the 2nd. Mergis Group never recovered.

Bonham collected three hits, and Chad and Shelly Chisman and Tammy Feinauer each went 2-for-3.

Brady's needed four runs in the top of the 6th to overcome an 8-6 deficit to T & T Mortgage in game two and put Brady's ahead to stay at 10-8. Steve Ogden doubled home two runs to knot the score, then Chad Chisman delivered a clutch two-run triple for the lead. Brady's added a pair of insurance runs in the top of the 7th while pitcher Steve Ogden held T & T at bay to make the final 12-8.

Chad Chisman banged out four hits, Jonathon Bonham added three, and Jake Angne went 2-for-3 with two walks.

A three-run 1st and an eight-run 3rd sealed an eventual 12-8 victory over Summerville in the finals. A two-run triple by Jonathon Bonham highlighted the eight-run 3rd. Joe Wallach pounded out four hits to power the champions. Chad Chisman chipped in with a 3-for-4 effort, and Jake Angne again went 2-for-2 with a pair of bases-on-balls.

Brady's Lisa Leonard said her club was happy to come away with the title.

"This was only our second tournament, and to do that well we were pretty pleased," said Leonard.

"Our players have played off and on with or against each other, and playing together is something we've always wanted to do. We thought it would be cool to combine with each other and see what we could accomplish."

WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA MIXED COUPLES NATIONAL INVITATIONAL - JULY 28, 2007

1. Brady's Bunch/Cherry Grove Lanes, Bethel, OH 4 1
2. Summerville Bank, Eaton, OH 4 1
3. T & T Mortgage 3 1
4. Slice of Stainless/Venom, Mt. Orab, OH 2 3
5. Speed Kills, Lewis Center, OH 3 2
6. Mergis Group, Cincinnati, OH 0 4
7. Wizards, Medina, OH 0 5

BUD LIGHT-USSSA MIXED COUPLES NATIONAL INVITATIONAL TOURN. - ALL-TOURN. TEAM

Sean Emmitt Slice of Stainless/Venom
Shawneeda Pittman Slice of Stainless/Venom
Brad Reusch T & T Mortgage
Stacy Kaliner T & T Mortgage
Tonya Johnson Summerville Bank
Terry Johnson Summerville Bank
Jerry Johnson Summerville Bank
Steve Ogden Brady's Bunch/Cherry Grove Lanes
Chad Chisman Brady's Bunch/Cherry Grove Lanes
Shelly Chisman Brady's Bunch/Cherry Grove Lanes
Bob Ebright - Co-MVP Summerville Bank
Susan Nelson - Co-MVP Summerville Bank
Jonathon Bonham - Co-MVP Brady's/Cherry Grove
Sue Lane - Co-MVP Brady's/Cherry Grove

July 26-August 5 Metro Stories...

Timely Home Runs, Late Scoring Subdues Opponents...

Roesch, Gruber Lead Blitz/Watanabe/TTP/Wessel/A & K/Easton To EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro Men's "Open" Trifecta At Rumpke Park

Crosby Township, Ohio - Jason Roesch hit .759 with eight home runs and 22 rbi's while pitcher Frank Gruber held six opponents to a combined 63 runs to lead Blitz/Watanabe/TTP/Wessel/A & K/Easton to the Men's "Open" division title of the EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro July 26-August 7 at Rumpke Park.

Blitz/Watanabe/TTP/Wessel/A & K/Easton ran roughshod over the 33-team field, mercy-ruling their first four opponents, then steamrolling Freeze/Arnold/Putter's/BW3 30-10 in the finals. Only one team - EMR - came closer then twelve runs to the champions in an 18-15 winners' bracket finals contest.

Timely home runs and late scoring helped carry Blitz/Easton to the title, said manager Terry Walton.

“Sixteen of our 38 home runs were either three-run home runs or better, so we used our home runs pretty well,” noted Walton.

Blitz/Easton generally put teams away in the final innings while pitcher Frank Gruber held them at bay. In game one, Blitz/Easton put up sixteen runs in their final two at bats to finish off EAP/Western Hills Window 27-14. They scored a dozen runs in their last two at bats to pull away from Cooper Sports 20-6 in game two. A fifteen run 5th brought down the curtain on PRI/Easton in game four, and a fifteen run 7th slammed the door on Freeze/Arnold in the championship game. Blitz/Easton also scored a dozen runs in their last two at bats to overcome a 10-6 deficit against EMR in the winners’ bracket finals.

“For the most part, we started off kinda slow, and used our home runs wisely, then stepped on the gas in the later innings,” observed Walton.

“We had some big innings,” he continued. “We got hot together in certain innings and threw up some big numbers midway or late in the games, and often other teams didn’t answer back. And once again, I attribute that to Frank Gruber’s pitching.

“If you look at the numbers, our opponents only hit .485 against us, and we outscored teams 141-63, and that had a lot to do with Frank’s excellent job on the mound,” said Walton. “And as usual, Frank fielded the middle like he always does. He pretty much shuts it down in ASA.”

Gruber also only walked five of the 202 batters he faced, added Walton.

Jason Roesch was named tournament MVP after leading his teams in average (.759), home runs (8), rbi’s (22), and runs (18). Tony Huston followed with a .750 mark, Brian Alexander hit .724, Jeff Edington .batted 722 with six home runs, Brad Tabler hit .714, and Kelly Haiber and Larry Wert chipped in with a .682 and .667 performance, respectively.

“Time after time Jason hit the big home run for us when we needed it as well as being a steady glove at 1st base,” commented Walton.

Defensively, Walton applauded the efforts of outfielders Larry Wert, Brian Alexander and Tony Huston.

“They did a great job of cutting off the gaps and keeping balls in front of them,” said Walton.

EAP/Western Hills Window appeared to be poised for an upset in game one in the early innings, putting up four runs in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd to build a 12-11 lead through three and a half. But in the bottom of the 4th, Blitz/Easton scored four runs to grab a 15-12 lead, then erupted for twelve runs in the 5th to invoke the mercy-rule. Kelly Haiber’s three-run blast in the 4th put his club ahead to stay at 15-12. Three run blasts by Brad Tabler and Brian Alexander and a walk-off by Carey Taylor did most of the damage in the 5th.

Tabler and Bosch homered twice and shared a dozen hits with Carey Taylor.

Blitz/Easton never trailed in game two after scoring one in the 1st, two in the 2nd and three in the 3rd to take an 8-6 lead. But it took them until the 5th and 6th innings to take control. Kelly Haiber launched a two-run home run and Brian Alexander went solo in the five run 5th. Then in the 6th, Jason Roesch had a leadoff homer, Brad Tabler had a three-run shot, Larry Wert soloed and Brian Alexander socked a two-run homer to close out the scoring.

Alexander and Roesch both homered twice and banged out four hits along with Frank Gruber. Brad Tabler chipped in with a 3-for-4 effort.

Game three was never in doubt after jumping out to a 15-4 lead over J-Taps after two. Jason Roesch belted a three-run homer, and Brad Tabler added a two-run shot to account for five of eight runs in the 1st. Jeff Edington went solo in the 2nd before Blitz/Easton erupted for six runs with two outs. Todd Whitson belted leadoff home run in the 6th.

Edington, Brian Alexander and Kevin Birkofer combined for nine hits.

Blitz/Easton reverted to their late scoring routine in game four, exploding for 21 runs in the 4th and 5th innings to crush PRI/Easton 25-10. Leading 4-1 after two, Blitz/Easton plated six in the 4th, then aired it out with a fifteen run 5th. Brian Alexander and Jason Roesch each connected for a three-run bomb as the lead mushroomed to 25-2. Alexander collected five hits, Roesch homered twice in the 5th and had four hits along with Edington, Carey Taylor, Kelly Haiber and Tony Huston.

Defending champion EMR threatened to derail Blitz/Easton in the winners' bracket finals, as they took a 13-12 lead after five and a half. But in the bottom of the 6th, Blitz/Easton wrenched the lead away, going ahead 18-13 with the help of a Jason Roesch slammer and Steve Bosch solo home run. EMR answered with two in the top of the 7th to make the final 18-15. Roesch continued to set the pace with four more hits and a homer, Bosch and Jeff Edington each contributed a pair of home runs, and Tony Huston and Kevin Birkofer chipped in three hits apiece.

The championship game wasn't decided until the top of the 7th. Blitz/Easton used a five run 3rd and an eight run 4th to go ahead to stay at 14-4, but Freeze/Arnold answered with six runs to cut the deficit to 15-10 in the bottom of the 5th. Neither team scored in the 6th, but in the top of the 7th, Blitz/Easton erupted for fifteen runs to seal a 30-10 victory.

Jeff Edington put his team ahead for good at 5-2 with a three run sock in the 3rd. Brian Alexander launched a three-run home run and Jason Roesch followed with a two-run dinger in the eight run 4th. Tony Huston added a two-run, inside-the-park home run as the lead swelled to 12-4. Huston struck again early in the 7th with a three-run inside-the-parker to make it 20-10, then Jason Roesch parked a two-run homer and Jeff Edington and Steve Bosch went solo and Blitz/Easton suddenly held a 24-10 advantage. Larry Wert belted the final home run of the game with a two-run swat to make the score 26-10. A two-run Kevin Birkofer triple closed out the scoring.

Alexander, Roesch and Wert shared fifteen hits, and Haiber, Huston and Edington each went 4-for-5 to power the champions.

Blitz/Easton manager Terry Walton said his club turned in some huge defensive plays to keep Freeze/Arnold at bay.

"In the 5th inning with one out and a runner on 1st and four runs already in, Freeze hit a ground ball to Chris Ashley that took a bad hop and he was able to get his glove up, smack the ball out of the air, and was able to get the force play at 2nd," recalled Walton. "A lot of guys don't make that play."

That was followed by a "rocket up the middle that Frank (Gruber) was able to dive to his left, field the ball and throw out Scott Stigers at 1st to end the inning," said Walton. "That was really big at the time because it kept us up 15-10."

Blitz/Easton's Jeff Edington turned in another key defensive play in the 6th, said Walton.

"Bob Noeth reached on a single, then after a fielder's choice, Jon Jamison smoked a one-hopper down the 3rd base line and Jeff Edington was able to back-hand the ball and turn a five-ten-three double play to end the inning.

"Those plays were huge," said Walton. "They stopped a big inning in the 5th and shut them out in the 6th, and that opened the door for our fifteen run inning in the top of the 7th. Those defensive plays gave us the momentum heading into the 7th inning."

Walton expressed his congratulations to EMR - "they gave us our tightest game" - and Freeze/Arnold "for a good tournament.

"We were glad to see they got in for the first time in several years," said Walton.

"We also want to thank our sponsors, Dave Watanabe, Kevin Bullock of Tiny Town Pizza, Wessel Sports and Dave Maury, A & K Tile, and Easton Sports," continued Walton.

"I also want to congratulate Kevin Bullock on winning his second Metro and Dave Watanabe on his record-tying 5th Metro title," added Walton.

"Also, thanks to all my players, especially the guys who have been with me the last eight seasons and have been part of all three of our metro titles: Todd Whitson, Chris Ashley, Frank Gruber, Bob Abbott and Nick Mentrup, who has been with me seven out of eight seasons.

"It feels good to complete our trifecta," concluded Walton. "Our original goal was to win the 'A' and 'B' when Blitz first started, and winning the 'open' is kind of an exclamation point."

Indeed.

Sweep Ends Long Drought For Sponsor, Manager...

EAP/Western Hills Window Battles Past Balanced Fitness/B & A To Capture EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro "A" At Rumpke Park

Crosby Township, Oh.--After finishing second in Metro "B" divisions and competing in 26 city tournaments, EAP sponsor Bob Shad finally has his first Metro title.

Shad's EAP/Western Hills Window team swept past five opponents to capture first place in the class "A" division of the EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro Tournament July 26th-August 6th at Rumpke Park.

"Bob's been chasing that for 26 years and it's been 28 for me," said team manager Rob Schlemmer.

EAP/Western Hills Window knocked off Balanced Fitness/B & A Sports Bar 11-10 in the championship game, capitalizing on a pair of dramatic home runs to pull out the victory. Trailing 10-8 in the bottom of the 6th, EAP's Ryan Richmond clubbed a solo shot to cut the deficit to one, then veteran Steve Schon cracked a two-run homer to give his club the lead. Pitcher Jeff Kenney held Balanced Fitness scoreless in the top of the 7th to preserve the win.

"It was a team effort to win it," stressed EAP's Schlemmer. "We hit very well. Nobody on the team hit under .500. We decided to just bat ten guys and didn't use an AH to get what we thought were the ten best hitters in the lineup. And it worked out."

Pete Stokes paced the offense with a hefty .894 performance. Josh Baird batted .700, Ron Baird .684 and Steve Schon .667.

Stokes, Schon, Rob Andres and Johnny Richmond were named to the All-Tournament team.

"Pete was 17-for-19...that pretty much says it all," said Schlemmer. "He won the major industrial this season, so he's won two Metros already this year."

Schlemmer said Schon hit several "key home runs.

"He didn't hit a whole lot of solos," said Schlemmer. "That enabled Josh (Baird) to get some home run swings in. He held back on his home runs."

Andres “came up with a couple of big home runs for us, and played a very good defensive first base,” said Schlemmer. “He picked up some tough catches over there.”

Schlemmer called Richmond “the glue that held this team together.

“He kept pumping us up,” said Schlemmer. “And he played the second two games on a ruptured Achilles tendon, so he really gutted it out to play.”

Defensively, Schlemmer singled out the efforts of infielder Ryan Richmond and outfielders Gary Hammerle and Jason Harrison.

“Ryan started at least four double plays at short that I can think of. He always seemed to be in the right position,” said Schlemmer. “He always seemed to be in the right position. Our middle infielder (Steve Schon) was moving around depending on the hitters, so Ryan was helping cover some ground between 2nd and 3rd.”

Schlemmer said Hammerle and Harrison came up with some big plays for his team at critical times.

“Gary made a diving catch in centerfield against House Rules that saved us two or three runs. It was the key play of the game,” said Schlemmer. “And Jason made a couple of big plays in left field in the finals.”

EAP brushed aside their first three opponents handily, mercy-ruling Tigerfitness.com 19-6 in six, then disposing of Cooper Sports 20-13 and House Rules 16-8.

A ten run 4th broke open a 4-4 stalemate with Tigerfitness. Jason Harrison singled home the go-ahead run. Later in the inning Ron Baird and Jeff Kenney each belted a two-run homer. Kenney and Pete Stokes were both perfect in three at bats.

Next EAP used a seven run 6th to break a 13-13 contest with Cooper Sports. Back-to-back three-run blasts by Steve Schon and Pete Stokes suddenly made the score 19-13. Pitcher Jeff Kenney held Cooper at bay in the 7th. Johnny Richmond collected four hits, and Schon, Ryan Richmond and Josh Baird combined for nine hits.

EAP jumped out to a 10-3 lead over House Rules in game three, then eased to a 16-8 victory. Josh Baird smacked a three-run homer and Pete Stokes followed with a two-run shot to make it 5-0 in the bottom of the 1st. Steve Schon socked a two-run homer to highlight a five run 2nd as the lead swelled to 10-3. House Rules responded with four in the 3rd and one in the 4th to cut the lead to 10-8, but EAP scored the final six runs of the game to claim to close out the scoring. Ron Baird accounted for five of those with a three-run bomb in the 4th and a two-run homer in the 6th. Jeff Kenney again proved strong in the final innings, holding House Rules scoreless in the 5th, 6th and 7th.

Baird, Stokes, and Schon banged out four hits each.

In the winners’ bracket finals, Balanced Fitness/B & A Sports held a 5-1 lead after an inning and a half, but EAP outscored their opponent 18-3 over the next four and a half innings to take a commanding 17-8 advantage, then withstood a Balanced Fitness seven run 7th to emerge with a 19-15 victory. A Pete Stokes rbi single put his team ahead for good at 6-5 in the 2nd. A Rob Andres three-run dinger capped off the inning. Jason Harrison soloed and Steve Schon cracked a two-run homer in a four run 3rd. Josh Baird launched a two-run homer in the 6th to stretch the lead to 18-8.

Baird and Steve Schon had four hits apiece to pace the offense.

Balanced Fitness was poised to force an “if” game in the finals, as they held a 10-8 lead after five and a half innings. But in the bottom of the 6th, Ryan Richmond socked a solo home run to make it 10-9, Gary Hammerle singled, then veteran Steve Schon went yard to give EAP the lead. Once again Jeff Kenney took control on the mound, shutting down Balanced Fitness in the 7th to preserve the win.

Hammerle and Pete Stokes pounded out four hits each to power the champions.

EAP/Western Hills manager Rob Schlemmer had plenty of acknowledgements to make after the tournament.

“I want to thank our sponsors, EAP and Western Hills Window, (ASA Commissioner) Danney Saylor, and our bench guys,” said Schlemmer. “They didn’t get in much, but they were there supporting us or if we needed anybody to pinch-run. I want to thank them for being there and not missing a game. It’s not easy to sit there.”

Messinger, Luckett Lead Champions To Six Game Sweep...
Pitching, Defense Lift Western Hills Window To EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro Men's "B" Title At Rumpke Park

Crosby Township, Ohio - Pitcher John Messinger limited four of his club’s six opponents to six runs or less, while Sam Luckett paced the offense with a .765 average to lead Western Hills Window to a six game sweep of the Men’s “B” Division of the EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro July 26-August 7 at Rumpke Park.

Western Hills Window polished off Ask Rocco/Cincysoftball.com 15-11 in the championship game to run the table in the 28-team “B” division.

“There’s an old saying that to be the best you have to beat the best, and we felt Cincysoftball.com was the class of that division. And it was nice to be able to beat them two times in a row to be able to win that tournament,” commented Western Hills Window manager Bill Koenig.

Window had previously bested Cincysoftball.com 14-5 in the winners’ bracket finals.

“Pitching and defense” were the keys to winning the tournament, said Koenig.

“In the six games we played, John (pitcher John Messinger) only walked three batters, and one of those was intentional,” said Koenig. “So he kept our defense alert. We made several plays at the fence. In fact, the final out of the tournament, Nick Huffman caught a ball at the fence in left field that was hit by Andy Dickman which would have only put them down by one run.”

Koenig said that his team’s defense was nearly flawless.

“In our six games, we had a total of only five errors, and three of those were in the last game,” noted Koenig.

“Any time you hold several teams like we did to under ten runs, you have good pitching and defense,” he added.

“It was pretty much a team effort,” summed up Koenig. “If you look at our stats, I don’t think they’re overwhelming. But we had very timely offense.”

Following Sam Luckett’s team-high .765 average was John Wynn with a .682 mark, Mike Little at .625 and Koenig at .600.

Luckett and Messinger shared MVP honors.

“From the first game to the last he was the most consistent hitter on our team,” said Koenig of Luckett’s selection.

Koenig said Messinger was also named “primarily because he only gave up three walks and he kept the defense alert and kept us in the game and kept some very good hitters off-balance.”

John Wynn and Mike Little were also named to the All-Tournament team.

“John had some timely hits and the second highest batting average,” said Koenig. “Mike was named primarily for his defense. In the first two games, he made a couple of plays that absolutely saved the ball games for us in centerfield.”

Western Hills Window barely survived their opener with a win, needing three runs in the bottom of the 7th to pull out an 11-10 victory. John Wynn sparked the rally with a leadoff home run to cut the deficit to 10-8. Then bases-loaded rbi singles by Bill Koenig and Gary Macke produced the tying and winning runs.

Mike Little, Johnny Wynn, Nick Huffman and John Messinger combined for a dozen hits to lead the offense.

A two-run 2nd followed by a ten-run 3rd carried Western Hills past Union Savings Bank 13-6 in game two. Sam Luckett put his club on the board with a two-run shot in the 1st, the Ralph Christophel and Bill Koenig each had a three-run blast in the 3rd. Heath Northcutt chipped in with a solo shot. John Wynn collected three more hits for the winners.

Next Window jumped out to an 11-1 lead over Team PBSI after an inning and a half and never looked back in a 14-2, five inning rout. A two-run homer by Ralph Christophel and consecutive doubles by Sam Luckett, Frank Andriola and Nick Huffman made it 4-0 in the top of the 1st. Later in the inning Gary Deaton added a two-run bomb. Christophel added two-run homers in the 2nd and in the 4th as the lead swelled to 13-1. Christophel, Deato and Sam Luckett were all perfect in three at bats.

Early scoring helped carry Western Hills past victim number four as well, as Window went up 2-0 in the bottom of the 1st on a Sam Luckett shot, then added six in the 2nd on the strength of a John Wynn three-run homer to forge an 8-0 lead over Franchise Softball. Western Hills went scoreless for the remainder of the game, but the lead held up and gave Window an 8-3 victory.

John Wynn had his third three hit game of the tournament.

A seven run 7th blew open a 7-5 contest with Ask Rocco/Cincysoftball.com in the winners' bracket finals and gave Western Hills a 14-5 win. An rbi double by John Wynn, an rbi single by Ralph Christophel and a two-run home run by Sam Luckett increased Window's lead to 11-5. Then back-to-back-to back triples by Frankie Andriola, Nick Huffman and Heath Northcutt, and a Gary Deaton sac fly closed out the scoring.

Eric Stidham pounded out four hits, and Luckett, Andriola and John Messinger went 3-for-4.

Cincysoftball.com held a 7-5 lead through three innings in the finals, but with pitcher John Messinger holding his opponent scoreless from the 3rd through the 6th, Western Hills grabbed an 8-7 lead in the 4th, then stretched it to 15-7 with five in the 6th and two in the 7th before Cincysoftball.com finally plated four runs in the bottom of the 7th to make the finals 15-11. Rbi doubles by Koenig and Messinger knotted the score in the 4th, then Mike Little plated Messinger with an rbi single to put his team ahead to stay at 8-7. Eric Stidham's two-run triple helped increase the lead to 13-7 in the 6th. A solo shot by Bill Koenig and Mike Little's sac fly capped off the scoring for Window in the 7th.

Koenig, Messinger, Little, Ralph Christophel and Sammy Luckett shared fifteen hits for the champions.

Western Hills' Koeng called his team “a good mix of young players and veterans.

“A lot of people don't know us. We're not real flashy and don't overpower teams. We just play a consistent game and let teams beat themselves,” said Koenig.

“We’ve been playing at it a long time, and winning our first metro is like a weight lifted off your shoulders,” said Koenig. “I’ve been double-dipped and that memory never leaves you.”

MVP Steve Bradley Holds Seven Opponents To Meager 31 Runs...

B. A. Cutter Gets Better Of American Tickets/BWW To Take EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro Men’s “C” North At Rumpke Park

By Andy Zureick

Crosby Township, Ohio – After losing to them in the winner’s bracket, B. A. Cutter came back to double-dip American Tickets/BWW in the finals to take first place in the “C” North Division of the EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro. The tournament was played July 26th-August 5th at Rumpke Park.

B. A. Cutter was rolling early in tournament with back-to-back-to-back wins.

The first and closest of the three was against Death Row Softball. Adam Thamann blasted a two-run homer in the top of the 6th. In that inning, his team totaled three runs, good for a 5-2 lead. Death Row failed to score in their final two chances and that stood as the final score. Terry Cox was 3-for-3. Bart McMannon collected three hits in four at bats.

The decisive inning versus Delhi Insurance was also the top of the 6th. This time, B. A. Cutter used ten runs to turn a 5-3 deficit into a 13-5 advantage. After a Larry Stokes two-run bomb tied the game, Jim Whitehouse put the eventual winners ahead to stay with a run-scoring single. Roger Davis added two RBI later in the at bat. Bart McMannon was again among the hitting leaders with a 4-for-4 effort. Adam Thamann went 3-for-4.

B. A. Cutter made it three in a row with a 15-0, four-inning shellacking of Secret Service. Larry Stokes got it going again with another two-run round tripper in the 1st. Five more in the 2nd increased it to 8-0. Bart McMannon drove in three and Roger Davis two more in the bottom of the 3rd as the advantage swelled to 15-0. Secret Service never dented the plate to take the doughnut. Stokes and Davis were each 3-for-3.

That is where the good times ended for B. A. Cutter as American Tickets/BWW handed them a 13-9 defeat in their 4th game, sending them to the loser’s bracket.

In their first game of win-or-go-home softball, B. A. Cutter drew the Llama Cowboys. Craig Gallenstein and Roger Davis drove in one run apiece in the top of the 1st to stake B. A. Cutter to a 2-0 lead. The Llama Cowboys got as close as one when they made it 5-4 after 5 innings. Bart McMannon then delivered the knock out punch, a three-run homer, in the top of the 6th. It never got closer than 8-4 as Steve Bradley tossed scoreless softball over the last two innings to preserve the win. Terry Cox went 3-for-3.

The win set up a rematch between B. A. Cutter and American Tickets/BWW for the division championship. RBI base hits from Tim Cox and Jim Whitehouse allowed B. A. Cutter to jump out to an early 2-0 lead. Four more in the 6th increased the lead to 6-1. American Tickets/BWW got just one more in their final two at bats, making it a 7-2 final score. Whitehouse and teammate Brad Crenner were both 3-for-3.

That set up a winner-take-all rubber game between those same two teams. Going into the bottom of the 6th, the game was knotted 5-5. After one out, B. A. Cutter’s Jim Whitehouse tripled. Ryan Minton brought him into score with a sacrifice fly. That is all they got, but pitcher Steve Bradley followed in the top of the 7th with a 1-2-3 shutdown of American Tickets/BWW. The final was 6-5 in favor of B. A. Cutter. Adam Thamann was 2-for-3, including a two-run homerun. Craig Gallenstein and Jim Whitehouse were also 2-for-3 in the championship win.

The all tournament team included B. A. Cutter big sticks Larry Stokes (.778), Bart McMannon (.708), and Adam Thamann (.522). Each player also put two over the fence in the tournament. “We had a home run in every game except for one and they hit most of them,” noted team manager Craig Gallenstein.

“McMannon is our best pure hitter. He can go every direction and he can hit it out,” said Gallenstein. “He’s our clutch homerun hitter and always seems to come alive when we need it.”

“Larry Stokes hits for average and homeruns.” He leads B. A. Cutter in long balls.

“Adam Thamann hit two homeruns including a crucial homer in our first game,” explained Gallenstein. “And he answered American Tickets in the championship game when they scored two runs in the top of the 1st. He had a two-run shot in the bottom of the 1st.”

Despite the solid offensive showing, pitching and defense were keys according to Gallenstein.

Pitcher and tournament MVP Steve Bradley tossed all seven games, giving up a meager total of 31 runs.

“Our infield was also key with our twin bother Terry and Tim Cox at shortstop and second base turning double plays. Jason Lucy had a strong defensive stand at third and our first baseman Roger Davis never dropped a ball.”

“We played smart and didn’t throw the ball around,” concluded Gallenstein.

Tourney MVP Dean Nantz Pitches Winners To Title...

Newcomers Lead Indian Creek In EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro Men’s “C” South Division At Rumpke Park

By Andy Zureick

Crosby Township, Ohio – Indian Creek went a perfect 5-0 to win the Men’s “C” South Division of the EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro on July 26th - August 5th at Rumpke Park. The team was led by the performances of pitcher Dean Nantz and additional hitter Robbie Garrett. Both players are new to the Indian Creek team this year.

“Dean was one of our pickups this year and he’s turned the team all the way around,” explained Indian Creek manager Johnny Smith. “He held four of five opponents to seven runs or less. He moves the ball around a bunch and fields his position really well.” Nantz was named the tournament Most Valuable Player. He also hit a solid .625.

Garrett hit a team-best .882 with five homeruns. He was selected to the all tournament team.

Indian Creek opened the Metro with an 11-7 victory over Steele’s Laundry. In the bottom of the 4th, Bobby Winkler doubled in two runs to take his team from a 4-3 deficit to a 5-4 lead. Randy Harrison tacked on another run in the at bat to increase the lead to 6-4. Craig Hertle drove in two more in the three-run 5th. That made it 9-5. Two more in the next inning sealed the win. Hertle was a perfect 3-for-3.

Game two matched Indian Creek against Black N Blue/Johnson. Robbie Garrett blasted a three-run bomb and Matt Chadwell double in two more as Indian Creek scored seven runs in the bottom of the 2nd. That game them a 10-4 lead. Dave Mergenthal added a three-run homer of his own in the six-run 5th. That paved the way to an 18-6 mercy rule victory in six innings. Garrett led all hitters by going 4-for-4. Russ Barger, Dave Mergenthal, and Craig Hertle were all 3-for-4.

The next two games were much more closely contested. Facing Black N Blue/Penn Station, Indian Creek went from three down to a 5-4 lead in the bottom of the 4th. Dean Nantz put the team ahead with an RBI single. Three more in the 5th, including a Troy Irvine two-run double, stretched the lead to 8-4. They padded the lead to 10-5 with two more in the 6th. Black N Blue/Penn Station got a couple in their last chance, but it was too little, too late. Randy Harrison was 3-for-3 in the 10-7 victory.

The first of two straight games against All In Softball proved to be the toughest of the tournament for Indian Creek. Going into the bottom of the 7th, the eventual champs trailed 14-13. Bobby Winkler and

Matt Chadwell led off the at bat with back-to-back singles. Dean Nantz followed with a sacrifice fly that tied the game. Tommy Crank then singled and All In Softball decided to intentionally walk Eddie Glaser and load the bases. Russ Barger spoiled their strategy by singling to right field to drive in the game-winning run. Barger turned in a stellar 4-for-5 performance in the 15-14 win. Robbie Garrett was 3-for-4 with two homeruns. Dave Mergenthal, Bobby Winkler, Matt Chadwell, and Tommy Crank were also 3-for-4.

All In Softball went to the loser's bracket and beat Community Cab to get another chance at Indian Creek. But the extra game must have taken something out of them, as they were not even competitive in the second contest.

Robbie Garrett got Indian Creek on the board in the top of the third with a three-run round tripper. Tommy Crank capped off the seven-run inning with an RBI single. They continued to pile on with six more in the 4th including a three-run Troy Irvine homerun. They scored 14 in all as Dean Nantz tossed a shutout for the five-inning, mercy rule victory and division championship. Dave Mergenthal, Dean Nantz, and Randy Harrison were all 3-for-3.

Mergenthal, at .786, was second on the team to Garrett in batting average. "Dave was an all tournament selection for his hitting performance. He places the ball pretty much all over the field and drives in runs when they're needed," commented Johnny Smith.

Just behind him were Craig Hertle at .706 and Bobby Winkler at .700. Other notables included Randy Harrison, .667; Russ Barger, .632; and Troy Irvine, .600.

As the manager explained, Winkler, another all tournament player, also made a solid contribution in the field. "He played spectacular on defense at shortstop. Bobby pretty much makes any plays up the middle."

"We used a five-man infield and between Bobby and Matt Chadwell (middle infielder), we were very quick with turning double plays," noted Smith. "And we made very few errors."

Solid Defense, Clutch Pitching Carry Winners To Title...

Team Effort Key For Emanon/Wessel/Care Springs/Pediatrics Of Hamilton In EMR Group-ASA Metro Men's "C" East At Rumpke Park

By Andy Zureick

Crosby Township, Ohio - Emanon Properties/Wessel Sports/Care Springs/Pediatrics of Hamilton relied on a solid team attitude to carry them to first place in the Men's "C" East division of the EMR Group-ASA Metro at Rumpke Park on July 26th – August 5th.

"It was everybody's selfless attitude [that was key]," explained team manager Andy Balzer. "We consider ourselves a very family-based team. We've tried to get the kids and wives and significant others involved as much as possible. Without them, we would not be able to play. Family and fun is our motto.

"We've done it together as a team all year," continued Balzer. "We win as a team and we lose as a team, everybody's glad to pick the next person up."

In this tournament, it would be all winning and no losing as Emanon Properties went undefeated in six games.

The first win was against Angilo's/Cincinnati Phillies. Six runs in the bottom of the 3rd broke open a 3-2 contest. Dale Deck provided the big blow, a three-run homer that capped the inning to make it 9-2. The final was 9-4. Joey Wilke was 4-for-4 to lead all hitters. Isaiah Staten and Andy Balzer were both 3-for-3.

In the top of the 2nd versus Foresters, Emanon plated 12 runs to take a decisive 15-1 lead. Brian Thamann blasted a three-run homerun in the at bat. Dale Deck and Brandon Sciutti chipped in with two RBI apiece.

Foresters managed to cut into the lead late, but eventually fell, 19-11. Brian Thamann had five hits in six trips to the plate. Scott Tillery and Chris Wessel each went 4-for-5.

Game three was a lopsided five-inning mercy rule victory over Linnie's Pub. Dale Deck had a three-run round tripper in the four-run 1st. Five more scored in the 2nd. Brandon Sciutti legged out an inside-the-park homer in that frame. The final was 13-1. Brian Thamann (4-for-4), Joey Wilke (4-for-4), and Isaiah Staten (3-for-3) were all perfect at the plate in the win.

Emanon continued to roll facing Rick's Tavern/Columbia Chevrolet. Dale Deck again came up big early with a two-run bomb in the 2nd that got his team on the board. In all, they totaled five runs in the inning. Rick's Tavern/Columbia Chevrolet came back to take a 6-5 lead going into the bottom of the 6th. With one run already in, Scott Tillery then singled in a run that allowed Emanon Properties to regain the lead. Dave Vonbargen provided some breathing room with a double that scored two more. Pitcher Chris Wessel held Rick's Tavern scoreless over the last two innings to preserve the 9-6 victory. Tillery finished at 3-for-3; Vanbargen was 2-for-2.

The winner's bracket finals matched Emanon with Quality Sports. In the bottom of the 5th with the score tied 6-6, Daniel Tolbert drilled a solo homer to give his team a 7-6 lead. That would stand as the final score as Chris Wessel, for the second game straight, held the opposition to no runs over their last two at bats. Tolbert and teammate Brian Thamann collected two hits a piece to set the pace at the plate.

That win set up a rematch between Emanon and Rick's Tavern/Columbia Chevrolet. Rick's Tavern would need two consecutive victories to take the division title, but it was not to be. Turns out that Chris Wessel had found his groove and proceeded to toss a five-inning shutout. Wessel and Andy Balzer both drove in a run in the bottom of the 2nd to give their team a 2-0 lead. They added four more in the 3rd and five in the 4th, two of those on a Brian Thamann long ball. Thamann came back to end the game in the bottom of the 5th with a walk-off solo dinger. The final was 12-0. Thamann was 3-for-4 in the game. Isaiah Staten and Chris Wessel each finished 3-for-3.

"Solid team defense was very key," noted Balzer. "We got clutch plays and clutch pitching from Chris Wessel. And everyone made the routine plays we needed to make."

Emanon Properties/Wessel Sports/Care Springs/Pediatrics of Hamilton also benefited from some noteworthy performances at the plate. Joey Wilke batted .773, making only four outs in the entire tournament. Brian Thamann finished at .667, including six homers and 11 RBI. "He clutched up and hit when he needed to hit," said Balzer of the tournament MVP.

Isaiah Staten drove in nine runs while hitting .636. Dale Deck, Scott Tillery, and Chris Wessel all batted .500. Deck also had three homeruns and ten runs batted in.

Named to the all tournament from Emanon Properties were Chris Wessel, Joey Wilke, Dan Tolbert, and Marty Sparks.

"You can't get this far into a tournament without a pitcher. He did an excellent job mixing up his pitches and fielding the middle," Balzer noted of Wessel.

"Dan Tolbert was absolutely phenomenal at second base. Just when you thought something was going to get in the hole, he was all over it. Shortstop Marty Sparks also played flawless defense as well," added Balzer.

Balzer concluded emphasizing his gratitude, "We'd like to thank everybody who's come to support us and our sponsors – Emanon Properties, Wessel Sports, Care Springs, and Pediatrics of Hamilton."

EMANON FENDS OFF EXTREME/TURNER FOR "C" OVERALL TITLE - Emanon Properties/Wessel Sports/Care Springs/Pediatrics of Hamilton held off Extreme/Turner Properties Services

12-9 in the championship game of the Men's "C" Overall Playoffs of the EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro August 7th at Rumpke Park.

Extreme/Turner had forced an "if" game with a 10-8 victory in the first finals.

Emanon had also knocked Extreme into the losers' bracket in both team's opener. Next they mercy-ruled Indian Creek 17-2 in four innings to reach the finals.

Emanon never trailed in game one, scoring four in the top of the 1st, three in the 2nd, then four in the 4th to take control 12-3. Extreme never recovered. Joey Wilke's two-run shot put Emanon on the board in the 1st. Wilke also contributed a big two-run single in the 2nd. Scott Tillery drove in two runs with a single in the 4th. Wilke and Tillery combined for eight hits, and Chris Wessel added three.

Next Emanon jumped out to an 11-2 lead in the bottom of the 2nd inning against Indian Creek and never looked back. Daniel Tolbert broke a 2-2 tie with a two-run sock in the bottom of the 1st and helped his team take a 5-2 lead. A two-run single by Marty Sparks capped off the six-run 2nd. Chris Wessel and Joey Wilke shared six hits to pace the offense.

Extreme then ambushed Emanon 10-8 in the first finals, but Emanon would never trail again after grabbing a 3-0 lead in the bottom of the 1st in the championship game. The lead swelled to 12-2 after five before Extreme rallied for six in the top of the 7th to make the final 12-9. A triple by Brand Sciutti, a double by Brian Thamann and rbi singles by Joe Wilke and Daniel Tolbert accounted for Emanon's three runs in the 1st. Scott Tillery doubled home two runs in the 2nd, and Isaiah Staten launched a two-run homer in the 4th. Chris Wessel and Daniel Tolbert banded out three hits each for the champions.

Joey Wilke batted .764, Scott Tillery .714, Chris Wessel .692, Daniel Tolbert .647 and Isaiah Staten .625 to lead the winners.

"Good defense, good pitching and timely hitting" carried Emanon to the overall championship, said player-coach Scott Tillery.

"Everybody made the plays they were supposed to make," said Tillery. "We made very few errors.

"And Chris Wessel was phenomenal," added Tillery. "He only gave up 31 runs in four games."

The offense was "spread out among everyone on the team," said Tillery. "We scored in almost every inning of every game we won. It was great balance...a team effort."

Tillery said Emanon "absolutely felt we'd see Extreme again" in the finals after battling past them in their opener.

"They were clearly the best team we played in the tournament," said Tillery. "The games we played them were all tough games. They're a very, very good team, and we congratulate them on a tremendous tournament."

Tillery said his team wasn't phased by their setback in the first finals.

"Really we were just ready to move on. We're at our best when our backs are against the walls, and we responded by jumping out on top."

Tillery extended a "special congratulations to Andy Balzer and Dale Deck on their defense, and to Andy on his tremendous leadership as the manager of the team," said Tillery. "He's a lot of the reason why we're 56-27 and won the tournament.

"We also want to thank our sponsors Wessel Sports, Care Springs and Pediatrics of Hamilton," said Tillery. "And (ASA Commissioner) Danney Saylor ran a great tournament, as usual."

Original Table Top Cornhole Falls Twice In Finals, 6-3 And 7-4...
Extreme/Turner Property Services 9-1 In Taking Men's "C" West Division Of EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro At Rumpke Park

By Andy Zureick

Crosby Township, Ohio – Extreme/Turner Property Services came out of the loser's bracket to win the EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro Men's "C" West Division at Rumpke Park held July 26th – August 5th.

Extreme/Turner won their opening game versus S&A Show, 17-11. Bryon Simpson broke an 11-11 tie in the top of the 7th with a two-run double. In all, they scored nine runs in the at bat, overcoming an 11-8 deficit. Matt Leugers was 4-for-5 including a homerun and five RBI. Chris Hilton was also 4-for-5. Mike Cooper and Danny Cupp both went 3-for-4. Cooper also chipped in a homer.

Game two was an 11-2 loss at the hands of Original Table Top Cornhole. That sent Extreme to the loser's bracket. They would later get a chance to settle the score with the Cornholers.

Extreme/Turner cruised in their next couple of games.

Facing Team Lite they jumped out to an early lead with five runs in the top of the 1st. The big hit in that at bat was a three-run homer from Matt Wheeler. Extreme tacked on three more in both the 2nd and 4th to increase the lead to 11-4. They put the finishing touches on the 15-8 victory with three more in the top of the 7th. Mike Cooper led the way with a long ball that plated two of those runs. Cooper and teammate Josh Zickgraf were both 3-for-4 in the game. Matt Leugers (4-for-4), Bryon Simpson (3-for-3), and Matt Wheeler (3-for-3) were all perfect at the plate.

The next game against Belly's Party Bus was one of the two mercy rule victories for Extreme/Turner in the tournament. Carlton Brock, Matt Wheeler, and Bryon Simpson each drove in a run in the top of the 1st to stake their team to a 3-0 lead. Jeremy Williams capped the scoring in the 5th with a three-run homerun. Belly's Party Bus failed to cross the plate even once in the 15-0 final. Josh Zickgraf was a team-best 3-for-4 in the blowout.

Carlton Brock provided just about all the offense that would be necessary versus Accurate Masonry in the top of the 1st. He blasted a grand slam that led the way to six runs and an insurmountable lead. The final was 7-2. Brock totaled five RBI while going 3-for-4. Bryon Simpson was also 3-for-4. Aric Mills had three hits in as many at bats.

Extreme needed an extra inning to finally get past Alibi's in the next game. With the score tied at 6-6 at the end of regulation, Alibi's failed to score in the top of the 8th. Then in the bottom of the frame, Carlton Brock, Bryon Simpson, and Chris Hilton led off with back-to-back-to-back singles that loaded the bases. Aric Mills brought in the game-winning run with a sacrifice fly. The final was 7-6. Simpson was 4-for-4 in the win, but the real story was the play of Jeremy Williams. "He single handedly beat Alibi's," explained team manager Chris Hilton. "He tied the game up in the bottom of the 7th [with a three-run homerun] and was 4-for-4. If we hadn't won the game, we wouldn't have moved on. He caught some serious fire at the plate during this tournament." Williams hit .643 and totaled five homers in the event. He was voted team MVP.

After the squeaker versus Alibi's, Extreme/Turner were not even challenged in the next two games.

Opposite Chili Company, they jumped out to 7-0 lead after the first two innings. Jeremy Williams led the game off with a solo johnson. In the six-run second, Williams added a two-run round tripper. Matt Leugers and Carlton Brock drove in two apiece in the four-run 6th as the lead increased to 15-3. Chili Company failed to make a run in the bottom of that inning and the game ended via mercy rule. Williams was 4-for-4 for the second game in a row. Brock was also 4-for-4. Aric Mills and Matt Leugers each collected three hits in the victory.

The margin of victory for Extreme over All Valley Plumbing was also twelve runs. Six runs in the top of the 3rd broke open a game that had stood at 4-3. Aric Mills had a two-run triple. Mike Cooper added a two-run homerun. The final was 17-5. Mills finished 3-for-4 with five runs driven in. Jeremy Williams was 3-for-4 with another homer. Bryon Simpson led all hitters, going 4-for-5.

That win set up a rematch between Extreme/Turner and Original Table Top Cornhole for the division championship.

In the first final, Aric Mills and Mike Cooper drove in one each as Extreme claimed a 2-1 lead in the top of the 2nd. Original Table Top Cornhole trailed by only one, 4-3, after four innings. Then in the top of the 5th, Carlton Brock cracked a two-run homer that made it 6-3. Neither team scored the rest of the way and that is how it ended. Aric Mills was 3-for-3.

Extreme/Turner scored three runs in the bottom of the 1st of the second final and from there they never looked back. Bryon Simpson got his team on the board with a two-run triple. Chris Hilton added a run-scoring double. Original Table Top Cornhole cut the lead to 4-3 going into the bottom of the 6th, but Aric Mills' two run double followed by Danny Cupp's run-scoring fielder's choice opened the lead back up to 7-3. Original Table Top Cornhole managed only run in the top of the 7th, ending it at 7-4 in favor of Extreme. Chris Hilton and Adam Harmon were each 3-for-3 in the championship win.

Bryon Simpson led his team with 25 hits and a .658 batting average. He was a member of the all tournament team along with teammates Aric Mills and Adam Harmon.

"Aric was named for his clutch hitting. He struggled going from USSSA style to ASA stlye," noted Hilton, the manager. "It took him a few games to get on track, but once he did, he led the team in RBI with 15." He batted .594 for the tournament. Carlton Brock was the other co-leader in runs batted in.

"Adam Harmon in right field was our defensive standout. He played his tail off and made some great catches," added Hilton. "He's maturing into a great player."

"We play very well as a team," Hilton summarized. "We hit when we needed to and we played defense when we needed to. Seems like we play a different brand of softball every time we go out on the field. When our offense is not there, our defense is and vice versa."

Brunner Triple Lifts Winners In Second Finals, 11-10...

Bo's Boys Produce In Late Innings To Win Men's "D" North EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro

By Andy Zureick

Crosby Township, Ohio – Bo's Boys won two of their last three games in the last at bat en route to a first place finish in the Men's "D" North Division of the EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro on July 26th – August 5th at Rumpke Park.

Bo's Boys opened the tournament with four straight wins. The first was an 18-10 besting of WTP. They followed that by outdoing Main Entrance 13-4. The wins kept getting bigger in game three when Bo's Boys pounded TB Sports 15-3.

At that point, things started to get a little tougher for Bo's Boys. Facing FOP #69, they found themselves in an early 6-3 hole. They righted the ship with eight runs in the bottom of the 2nd, taking an 11-6 lead. Kenny Wengert blasted an inside-the-park grand slam to cap that inning. The final would be 15-7. Wengert, along win teammates Andy Perkins and Rusty Engle, was 4-for-4 in the victory.

Bo's Boys were sent to the losers bracket after the next game when the dropped an 11-9 decision to Crum Trucking. From there on it would be a grind for the eventual champs.

In order to get a chance at the division championship, Bo's Boys would have to beat Miss Kitty's. It looked to be anybody's ballgame as the score stood tied after eight innings of play, 14-14. Miss Kitty's failed to score in the top of the 9th, putting Bo's Boys fate right back in their own hands. Kenny Wengert and Danny Johnson led the bottom of the frame off with back-to-back singles. After two fly outs, Rusty Engel loaded the bases when he drew a base on balls. Roy Hopkins then singled to deliver the game-winning RBI. Hopkins was a perfect 5-for-5 in the contest. Larry Brunner also went 5-for-5 in the 15-14 win.

That win set up a rematch between Bo's Boys and Crum Trucking. Crum Trucking turned out to be their own worst enemy when they committed a two-run error in the top of the 6th. At that point, the game had been tied 8-8. That paved the way to a four-run inning for Bo's Boys and a 12-8 lead. Crum Trucking never recovered in the 13-8 final. Donald Cox was 4-for-4; Danny Johnson went 4-for-5.

The result was one more, winner-take-all game between Bo's Boys and Crum Trucking. This one went down to the Bo's Boys' at bat in the bottom of the 7th. With the score all even at 10-10, Bobby Durbin singled with one out to put the potential winning run on base. He advanced to second when Tony Downing flew out. Keith Brunner then came up with biggest hit of the tournament, a triple off the left field fence. That brought Durbin into score and give Bo's Boys the division crown. Christ Watson collected three hits in as many at bats. Kenny Wengert, Andy Perkins, and Rusty Engel all went 3-for-4.

Engel also led Bo's Boys in the tournament with a .645 batting average. Just behind him were Larry Brunner and Christ Watson at .630 and .619, respectively.

All-tournament selection Andy Perkins played solid in left-centerfield while hitting .613. Other members of the all tournament team from Bo's Boys were Danny Johnson and Bobby Durbin. Johnson hit .556 and played shortstop. Durbin was selected due to his knack for being johnny-on-the-spot in the field.

Notable hitting performances were turned in by Donald Cox (.571) and Timmy Downing (.552).

The tournament MVP was Tony Downing. "He pitched the whole tournament and nobody scored a lot of runs off of him and he hit pretty well overall," noted Bo's Boys spokesperson Chrissy Shell.

"It was great teamwork from a team full of injured players," explained Snell about Bo's Boys' success. "They just had the will to win this year and wouldn't give up. Our ability to win in our last at bat against Miss Kitty's and Crum in the finals [was key]. We were determined not to leave like that, so we came back and won."

MVP Chris Bien Holds Nine Opponents To 42 Runs To Key Comeback...

Rustic Tavern Takes Hard Way To Title In Men's "D" South Division Of EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro

By Andy Zureick

Crosby Township, Ohio – After a second round loss, Rustic Tavern had to grind through the loser's bracket for most of the "D" South Division of the EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro at Rumpke Park on July 26th August 5.

"This tournament is not made for you to lose early," noted Rustic Tavern manager Mike Schrenk. His team ended up having to win seven straight games over the weekend just to get a chance to play for the championship. "The team we had to play in the finals, since they were able to stay in the winner's bracket, they didn't have to play as many games in the heat." The struggle must have made the prize extra sweet.

Game one against Boner Entertainment probably gave Rustic Tavern a false sense of security. Steve Brinkman got his team on the board in the 1st with an RBI single. They added another run in the 2nd and two more in the 6th. Then in the 7th, Rustic Tavern exploded for 11 runs, three of them scoring on a Justin

Garrison three-run double. Brinkman, the pitcher, also tossed a shutout as Rustic Tavern notched a 15-0 blowout victory. Keith Mills was 4-for-4. Brinkman and teammate Steve Brock were both 3-for-4.

But the good times were short lived as Rustic Tavern dropped their next game 16-15 to Eddie's Café. "We were up 15-11 in the bottom of the 7th with two outs and we blew it," lamented the manager. Going to the loser's bracket so early in the tournament meant Rustic Tavern was going to have a hard row to hoe if they were going to be division champs.

Luckily for Rustic Tavern, it was easy going in the first two games of the loser's bracket.

Rustic Tavern first drew Bargo's/Putters. Drew Reichle's run-scoring base hit started an eight-run rally in the bottom of the 3rd, breaking a 1-1 tie. Steve Brock added a two-run double later in the at bat. The final was 19-4 in four innings. Keith Mills was a perfect 3-for-3 in the win. Steve Brinkman was 3-for-4. It was also the first game with Chris Bien on the mound for Rustic Tavern. He would allow only one team in the next nine games to score in double digits.

Design Press/Falcons were also recipients of a four-inning, mercy rule thrashing at the hands of Rustic Tavern. Drew Reichle drove in two as part of the decisive nine-run 3rd. That made the score 13-2. Reichle led the way by going 2-for-3 with four RBI. Mike Fossaluzza had three hits in as many at bats. The final score was 17-2.

As lopsided as the previous two games were, that is just how close the next two would be.

Going into the top of the 6th opposite Showtime Softball, Rustic Tavern trailed 6-5. Drew Reichle led the at bat off with a single. He scored when Tony Coffaro followed with a double. After moving to third on a fly out, Coffaro came in to score on a single from Delaney Smith. The 7-6 total stood up as the final as Chris Bien held Showtime Softball scoreless over the last two innings to preserve the win. Steve Brinkman led all hitters at 3-for-4.

Things were no easier in the next game versus Paul's Bus Service. Going into Rustic Tavern's at bat in the bottom of the 7th, the game was knotted at 1-1. Chris Bien ledoff with a single. He was retired at second when Mike Bissler grounded into a fielder's choice. Tony Coffaro had a base hit to move to the potential winning run to third. After a short pop out, Mike Schrenk singled down the left field line, plating Bissler with the game winner. Chris Bien and Steve Brinkman were each 2-for-3.

Rustic Tavern continued to roll against Youngblood by tallying nine unanswered runs in the last three innings of the game. The final was 14-9. Mike Bissler and Keith Mills both went 4-for-5. Drew Reichle was 3-for-4.

That win put Rustic Tavern just two victories short of a chance to play for the division championship. Standing in their way first was H.L. Softball. Trailing 4-3 in the bottom of the 4th, Rustic Tavern got RBI singles from Mike Fossaluzza, Tony Coffaro, and Steve Brock to take a 7-4 lead. Each team got one more each over the last three innings for an 8-5 final. The trio of Steve Brock, Mike Fossaluzza, and Chris Bien all were 2-for-3. Bien again wrapped up the game tossing two scoreless frames.

Rustic Tavern rolled past Renegades/Huddy Park in the next game, 13-3. Steve Brinkman doubled in two as part of the five-run 4th. That made the score 8-2. Dale Hodapp collected two RBI as the lead swelled to 11-2 in the 5th. Hodapp and Steve Brock both finished 3-for-4.

That earned Rustic Tavern a match up with Dirty Dozen/Walt's BBQ for a chance at the championship. Trailing 1-0 in the top of the 4th, Rustic Tavern scored three, including two on a Justin Garrison double, to take a 3-1 lead. They tacked on two more in the 5th, increasing the lead to 5-1. Dirty Dozen/Walt's BBQ made a run with one run in the 5th and two in the 7th, only to fall short in the 5-4 final.

The second final saw Rustic Tavern jump out to an early lead by scoring four runs with two outs in the top of the 1st. Chris Moses and Tony Coffaro each had an RBI in the at bat. Moses drove in another run in the

5th as Rustic Tavern scored five more. That made the score 13-4 and effectively sealed the game. Dirty Dozen/Walt's BBQ scored seven over their final three at bats to make the final 17-11. Coffaro was a team best 4-for-5. Mike Schrenk was 3-for-4 while Dale Hodapp and Mike Fossaluzza were each 3-for-5.

Keith Mills hit a team-best .657 in the tournament. "He committed no errors in left field and was our leadoff hitter and pretty much started every game out with a hit," added Schrenk, the manager. Mills also totaled 12 RBI.

Mike Fossaluzza finished just behind him at .633 with 13 RBI. Steve Brock and Steve Brinkman, each an all tournament selection who hit .600, had 14 and 15 runs batted in, respectively.

The tournament MVP was pitcher Chris Bien. "He pitched the last nine games and stopped every ball hit to him and hit pretty good, too," explained Schrenk. "He was 9-0 as our pitcher and the teams we played only averaged 4.88 runs a game against him."

MVP Terry Lingo Handcuffs Field, Holds Seven Opponents To Twenty-Two Runs... Pitching, Defense Carry A-1 Lumping In Men's "D" East Division Of EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro At Rumpke Park

By Andy Zureick

Crosby Township, Ohio – Led by the stellar pitching of tournament MVP Terry Lingo, A-1 Lumping overcame a loss late in the winner's bracket to rally back and win the Men's "D" East Division of the EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro on July 26-August 5 at Rumpke Park. A-1 won four straight games to open the tournament before suffering a loss. They scrapped their way out of the loser's bracket to the championship round and a chance to avenge their previous defeat.

A-1 Lumping opened the tournament versus FD Lawrence Electric. They got it going early with eight runs in the top of the 1st. Bill Foster drove in the first two of them to get the rally underway. FD Lawrence Electric never recovered, dropping the game 14-3. Whitey Herzog and Bob Schlachter were both 4-for-4. Seth Lingo and Doug Duwel went 3-for-4.

Game two pitted A-1 with Kentucky Chiropractor/Highland Heights. This one was a defensive struggle as evidenced by the 1-1 score going into the bottom of the 6th. In that at bat, A-1 took the lead on Brandon Smith's RBI single. Ben Schibi added two more when he tripled with a couple runners aboard. Terry Lingo capped the scoring with a sacrifice fly, making it 5-1. Kentucky Chiropractor/Highland Heights made it interesting with two runs in their final chance, but fell just short at 5-3. Schibi led all hitters in the game, going 3-for-3. Jeff Greer had two hits in as many at bats. Bill Foster and Kyle Maury both were 2-for-3.

Kentucky Chiropractor/Butternut also managed to keep it close with A-1 before eventually yielding, 9-6. In the decisive 3rd inning, Whitey Herzog led off with a double. He scored on Terry Lingo's RBI single. Bill Foster later added a two-run single that made it 5-1. A-1 Lumping added one more in the 4th, two in the 5th, and another in the 6th, making it 9-3. Kentucky Chiropractor/Butternut came back with three in their last at bat, but it was not enough. Jeff Wilson and Bill Foster were both a perfect 3-for-3 in the game. Whitey Herzog was 3-for-4.

A-1 continued to roll in their next game versus Pirate's Den/Vandelay. A combined eight runs in the 4th and 5th innings blew open what had been a relatively close 6-2 contest. Seth Lingo tripled in two in the 4th; Kevin Schleben collected two RBI of his own in the 5th. The final was 15-3 in a run-rule shortened affair. Bill Foster was 3-for-3 for the second consecutive game. Todd Lingo had two hits in two official at bats.

Game five is where things took a turn for the worst for A-1. They suffered an 11-5 loss at the hands of Ante Up Softball.

That sent A-1 to the loser's bracket for a match up with Viox Services. The winner of that game would earn a chance to play for the division championship. Trailing 3-1 after five innings, A-1 jumped into the lead in the top of the 6th when Jeff Wilson doubled to drive in two runs. Kyle Maury capped the six-run rally with a run-scoring base hit. Viox Services got two of those runs back in the next couple of frames, but it would not be enough. A-1 won 7-5. Terry Lingo, Brandon Smith, and Kevin Schleben were all 2-for-3 in the victory.

The result of the win was a rematch between A-1 and Ante Up Softball, the team that had beaten them earlier in the tournament. In the bottom of the 3rd, Bill Foster hit a two-out triple to plate a run that broke a 1-1 tie. A-1 never looked back. Four runs in the 4th broke the game open, giving the eventual winners a 6-1 lead. Jeff Wilson had two RBI in that at bat. A-1 added a couple more in the late innings on the way to an 8-1 win. A couple of Lingo boys, Seth and Todd, were each 3-for-3. Brandon Smith collected three hits in four tries.

A-1 and Ante Up Softball would have to play one more to decide the champion of the division. A-1 drew first blood in the top of the 4th. After Terry Lingo singled to open the at bat, Bill Foster doubled to bring in the game's first run. Brandon Smith then singled to score Foster and give A-1 a 2-0 lead. Ante Up cut the lead to 2-1 before Kevin Schleben drove in a run in the 6th. Neither team scored the rest of the way, making it a 3-1 final in favor of A-1. The trio of Bob Schlachter, Kevin Schleben, and Brandon Smith all turned in 3-for-3 performances in the championship victory.

Whitey Herzog posted a .634 batting average in the tournament. "He's our leadoff hitter and led the team in hitting," explained team manager Bob Schlachter. His performance at the plate and outstanding play at shortstop earned him a spot on the all tournament team.

Schlachter, who hit a respectable .586 himself, also made the all tournament team. "I played solid defense at second base and had consistent hitting. We probably turned ten double plays throughout the tournament."

Brandon Smith and Jeff Wilson were both clutch hitters, coming up with several two-out hits. They batted .600 and .500, respectively.

Other top batting performances were turned in by Bill Foster, .593; Kevin Schleben, .520; and Todd Lingo, .500.

Eric Hardesty made a solid contribution off the bench running the bases and coming up with a couple of pinch hits.

But the key for A-1, according to Schlachter, was the play of pitcher and MVP Terry Lingo. "Absolutely, without a doubt. He shut down teams at the end of the tournament and played solid defense up the middle. We don't play a five-man infield because he fields the middle very well."

Duggins' Pitching Limits Seven Opponents To Twenty-Nine Runs...

Hard Knocks Outduels J-Taps In EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro Men's "D" West Division At Rumpke Park

By Andy Zureick

Crosby Township, Ohio – The Men's "D" West Division of the EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro at Rumpke Park on July 26-August 5 came down to a battle between Hard Knocks and J-Taps. Hard Knocks got the best of what ended up being a three-game playoff between the two teams to take the division championship.

Hard Knocks started their undefeated run through the winner's bracket of the tournament with a 19-6 five-inning mercy rule victory over R&R Quality Meats. Brian Kelly and Rob Bennett both drove in two runs as Hard Knocks jumped out to an 8-0 lead in the top of the 1st. Eight more runs in the top of the 3rd put the game away. Dave Case was a perfect 3-for-3 in the contest. Brendan Kruse went 3-for-4.

Play By Play put up a much better fight against Hard Knocks in game two. Going into the top of the 5th, the score was knotted at 1-1. Brian Kelly's RBI single broke that tie in his team's next at bat. Steve McCreary doubled in another run to increase the lead to 3-1. They added an insurance run in the top of the 7th, but it turned out to be unnecessary as Play By Play could not find even a single run in the late innings. The final was 4-1.

The match up between Hard Knocks and Huesman-Schmid Insurance turned out to be one of the best games of the tournament. At the end of the regulation play, the game was tied at 6-6. Neither team scored in the first extra frame. Huesman-Schmid Insurance also failed to take a lead in the top of the 9th. In the bottom of that inning, Hard Knocks came up with four consecutive singles with no outs. Steve McCreary had the last of those to bring in the game-winning run. Albert Irvine and Brendan Kruse were both 3-for-4 in the 7-6 win.

Facing Win-Place-Show/Old Spice, Hard Knocks scored four times to break a 3-3 tie in the bottom of the 3rd. Matt Reed singled in the go-ahead run. Brian Kelly later added a two-run sacrifice fly. Hard Knocks won going away as Win-Place-Show/Old Spice managed only one more run over their final four at bats. The final tally was 10-4. Kelly was 2-for-2 with five RBI. Rob Bennett collected two hits in three trips to the plate.

That set up the first of three games between Hard Knocks and J-Taps. In the bottom of the 6th, Steve McCreary's two-run single started a six-run rally that broke open what had been a 6-2 game. J-Taps failed to answer in the top of the 7th and 12-2 is how it ended. McCreary, Dave Case, and Brendan Kruse all had two hits in the victory.

J-Taps went to the loser's bracket and won a chance for a rematch with Hard Knocks in the division finals.

In the first finals, J-Taps handed Hard Knocks their first and only loss of the tournament in a 3-1 defensive struggle. "We came out slumping," explained Hard Knocks manager Brian Kelly. "We didn't hit the ball, but they didn't hit the ball either. The score was 3-1, that's not really a softball game. But we're a positive team and we stayed focus."

Despite the optimistic approach, things did not look good for Hard Knocks as J-Taps jumped out 7-3 in the early innings. But in the top of the 5th, Hard Knocks rallied for six runs to take a 9-7 lead. Brendan Kruse cut the lead to one with a two-run single. Matt Reed's base hit plated a run to tie the game. Brian Kelly capped the inning when he singled in two more runs. In the top of the 7th they added two more to stretch the lead to 11-7. The J-Taps bat went cold as they failed to score again making that the final score. The trio of Albert Irvine, Brian Kelly, and Brendan Kruse each chipped in two hits to the championship effort. Kelly also had three RBI.

Albert Irvine posted a team-best .619 batting average while Kelly ended up being the top run producer for his team with 12 runs batted in during the tournament. "I led in RBI but Albert bats right in front of me and he set the table. He had a lot of big doubles. It seemed like nobody could get him out." Kelly ended up hitting .555. Kelly and Irvine both earned spots on the all tournament team.

The other Hard Knocks representative on the all tournament team was pitcher Bob Duggins. "He has a lot of control on his pitches. He pitches inside, outside, and fields everything coming back up the middle. He talks to everybody and tells them where the ball is going to go," explained Kelly, the manager. Duggins did not allow any of his team's opponents to score more than seven runs in any game. He finished with a 4.14 earned run average.

Rookie shortstop Robbie Bennett was named tournament MVP. "He is a very fundamentally sound ball player," noted Kelly. "He makes the plays and does his job."

In fact, Kelly felt it was that sort of fundamental play in the field, not throwing the ball around and turning inning-ending double plays, that was key to his team's success.

Complementing the defensive effort were several notable performances at the plate. Those were turned in by Brent Ferguson (.583), Steve McCreary (.579), Dave Case (.500), and Brendan Kruse (.500).

“I’d like to give special thanks to Ryan’s Painting for sponsoring us and sticking with us for the year,” added Kelly. “I’d like to thank the team. They did a great job this year. We took a new team and took it to this extent.”

LATE RALLIES LIFT HARD KNOCKS TO OVERALL “D” TITLE - Hard Knocks rallied to win their first two games in their final at bat, then polished off A-1 Lumping 9-6 in the championship to capture first place in the Men’s “D” Division overall playoff round of the EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro August 6-7 at Rumpke Park.

Hard Knocks scored two runs in the bottom of the 7th to knock off Rustin Tavern 4-3 in their opener, then used an eleven run 6th to stun A-1 Lumping 19-14 in the winners’ bracket finals.

Keith Blazer walked and scored the tying run on Matt Reed’s triple in the bottom of the 7th in game one. Then, after intentional walks to Albert Irvine and Brian Kelly loaded the bases, Rob Bennett singled home Reed with the game winner. Reed and Irvine shared four hits to pace the offense.

A-1 Lumping built a 14-8 lead over Hard Knocks after five innings in the winners’ bracket finals, but an eleven run 6th inning explosion lifted Hard Knocks to a hard-fought 19-14 victory. Dale Krauser’s two-run double put his club ahead to stay at 16-14. Krauser, Steve McCreary and Dave Case combined for nine hits.

In the finals A-1 jumped out to an 8-0 on the strength of a four run 1st and a four run 3rd, then held on for a 9-6 victory. Albert Irvine’s two-run double put his club on the board in the 1st, and Rob Bennett had the big blow in the 3rd - a three-run, inside-the-park home run to cap off the inning. Dave Case collected four hits, and Brian Kelly and Keith Blazer each went 3-for-4.

Steve McCreary and Don Duggins batted .750 to power the champions. Case and Kelly chipped in with a .667 performance, and Blazer batted .600.

Hard Knocks’ player-manager Brian Kelly called McCreary a “team player” who “spreads his hits around to all fields,” said Kelly.

Kelly said that Duggins’ .750 effort was “big because he bats at the bottom of the line-up, and that kept our morale and confidence up.”

Kelly was philosophical about his team’s come-from-behind wins.

“Against Rustic Tavern we made some mental mistakes. We had a lot of opportunities and left guys on base. We were due to score some more runs,” said Kelly.

Kelly said A-1 “hit the ball and got up on top of us right away. My guys were down.

“But I got into their heads and we turned into a whole different ball team,” said Kelly. “A lot of teams couldn’t score eleven runs like that in a major tournament, but my guys play seven innings.

“They’re a good team,” added Kelly about A-1. “I respect them. They play with class. They came out on the mound and chanted our names with us after the tournament. They’re a good group of guys.

“I just hope next year we can be as competitive as this year,” said Kelly.

Winners Double-Dip Dew Drop Inn/2J Supply, 14-6 And 15-9 In Finals...

Team Effort Carries Bronson's Painting In "E" Rec Division Of EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro At Rumpke Park

By Andy Zureick

Crosby Township, Ohio – Bronson's Painting used a concerted team effort to take first place in the EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro "E" Rec Division on July 26-August 4 at Rumpke Park.

"Our team was named MVP," emphasized team manager Ron Bronson, "because that's what it took to win it...a team. It came out of everybody's mouth at the same time when asked who should be MVP."

"I've never been more proud of a group of guys than in this tournament," gushed Bronson.

The road to the championship was not without adversity as Bronson's Painting had to play most of the tournament in the loser's bracket.

Their one victory in the winner's bracket came in the opening game versus Shednecks. Four runs in the bottom of the 4th broke a 5-5 tie and put Bronson's ahead for good. The final was 12-7. Ron "PD" Bronson, Jr. was a team best 4-for-4. Mike Davis, Mike Hoskins, and Craig Risner were all 3-for-4.

Game two is where Bronson's hit a bump in the road, losing 12-6 to Deadwood Café.

They came back to score a relatively easy win over Cheviot Savings Bank Stallions. Brad Schalk put his team ahead when he singled in a run in the top of the 4th. That gave his team a 6-5 lead and they never trailed again. It ended at 10-5. Schalk and teammate Jamie Brewer were both 3-for-3. Jeff Schalk was 3-for-4.

The next game against M&S/Best Damn Sports Bar proved to be the decisive game in the tournament for Bronson's. Going into the bottom of the 7th, they trailed 6-3 and faced elimination. After managing to tie it up with three runs, Floyd Turner hit a no-outs, bases loaded fly ball over the left fielder's head to drive in the game-winning run. David Fader and Mike David both went 3-for-3 in the crucial victory.

"When we were down 6-3 going into our last at bat, we all got in a huddle and I told them to believe in each other and play as a team and they could pull it out, and they did," explained the manager. "That carried over to the next game, when we were down and came back again. After that, we played totally as a team and knew that we were going to win."

In that next game, Bronson's went into the final inning of play tied at 5-5 with Rumpke/Cincy Renegades. In that at bat, David Fader smacked a bases-loaded triple. Jeff Schalk added a double that scored two. In all, they plated eight runs to take a 13-5 lead. Rumpke/Cincy Renegades failed to match the effort in the 13-7 final. Jeff Schalk and Eric Troxel were both 3-for-4 to lead the team.

Bronson's won all of the next three games by seven or more runs.

They pounded JTM, 16-4. Jeff Schalk was 5-for-5; Floyd Turner, 4-for-4.

Next they avenged their only loss of the tournament by beating Deadwood Café, 10-3. Back-to-back doubles in the top of the 1st by Jeff Schalk and Floyd Turner put them ahead 2-0. They added runs in each of the next five innings to increase the lead to 10-3, and that is how it ended. David Fader turned in his best performance of the tournament, going 4-for-4. Jeff Schalk was again among the hitting leaders, going 3-for-4.

In the first finals versus Dew Drop Inn/2J Supply, PD Bronson put his team ahead in the top of the first with a two-run single. David Fader's base hit that scored two more in the bottom of the 6th capped a four-run inning that made it 14-5. Wayne Troxel was 3-for-3 in the 14-6 victory. David Fader, Jeff Schalk, and Floyd Turner were all 3-for-4.

The second final, again facing Dew Drop Inn/2J Supply, was more closely contested. Bronson's was playing from behind as they trailed 9-8 going into the bottom of the 5th. Jamie Brewer led that at bat off with a base on balls. David Fader then tripled to score him and tie the game. Floyd Turner singled to drive in the go-ahead run. It would prove to be the game-winning RBI. Three more in the bottom of the 6th made it 15-9 and that is how it ended since pitcher Floyd Turner tossed three scoreless innings to end the game. Wayne Troxel, Floyd Turner, and Jamie Brewer all turned in 3-for-3 performances. David Fader and PD Bronson were 3-for-4.

The top batting averages in the tournament for Bronson's were posted by Wayne Troxel, .692; Jeff Schalk, .648, PD Bronson, .621; Floyd Turner, .615; David Fader, .606; and Mike Davis, .600.

PD Bronson, Floyd Turner, Jamie Brewer, and Jeff Schalk were representatives of Bronson's on the all-tournament team.

"They really stuck in there," said Bronson of his team. "We could have folded easily after losing to Deadwood in the second game, but rallied behind each other and believed."

"You can't win one of these tournaments coming out of the loser's bracket unless you're playing as a team, and that's what we did."

"It's one of the best feelings I've ever had," concluded an elated Bronson. "They put on a class show."

Pelle's Double-Dipped, 8-1 And 13-4...

Bleser Pitches Bobcat To Three-Peat In EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro Women's "C" Division At Rumpke Park

Crosby Township, Ohio -Do the math.

With Barb Bleser on the bench in Bobcat's first two games in the Women's "C" division of the EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro Tournament July 26-August 6 at Rumpke Park, Bobcat allowed 25 runs.

The next five games, with Bleser on the mound, Bobcat allowed only fourteen runs.

That performance garnered Bleser tournament MVP honors as Bobcat rallied through the losers' bracket to capture their third straight title, as they mowed down five straight opponents and upended Pelle's 8-1 and 13-4 in the finals.

"Her effort out there in that heat earned her the Most Valuable Player award," said Bobcat manager Bernie Gierach. "Everybody on the team agreed. Even though we had some great hitting and some great defense, Barb deserved the MVP award."

Bobcat looked like two completely different teams before and after Bleser took the mound. They needed a run in the top of the 7th to outlast Rookies/D & R Concrete 8-7 in their opener, then got outslugged by Pelle's 18-14 in game two.

That's when Bleser came into to pitch. Her first accomplishment was to toss an 8-0 shutout over Harrison Bowl. Then she pitched Bobcat past Rookies 19-6, James Harrison/Kurtz & Associates 11-3 before double-dipping Pelle's 8-1 and 13-4.

Bleser's Bobcat teammates seemed to respond to her leadership both offensively and defensively. Theresa Hirschauer and Karen Kron batted .750 to lead the offense. Lisa Richter was right behind at .720, and Punky Kater chipped in with a .670 performance.

"Theresa and Karen paced the top of our lineup all the way through the tournament, and the bottom of the lineup held in there," noted Gierach. "If the bottom got on, the top was going to score them."

Hirschauer and Kron anchored the infield defense too, said Gierach.

“Karen did a great job for us at shortstop, and a big key for us this year because of an injury at 2nd base was Theresa Hirschauer. She came in and played 2nd base the whole tournament and helped turn fourteen double plays. I knew she was a great outfielder, but this was the first time she played 2nd base and she did an outstanding job,” said Gierach.

Gierach said that Lisa Richter “made a couple of key plays in left field to shut down potential big innings.”

Bobcat barely survived their first game, pushing across a run in the top of the 7th to escape with an 8-7 win over Rookies/D & R Concrete. Lisa Richter singled and scored the eventual winning run on a triple by Karen Kron. Rookies put runners on 2nd and 3rd with one out in the bottom of the 7th, but pitcher Lisa Tyler induced the next two batters to pop up to preserve the win. Kron collected four hits, and Richter and Punky Kater each went 3-for-4.

That was as far as Bobcat got in the winners’ bracket, as 2006 women’s D Metro winner Pelle’s outslugged the defending “upper” champions 18-14.

That loss brought Barb Bleser into the game, and she quickly took control, shutting out Harrison Bowl 8-0. Bobcat took an early 3-0 lead in the 1st with the help of a two-run single by Karen Kron. Lisa Richter’s two-run double in the 4th closed out the scoring at 8-0. Punky Kater banged out four hits, and Richter added three to lead the offense.

Next Bobcat mercy-ruled the Rookies 19-6 in six, breaking open a 4-2 game with a seven run 3rd. The inning featured a Karen Kron two-run double and a two-run triple by Amy Schweinefus. Schweinefus and Punky Kater combined for eight hits, and Kron and Lisa Richter added three apiece.

Bobcat brushed aside James Harrison/Kurtz & Associates 11-3 in the winners’ bracket finals. Bobcat pulled away with six runs in the bottom of the 4th to break open a 5-3 contest. Both teams were scoreless over the final three innings. Amy Schweinefus doubled home two runs, and Theresa Everman contributed a two-run triple to account for four of their clubs six runs in the 4th. Punky Kater and Theresa Hirschauer were both perfect in four at bats, and Schweinefus and Lisa Richter chipped in with three hits.

A three run 1st proved to be all the runs Bobcat would need as they avenged their loss to Pelle’s with an 8-1 victory in the first finals. Amy Schweinefus put her team on the board with a two-run double. Schweinefus came through big again in a four-run 3rd with a bases-clearing triple to push the lead to 6-1. Bobcat added one in the 4th to close out the scoring as Barb Bleser held Pelle’s at bay over the final four innings. Punky Kater, Lisa Richter and Karen Kron each went 3-for-4 to pace the winners.

Pelle’s drew first blood in the second finals, but the lead was short-lived as Bobcat plated four runs in the bottom of the 2nd. Theresa Everman put her club ahead to stay at 2-1 with an rbi single. Amy Schweinefus tripled and scored on Theresa Hirschauer’s base hit to spark a two-run 3rd. The lead ballooned to 9-1 on the strength of a three-run 4th. Finally in the 6th Bobcat erupted for four runs to seal the win. Karen Kron’s two-run double highlighted the inning. Pelle’s answered with a run in the top of the 7th to make the final 13-4. Hirschauer pounded out four hits, and Schweinefus, Kron and Lisa Richter shared nine to power the champions.

Bobcat manager Bernie Gierach said winning a third straight title was “a great feeling.

“It’s incredible,” said Gierach. “But I have to give all the credit to the girls. They walk on the field and automatically you assume they’re going to win. They don’t know how to lose. They give you everything they’ve got and you know they’re going to find a way to win.”

Gierach said the title was especially satisfying considering his club has had to rebuild this year.

“We lost five starters from last year’s team, but we found the right girls to jell with the nucleus we already had on this team, and it worked again,” said Gierach. It all came together thanks to the leadership of our veterans like Theresa Hirschauer, M. J. Ranz and Lisa Tyler, and a couple of new gals who really jelled.”

Gierach concluded by saluting his staff, fans and sponsor.

“I want to thank my two coaches, Ken and Jason, and Meagan and Robbie for keeping the stats, and our family and friends for all their support,” said Gierach. “We had more of a crowd on both sidelines of the field and in the upper deck than the men’s ‘A’ division had. We had a lot of fan base that night. Also, I want to thank Bobcat Enterprises for their continued support.”

Tourney MVP Holds Opponents To Single Digit Scoring...
Miller Pitches Drunk-N-Stuf To Title In EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro Women’s “D” Division At Rumpke Park

Crosby Township, Ohio - Melody Miller limited three opponents to single digit scoring to lead Drunk-N-Stuf to a three game sweep of the Women’s “D” division of the EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro Tournament July 26-August 6 at Rumpke Park.

Miller allowed only 17 runs as her club mowed down Kupper Computers 7-3, T. I. Racing 22-8 and Rumpke CI 8-6 en route to the title.

“Melody was consistently stellar with her pitching and fielding up the middle for the entire tournament,” commented Drunk-N-Stuf player-manager Donna Schweer. “She did an outstanding job helping bring us the championship.”

Offensively, Marci Walicki turned in a blistering .846 average for the tournament. Tina Justice followed at .777, Lori Strunk batted .769, Stacey Blair .723, Melody Miller and Jill Young .692, and Schweer batted .667. Karen and ReNee Nickell and Carrie Hess-Wilson also exceeded the .600 mark.

“Everybody did their part and played their role,” summed up Donna Schweer. “Sarah Duesing had to miss the last game, and Christy Bien was injured but did some great base coaching. We had a great team effort offensively and defensively.

“We’re all good friends and have played together for years,” said Schweer. “After a big of a struggle this year in league play, it was incredible to pull it together and win the Metro.”

Drunk-N-Stuf used a three run 2nd and a three run 5th to take a 7-2 lead, then went on to dispose of Kupper Computers 7-3 in the opener. Christy Bien’s rbi double capped off the 2nd. A two-run double by Marci Walicki highlighted the 5th. Walicki banged out four hits, and ReNee Nickell added three for the winners.

Next Drunk-N-Stuf and T. I. Racing combined to explode for 23 runs over the last two innings as the eventual champions rolled in a 22-8 rout. Drunk-N-Stuf nursed a 5-2 lead through five, then erupted for seven runs on the strength of a Marci Walicki slammer. T. I. Racing answered with six, but Drunk-N-Stuf blew the game open with ten in the 7th to seal the win. The inning featured a Jill Young two-run double.

Melody Miller pounded out five hits, and Tina Justice and Karen Nickell each went 4-for-5.

In the finals, Drunk-N-Stuf grabbed an early 4-0 lead in the top of the 1st, then added a run in the 3rd and two in the 5th to build a 7-2 lead before Rumpke CI rallied for four runs over the last two innings before succumbing 8-6. ReNee Nickell doubled leading off the 1st and scored on a Marci Walicki triple to put her club on the board. Tina Justice followed with a single to plate Walicki and make it 2-0. In Drunk-N-Stuf’s two-run 5th, Luanne Smith and Carrie Hess-Wilson each delivered a key rbi single. Drunk-N-Stuf twice denied Rumpke from scoring with the bases loaded.

Marci Walicki collected four hits to power the champions.

July 31-August 5 Mid-Summer Championship...

Moore, Williams Lead Ice Softball To 7th Wayne Rust Memorial-Mid-Summer Championship Platinum "Title" Title At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--Reuben Moore hit a sizzling .833 with five home runs and fifteen rbi's, while pitcher Mike Williams held four of five elimination round opponents to five runs or less, to lead Ice Softball to a first place finish in the "Platinum" division of the 7th Annual Wayne Rust Memorial-Mid-Summer Championship July 31-August 5 at Expressway Park.

Ice Softball outlasted the Dirty Birds 8-5 in the second championship game to secure the title. Dirty Birds had forced an "if" game by ambushing Ice Softball 12-11 in the first finals.

Defense, pitching, and the offensive punch supplied by Reuben Moore carried Ice Softball to the title, according to player-coach Brad Ballinger.

"Our defense was the key," said Ballinger. "Our outfield is pretty quick and gets a lot of balls other teams can't.

"And Mike Williams did a great job on the mound," added Ballinger. "In our first three games he only gave up three runs in each game, and in the game we lost, we made errors and didn't give him a good defensive effort. Then in the championship game he only gave up five runs. He pitched out of a lot of jams."

Ballinger called Moore "a heckuva hitter with a lot of power.

"He got hurt in the game we lost and only batted twice there, and he didn't play in the championship game. But he's our big hitter."

Defensively, Ballinger said that Williams and 1st baseman Isaac Barr anchored the defense in the infield, and Adam Conover and Aaron Chase in the outfield.

"Mike made a couple nice plays on the mound, and Isaac made some nice plays at 1st base," said Ballinger. "Adam is our left centerfielder and he's really quick and gets to a lot of balls. And Aaron is our right fielder and he made a really nice catch running into the fence down the right field line."

Following Moore's team high .833 average were Adam Chase at .679, Jeremy Lansing at .588, Brad Ballinger at .562, and John Mulvihill and Isaac Barr at .500.

In pool play, Ice Softball overpowered Clermont Softball 18-3 and A. T. Excavating 19-8, then outslugged Cincinnati Diamondbacks 26-24.

Then Ice Softball used a staunch defense to mow down JB's 8-3, Jet GT 15-3 and Dirty Birds 13-3 to sweep into the finals.

After JB's drew first blood with a pair of runs in the top of the 1st, Ice Softball answered with three, taking a 3-2 lead on a Jeremy Lansing two-run shot. Ice added one in the 2nd and three in the 5th to take a 7-3 lead. John Mulvihill's rbi double capped off the 5th. Lansing banged out three hits for the winners.

Ice Softball used an eight run 3rd to blow open a 3-1 contest and never looked back in a 15-3, 5 inning rout of Jet GT in game two. Reuben Moore's two-run blast ignited the scoring in the 3rd. Isaac Barr and Mike Williams each contributed a two-run single. Moore was a one man wrecking crew, swatting three home runs and collecting six rbi's. He shared nine hits with Jeremy Burton and Brad Ballinger.

Next Ice mercy-ruled Dirty Birds 13-3 on the strength of a five run 2nd and a five run 4th. Dirty Birds took a 3-1 lead after an inning and a half, but in the bottom of the 2nd Ice plated five runs to grab a 6-3 lead. John Mulvihill's rbi single put his club ahead to stay at 4-3. Jeremy Lansing singled in two runs in the 4th as the lead swelled to 11-3. Reuben Moore's walk-off, two-run homer in the bottom of the 5th brought the curtain down. Lansing and Moore combined for six hits to power the offense.

Dirty Birds then ambushed Ice Softball 12-11 in the first finals, but Ice never trailed in the second after putting up two runs in the top of the 1st on Jeremy Lansing's rbi single and Jeremy Burton's ground out. Aaron Chase singled home a run in the 2nd to make it 3-1, then Ice pulled away with four runs in the top of the 3rd. Isaac Barr tripled home three runs, then scored on Brad Ballinger's sac fly. Dirty Birds cut the deficit to 7-5 before Jeremy Burton singled home the final run of the game in the top of the 7th. Mike Williams shut down Dirty Birds in the bottom of the inning to preserve the victory.

Barr pounded out three hits for the champions.

Clark Pitches Creative Point To 7th Wayne Rust Memorial-Mid-Summer Championship Gold "Title" Title At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--Jimmy Clark limited his team's final three opponents to single digit scoring and held finalist Airtight Plumbing scoreless over the final three innings of both the winners' bracket finals and finals to help Creative Point capture first place in the "Gold" division of the 7th Annual Wayne Rust Memorial-Mid-Summer Championship July 31-August 5 at Expressway Park.

Clark's ability to shut down Airtight twice in the 5th, 6th and 7th innings proved critical to his club in both games. In the winners' bracket finals, Creative Point nursed a 9-8 lead from the bottom of the 4th until they added a pair of insurance runs in the 6th to make the final 11-8. Then in the finals, after Airtight jumped out to a 5-0 lead in the bottom of the 1st, Clark held them to a lone 4th inning run while his club chipped away at the lead, finally going ahead 8-6 with two runs in the top of the 7th.

"He did an outstanding job throughout the tournament," said player-manager Chris Clark of his team's pitcher. "Obviously he had that 3-0 shutout and consistently got us back in the dugout, and he fielded his position outstanding, and he always gave us a chance to make a play."

Defense was the key to winning the tournament, said Clark.

"We had some low scoring games, and we only had one home run, so the key would have to be defense. And if I had to pick an MVP, it would probably be Chris Bonnell. He played shortstop and saved a lot of base runners and a lot of runs," said Clark.

Creative's standout in the outfield was Paul Kreiner,, said Clark. "He tracked everything down for us in left field."

Offensively, Jimmy Clark led the way with a .667 average. Rob Reed followed at .600, Carl Coldway batted .545 and Kreiner .533.

"Jimmy came up and hit the ball every time," said Chris Clark of his team's offensive leader. "Rob Reed did the same. He was always there when we needed a hit."

After battling past round robin opponents Ferrari's 4-3, Express 5-4 and Dairy Queen/Navy 16-12, Creative rallied for six runs in the bottom of the 6th to stun Arsenal 15-11 in game one of the elimination round. An rbi single by Paul Kreiner put his club ahead to stay at 12-11. Later in the inning Jason Neal cracked a three run homer - Creative's only four-bagger of the week - to close out the scoring. Kreiner collected four hits to pace the offense.

Next pitcher Jimmy Clark tossed a 3-0 shutout win over K & K. An rbi single by Jason Neal in the 4th, one by Larry Prine in the 5th and another by Kenny Evans in the 6th accounted for Creative's three tallies. Prine banded out three hits, and Clark, Evans and Paul Kreiner each went 2-for-3.

In the winners' bracket finals, Creative used a five run 3rd to overcome a 6-4 deficit against Airtight Plumbing. Airtight answered with two runs in the top of the 4th and Creative plated two in the 6th to make the final score 11-8. Chris Clark's two-run single put his club ahead to stay at 7-6. Shawn Farley's rbi single capped off the inning. Farley and Jimmy Clark combined for six hits.

Airtight jumped out to a 5-0 lead in the bottom of the 1st in the finals, but pitcher Jimmy Clark held them to a lone 4th inning run thereafter while Creative battled back. Finally in the top of the 7th, Creative pushed across two runs on an rbi single by Chris Clark and a Cecil Johnson sac fly. Jimmy Clark held Airtight at bay in the bottom of the inning to preserve the win.

Jimmy Clark and Rob Reed shared six hits to lead the champions.

"This really isn't a seasoned tournament team," commented Creative Point manager Chris Clark following his club's victory. "We don't go out every weekend and play. We went out with our heads up every inning and kept swinging the bat and scoring runs."

Getting past Arsenal after trailing up until their final at bat in game one proved pivotal, said Clark.

"We had that big inning when we were trailing 11-9 in the bottom of the 6th, and that goes to show anything can happen. You just have to get up and swing the bat," said Clark.

Fitch Singles Coaches Crew Past Tom Brate In 7th Wayne Rust Memorial-Mid-Summer Championship "Silver" Finals At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--Scott Fitch's two-run, two-out single in the bottom of the 5th gave Coaches Crew an eventual 12-11 victory over Tom Brate Trucking in the championship game of the "Silver" division of the 7th Annual Wayne Rust Memorial-Mid-Summer Championship July 31-August 5 at Expressway Park.

Tom Brate, which had forced the tournament to its limit by slapping a 13-8 loss on Coaches Crew in the first championship game, had just taken an 11-7 lead in the second finals after scoring six runs in the top of the 5th.

But Coaches Crew answered with five runs to re-take the lead, then held Tom Brate scoreless over the final two innings to preserve the win.

The victory gave Coaches Crew a 5-1 record in the tournament's elimination round and an overall 8-1 mark for the tournament.

Defense was key, said player-manager Steve Dallas.

"We only gave up more than ten runs twice in the tournament," said Dallas. "So our defense really helped us out. Also, we scored a lot of runs early," noted Dallas.

Jeff Howell compiled a hefty .620 average to pace the offense.

"He definitely hit well and he played really good defense at short too," said Dallas.

Dallas turned in a .600 performance, Brad Stelzer batted .555, and Adam Greathouse and Wayne Lung chipped in with a .500 effort.

Defensively, Dallas said that infielders Howell and Greathouse, and outfielders Stelzer, Joe Renois and T. J. Lung.

“Jeff and Adam definitely had the left side covered,” said Dallas. “The whole infield played really well.

“And Brad played really well in left-center, Joe played a solid left field and T. J. Lung played a really good right field,” he added.

After mowing down CPM 11-10, Coldiron’s Crushers 8-4 and Silver Springhouse Dogs 11-6 in round robin play, Coaches Crew outlasted Team Fox 11-10 in their elimination round opener. The winners never trailed after putting up six runs in the bottom of the 1st. A Wayne Lung three-run blast capped off the inning. Coaches Crew added three in the 3rd and then two in the 4th on a Joe Renois homer. Mike Urley banged out four hits in the win.

Next Coaches Crew used a five run 1st, a five run 2nd and a six run 3rd to stun Tom Brate Trucking 16-1 in four. Adam Greathouse tripled home two runs in the 1st, then launched a three-run shot in the 2nd. Jeff Howell’s bases-loaded double highlighted the 3rd. Greathouse and Steve Dallas were both perfect in three at bats.

Bad Habitz/BW-3 fell next 12-5 as Coaches Crew plated four runs in each of the first two innings, then added two in the 3rd and two in the 5th. Sean Brehm accounted for five runs in the first two innings with a three-run 2b in the 1st and a two-run homer in the 2nd. Scott Fitch’s two-run single capped off the 5th.

Adam Greathouse and Sam Lawson combined for six hits.

Coaches Crew escaped with a 9-8 victory over Cleveland Construction in the winners’ bracket finals. A two-run double by Jeff Howell put his club ahead to stay in the 2nd at 6-4. Coaches Crew added one in the 3rd and two in the 4th to open up a five run advantage, but Cleveland stormed back with four in the 6th, then a leadoff triple in the 7th put them in position to knot the score. But pitcher Steve Dallas retired the next batter on a grounder back to the mound, then Adam Greathouse made a spectacular diving catch at 3rd to record the 2nd out, and a fly ball to left ended the threat.

Brad Stelzer collected four hits to pace the winners.

Tom Brate then ambushed Coaches Crew 13-8 to force an “if” game, and was poised to complete a double-dipping after erupting for six runs in the top of the 5th to take an 11-7 lead. But Coaches Crew answered with five runs, scoring two on Mike Urley’s double to make it 11-9, another run on Steve Dallas’ rbi single, then the tying and go-ahead runs on a clutch, two-out single by Scott Fitch. Steve Dallas held Tom Brate scoreless over the next two innings to preserve the win. Jeff Howell went 3-for-3 to lead the offense.

Late Scoring Lifts X-Force To 7th Wayne Rust Memorial-Mid-Summer Championship “Bronze” Title At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--X-Force won three of their four elimination round games in their final at bat en route to a first place finish in the “Bronze” division of the 7th Annual Wayne Rust Memorial-Mi-Summer Championship July 31-August 5 at Expressway Park.

X-Force polished off Richard Industries 15-5 in the championship game to complete a four game sweep of the elimination round and wrap up a 7-0 overall effort. They went 3-0 in pool play during the week prior to a double elimination round.

No one could have been more surprised at X-Force’s success than the team itself.

“We entered without a whole lot of expectations,” commented X-Force manager Joe Bryant. After all, we were 3-13 in league play on Tuesday night at Expressway. To get into this thing and win it was the furthest thing from our minds. We were just looking for an opportunity to play a few extra games as the season was drawing to an end. It was the first tournament we had ever played in.”

Pitching and defense were the keys to winning the tournament, said Bryant.

“Will Hendrickson pitched great, and the defense was flawless as usual, especially in the middle where Larry Weaver (ss) and Dave Harris (2b) made numerous big plays to get out of innings. Ron Kennedy (rf) and Dan King (1b) both contributed to the pool play but were unable to make it for the weekend games.”

Ken Korfhagen hit a sizzling .678 to lead the offense. Josh Gill followed right behind at .652, Jeff Spiker and Joe Bryant batted .600, Jay Hubbard hit .588, Dave Marischen .560 and Joey Bryant .535.

In the elimination round opener, Jeff Spiker drilled a two-out triple into the leftcenterfield gap, then scored on Dave Morrison’s base hit to left to give X-Force a 14-13 victory over Off Constantly in the bottom of the 7th. Spiker banged out four hits, and Josh Gill added three for the winners.

Next X-Force exploded for eight runs in the top of the 8th and outlasted Matlock Electric 16-10 for win number two. Jay Hubbard’s two-run single put his club ahead to stay for good at 10-8. Jeff Spiker followed with another two-run single, and Josh Gill singled in two runs to cap off the inning.

Ken Korfhagen pounded out five hits, and Dave and Joe Marischen and Rob Baxter combined for twelve.

In the winners’ bracket finals X-Force came alive in the late innings again, this time scoring three runs in the bottom of the 6th to break a 5-5 tie and pull out an 8-5 win over Roush Inc. Pitcher Will Hendrickson held Roush scoreless in the 7th to preserve the win.

Bryant and Jeff Spiker shared six hits.

X-Force broke open a scoreless finals with six runs in the top of the 3rd, then added one in the 4th and five in the 5th to seal an eventual 15-5 rout of Richard Industries. Joey Bryant and Mark Vestring teamed up for back-to-back triples to lead off the 3rd. Josh Gill followed with an rbi single to make it 2-0. Later in the inning Ken Korfhagen singled home two runs as the lead swelled to 5-0. Korfhagen and Joe Bryant each delivered a two-run single to account for four of the five runs in the 5th.

Joey Bryant collected four hits, and Joe Bryant, Rob Baxter, Jay Hubbard and Mark Vestring each went 3-for-4 to power the champions.

X-Force manager Joe Bryant said his team would not have been the usual suspects to win the tournament.

“Who would have thought that a team with a 54-year old shortstop, a 63-year old catcher, and an infield whose combined age was in excess of 290 years would have won this tournament,” said Bryant. “Well, that’s why they play the game.”

Clark Pitches Creative Point To 7th Wayne Rust Memorial-Mid-Summer Championship “Title” Title At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--Jimmy Clark limited his team’s final three opponents to single digit scoring and held finalist Airtight Plumbing scoreless over the final three innings of both the winners’ bracket finals and finals to help Creative Point capture first place in the “Gold” division of the 7th Annual Wayne Rust Memorial-Mid-Summer Championship July 31-August 5 at Expressway Park.

Clark’s ability to shut down Airtight twice in the 5th, 6th and 7th innings proved critical to his club in both games. In the winners’ bracket finals, Creative Point nursed a 9-8 lead from the bottom of the 4th until they added a pair of insurance runs in the 6th to make the final 11-8. Then in the finals, after Airtight jumped out to a 5-0 lead in the bottom of the 1st, Clark held them to a lone 4th inning run while his club chipped away at the lead, finally going ahead 8-6 with two runs in the top of the 7th.

“He did an outstanding job throughout the tournament,” said player-manager Chris Clark of his team’s pitcher. “Obviously he had that 3-0 shutout and consistently got us back in the dugout, and he fielded his position outstanding, and he always gave us a chance to make a play.”

Defense was the key to winning the tournament, said Clark.

“We had some low scoring games, and we only had one home run, so the key would have to be defense. And if I had to pick an MVP, it would probably be Chris Bonnell. He played shortstop and saved a lot of base runners and a lot of runs,” said Clark.

Creative’s standout in the outfield was Paul Kreiner,, said Clark. “He tracked everything down for us in left field.”

Offensively, Jimmy Clark led the way with a .667 average. Rob Reed followed at .600, Carl Coldway batted .545 and Kreiner .533.

“Jimmy came up and hit the ball every time,” said Chris Clark of his team’s offensive leader. “Rob Reed did the same. He was always there when we needed a hit.”

After battling past round robin opponents Ferrari’s 4-3, Express 5-4 and Dairy Queen/Navy 16-12, Creative rallied for six runs in the bottom of the 6th to stun Arsenal 15-11 in game one of the elimination round. An rbi single by Paul Kreiner put his club ahead to stay at 12-11. Later in the inning Jason Neal cracked a three run homer - Creative’s only four-bagger of the week - to close out the scoring. Kreiner collected four hits to pace the offense.

Next pitcher Jimmy Clark tossed a 3-0 shutout win over K & K. An rbi single by Jason Neal in the 4th, one by Larry Prine in the 5th and another by Kenny Evans in the 6th accounted for Creative’s three tallies. Prine banged out three hits, and Clark, Evans and Paul Kreiner each went 2-for-3.

In the winners’ bracket finals, Creative used a five run 3rd to overcome a 6-4 deficit against Airtight Plumbing. Airtight answered with two runs in the top of the 4th and Creative plated two in the 6th to make the final score 11-8. Chris Clark’s two-run single put his club ahead to stay at 7-6. Shawn Farley’s rbi single capped off the inning. Farley and Jimmy Clark combined for six hits.

Airtight jumped out to a 5-0 lead in the bottom of the 1st in the finals, but pitcher Jimmy Clark held them to a lone 4th inning run thereafter while Creative battled back. Finally in the top of the 7th, Creative pushed across two runs on an rbi single by Chris Clark and a Cecil Johnson sac fly. Jimmy Clark held Airtight at bay in the bottom of the inning to preserve the win.

Jimmy Clark and Rob Reed shared six hits to lead the champions.

“This really isn’t a seasoned tournament team,” commented Creative Point manager Chris Clark following his club’s victory. “We don’t go out every weekend and play. We went out with our heads up every inning and kept swinging the bat and scoring runs.”

Getting past Arsenal after trailing up until their final at bat in game one proved pivotal, said Clark.

“We had that big inning when we were trailing 11-9 in the bottom of the 6th, and that goes to show anything can happen. You just have to get up and swing the bat,” said Clark.

August 4-5...

Pope, Boltman, Wilson Power Meissner’s Insurance Past 10th Annual Women’s Corn Boil Field At Central Turners

Colerain Township, Oh.--Nancy Pope hit a sizzling .600, and Ali Boltman and Crystal Wilson batted .588 to power Meissner's Insurance to a first place finish in the 10th Annual Women's Corn Boil Tournament August 4th at Cincinnati Central Turners.

Meissner's rallied from a second round 11-9 setback to Hart Environmental to mercy-rule their final two opponents, Side Room 17-6 and R & D Decorating 18-5, both in five innings. Meissner's also owned an 8-0 shutout victory over Mt. Healthy Store & Lock in their opener.

Mt. Healthy, Hart and Side Room finished tied for second in the five team, round robin affair with 2-2 records. R & D was last with a 1-3 mark.

"Consistent hitting and solid defense" carried Meissner's Insurance to the title, according to manager Becky Doak. Also, said Doak, Meissner's boasts two effective pitchers.

"Sara Bornick is consistent, and keeps us in the game," said Doak. "But we have a good combination, and if one struggles, the other comes in and gets the job done."

Boornick tossed the 8-0 shutout victory over Mt. Healthy in game one.

Defensively, Doak said that infielder Crystal Wilson "is always solid at shortstop," and that outfielder Steph Rowland "is willing to dive after the ball and doesn't miss in left field.

"She's a strong player out there," praised Doak.

Doak said that Nancy Pope is a "good hitter" and she was "not surprised" pope led the team in hitting with a hefty .600 effort.

Doak said Ali Boltman is the team's leadoff hitter and called her "very consistent." And Crystal Wilson, said Doak, "is our number three hitter and she can hit for power and average and hits for a high average in every tournament."

Meissner's used a four run 1st and a four run 4th to dispose of Mt. Healthy Store & Lock 8-0 in game one behind the shutout pitching of Sara Bornick. Crystal Wilson accounted for half of her team's runs with a two-run double in the 1st and a two-run single in the 2nd. Wilson shared nine hits with Steph Rowland and Becky Doak.

Hart Environmental quickly soiled Meissner's record with an 11-9 ambush in game two, but Meissner's roared back to mercy-rule their next two opponents to claim the title.

First they overpowered Side Room 17-6 in five, jumping out to a 13-2 lead after two and a half innings and never looking back. A Gail Riehl two-run single put the eventual winners on the board in a four run 1st. Meissner's extended their lead to 8-2 in the 2nd, then put the game away with a five-run 3rd. Tay Mitchell tripled to spark the inning, then scored on an Ali Boltman two-run home run.

Riehl and Boltman banged out four hits each, and Mitchell and Janae Chaney went 2-for-3.

In the finale Nancy Pope pounded out four hits, and Mary Ellen Menzer, Tay Mitchell and Janae Chaney combined for nine in an 18-5, five inning rout of R & D Decorating. R & D drew first blood with two runs in the top of the 1st, but R & D answered with four and never relinquished the lead thereafter. Mary Ellen Menzer's rbi single put her team ahead for good at 3-2. Meissner's lead swelled to 11-5 after four, then in the bottom of the 5th, they erupted for seven runs to seal the win. Steph Rowland singled home two runs to spark the rally. Later in the inning Janae Chaney's rbi single closed out the scoring.

Final Standings: Meissner's Insurance 3-1, Side Room 2-2, Mt. Healthy Store & Lock 2-2, Hart Environmental 2-2, R & D Decorating 1-3.

Kodiacs, Bitter Rivals Sweep At Kolping Park

Mt. Healthy, Oh.--Kodiacs and Bitter Rivals swept undefeated past three opponents to capture their respective divisions in an eight team, two division round robin on Saturday night, August 4th at Kolping Park.

Kodiacs outscored their opponents by a combined 48-16 margin, mowing down CCC (1-2) 16-4, The Buckeyes (0-3) 19-9, and Village Boyz (2-1) 13-3 to claim the division one title.

Meanwhile in division two, Bitter Rivals averaged just under 19 runs per game to overpower Diamond Jaxx (1-2) 22-2, Pacific Manufacturing (0-3) 16-10 and 513 Boyz (2-1) 18-4.

August 11-12...

“Game Shape” B & A/EAP Overpowers EMR Group/ASA 35-Over Metro “Upper” Field At Rumpke Park

Crosby Township, Oh.--“Fresh” and “game shape” were the keywords as B & A/EAP overpowered three opponents to capture first place in the “upper” division of the EMR Group/ASA 35-Over Cincinnati Metro Tournament August 11th at Rumpke Park.

B & A/EAP out-slugged Superior Restoration 20-16, then mercy-ruled House Rules 19-5 in the winners’ bracket finals before polishing off House Rules again in the finals, 13-2.

“The biggest key is we carried sixteen guys and rotated guys in and kept them fresh,” said B & A/EAP manager Andy Baker. “When you’re playing 35-over and it’s hot, you can keep running the bases because you’re fresh, and that was a huge key. Other teams got tired, we didn’t get tired.”

Also, pointed out Baker, “we were pretty much in game shape.

“We were playing against some players who were some pretty good players, but they’re no longer in game shape,” explained Baker. “We put together two teams that combined eight players that played together a lot this summer and that helped us out. We were in shape from playing a couple of tournaments a month. We were sharp. We didn’t miss a beat.”

Staying in the winners’ bracket also kept B & A/EAP fresh, acknowledged Baker.

“Winning two games and then sitting down for the third one was a key also. House rules had to stay on the field,” noted Baker.

Andy Dyer was a perfect 1.000 (8-for-8) to pace the offense. Tom Harmon followed at .786, Dave Sault batted .692 and Joe Penwell and Terry Jackson .667.

As a team, B & A hit .655 for the day.

“Andy was hitting the ball really good,” commented Baker. “He’s a good ball player and a good hitter. He was on a roll. My hat’s off to him...he had a good tournament.”

Harmon was voted team MVP, said Baker.

“He played shortstop all day long and went 11-for-14. I never pulled him out of any of the games.”

B & A/EAP’s other players were given a rest.

“The guys didn’t mind sharing time. It just worked out great,” said Baker.

B & A/EAP jumped out to an 11-0 lead in the top of the 1st against Superior Restoration in game one, then fended off a late Superior charge to win 20-16. Joe Penwell clubbed a two-run homer, Dave Soult contributed a three-run blast, and Scott Vollrath and Tommy Harmon solo shots in the eleven run 1st. Soult added another home run in a four-run 4th to help push the lead back up to nine at 17-8 after Superior cut had cut it to five.

Soult, Andy Dyer and Steve Schon combined for twelve hits, and Tom Harmon, Terry Jackson, Joe Penwell and Scott Vollrath each went 3-for-5 to lead the winners.

Next B & A used a four run 2nd to overcome a 4-2 deficit, then added seven in the 3rd to pull away to a 13-5 lead en route to a 19-5 spanking of House Rules. A two-run single by Tommy Harmon put his club ahead to stay in the 2nd at 5-4. Shawn Mesmore launched a two-run homer in the 3rd and Dave Soult belted his third round-tripper to drive in three runs.

Harmon collected five hits, Dave Soult added four, and Andy Dyer, Terry Jackson, Scott Vollrath and Steve Schon shared a dozen hits.

B & A put House Rules away early in the finals, erupting for eight runs in the top of the first and never looking back. Dave Soult's leadoff solo got his team on the scoreboard, and Steve Schon followed with a two-run swat to make it 3-0. Two-run singles by Shawn Mesmore and Shawn Jackson capped off the scoring.

Schon, Mesmore, Joe Penwell and Tom Harmon banged out three hits each to power the champions.

"I enjoyed coaching with Rob and Rob from EAP," remarked B & A/EAP's Andy Baker. "They won two Metros, so it was a good week for EAP."

Rutz Pitches Cincysoftball.com/Cooper Sports To EMR Group/ASA 35-Over Metro "Lower" Title At Rumpke Park

Crosby Township, Oh.--Don "Rufus" Rutz limited three opponents to a combined ten runs to pitch Cincysoftball.com/Cooper Sports to a first place finish in the "lower" division of the EMR Group/-ASA 35-Over Cincinnati Metro Tournament August 11th at Rumpke Park.

Cincysoftball.com/Cooper Sports sandwiched two mercy-rule wins - an opening round 19-1 rout of Cargill and a 21-1 spanking of Cooper Sports - around a 13-8 victory over Shannon Tool en route to the title.

Cincysoftball.com was led by Co-MVP's Rufus and John Lawwill.

"Don pitched three excellent games only giving up ten runs and he allowed no walks," pointed out manager Andy Larkins.

"John went 10-for-11 (.909) and had four home runs and fourteen rbi's. Every time we needed a big hit to take control of the game with either hit a home run or a base hit, he provided it."

Other hitting leaders included Heath Northcutt (.800), Jeff Sunberg (.727), Steve Kroger (.667), Ron Baird (.636) and Sean Walters (.545).

Larkins attributed his club's victory to "chemistry.

"Because we all knew each other so well, we snapped together perfectly," said Larkins. "Everybody has either played together or against each other for the last ten years. Everybody knew each other, so it was very easy to build this team."

Defensively, Larkins said infielder Gary Macke was stellar.

“Gary made several diving plays at short to get us at least an out on the play, and he didn’t make any errors and led the team in hitting. He’s a natural at shortstop.”

Cincysoftball.com/Cooper Sports grabbed an early lead with a six run 1st, then put the game away with four in the 4th and eight in the 5th to overpower Cargill 19-1 in five innings in game one. A two-run single by Gary Macke followed by a two-run homer by John Lawwill provided most of the offense in the 1st. Steve Kroger had a bases-loaded double to close out the scoring in the 5th.

Lawwill and Chris Soldano banged out three hits each to pace the offense.

Chris Soldano’s rbi triple followed by a Bill Koenig single enabled Cincysoftball.com to break a 6-6 tie in the top of the 3rd in game two. John Lawwill cracked a two-run homer in the 4th to push the lead to 10-7. Ron Baird’s key two-run double highlighted a three-run 7th and closed out the scoring at 13-8.

Lawwill, Heath Northcutt and Jeff Sunberg combined for nine hits for the winners.

A six run 1st followed by a thirteen run 2nd sealed a 21-1 win over Cooper Sports in the finals. Chris Soldano’s two-run shot was the big blow in the 1st. John Lawwill’s slammer made it 10-0 in the 2nd. A two-run Heath Northcutt base hit capped off the inning.

John Lawwill clinched MVP honors with four hits, and Northcutt and Jeff Sunberg each went 3-for-4.

Cincysoftball.com manager Andy Larkins said his team “never trailed” and the win “is the first 35-over title for everybody on this roster.

“Several of us have been runners-up on prior teams, so that was fun,” said Larkins.

Murphy, Hopkins Lead Winners “One Game At A Time...”

Pitching, Defense Carry Good Guys/GBI To Kentucky USSSA “D” State Title At Northern Kentucky Sports Park

Taylor Mill, Ky. - Rallying behind the pitching of Doug Murphy and the defense and hitting of tournament MVP Brent Hopkins, Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati overcame a first round setback to mow down seven straight opponents en route to a first place finish in the Kentucky USSSA “C” State Tournament August 11-12 at Northern Kentucky Sports Park.

Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati outlasted 2006 State Tournament runner-up Two-N-Out.com 10-9 in a nine inning championship game. Brent Hopkins’ bases loaded sac fly plated pinch-runner Chaz Goetz with the game winner in the bottom of the 9th. The Good Guys had forced an “if” game with a 7-2 victory in the first finals.

Pitching, defense, and the overall play of Brent Hopkins carried Good Guys/GBI to the title, said acting manager Brian Sandlin.

“As always, Doug (Murphy) is one of the best pitchers in the area. It doesn’t matter what level he’s playing,” remarked Sandlin.

Murphy held eight straight Good Guys’ opponents to single digit scoring.

Utility man Seff Setters and outfielder Brent Hopkins anchored the defense, said Sandlin.

“Jeff played everywhere for us - up the middle, 3rd base, and in the outfield. He’s very versatile. He played standup defense for us in the infield, and if somebody needs a break, he can spot you in the outfield,” said Sandlin.

Sandlin said he’d take Brent Hopkins in centerfield “all day long over anybody.

“He can absolutely fly,” said Sandlin. “He’s one of the fastest guys I’ve ever seen out there and has an outstanding arm. He cuts balls off that otherwise would go to the fence and holds guys to singles.

“For hitting as well as he did, and manning centerfield as well as he did, he was by far our MVP for the weekend,” said Sandlin.

Hopkins went 21-for-29 to pace his club offensively with a robust .724 average. All-State selections Scott Goetz followed at .687, Brian Stevenson hit .643, and Sandlin .629.

After falling to 2006 State Champion Best Way Frame/Nasty Boys 3-1 in game one, the Good Guys mowed down five teams to reach the finals, never allowing one opponent closer than seven runs.

First they brushed aside the Renegades 12-3, taking control early with three in the 1st, four in the 2nd and three in the 3rd to grab a 10-2 lead. Brian Sandlin put his club on the scoreboard with a two-run single in the 1st. Brent Hopkins drove in two runs with a base hit in the 2nd, and Adam Carr contributed a two-run single in the 3rd. Hopkins collected three hits for the contest.

The Good Guys didn’t shake free from a pesky Schultz Builders squad until the 5th, when they erupted for eight runs to break a 6-6 tie. Brian Stevenson singled to drive in the go-ahead run. Brian Goebel singled in two runs and Jeff Setters bases-loaded triple capped off the inning. Goebel banged out four hits, and Brent Hopkins and Doug Murphy went 3-for-4 to lead the winners.

Mazak fell next 19-7 in five innings. A seven run 1st featured two-run singles by Brian Sandlin, Brian Goebel and Nick Bibbins. Mazak only trailed by four, 11-7, after four, but in the top of the 5th, Good Guys/GBI sealed the deal with an eight run outburst. Ryan Hays had a two-run double to start the scoring off, and Brian Stevenson a two-run double to cap off the inning. Brent Hopkins and Chaz Goetz were both perfect in four at bats, and Sandlin, Jeff Setters and Scott Goetz chipped in three hits apiece.

Good Guys/GBI avenged their first round loss with a 13-3 spanking of Best Way/Nasty Boys in game four. The winners batted around in the 1st to take a 6-0 lead, and later put up four runs in the 4th to blow open an 8-3 game. Scott Goetz singled home the first run of the game, and Andy Birkenhauer’s single capped off the inning. Brian Sandlin had an inside-the-park home run in the 2nd. Then in the 4th, a pair of two-run singles - one by Scott Goetz and the other by Nick Bibbins - made it 12-3. Ryan Hays and Brent Hopkins shared six hits.

The Good Guys broke on top of Dino’s/Young Guns 5-1 in the bottom of the 1st in the losers’ bracket finals, then pulled away to a 15-6 lead with four runs in the bottom of the 6th. Brian Sandlin’s two-run double broke a 1-1 tie in the bottom of the 1st. Adam Carr had a big rbi triple in the 6th and scored on Scott Goetz’ bingle. Carr, Goetz, Brent Hopkins and Brian Stevenson combined for a dozen hits.

That lifted the Good Guys into the first finals, where they used a five-run 3rd to break open a 1-1 contest in an eventual 7-2 victory over Two-N-Out.com. The Good Guys plated all five runs with two outs, scoring on a triple by Brent Hopkins, a single by Scott Goetz, a double by Brian Sandlin, and a two-run double by Brian Goebel. Sandlin collected three hits in the game.

The championship game took nine innings to decide. Doug Murphy’s leadoff double in the bottom of the 9th spelled doom for Two-N-Out.com. An intentional pass to Adam Carr and Rob Feldman’s single loaded the bases. Then, after Chaz Goetz was inserted at 3rd to run for Murphy, Brent Hopkins came through with a sac fly to leftcenter to score Goetz.

Brian Stevenson pounded out four hits, and Brian Sandlin added three for the champions.

Sandlin said his team was never phased after suffering the early loss to Best Way.

“After losing the first game, we decided we were just going to play one game at a time and play as hard as we could for that one game,” said Sandlin. “That was kinda rough losing 3-1, but we knew we were going to play a whole lot better than that.”

Groundtexx Champs Of Cincinnati World Series Of Softball USSSA D-E State-National Qualifier At Pastime

By Andy Zureick

Harrison, Ohio – Groundtexx went a perfect 5-0 to take first place in the Cincinnati World Series of Softball USSSA D-E State-National Qualifier at Pastime Park on August 11th.

Groundtexx opened the tournament by grinding through round robin play. In the first game they topped Nappy Dugout 10-4. They followed that with what would be their toughest game of the event, an 8-6 narrow escaped of REMAX/TBR.

From that point on, Groundtexx caught fire, barely breaking a sweat en route to the championship.

In game one of the elimination round, Groundtexx took on Youngbloods. Tom Taulbee singled in a run in the bottom of the 3rd to break a 3-3 tie. At the end of the inning, Groundtexx had a 6-3 lead. Scott Hummel and Will Henke tacked on a pair of two-run doubles in the 4th to help push the lead to 11-3. Youngbloods never made it off the mat, taking a 14-4 beating in five innings. Hummel, along with teammates Josh Smith and Mike Heis, led the team at 3-for-3. Taulbee went 3-for-4.

The semifinal against Cheviot Savings/Stallions was even more of a cakewalk thanks to a shutout pitching effort from Will Henke. Not that it was necessary, there was also plenty of run support from the offense. Mike Heis and Rob Barnes each drove in a run in the 2nd to make it 2-0. Things got out of hand in the 3rd when five more Groundtexx runs scored. Josh Smith got it going with a double that plated three. Mark Schorsch and Matt Trosper added an RBI each to round out the scoring. The final was 11-0. Smith was a perfect 3-for-3 in the contest. Rob Barnes was also 3-for-3.

The finals brought round robin opponent Nappy Dugout back around for another try. “They had a really good team,” noted Groundtexx manager Walter Burchett. “They have a lot of young, hard ball players, you could tell they could play. They have a really good outfield, strong arms, and they’re quick. We kinda knew we would run into them again.”

Despite the talented opponent, Groundtexx jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the bottom of the 1st. Mike Cronin singled in a run; Josh Smith had a double that brought the other two into score. Four runs in the bottom of the 5th blew open what had been a 5-4 game. Bill Ramsey collected the final RBI, giving his team a commanding 9-4 lead. Groundtexx added four more in their last two at bats while Nappy Dugout failed to cross the plate again, making it a 13-4 final. Danny Carroll was a team-best 4-for-4 in the championship effort. Mike Cronin and Scott Hummel were both 3-for-3. Josh Smith had three hits in four trips to the plate.

Smith, Hummel, and Carroll were also among the leading hitters in the tournament for Groundtexx. Burchett explained that their efforts led to his team scoring in all but three innings the entire day.

“We also played solid defense all day long,” Burchett added. “We had good play by Tom Taulbee at shortstop, Matt Trosper at third base, and Rick Powers at first base.”

“And in the outfield Scott Hummel (centerfield) made a couple of good plays in the alley to take away doubles. He took away two or three balls that would have been in the gap because he’s really fast and held people to singles.”

“Will Henke’s pitching was great all day – I don’t think he walked a batter...maybe one,” said Burchett.

“It was a well-run tournament. The games were on time and the umpires did really well all day,” Burchett concluded. Having won the tournament title along with \$100 in USSSA travel expense, who could ask for more?!

Hot Start, Solid Pitching Carry Cincinnati Diamondbacks In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA One-Pitch State Tourney At Pastime

By Andy Zureick

Harrison, Ohio – Cincinnati Diamondbacks won their first four games by more than ten runs each and got solid pitching from Kenny Throckmorton to take the title in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA One-Pitch State Tournament at Pastime Park on August 12th.

All three of the round robin games for the Cincinnati Diamondbacks ended via the mercy rule. The first was an 18-8 besting of Dearborn Optical. They followed that up by laying the wood to Buckeyes, 15-4. They concluded the opening portion of the tournament with a 19-3 drilling of Young Guns.

Cincinnati Diamondbacks continued to steamroll the opposition in game one of the elimination round versus Peanuts Gang. Eight runs in the top of the 1st, including a three-run double from Steve Norman and two more RBI from Steve Sliter, sealed the ‘Nuts’ fate. That was especially true considering pitching ace Kenny Throckmorton had his best performance of the day – a 12-0 five-inning shutout. “Kenny had them all messed up with the one-pitch format and they just never could get anything together,” explained team manager Justin Dick. “He basically just told us where to stand and that’s where they hit the ball.” Dick led the way at the plate, going 3-for-3. Matt Waller was 2-for-3.

The final two games were at least challenging for the Diamondbacks.

The first of those was against Hitmen. The Diamondbacks jumped out to a commanding 9-0 lead in the top of the 1st only to have the Hitmen come back and tie it up in the bottom of the 4th. Then in the 5th, TJ Carty and Chris Lack each drove in a run as the eventual champs regained the lead, 11-9. Those two came through with another RBI each in the top of the 7th, padding the lead to 13-9. Kenny Throckmorton showed up big with three scoreless innings to finish the game and that is how it ended. Justin Dick again led all hitters by going 4-for-5. Throckmorton and Carty both were 3-for-4. Matt Waller also chipped in three hits.

The championship game matched the Diamondbacks with Bombers. It was a defensive struggle as the Diamondbacks failed to score in double digits for the only time in the tournament. Still, four runs in the top of the opening frame gave them what would be a commanding lead in this contest. Matt Waller had a run-scoring triple. Steve Sliter capped the scoring with a two-run double. They added one more in the 2nd and 3rd, then two more in the 5th. The Bombers were never able to solve the Throckmorton puzzle, tallying only three runs, and those did not come until the 6th and 7th innings. Throckmorton and teammate TJ Carty were both 2-for-3 at the plate. The final score was 8-3.

Team manager Justin Dick led by example at the plate, posting a team-best .850 batting average for the day. “It was just a good day. I’m our leadoff hitter and I was trying to hit for singles.”

Just behind him were Steve Norman and JC Clutter at .833 and .750, respectively. “Jason Watson, Donny Taylor, Zach Blume and Steve Martin also hit the ball well all day long,” said Dick.

The Diamondbacks gave up on average just four and a half runs per game. That led Dick to the conclusion that defense and good pitching were the keys to his team’s success.

“The infield played very well. I think they made only about four errors all day,” noted Dick. “Steve Norman (third base) turned two double plays and fielded everything that was hit to him. Chris Lack (left field) caught everything that was hit to him and didn’t let anything drop.”

Dick concluded by thanking sponsors State Farm and Riverfront Sports Management.

Bushwackers Overpower Kolping Round Robin Field

Mt. Healthy, Oh.--The Bushwackers outscored three opponents by a combined 57-12 margin to overpower a four team Saturday round robin August 11th at Kolping Park.

The Bushwackers leveled Wolf Pack (0-3) 21-3 in their opener, then brushed aside Royal Lawn Care (1-2) 15-4 before steamrolling TCB (2-1) 21-5 in the deciding contest.

Defense Carries Pitt Ohio Express, I'm Sorry To Queen City Division Titles

West Chester, Oh.--Pitt Ohio Express and I'm Sorry I'm Not Sorry each held three opponents to single digit scoring to capture first place in their respective divisions in an eight team, two division Saturday night round robin August 11th at Queen City Sports Complex.

Pitt Ohio battled past Bayes & Sons (2-1) 11-9 in a key first round match-up with the eventual division one runners-up, then romped past Rush (0-3) 12-3 and ICI Hitmen (1-2) 10-0.

Meanwhile in division two, I'm Sorry I'm Not Sorry steamrolled H & D (0-3) 13-3, River Dogs (2-1) 17-9 and Bad Company (1-2) 14-6.