

Guest Editorial by Homer Matheny

Editor's Note: Homer Matheny, a veteran All-City third baseman for Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putter's, is also a USSSA umpire. In a guest editorial this month, Matheny will try to clarify changes that the USSSA made last November relating to the pitching distance in view of the confusion that has reigned in Greater Cincinnati since play first began back in March.

The 2007 USSSA pitching rule has been changed. Or has it? The rule is actually the same. The distance one can pitch from, however, has changed. A pitcher's pivot foot (planted foot upon release of the ball) can be within the 24-inch wide pitcher's plate up to 6 feet behind the 50 foot mark. All the normal rules still apply. This increased distance is to offer protection and safety to the pitcher. USSSA has always tried to give an advantage to the pitcher. In this case, the rule was to protect the pitcher.

I play and umpire USSSA softball. The rule, though simplistic in nature, can have its issues. I like the idea of providing a pitcher with an alternate distance to pitch from. However, I believe 6 feet may be too far. At 56 feet and beyond the integrity of the pitch is lost. The speed of the ball and the height of the arc are now compromised. The rule book states the pitch must be pitched at a SLOW SPEED. The USSSA umpire has a tough job. Where did the pitcher release the pitch? Did it get 3 feet of arc from the point of release? How was the speed of the pitch? Did it meet the required depth on a batter who may or may be running up or out of the box? The umpire must keep the pitcher from gaining an advantage with a rule that was not introduced for deception.

I recently spoke to Kenny Throckmorton, pitcher of the Cincinnati Diamondbacks. After umpiring his league game at Expressway Park, he indicated he was beyond the required 6 foot extended pitching area several times. He said, "I was closer to 8 feet." From my vantage point behind the plate, I could not tell. Because of the deception of the distance it was not fair. His intentions were not to deceive, but to gain an advantage defensively. He did not jump around or walk through the pitching area, but did deliver the ball beyond the extended area. The opposing team did not complain and I was not aware he was behind the 6 foot limit. This added feature now requires more attention to an already difficult job.

As a player, it is one more rule interpretation you must trust the umpire to know. Is the umpire going to notice the illegal position or faster pitch? Are you going to rely on the umpire to make the correct call or will you protect the plate and swing at an unfairly delivered pitch? Most players will take this matter into their own hands and swing. The reason is uncertainty. The reason few umpires bring up the rule is because they are uncertain too. The most common mistake made by umpires is allowing the pitcher to walk through the 6 foot zone and deliver the ball. Anytime the pitcher's planted foot moves forward without delivering the pitch, a "RED flag" should be raised. The pitcher must then pause after re-positioning the pivot foot at their next step. This becomes the last thing an umpire may be looking for when a pitcher is faking, jumping, wind-milling, and tossing dust toward the batter. However, when the batter has a strike on himself and the ball is flying through a cloud of dust, uncertainty is back in the picture. What will you do?

I have tried to explain the rule many times. The best explanation I can give is an imaginary one. Imagine there are multiple pitching plates from 50 feet back to the 56 foot limit. Each time the pitcher moves forward to a new 24 inch by 6 inch pitching rubber, the pitching process starts over. So visualize 12 pitching plates connected together. This means there are 12 pitching plates - not one big one. The pitcher must initially pause, then pause again if he is moving forward. These moves along with pump fakes and such must be completed within the 5 second time limit. Dave Grooms of BCP Associates/Mr. Tint/TPE, USSSA C Team, often releases the ball while roaming around inside this 6 foot area. He has quite an arsenal of deliveries. He uses the umpire's uncertainty and batter's uncertainty to his advantage. I rarely see umpires make him re-pause after moving and jumping forward toward the batter. He works the move very well.

I believe USSSA will rewrite this rule for next year's softball season. I have been seeing more and more pitchers using the new rule to be deceptive. This was not the intention of the 6 foot freedom. I believe the language will change for next year's book but the rule is here to stay. I think 6 feet is too far. I would like to see it a more manageable distance such as 3 feet. This allows the pitch to maintain its "integrity"

through the zone. And, if an umpire inadvertently allows a pitch to fly from 54 feet, it is not a huge advantage to anyone. It helps protect the pitcher and also allows the umpire to concentrate on more important game management items. I like the rule but think the distance is too far and not explained appropriately. Hopefully the 2008 rule book will be rewritten and the rule clarified.

In My Opinion by Ron Jeffers

Following my list of subjects Mark Linnemann has asked me to write about, and I have always ignored, is "Do you believe most umpires engage in evening the score when they make a bad call?"

I can tell you I sincerely have never, ever seen any umpire make a bad call to even up a call he blew previously in my almost fifty years in the game.

I have seen countless numbers of incompetent umpires, I have seen hundreds or thousands of lazy umpires, I have seen too many umpires to mention who do not have a clue as to the playing rules in the game, but I have never seen one umpire try to even things up.

I have seen many umpires blow one judgment call after another, but not to even things up. He either had horrible judgment, terrible vision or such bad mechanics he didn't get a good view of the play.

When I first started umpiring, I was working the plate on a baseball game when I called a pitch shoulder high a strike. The batter was furious and stepped out of the box to ask me "where was that pitch?" Did you think I was going to tell him it was eye-high? I blew the pitch, and believe me I knew it as soon as I called it. Early in my career I had a problem with calling some high pitches strikes, but I didn't do it intentionally. I was so upset with myself, because I knew I blew the pitch, and I knew everyone in the park could tell the pitch was too high to be a strike. I was embarrassed, and no one wants to be embarrassed. The next pitch came in right down the middle, and of all things I called it a ball. Now the other team went crazy, and both teams laughed at me and tried every way they could to humiliate me. I wasn't trying to even things up. I was so upset with blowing the previous pitch that my head and concentration were somewhere else causing me to blow the second pitch.

I told myself "if I get off this field today, I will never umpire another game in my life." That was my single worst day I ever had in my umpiring career, and I am certain to the players and fans there that day it appeared as if I was trying to even things up, when that never, ever entered my mind.

I do not believe umpires or people are born with good judgment and or bad judgment. If an umpire sincerely knows the playing rules of the game, and he is in a good position to see the things that are important in making a call, he or she will get it right most of the time. I can improve any umpire's judgment simply by teaching him a few simple elements of the mechanics of umpiring. Ninety-nine percent of the amateur umpires blow judgment calls because they do not hustle or know the basics of umpiring mechanics.

If there has been one thing that has disappointed me over the thirty-plus years I have been writing this and other magazine and newspaper articles it has been my continued offer to help any umpire who wanted help to improve his or her umpiring.

I offered to do this free of charge, and I never had one umpire take me up on the offer to help them become the best they could be. I charged umpires from around the country hundreds of dollars to go to my various weekend and one-week umpire schools, yet not one local umpire wanted my free help. For that I will never understand, but nor I do not want to believe any umpire ever intentionally made the wrong call to try and even things up things for a call he blew earlier in any game.

Umpiring is a very difficult, thankless job where you are expected to be perfect your first day on the job and improve every day there after. Question an umpire's rule knowledge, question his judgment, question his mechanics, question his hustle, but do not question his integrity or honesty. Intentionally making the wrong call to even things up is to question a man's integrity or honesty, and even I won't do that about any

umpire. Any umpire who would intentionally ever try to do this should get out of the game. That is my opinion. What is yours?

What's Your Gripe? By Ron Jeffers

Q. In a game I was watching recently there was a batted ball (Pop Up) hit near the first base line, and the pitcher ran over to try and catch the ball when the batter ran into him while running to first base. The ball fell safely to the ground, and everyone stopped to see what the umpire would call, but he didn't know what to call. They eventually put the batter back in the box for a do over. I heard the umpire say this was incidental contact, and it was an accident. I just need to know, was this the right call?

A. The umpire needs to read the rule book occasionally, and perhaps he would know what to do when unusual plays occur. The batter and all runners must stop running or run around all fielders when they are trying to field a batted ball.

The ball is dead, and the batter is out as soon as he runs into the pitcher in this play. The only place any runner can remain without getting out of the way to allow a fielder to field a batted ball is first, second and third base. The runners can remain on the base, without any jeopardy of committing interference unless they do something to intentionally prohibit a fielder from making a play.

Q. In a AABC baseball game I was watching recently at Lakota East field, a fly ball was hit to center field with a runner on first base. It was obvious the ball was going to be very difficult to catch, and it was. The center-fielder tried to make a diving catch, but the ball bounced out of his glove, and was caught by one of the other fielders before it hit the ground. The base umpire, stationed behind the pitcher, never took a step toward the outfield, and he never made a call. The plate umpire never made a call either, and everyone in the crowd, and on the defensive team, yelled that he caught the ball. The teams appealed to the base umpire to make a call, and he pointed to the plate umpire who weakly called the batter out.

These umpires are paid \$55 each to work this game, and this is absolutely ridiculous, and should never happen. Why did the base umpire, who was right there between second base and the pitcher, not run to the outfield when it was obvious this was going to be a difficult play?

The umpires look horrible when they have an umpire close to the action refer to the umpire who remained behind home plate to make this call. Fans and players, rightfully so, will never ever understand why the umpire behind the plate is making this call when he is 100 feet farther away than the base umpire.

I watched the base umpire the rest of the game, and he never ever went out of the infield. Is this the way they are supposed to umpire?

A. These umpires are flat out lazy and stealing their money when they umpire like this. Any base umpire who does not go out to the outfield on fly balls is guilty of not having a clue as to how to umpire, or is flat out too dumb or lazy to umpire. The base umpire should have run out to the outfield on this play, and the plate umpire should have hustled out toward the middle of the infield to be in position to make any call at first or second base. If they did this they would have either gotten the call correct or they would have been a whole lot more believable and professional looking.

Any time the base umpire turns his back to the plate umpire, and goes out to the outfield, the base umpire will make the fair-foul call, and the catch-no catch call. The plate umpire will then be responsible for all the base calls until this play has completed itself.

This is the same correct mechanics for both baseball and softball umpires, but you will see very few - if any - umpires work this way, because they do not take any pride in their work, and they are too lazy to do their job right.

There is such a shortage in decent umpires that the leagues, parks and organizations have to accept poor and mediocre umpiring in baseball and even more so in softball. I don't know what ever happened in taking pride in your work.

Q. I understand there are no major or class A teams in the Cincinnati area this year. Is this correct, and if so, has this ever happened before?

A. Mark Linnemann tells me what you ask is true. We do not have any of the top level teams, and this is the first time in history for us. We have now caught up with the rest of the country. Everyone wants to play down, and some day we will only have class W, X, Y and Z. That is, if softball is still around then.

You know softball is in big trouble when the Amateur Softball Association is getting into the baseball business. As always, they are about a dozen years too late. They should have been in the baseball business years ago. It is a perfect fit to use the same parks and umpires.

My grandson plays AABC baseball, and it is extremely well-organized. He plays games about every week night it doesn't rain, as well as every weekend. They go out of town three or four weekends each summer to play in tournaments, and the teams are appropriately classified, by the commissioner, according to the players' and teams' playing skills.

Q. Hall of Fame umpire Richard Zureick asks the following question.

I was watching my granddaughter play in a fast pitch tournament at one of our local parks when the following play occurred. The batter struck out, and the pitched ball went out of play. The umpire awarded the batter second base. When I questioned the umpire, after the game about his call, he said "there has been a rule change, and the batter gets two bases when the pitch goes out of play." Ron, is this guy just blowing smoke or has the rule been changed?

A. The umpire simply does not know the playing rules of softball, and he is as wrong as two left feet. The batter is awarded first base, and any and all runners would be awarded one base as well. One base from the pitching rubber and two from the field is a simple way to remember this rule, but this umpire probably still can't figure it out.

You are right, though. When you confronted him he didn't know how to cover his rear end except by saying the rule was changed. If they did change the rule it would probably take him ten years to learn the rule change. It would help if the umpires would just read the rule book once a year, but that takes too much time and energy for some of them.

Q. The bases were loaded in this play, and there were no outs when the batter hit a pop up between third base and the short stop. The two infielders collided and the ball dropped safely between them. The runners now started to run for the next base, and the third baseman threw the ball to home plate where they tagged the runner out. All hell broke loose, and both managers charged the umpire yelling it was an infield fly. One manager said the runners can run at their own risk, which they did, and it should be a double play. The umpire said it should have been an infield fly, but since he did not call it, he was going to call the batter out, and put all the runners back where they were before the ball was hit. Can this be right?

A. The plate umpire should remind himself of the infield fly situation any time he has runners on first and second base with less than two outs, and he should call it out for everyone to hear when the ball is subsequently popped up in the infield. After he screwed up and didn't call the infield fly he confused everyone, and caused this whole mess. He did the only right thing he could do by putting the runners back on the base. He screwed up and softball covers this by what they call a correctable error. Professional baseball would fire the umpire for messing a play up this badly.

Umpiring is hard enough when you know what you are doing. It has to be intolerable when you do not know the rules or how and when to apply them.

Willie DeLuca Honored With “Special Award”...
Rick Linz Inducted Into Hamilton County Sports Hall Of Fame

Rick Linz, who had the rare distinction of earning All-American honors with the Amateur Softball Association (ASA), All-World honors with the United States Slow Pitch Softball Association (USSSA), and All-Pro honors with the American Professional Slow Pitch League (APSL), has been inducted into the Hamilton County Sports Hall of Fame.

Considered to be the finest shortstop to ever play softball in Greater Cincinnati, Linz was honored at the 46th Anniversary Program of the Hamilton County Sports Hall of Fame on Saturday, May 12th, during ceremonies held at the St. Patrick’s Knights of Columbus Hall in Carthage.

Also honored at the function from the sport of slow pitch softball was sponsor Willie DeLuca, who died last fall of an apparent heart attack. DeLuca received the Hamilton County Sports Hall of Fame’s 2007 “Special Award.”

With his induction, Linz became only the second individual from the softball community to ever be inducted into the Hamilton County Sports Hall of Fame. The first was Tom Taylor, a first team all-century outfielder and Greater Cincinnati “Player of the Decade” for the seventies.

Taylor is also President of the Hamilton County Sports Hall of Fame, a position he’s held since 2005.

Linz was selected from thirteen finalists by the Hall of Fame’s Executive Committee. The finalists were listed in the Cincinnati Enquirer and the election of two individuals was conducted by email.

DeLuca was nominated by Hall of Fame President Tom Taylor, and approved by the Hall of Fame’s Executive Committee.

WKRC-TV weekend sports anchor Walt Maher presented Linz to the banquet crowd of over 200 people.

“Rick was the best combination shortstop and hitter in the history of Cincinnati Softball,” proclaimed Maher. “He played for Savannah Cafe at the age of 22. He was about to make his mark.

“He was named Greater Cincinnati ‘Player of the Decade’ for the eighties, and to the all-decade first team for both the seventies and eighties. Only one other player has achieved that accomplishment,” said Maher. “He was also an All-American with the ASA and All-World with USSSA, and All-Pro in 1977 and 1981 with the Cincinnati Suds.”

During his induction remarks, Linz thanked the Hall of Fame committee for putting his name on the ballot.

“Being one of the thirteen finalists in itself was a great honor for myself personally and also softball in general,” said Linz. “Then to be only the second softball person inducted in the 46 years of the Hall of Fame is really unbelievable.

“I want to thank my wife, Katie, my family, and all those who are here tonight on my behalf, and everyone who voted for me,” continued Linz. “To be inducted into the Hall of Fame with such great names as heavyweight champion Ezzard Charles, Pete Rose, and Roger Staubach is overwhelming. Thanks again to the Hall of Fame committee.”

Former National Basketball Association referee Mike Mathis spoke for “Special Award” winner Willie DeLuca.

“Willie was a guy who everybody knew in one way or another,” remarked Mathis. “He had the kind of family we all dream of. I’ll always remember a smile on his face and a joke in his heart when I walked through the door of Sorrento’s.

“Family and friends were the most important thing to Willie, and those who didn’t have much,” observed Mathis. “He was a person who helped others.”

Mathis related how DeLuca always found a way to lift his spirits and those of other customers when they entered into the family restaurant on Montgomery Road in Norwood. He also made sure that needy people in the neighborhood always had something to eat, said Mathis.

DeLuca’s sister, Esa Stewart, accepted the award on behalf of her family.

“Willie was always so thankful for everything God had bestowed on him, so sponsoring teams was Willie’s way of giving back,” said Stewart.

She said that just as Yankee Stadium was the “home that Babe Ruth built, Sorrento’s was the home Willie built for sports in Cincinnati.”

DeLuca is believed to have pioneered the sports bar concept with Sorrento’s.

Stewart recalled her brother’s involvement in sports, from organizing a baseball team as a youngster, to working for the Norwood Recreation Department, sponsoring several city championship men’s teams in the seventies, and an ASA Women’s Major Slow Pitch national championship team in 1976.

“The City Council of Cincinnati honored Willie for that sponsorship and winning the national title,” noted Stewart.

Stewart said that Willie spent “thousands of his own dollars” so that “those who were less fortunate could play sports.” Sponsorships included everything from youth baseball to bowling teams to ice hockey, said Stewart.

Several charities, especially those sponsored by his many sports celebrity friends like Jerry Faust, Boomer Esiason and Digger Phelps, were also very dear to Willie, said Stewart. He also helped raise money to keep a local playground open in Norwood.

But Willie’s favorite function was the SnoBall Softball Tournament, an event Stewart said that her brother “created, sponsored and hosted” for the March of Dimes annually from 1980 through 1994. “By 1994 he had raised over \$200,000 for the March of Dimes,” said Stewart. “His love for sponsorship was his campaign to keep children healthy.

“He was the Mother Theresa of sports for so many people,” said Stewart.

Stewart also noted that her brother “sponsored the Greater Cincinnati Softball Hall of Fame after the Hudepohl Brewing Company went out of business.

“They found a home with Norwood Sorrento’s, and of course, Willie DeLuca,” she said.

“Willie always kept others’ dreams alive,” said Stewart. “Where there was a void, Willie filled it.”

Stewart said that when former University of Cincinnati Bearcats Basketball Coach Bob Huggins listed ten reasons he wanted to stay in Cincinnati, number seven was Willie DeLuca.

“He leaves a living legacy for us all,” said Stewart.

Stewart concluded by thanking everyone in attendance at the banquet and the selection committee.

“I especially want to thank my mother, Rico (Willie’s son), my brothers Art and Ralph, and my sister, Anna, and everyone who gathered here tonight to honor Willie DeLuca. Remember to keep Willie’s spirit alive through giving and sponsorship. Someone out there needs us. Thank you.”

Determination Brings DeLuca Family Dream To Reality... **Softball Hall Of Fame Is New Centerpiece At Sparkling New Sorrento’s**

To no one’s surprise, the grand reopening of Sorrento’s Pizza and Restaurant was a bittersweet experience. Especially, of course, for the DeLuca family.

“We were so glad that there was closure to the fire and dad’s death, and that Sorrento’s was reopening, and seeing the faces of the people who came in before,” said Ralph DeLuca, the son of founder Enrico DeLuca, who was killed in a fire that severely damaged the restaurant in April of 2005. “They’re like family. To see them again was wonderful. At the same time it was very sad because dad and Willie are no longer with us.”

Willie, Ralph’s older brother, had managed the restaurant prior to the fire, and was leading the effort to rebuild it before his sudden death from a heart attack on October 22nd.

And while no one can replace Willie, his gregarious spirit now lives on with the reopening of the restaurant last month, says Ralph DeLuca.

“Willie loved softball, and he had a great way with children, so hopefully we can carry on Willie’s atmosphere and spirit in the things he loved,” says DeLuca.

Willie DeLuca’s vision for the newly remodeled Norwood landmark included relocating the bar and Willie’s beloved Softball Hall of Fame room.

“Prior to the fire, the bar was maybe 15’ long by 4’ wide, but that little space couldn’t contain his personality and spirit,” explains Ralph DeLuca. “The new bar is huge - 26’ by 11” - and that’s the way Willie wanted it...right in the center of the bar. He wanted to be in the folks down there in the main dining room.”

Previously, the bar was located in the entranceway of the restaurant and the dining area was in the next room, says Ralph. The Softball Hall of Fame, which was housed in the rear of the restaurant, now occupies the old entranceway and bar area.

“Willie moved the Hall of Fame room to the front, because he felt like it deserved more attention. Being in the back, people didn’t venture back there, but in the front, it’s more of a showcase. The Hall of Fame was going to be Willie’s centerpiece,” says Ralph. “A lot of people have requested to sit in that room. We’re not sure if it’s the attraction of the old bar, or if it’s because of the Hall of Fame room. But a lot of people have requested to sit in there.”

Moving the bar and Hall of Fame are just a few of the changes patrons can expect to see when they return to Sorrento’s. The entire restaurant was gutted and remodeled, says DeLuca.

“We took every room down to the brick and mortar and then rebuilt,” says Ralph. “All the fixtures and plumbing and hardwood floors and all the equipment is brand new. Willie used to joke that maybe we should have bulldozed it and dropped it into the cellar and started over.”

In addition to all the renovations, which include larger bathrooms, a private party room and a game room, one strikingly noticeable difference in the restaurant is that there is less sports memorabilia. Previously the inside appearance of the restaurant centered on Willie’s extensive sports memorabilia that covered the walls.

“A lot of them were damaged in the fire,” points out Ralph. “Many of the items Willie had salvaged were in the process of being restored. They need to be dry-cleaned. Everything in the front of the bar is gone, including jerseys, basketball shoes, and football and racing helmets. Soot from the fire got into the frames and damaged them. They need to be restored. We’re going through them and as time goes on, we’re restore them and reframe them and get them back in.”

Part of a new ambience infused into the restaurant is the strong presence of the DeLuca family history, beginning in the entryway with a stained-glass window with the DeLuca family emblem, and a large photo of a youthful Enrico, his wife Santina, and children Willie and Esa on their voyage to the United States over 50 years ago. Other family photographs are displayed throughout, including on the walls and laminated into the bar.

“We wanted to honor Willie and dad,” says Ralph. “Sorrento’s has gone through many changes over the years from when dad first started it, so following that theme, we’ve put something different here and there throughout the history of the restaurant. “We’re proud of that history and what dad and mom and Willie did.”

A few new menu items, like wedding soup, additional appetizers, and a more extensive wine collection will also be featured, says Ralph DeLuca. But customers can count on the same great food they had been accustomed to in the past, he promises.

“We were happy with the menu we had before and we continue to offer pizza, lasagna, ravioli, spaghetti, and sandwiches. And mom makes those items and makes the ingredients for them - the pizza sauce, pasta sauce and sausage. We have the same, wonderful quality food that we had before. People tell us that even though we’ve been closed for two and a half years, the taste is right there (where it was before),” says Ralph.

And while no one can replace Willie, Ralph DeLuca promises that patrons will see “the same happy faces who waited on them before - mom, myself, Art and Esa. We’ll continue to make sure the food is right and customer service is great and to have a family presence.”

Reopening the restaurant has been a testament to the determination of the entire DeLuca family, says Ralph. Recently, Todd Portune, President of the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners, presented Santina DeLuca with a proclamation for the family’s determination in reopening the restaurant.

And that determination has been fueled in no small way by the softball community, says Ralph. “They’ve been very, very good. They’re coming in. It’s been great. People have been coming out and supporting us. I think they’ve been happy with the end result.”

Blitz/Watanabe/TTP/Wessel/A & K/Easton One Step Away From Metro Trifecta; Play Begins July 26th

Crosby Township, Oh.--Eight years ago, winning the “Open” division of the ASA Cincinnati Metro Tournament was the far-thest thing from Terry Walton’s mind.

But now, with one month to go, a long-time dream is on the brink of becoming reality.

“Originally when the Blitz team was first formed in 1999 and we played in the ‘C’ division, competing in the Major Metro was a long way off. Then in 2000 we won the ‘B’ division, and our goal was to turn that into an ‘A’ division title the following year. Now we hope we can complete the trifecta,” says Walton.

Odds - and circumstances - are in Walton’s favor. His Blitz/Watanabe/TTP/Wessel/A & K/Easton team is currently ranked number one in the city. All four of the teams that finished ahead of Walton’s team in the “Open” division of last year’s Metro have disbanded. The second and fourth ranked teams - Dawg Pack/Wessel/A-1 Fabricators and Mike Foulks Auto Body/Team Insanity/Easton - have gone into a late

“June swoon” in tournament play after coming out of the gate strong in April and May. And third-ranked Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putters, the hottest team in the state last month, has snubbed the Metro for years.

So how does Walton feel about his club entering the Metro with a target on their backs?

“We’ve had a target on our back all year,” says Walton. “The pools have listed us as number one in the city, but up to this point, we haven’t played like that.”

Walton shrugs off any notion that being the favorite has any special significance.

“It really doesn’t matter,” he contends. “It just depends on how you play when the tournament rolls around. Nobody on our team is even thinking about being the favorite.”

Walton does acknowledge that an “Open” Metro title is something that his players hunger for - especially those who haven’t won one before.

“We have some guys who have won a Major Metro, but a lot more guys who haven’t,” he says. “So there’s some anticipation for those guys to win their first Metro.”

Walton is quick to caution area softball soothsayers who predict a Blitz win.

“First of all, we haven’t played any ASA this year other than the Bash for Cash,” says Walton. “And secondly, there are going to be some good players in the city end up on some of the other teams. I don’t know exactly who they’ll be playing with, but they will help determine who the favorite might be.”

Ironically, Blitz is the only team ranked in the top four that hasn’t won a tournament this year. Is that a concern for Walton?

“Obviously, we haven’t had the success at this point that we wanted to,” says Walton. “Hopefully, that will just make us hungrier to win, whether it’s the Metro or the next tournament we play in. But hopefully the Metro will bring something out of us as far as local bragging rights. Some guys respond better to that.”

Two teams that have won tournaments, Dawg Pack and Mike Foulks, are more than capable of winning this year’s “Open” Metro, says Walton.

“Dawg Pack has a good chance with their nucleus of five guys who won the Major Metro with the Storm last year,” points out Walton. “They have to be considered a favorite. They did recently lose their pitcher, which will hurt them. But I’m not sure it will hurt them as badly in ASA.

“Mike Foulks also has a good chance. They haven’t been playing their best the last couple of weeks, but like us, they’re probably hoping to get hot at the right time.”

Could there be any sleepers in the tournament?

“Depending on their pick-ups, Loveless is a team you have to look at as well,” says Walton. “Also EAP and TPE play ASA well, and both could be competitive in the ‘Open’ division.”

The Metro tournament runs from Thursday, July 26th, through Tuesday, August 7th for five men's Open divisions, including Major, A, B, C, D and “Re-creation,” three women's Open divisions - class B, C and D, and two new divisions: Black American and Hispanic. Three Industrial divisions - A, B and C - will compete two weekends prior on July 13-15.

The tournament deadline is Monday, July 9th at 12 PM for Industrial play, and Saturday, July 21st at 12 noon for the “Open” divisions. First round Industrial games will kick off on Friday, July 13th at Rumpke Park in Miamitown. Then Open division games will commence on Thursday, July 26th, with Rumpke,

Eggleston Park, Northside K of C, Riverfront West, Rivershore Sports Complex, Riverstar Sportsplex, Spoils Field and Westside Sports Park serving as host sites for first round games.

Competition in the Mas-ters divisions (35-over and 40-over) is scheduled for August 12-13 at Rumpke. The dates and sites of the Men's Church and Co-Ed divisions are pending.

Over 300 teams are expected once again for the Metro, which is widely recognized as the premier event in Greater Cincinnati softball and largest ASA tournament in the nation. Last year 346 teams competed in the five Men's and three Women's open, three industrial and one masters divisions.

Here's a look back at each 2006 open and industrial division championship finals:

MAJOR OPEN - An upset-minded Storm/Wessel Sports/Nixco Plumbing/Flanagan's/Front Porch stunned nationally Ranked Watanabe/Kattus/TTP/B & A/Superior/CHL/TPS 20-18 in the winners' bracket finals, then again 14-9 in the championship game, to complete a five game sweep of the Metro's "Open" division. The winners capitalized on the tournament's eight home run limit, solid defense and the pitching of tournament MVP Doug Murphy.

CLASS A OPEN - Mike Foulks Auto Body/Team Insanity battled past Loveless Hardwood/Easton 15-13 in an eight inning opener, then again 10-8 in the championship game en route to a three-game sweep of the Class "A" Open division of the Metro. Defense and timely hitting - especially some late inning bombs that helped carry Mike Foulks past Loveless in both games, were the keys to the title for Foulks.

CLASS B OPEN - TPE/AST/Mizuno double-dipped EAP/Western Hills Window 13-11 and 21-19 to capture first place in the 38-team Class "B" Open division and wind up the two-week tournament with a sparkling 7-1 record.

CLASS C OPEN - After going 5-0 in the Class "C" East division by limiting their opponents to a meager 18 total runs, In Between/B & B Tree Service went on to win the overall title by double-dipping Niesen Plumbing/Mass Marketing/Sportsco 10-4 and 9-5 for the championship.

CLASS D OPEN - After a 6-0 performance in the "D" West Division, Secret Service improved their record to 9-0 with a three game sweep of the overall playoffs, outslugging Godbey Law 15-11 in the title game.

CLASS E OPEN - Oops Auto Collision & Towing/Benneth Prather Landscaping rallied to win three games in the bottom of the 7th and double-dipped the Woodpeckers 16-15 and 7-5 to in the 18-team Class "E" division.

WOMEN'S UPPER - Lisa Tyler held three opponents to fifteen runs to help Bobcat Enterprises successfully defend their title in the Women's "Upper" Division. Amy Schweinfus hit a blistering .818 to pace the offense.

WOMEN'S C - Pelle's outscored four opponents 59-10 to overpower the Women's "C" division. Pitcher Stacy Doyle tossed a 15-0 shutout victory over T. I. Racing in the finals to secure the title.

INDUSTRIAL A - Cooper Sports/UAW #863/Veterans outslugged Cincinnati Blue Local #392 26-19 in the championship game to end Blue's string of nine consecutive titles. Pitcher Dwayne Kirkland was named tournament MVP. Teammate Chad Cumberland led his team in hitting with a sizzling .833 performance.

INDUSTRIAL B - Tournament MVP John Trimpe hit a blistering .815 and clubbed six home runs, and Joe Resing batted a red-hot .800 with five home runs, to power Reimeier Lumber to a first place finish in the Metro's Industrial "B" Division. Reimeier double-dipped ADS 12-5 and 13-7 to complete a five game run through the losers' bracket after falling to ADS 14-11 in the second round.

INDUSTRIAL C - Pitcher Terry Lingo held four opponents to thirteen runs, and A1/Kahoots won two games in their final at bats en route to a first place finish in the Industrial "C" Division. A1/Kahoots rallied for two runs in the bottom of the 6th to clip Hamilton County Sheriffs 4-3 in the championship game. Tournament MVP Jeff Herzog powered the champions with an .888 weekend.

35-OVER MASTERS - Bernecker Brothers routed EAP 22-3 in four innings to complete a five game sweep of the 35-Over division. The champions outscored their opponents 64-17 en route to the title, mercy-ruling their last two victims. Mark Parris hit a robust .800 to lead the winners.

May 26-28 Articles...

Cummins Single Lifts Ty-1-On Past Incognito 10-9 In Nine Innings In USSSA Women's "B-C" Memorial Classic Finals At Northside K Of C

Shirley Cummins' bases loaded single with two outs in the bottom of the 9th lifted Ty-1-On to a 10-9 victory over Incognito in the championship game of the USSSA Women's "B-C" Memorial Classic May 26-27 at Northside K of C Fields.

Ty-1-On rallied all the way back from an 8-2 deficit in the 4th inning to tie the score at 9-9 in the bottom of the 7th before Cummins' base hit lifted her team to the title in the five team round robin affair. The championship was Ty-1-On's second of the 2007 campaign.

A defensive effort that limited all four opponents to single digit scoring and a never-say-die attitude carried Ty-1-On to the title, said manager Colleen Needham.

"There were a number of games where we got behind, but we never gave up," said Needham. "We didn't try to get all the runs at one time. We just kept plugging away, and got one or two runs at a time. We could have given up, but after we loaded the bases and didn't score in the bottom of the 8th in our last game, but we said, 'hey, we're the home team, we'll just have to try that again.'"

Needham was referring to the championship game, when Ty-1-On loaded the bases with one out in the bottom of the 8th but failed to score. Ironically, in the bottom of the 9th, Ty-1-On made two outs before Erin Engelkamp singled to ignite the winning rally.

"We kept our composure," added Needham. "We don't give up on ourselves when we get a couple of runs down."

Brenda Ryan led Ty-1-On in hitting with an .800 mark, M. J. Ranz batted .625, Sharon Graham .583, Lisa Richter .583 and Erin Engelkamp and Shelly Cummings hit an even .500.

Needham called Richter her team's unofficial offensive MVP.

"She played in every game and led off in three of our four games," pointed out Needham. "She stepped into that role and obviously did very well."

Needham also praised pitcher M. J. Ranz for her performance in the final game against Incognito.

"She held them to one run in the last five innings," said Needham.

Ty-1-On scored three runs in the bottom of the 1st to take the lead for good, then broke open a 5-3 contest with six runs in the bottom of the 6th en route to an 11-5 victory over Hill & Griffith in game one. Erin Engelkamp's rbi single put her club on top to stay at 3-2 in the 1st. Theresa Hirschauer, whose sac fly capped off the 6th, shared ten hits with Engelkamp, Brenda Ryan, Lisa Richter and Rhonda Klette.

Ty-1-On needed eight innings to escape with a 10-7 victory over the Shooters in game two. After battling to a 6-6 stalemate through seven, Ty-1-On erupted for four runs in the top of the 8th to seal the win. Shelly Cummins' rbi single broke the tie, and Jane Eltzroth, whose rbi double capped off the 8th, went 3-for-4 along with Cummins and M. J. Ranz.

Fruth Pharmacy drew first blood in game three and held a 1-0 lead through three and a half. But in the bottom of the 4th, Jessica Wendeln cracked a three run home run to give Ty-1-On a 3-1 lead. Lori Wilp's two run single closed out the scoring in the bottom of the 6th.

Sharon Graham collected three hits to pace the offense. Wendeln, Wilp, Brenda Ryan, Theresa Hirschauer and Lisa Richter chipped in two hits apiece.

That set the stage for a showdown between the tournament's other undefeated team, Incognito, which promptly jumped out to a an 8-2 lead through four innings. But Ty-1-On chipped away at the lead, scoring three in the 5th and two in the 6th before knotting the score with two runs in the bottom of the 7th. Back-to-back doubles by Karen Kron and Sharon Graham made it 9-8. Then Graham advanced to 3rd on a fielder's choice, and scored the tying run on an M. J. Ranz sac fly.

With Ranz holding Incognito at bay, Ty-1-On loaded the bases in the bottom of the 8th with one out, but came away empty. Finally in the bottom of the 9th with two outs and nobody on, Erin Engelkamp and Lori Wilp singled and Jane Eltzroth walked to set the table for Shirley Cummins' game winner.

Engelkamp banged out five hits in the contest, and Rhonda Klette and Karen Kron combined for six to lead the champions.

Final Standings: 1. Ty-1-On, Cincinnati, Oh. 4-0; 2. Incognito, Detroit, Mi. 3-1; 3. Hill & Griffith, Cincinnati, Oh. 2-2; 4. Shooters, Dayton, Oh. 1-3; Fruth Pharmacy, Wellston, Oh. 0-4.

Cannady, Chapman Power D & S Engineering In USSSA Women's "D" Memorial Classic At Northside K Of C

Emily Cannady batted .833 and Rose Chapman had three triples, a home run and led her team in rbi's to power D & S Engineering to their third title of the year in the "D" division of the USSSA Women's Memorial Classic May 26-27 at Northside K of C Fields.

D & S rallied past James Arnold 11-9 in their opener, then escaped with a 14-13, extra innings win over Pelle's in the winners' bracket finals before polishing off James Arnold in the championship game, 14-8.

The victory marked the third in as many tries for the winners.

"We're just staying focused and not giving up," remarked D & S manager Kim Wilson. "We're not getting down when we're behind."

Wilson said her team won with "good defense" and "an all around team effort."

The offensive leaders for D & S were all-tourney selections Emily Cannady at .833, Sharon Singleton at .818, Crystal Loudon at .750 and rbi leader Rose Chapman. Liz Ulland was also named to the all-tournament team. Tonya Woodruff chipped in with a .667 weekend.

Wilson said Cannady was named to the all-tourney team for "her outstanding hitting.

"She was our leader for the tournament, and she played good defense at 2nd base," said Wilson.

Wilson said Rose Chapman was selected for her "key hits" along with "three triples and a home run. And she was our rbi leader."

Singleton was also named for her offense, while Liz Ulland contributed “all-around good hitting and defense at 3rd,” and Crystal Louden for her “defense in right centerfield and her offense.”

Getting past Pelle’s in the winners’ bracket finals was also a big key, remarked Wilson. “That was a tough game.”

D & S overcame a 7-3 deficit with an eight run 4th to grab an 11-7 lead, then held off James Arnold 11-9 in game one. Sharon Singleton’s rbi single put her club ahead to stay. Rose Chapman capped off the inning with a big three run blast. Emily Cannady collected three hits, and Singleton, Chapman, Tony Woodruff and Christa Brinker combined for eight hits.

D & S needed eight innings to outlast Pelle’s 14-13 in game two. With the score knotted at 13-13 going into the bottom of the 8th, D & S got a leadoff single by Tony Woodruff. Then with one out, Emily Cannady singled and Amy Schweinefus walked to load the bases and set the table for Theresa Hickey, who calmly singled home Woodruff with the game winner.

Cannady, Sharon Singleton and Crystal Louden pounded out four hits each, and Theresa Hickey chipped in three hits.

In the finals D & S jumped out to a 7-3 lead in the bottom of the 1st and would never trail again. Crystal Louden put her club on top for good at 5-3 with a two run triple in the 1st. D & S added two in the 2nd to take a 9-3 lead, but James Arnold chipped away at the lead, finally cutting the deficit to 9-8 after three and a half. But in the bottom of the 4th, D & S used a three run outburst to force a four run lead, then padded their lead with two runs in the 6th to emerge with a 14-8 victory and the title. Amy Schweinefus delivered a key two run triple and trotted home with the 12th run of the game on Theresa Hickey’s rbi single in the 4th. Pitcher Christa Brinker held James Arnold scoreless over the final four innings. Louden, Rose Chapman, Emily Cannady and Sharon Singleton shared a dozen hits for the champions.

Final Standings: 1. D & S Engineering, Loveland, Oh. 3-0; 2. James Arnold, Cincinnati, Oh. 4-3; 3. Pelle’s, Silver Grove, Ky. 1-2; 4. Meissner Insurance, Cincinnati, Oh. 1-3; 5. Intimidators, Batavia, Oh. 2-2; Yada Club/Preimier One, Milford, Oh. 1-2.

June 2-3 Articles...

Veteran, Rookie Team Up To Lead Champions...

Hard Knocks/Ryan's Painting Victorious In 6th Annual Billy Backman Memorial-USSSA City Slam “E” Division At Eggleston Park

By Andy Zureick

Colerain Township, Oh. - Hard Knocks/Ryan's Painting went 8-1 to capture first place in the “E” Division of the 6th Annual Billy Backman Memorial USSSA City Slam played June 2-3 at Eggleston Park. Leading the way to the championship were veteran pitcher Bob Duggins and rookie shortstop Rob Bennett.

“Bob has a lot of control on his pitches. He knows what he wants to do and he does it,” explained Hard Knocks/Ryan's manager Brian Kelly. “His veteran leadership was key.” Duggins was named tournament MVP.

“Rob Bennett led our team in runs batted in. He was hot with the stick and made the plays that came to him at short,” Kelly said of the 21-year old infielder. For the tournament, Bennett hit .607 while driving in 17 runs.

Hard Knocks/Ryan's Painting got the tournament going with a perfect 3-0 performance in the opening round robin. Game one was a 14-11 victory against Bo's Boys/Lilly Painting. Pitcher Bob Duggins tossed a two-hit shutout in game two, leading the way to a 12-0 five-inning mercy rule win over Paul's Bus Service. The final game saw Hard Knocks slip by Packaged Home Solutions, 8-7.

Hard Knocks continued to roll as they began double elimination play versus Ohio National Guard. Albert Irvine and Rob Bennett each had RBI singles as part of the six-run 1st. They cruised the rest of the way to a 13-9 victory. Josh Kelly went 3-for-3 with 4 RBI. Irvine also drove in four while going 2-for-3.

Game two was a slugfest between Hard Knocks/Ryan's and Dixon Softball. Dale Krauser's two-run double in the bottom of the 4th broke a 12-12 tie. Rob Bennett later capped the six-run at bat with an RBI single. They would never surrender the lead en route to a 20-16 win. Albert Irvine and Keith Blazer were both a perfect 4-for-4. Four members of the Hard Knocks/Ryan's Painting team - Dave Case, Steve McCreary, Dale Krauser, and Bob Duggins - went 3-for-4.

Hard Knocks put their game against Dino's away early with an eight run opening frame. Matt Reed got his team on the board with a run-scoring single. Brian Kelly added two RBI as his team built what would be an insurmountable lead. Four more runs in the top of the 2nd put the game out of reach for sure. The final was 15-7. Bennett led the way at the plate with a 4-for-4 performance. Steve McCreary was 3-for-4 for the second game in a row.

Holy Grail provided the opposition for Hard Knocks/Ryan's in the winner's bracket finals. It would be the first of three straight games between the two teams. Going into the bottom of the 6th, Hard Knocks trailed 5-3. In that at bat, Matt Reed tied the game with an RBI single. Brian Kelly then drove in a run to put his team ahead. Rob Bennett later capped the scoring in what would be a six-run inning. Bob Duggins pitched shutout softball through the last three innings to preserve the 9-5 win. Keith Blazer was 3-for-3. Brian and Josh Kelly each went 2-for-3.

Holy Grail won their way through the loser's bracket to get another shot at Hard Knocks. They would also win the first finals, 9-2, to set up a one game, winner-takes-all final game.

The score of the championship game stood at 5-3 in favor of Holy Grail after one inning of play. Then, in the top of the 2nd with one run already in, Dave Case tied the game with an RBI single. Keith Blazer did the same to put his team up 6-5. In all, they pushed four across to take a 7-5 lead. In the 3rd, Bob Duggins sacrifice fly added one more to make it 8-5. Holy Grail cut the lead to 8-7 going into the final inning of play. In that last at bat, Hard Knocks got run-scoring hits from Keith Blazer, Matt Reed, and Steve McCreary. That extended their advantage to 11-7. Holy Grail failed to answer in the bottom of the frame, and that is how it ended. Bob Bennett and Keith Blazer each collected three hits in the championship effort.

Steve McCreary led Hard Knocks at the plate in the tournament by hitting .678. "He came out big against Holy Grail. In those three games, he was like 8-for-9. They couldn't get him out...he stepped up and made it count," said Brian Kelly, the team manager.

Other top hitting performances were turned in by Albert Irvine (.620, 12 RBI), Dale Krauser (.600), and Bob Duggins (.500).

"We turned a lot of double plays to get us out of innings. The outfield laid out for the ball and made diving catches. It took all 12 guys."

"When we got down, we got right back in it and we played seven innings. You have to play the full seven innings," Kelly noted.

The victorious manager concluded his comments by expressing his team's gratitude to a few worthy notables. "We would like to give Ryan's Painting special thanks for supporting us with their sponsorship. And we would like to thank all the wives for putting up with us and a special thanks for Amy Reed who helps out with the team a lot,"

The event title netted Hard Knocks/Ryan's \$1,500 cash and a paid berth for the USSSA "E" World Tournament in Kissimmee, Florida on September 14-16.

**WILLIAM D. BACKMAN IV MEMORIAL GREATER
CIN. USSSA CITY "E" DIVISION FINAL STANDINGS**

1.	Hard Knocks/Ryan's Painting, Cincinnati, OH	5	1
2.	Holy Grail/Champions, Cincinnati, OH	4	2
3.	Columbia Hyundai, Cincinnati, OH	6	2
4.	Cincinnati Diamondbacks, Milford, OH	5	2
5.	D & S Design, Milford, OH	3	2
	Dino's/Young Guns, Florence, KY	2	2
7.	Dixon Softball, Milford, OH	2	2
	Godbey Law, Cincinnati, OH	2	2
9.	Barnstormers, Lebanon, OH	2	2
	Ante Up Softball, Cincinnati, OH	1	2
	Nappy Dugout, Harrison, OH	1	2
	Paul's Bus Service, West Chester, OH	1	2
13.	Ballin Bombers, Hamilton, OH	1	2
	Colliers, North Bend, OH	1	2
	Packaged Home Solutions, Cincinnati, OH	1	2
	Sibcy-Cline/BW3's Colerain, Cincinnati, OH	1	2
17.	Bo's Boys/Lilly Paints, Cincinnati, OH	0	2
	Good Fellows, Cincinnati, OH	0	2
	Ohio Army National Guard, Lawrenceburg, IN	0	2
	P. J. Canaan, Hamilton, OH	0	2

**WILLIAM D. BACKMAN IV MEMORIAL GREATER CIN.
USSSA CITY SLAM - "E" DIVISION ALL-TOURNAMENT**

Team Diamondback	Cincinnati Diamondbacks
Kenny Throckmorton	Cincinnati Diamondbacks
Ron Abeling	Columbia Hyundai
Terry Dollenmeyer	Columbia Hyundai
Joe Zigler	Columbia Hyundai
Scott Pangallo	Holy Grail/Champions
Mark Vollrath	Holy Grail/Champions
Chad Ploehs	Holy Grail/Champions
Mike Stiens	Holy Grail/Champions
Scott Worst	Holy Grail/Champions
Rob Bennett	Hard Knocks/Ryan's Painting
Albert Irvine	Hard Knocks/Ryan's Painting
Steve McCreary	Hard Knocks/Ryan's Painting
Brenden Kruse	Hard Knocks/Ryan's Painting
Bob Duggins	Hard Knocks/Ryan's Painting
Ike Kirch - ODP	Holy Grail/Champions
Bob Duggins - MVP	Hard Knocks/Ryan's Painting

**It's Arni's Over Dented Bats As World Champions Collide In 6th Annual Billy Backman-City Slam
USSSA Mixed "B-C" NIT Finals At Riverstar Park**

In a showdown between the 2006 USSSA Mixed "C" and "D" World Champions, Arni's Prime Players out-dueled Dented Bats in three consecutive games to capture first place in the 6th Annual Billy Backman Memorial-City Slam-USSSA Mixed "B-C" National Invitational June 2nd at Riverstar Park.

After spanking Half-N-Half 22-2 in six innings, Arni's outlasted Dented Bats 17-16 to finish pool play with a 2-0 record. Then in the tournament's double elimination round, Arni's out-slugged Dented Bats 21-18 in the winners' bracket finals and 20-16 in the championship game.

The victory gave Arni's a paid berth to the USSSA Mixed "B" World Tournament October 19-21 in Kissimmee, Fl.

No doubt about it, said Arni's David Bear: his team won the tournament with their sticks.

"We all had an outstanding weekend," summed up Bear. "When your team hits .608 for the tournament, it's pretty hard to get beat. We also stepped up and played some defense for a change."

Tim Wheeler paced the winners offensively with a hefty .909 effort. Art Buescher followed at .846, Jacob Gregory batted .818, Howard Conley .692, Rich Bear .667, Connie Ramos .636, Rich Lehman .600, Sherry Jenkins .584 and Angela Buescher .572.

Gregory and Jenkins were named the tournament's co-MVP's.

"This was Jacob's first time competing against this type of competition and he played very well for us," said Bear. "And Sherri hit pretty well at .584 and played some good defense at catch. She made some great tags at the plate."

Bear said his team's defensive standouts for the day were outfielder Howard Conley, 1st baseman Angela Buescher and 3rd baseman Rhonda Koetlowski.

"Howard played well in left field," said Bear. "He made a couple of nice, diving catches out there. Angela made some very nice scoops at 1st base and started a couple of key double plays. And Rhonda made some nice diving stops at 3rd base."

ake Gregory, Connie Ramoss, and Art and Angela Buescher combined for a dozen hits. Howard Conley contributed a three run homer and a slammer.

A nine run 3rd helped carry Arni's past Dented Bats 17-16 in game two. Dented Bats rallied for six runs in the bottom of the 7th before bowing out. Art Buescher banged out four hits, including a home run, and Rich Bear and Tim Wheeler chipped in three hits apiece.

In the winners' bracket finals, Arni's jumped out to a 17-7 lead with an eleven run 1st and a six run 2nd, then fended off a late Dented Bats charge again to preserve a 21-18 victory. A two-run Rich Bear double put Arni's ahead to stay at 6-5 in the 1st. Angela Buescher also delivered a two-run double in the inning.

Buescher, Tim Wheeler, and Rhonda Koetlowski shared nine hits to fuel the offense.

The two finalists locked horns again in the championship game, and battled to a 12-12 standstill through three innings. But in the bottom of the 4th, Arni's went ahead 13-12 on Sherri Jenkins' sac fly, then added four in the 5th to forge ahead 17-12. Dented Bats answered with three in the 6th, but Arni's came right back with three of their own, then held Dented Bats to a lone run in the 7th to come away with a 20-16 victory. Jacob Gregory doubled home three runs then scored on Connie Ramos single in the 5th. Back-to-back rbi doubles by Howard Conley and Amy Cannon and an Art Buescher sac fly accounted for Arni's three runs in the 6th.

Gregory, Buescher, Tim Wheeler and Jamie Rankin were all perfect in three at bats in the finals.

Arni's Dave Bear credited his club's victory to "team camaraderie.

"We all just get along and play well together," remarked Bear.

"I'm very proud of this team and hope we can keep up the good work," he added. "We can't wait to get down to the World and defend our title."

6TH ANN. WILLIAM D. BACKMAN MEMORIAL USSSA CITY SLAM MIXED "B-C" STANDINGS

1. Arni's/Prime Players, Indianapolis, IN 4 0
2. Dented Bats Softball, Mooresville, IN 2 2
3. Half And Half, Cleveland, OH 0 2

Wright, Ackley Lead Bomb Squad In 6th Annual Billy Backman-City Slam USSSA Mixed "D" NIT At Riverstar Park

Tournament MVP's Tim Wright batted .760 and Diana Ackley .600 to lead the Bomb Squad to a first place finish in the 6th Annual Billy Backman Memorial-City Slam-USSSA Mixed "D" National Invitational June 2nd at Riverstar Park.

Bomb Squad spanked Sizzle Softball 18-7 in the winners' bracket finals, then was awarded a 7-0 forfeit victory in the finals. The champions rallied from a 1-1 mark in pool play to sweep past four opponents in the double elimination bracket.

Ironically, Sizzle Softball had routed the Bomb Squad 13-1 in pool play.

The championship netted Bomb Squad a paid berth to the USSSA "D" World Tournament October 19-21 in Lake Buena Vista, Fl. The winners also qualified for the Ohio USSSA Mixed "D" State August 25-26 back at Riverstar Park, and for the U-Trip Great Lakes "D" Nationals September 29-30 in Dayton, Oh.

Runner-up Sizzle Softball was also awarded State and National berths, and third place Ozzies qualified for the State Tournament.

A defense that held all three elimination round opponents to single digit scoring and an offense that jumped out on top in the first inning of their last two games carried the Bomb Squad to the title, said manager Chris Rowe.

"When we weren't hitting, we played solid defense. That's how we beat Premier Sports in the first (elimination round) game," said Rowe.

"And it seemed like we hit at the beginning of every game. We got things started and put the other team down early so that they had to try to catch us."

Clutch hitting by Co-MVP's Tim Wright and Diana Ackley was also key, said Rowe.

"It seems like every time we needed a big hit, Tim came up and got it and he led the team in batting average and rbi's," remarked Rowe.

Rowe said his club was missing three of its starters, so some of Bomb Squad's subs "really stepped up and picked up the slack." And no one more than Diana Ackley, said Rowe.

"She stepped up and helped carry us through the tournament. Every time she got up, she found a way to get on base and it was always at key times," he noted.

In pool play, the Bomb Squad outslugged KSI 25-18, but then Sizzle Softball shut down the eventual champions 13-1.

The Columbus club continued to struggle for the first five innings of their elimination round opener, battling Premier Players to a 3-3 stalemate. But in the top of the 6th they erupted for four runs to grab a 7-3 lead, then added three in the 7th to secure an eventual 10-5 victory. Tim Wright's two-run triple put his club ahead to stay at 5-3. Rbi singles by Mike Rizzo and Jen Tracy capped off the inning. Premier Players

answered with two in the bottom of the 6th, but Maria Dorn matched that with a two run double in the top of the 7th, then scored on Mike Rizzo's base hit to close out the scoring.

Wright, Tracy and Rizzo each went 3-for-4 to pace the offense.

Next Bomb Squad used a six run 1st and a six run 3rd to build a 12-4 lead over Touch 'Em All, then held on for a 13-9 victory. John Siemer's rbi single put his team on the board in the 1st. Trina Gerhard had the big blow of the inning with a two-run single to make it 4-0. Maria Dorn and Diana Ackley each delivered a two-run single in the six run 3rd. Touch 'Em All rallied to outscore Bomb Squad 5-1 over the final four and a half innings, but fell short 13-9. Mike Rizzo and Jen Tracy combined for eight hits, and Maria Dorn chipped in three.

In the winners' bracket finals, which turned out to be the championship game, Bomb Squad knocked Sizzle Softball on their heels with a nine run outburst in the top of the 1st. A two-run double by Tim Wright and a two-run single by Diana Ackley highlighted the inning. John Siemer, who got the scoring underway with an rbi single, also singled home a run to cap off the inning. Sizzle Softball cut the lead to 9-6 after three, but Bomb Squad tacked on five more runs in the top of the 4th to break the game open and take a commanding 14-6 lead. Mike Rizzo collected two of the rbi's with a double. Tim Wright, Diana Ackley and Mark Gerhard contributed rbi singles.

Gerhard pounded out six hits, Maria Dorn added five, and Trina Gerhard, Tim Wright and Diana Ackley each went 4-for-5 to lead the champions.

6TH ANN. WILLIAM D. BACKMAN MEMORIAL USSSA CITY SLAM MIXED "D" STANDINGS

1. Bomb Squad, Hilliard, OH 4 0
2. Sizzle Softball, Mt. Orab, OH 3 2
3. Buckeyes Softball, Lebanon, OH 3 2
4. Ozzies, Fleming, OH 3 2
5. KSI, Indianapolis, IN 1 2
- Touch 'Em All, Indianapolis, IN 1 2
7. Premier Players, Louisville, KY 1 2
- Quiet Storm, Charleston, WV 1 2
9. Brady's Bunch/Cherry Grove Lanes, Batavia, OH 0 2

Back-To-Back Eleven Run Outbursts Carry TPE/Backstabbers Past Best Way 24-9 In TPS/Louisville Slugger-USSSA "D" NIT Finals At RiverShore

Hebron, Ky.--TPE/Backstabbers used back-to-back eleven run innings to overcome a 7-2 deficit and mercy-rule Best Way Frame/Nasty Boys 24-9 in the championship game of the TPS/Louisville Slugger-USSSA "D" National Invitational June 2nd at Rivershore Sports Complex.

The victory completed a three game sweep for TPE, who captured a berth to the USSSA "D" World Tournament September 1-3 in Sterling Heights, Mi.

Pitching and defense carried the champions to the title. The Backstabbers held all three opponents to single digit scoring. TPE allowed only seven runs in their first two games, routing Two-N-Out.com 11-6 in their opener and NKY Thunder 13-1 in the winners' bracket finals.

TPE/Backstabbers' manager Creg Storer credited pitcher Floyd Turner "first and foremost" with his club's success.

"He doesn't get near the recognition he should," said Storer. "He's been around the game for a long time and only gave up sixteen runs in three games.

“In our four years of existence, he’s had to keep us in single digit games because we haven’t hit,” added Storer. “And we’ve started to make his job a little easier by hitting some. But all the credit starts with him.”

Kyle Holmes, Mike Rabin and Mike Harris anchored the defense, said Storer.

“Kyle (cf) is our vocal leader,” remarked Storer. “He’s always upbeat and trying to keep everyone positive.”

“This weekend was also the debut of Mike Rabin, who showed up for the first time and played left field, and was a huge advantage for us,” continued Storer.

Storer called shortstop Mike Harris his “field general.”

“Mike controls everything from his shortstop position,” said Storer. “He does a good job of putting everyone in the right position and made the key plays when we needed them.”

Storer led his team offensively with a .727 effort and was named tournament MVP. Matt Flynn followed with a .714 day, Kyle Holmes batted .667 and John Nicely .615. They were joined on the All-Tournament team by Harris and Adam Shepherd.

TPE/Backstabbers never trailed in their first two games. An eight run 1st sealed an 11-6 win over Two-N-Out.com. John Nicely put his club on the board with an rbi single. Adam Shepherd’s two run triple made it 4-0, and an rbi double by Mike O’Day capped off the inning. Mike Harris, who contributed a big two run triple in the 4th, went 2-for-3 along with Mike Rabin and Mike O’Day.

Next the Backstabbers put up three in the 1st, three in the 3rd, and five in the 5th to take a commanding 12-1 lead over NKY Thunder and nail down an eventual 13-1 win. Kyle Holmes led off the 1st with a triple and scored the games’ first run on a Mike Rabin double. John Nicely capped off the inning with a two-run double. A two run double by Creg Storer and an rbi double by Adam Shepherd accounted for TPE’s three runs in the 3rd. And a two-run double by Mike O’Day highlighted the 5th. Floyd Turner held Thunder scoreless over the final five innings of the game. Adam Shepherd collected three hits, and Nicely and Turner chipped in two each.

That lifted the Backstabbers into the finals against Best Way Frame/Nasty Boys, who took an early 7-2 lead into the top of the 4th. But there the wheels fell off the wagon, as TPE exploded for twenty two runs in their next two at bats to build an insurmountable 24-8 advantage. An rbi single by Kyle Holmes gave his team the lead for good at 8-7. The lead swelled to 10-7 on Creg Storer’s two run double. Overall the ‘Stabbers put up eleven runs in the inning to lead 13-7. Then in the 5th, TPE struck for eleven more runs with the help of ten consecutive hits. A leadoff double by Mike Harris ignited the rally. Creg Storer’s two run double and a two-run single by Floyd Turner were the big blows of the inning. Later in the inning Jeremy Vandever’s rbi single made it 24-8 and closed out the scoring for the Backstabbers.

Storer drove in five runs and combined with Holmes and Vandever for a dozen hits. Matt Flynn went 2-for-2.

“It was a great tournament for us,” commented TPE’s Storer. “We’ve been together four years and this is our first NIT win.”

“Our one regret was that Brian George and Greg Kinsella, two of the original Backstabbers, didn’t play this weekend. We wish they had been there to celebrate with us,” said Storer.

“We were also missing Rusty Beatty and Matt Feathers, who were also out for the weekend,” he noted. “We wish they had been there to celebrate.”

Storer concluded by thanking Rivershore manager Patty Amrein.

“She did a great job with the weather and an electric delay. She did everything she could to make the tournament run smoothly.”

LOUISVILLE SLUGGER/TPS-USSSA “D” NATIONAL INVITATIONAL - RIVERSHORE SPORTS COMPLEX

1. TPE/Backstabbers, Cincinnati, OH 3 0
2. Best Way Frame/Nasty Boys, Bellevue, KY 4 2
3. NKY Thunder, Burlington, KY 2 2
4. Nu-Way Drywall, Newport, KY 3 2
5. Two-N-Out.com, Florence, KY 1 2
6. Veteran’s Security/Easton, Louisville, KY 1 2
7. Dino’s/T & T Freightways, Burlington, KY 0 2
8. Pharmacy Solutions, National City, Florence, KY 0 2
9. Brew Crew, Harrison, OH 0 2

Dwyer Concrete Goes 5-0 In Worth/Bud Light/USSSA “D” State-National Qualifier At Queen City

West Chester, Ohio - Dwyer Concrete was undefeated in five games as they captured first place in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “D” State-National Qualifier at Queen City Sports Complex on June 2nd. The championship qualifies them for the USSSA State Tournament in Harrison on August 18-19. They also earned a berth to USSSA Great Lakes Division Nationals in Indianapolis on September 1-3.

In the first of two games of pool play, Dwyer Concrete took on Southwest Bombers. Matt Hochstrasser led all hitters in the 17-15 victory by going 4-for-5 at the plate. Andrew Kaiser was 3-for-4 including a grand slam homerun. Ulysses Lambert, Kasey Kirkpatrick, and Brett Hamilton also went 3-for-4.

Game two pitted Dwyer against Kaivac. Andrew Kaiser continued to produce at the plate, going 3-for-3. Frank Cummings was also 3-for-3. Kasey Kirkpatrick went 3-for-4 for the second game in a row. Gene Shepard chipped in three hits of his own as Dwyer cruised to a 16-5 victory.

Dwyer posted their only mercy-rule victory in the first game of single-elimination play versus the Dew Drop Inn. In the seven-run 4th, Jason Wesselman doubled in three runs and Brett Hamilton two more as the eventual winners scored seven times to take a 12-3 lead. The final was 13-3 in five innings as a quartet of Dwyer Concrete hitters - Matt Hochstrasser, Kasey Kirkpatrick, Brett Hamilton, and Frank Cummings - went 2-for-3.

The semifinals between Dwyer and Riptide/Roaring Lion/Pilot Inn were much closer. Going into the bottom of the 4th, the game was all even at 7-7. Brett Hamilton broke the tie with an RBI double. Jason Wesselman followed suit to increase the advantage to 9-7. In the final three innings, Riptide/Roaring Lion/Pilot Inn failed to score again while Dwyer Concrete added a couple of insurance runs, making it an 11-7 final. Nick Vogelsang, 4-for-4, had his best performance at the plate in the tournament. Brett Hamilton and Jason Wesselman each were 3-for-4.

State Farm/Howard gave Dwyer all they could handle in the tournament finals. In fact, Dwyer found themselves trailing 12-10 going into the bottom of the last frame. Gene Shepherd led that at bat off with a double. After a pop out, Kasey Kirkpatrick singled him in to cut the lead to one run. Brett Hamilton's base hit advanced him to third. Then, with runners on the corners, Jason Wesselman doubled to score both men on base and win the game for Dwyer, 13-12. Wesselman, along with Shepherd, Kirkpatrick, and Hamilton, was 3-for-4 in the championship effort.

Wesselman hit .611 in the tournament. “If we had picked an MVP it would probably be Jason. He had a bunch of clutch hits including the game winner in the last game,” explained Dwyer Concrete captain Kasey Kirkpatrick. “Jason [in leftfield] was kept busy the whole tournament. He made a bunch of big catches, got the ball in quickly, and didn't allow any runners to take extra bases.”

Brett Hamilton posted the top batting average, .765, for Dwyer Concrete in the tournament. Other noteworthy performances included Kirkpatrick at .631 and Andrew Kaiser who hit .555.

In the field, the pitching of Nick Vogelsang was a key to success according to Kirkpatrick. "He allowed no walks and kept us in each game."

Dwyer Concrete was also solid up the middle with Ulysses Lambert (2nd base), Gene Shepherd (middle infielder), and Matt Hochstrasser (shortstop). "Matt and Gene were a good one-two combination turning double plays. Ulysses kept everything in front of him and caught a couple over his shoulder and made a few good diving catches," Kirkpatrick noted.

Ice Softball Is Stone Cold In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" State-National Qualifier At Expressway Park

By Andy Zureick

Milford, Ohio - Ice Softball was a perfect 4-0 including three mercy rule victories as they took first place in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" State-National Qualifier at Expressway Park on June 2nd.

Game one versus JB's would be a typical Ice Softball win for the day - an early lead, a big inning late, and a six-inning victory. In this one they jumped out to a 5-0 lead in the bottom of the 1st inning. Jeremy Lansing led the way with a three-run homer. Brad Ballinger's two-run double in the 6th helped his team plate six runs and cap a 15-5 victory. Ballinger and teammate Jeremy Burton were 3-for-4 in the game. John Mulvihill went 4-for-4.

The second game of the day against Team Havoc went just about the same as the first. Reuben Moore doubled in two runs to get the scoring started in the bottom of the 1st. In all, Team Ice would total six in the at bat. Four more runs in the 4th including two RBI from Mike Williams stretched the lead to ten at 11-1. Each team would score six more on the way to a 17-7 six-inning decision. Moore and Jeremy Lansing tied for a team-best 3-for-3. Brad Ballinger, Jeremy Burton, and Adam Conover were all 3-for-4.

The third game of the day brought JB's back for another go 'round. The results were the same, only the details were changed. This time, John Mulvihill led the way in a four-run 3rd with a double that drove in two runs. That made the score 6-1. Pete Jackson delivered the final blow in the bottom of the 6th when he singled in two runs to make the score 14-4 and invoke the mercy rule. The trio of John Mulvihill, Brad Ballinger, and Jeremy Lansing were all 3-for-4 for the game.

The wrap-up was a rematch between Team Havoc and Ice Softball. In this one, Team Ice found themselves in unfamiliar territory as they trailed 9-3 after three innings of play. "We were a little drained and came out slow," explained team manager Mike Williams. But thanks to a Reuben Moore grand slam and a pair of RBI singles from Jason Reuss and Adam Conover, Team Ice managed to take the lead 10-9 in the top of the 4th. Williams and Reuss each knocked in a run in the 6th to increase the advantage to 12-9. Team Havoc fought back with a run in each of their final two chances, but it was too little, too late. The final score was 12-11. Pete Jackson collected three hits in the win. Jason Reuss went 2-for-3.

Jeremy Lansing led all Team Ice hitters on the day with a 0.667 batting average including three doubles, a triple, a homerun, 10 RBI, and seven runs scored. "He's what I expected of him all year - our leading hitter batting around 0.700," Williams noted. "When he's up, you never have to worry about him because he's going to get the job done." Williams also had a good day at the plate by driving in 10 runs while hitting 0.636. Brad Ballinger and John Mulvihill both hit 0.625. Reuben Moore collected 9 RBI in the four games.

"We showed up to play and jumped on teams early. The heart of our lineup was clutch all day, and the bottom of the lineup did extremely well. When the bottom of the lineup can roll it back to the top, you're going to win ball games," Williams said.

“Were probably one of the faster teams around, that's a big advantage on other teams. It makes the other teams defense hustle after the ball and make good plays to get us out.”

The first-place finish qualifies Ice Softball for the USSSA State Tournament in Harrison on August 18-19 and the Nationals in Indianapolis on Labor Day Weekend.

Barnstormers Cruise In USSSA “E” World Qualifier At Northern Kentucky Sports Park
By Andy Zureick

Taylor Mill, Ky. - The Barnstormers went a perfect 4-0 to win a USSSA “E” World Qualifier at Northern Kentucky Sports Park on June 3rd. In the five-team round robin, they won every game they played by way of the mercy rule, completing four games in only 20 innings of play.

In game one of the day versus Renegades, the Barnstormers started a run in the top of the 1st inning that would seemingly last all day. Tyler Jasper, Josh Sullivan, and Josh Storer each drove in runs as part of the six-run at bat. Jasper and Sullivan drove in a couple more in the next frame as the Barnstormers increased their advantage to 10-1. Four more in the top of the 4th paved the way to a 15-4, five-inning victory. Ricky Arnold led all hitters at 4-for-4. Tyler Jasper was 3-for-4 with a couple of RBI. Josh Sullivan, Bobby Stahl, and Brian Crafton were all 3-for-3.

The Barnstormers kept pouring it on in their next contest against the Benchwarmers. Twelve runs in the top of the 3rd broke open a 4-3 game. Tony Storer doubled in two runs in the inning. Ricky Arnold added a two-run inside-the-park homer. They tacked on eight more in the 4th. The Benchwarmers failed to score for the second straight at bat, ending it at 24-3. Arnold again went 4-for-4 including a double and a homerun. Josh Storer was a perfect 3-for-3. Bobby Stahl and Brian Rethman both went 3-for-4. Steve Harrington collected a team-best four RBI.

The Barnstormers waited until the top of the 5th to put the game away when playing Miller Imprints. Dave Bells' two-run homer capped a seven-run inning that blew wide open a game that had been close at 8-4. Miller Imprints could not answer, wrapping up a 15-4 run-rule win for the Barnstormers in five innings. Brian Rethman tallied three more hits in as many at bats. Josh Storer and Dave Bells were 2-for-2. Josh Sullivan went 2-for-3.

The Green Machine got the last chance to derail the Barnstormers. They fared no better than the three previous teams. Tyler Jasper drove in one run and Brian Rethman tripled in another as part of the four-run bottom of the 1st. They never looked back. In the bottom of the 3rd, Dave Bells singled in two runs and Tyler Jasper smacked two inside-the-park round trippers as the lead swelled to 14-1. The Green Machine showed a little fight with five runs in their last three at bats, but it was too little, too late. They did manage, however, to last longer against the Barnstormers than any other team in the tournament as it took six innings to wrap it up, 16-6. Jasper totaled three inside-the-park homers to go along with 6 RBI in a 4-for-4 performance. Josh Storer and Bobby Stahl added three hits apiece.

Stahl, with a batting average of .786, would finish the day as leading hitter the Barnstormers. Finishing a close second was Josh Storer at .706. Dave Bells (.615) and Ricky Arnold (.600) also had solid days at the plate.

According to Barnstormers manager Shawn Haley, his team's hitting from beginning to end and solid defense were keys to the tournament championship. “The whole team stood out. We didn't really give up anything major, just played good team defense. We turned several double plays that got us out of innings. We only gave up 17 runs in four games.”

Bobby Stahl and Tyler Jasper turned in outstanding individual efforts.

“[Bobby] played good defense, got hits when they were needed. He adjusted to the defense that out there and was able to get hits,” said Haley.

“Tyler Jasper only batted .571 but led the team in RBI and had three homeruns in one game. He helped pace the team in the number two slot and had a real solid performance,” the manager noted. Jasper also led the team in runs scored.

The first-place finish earned the Barnstormers a berth to the USSSA World Tournament in Kissimmee, Florida on September 14-16.

Royals, BJ’s Body Shop, Diamond Cutters Take Queen City Divisions

West Chester, Oh.--The Royals, BJ’s Body Shop and the Diamond Cutters each compiled a perfect 3-0 record en route to a first place finish in their respective division in a twelve team, three division Sunday morning round robin June 3rd at Queen City Sports Complex.

The Royals spanked Camel’s Towing (0-3) 13-6 and Lindenwald’s Finest (1-2) 20-7 before out-dueling UAW #863 (2-1) 8-7 in the deciding game in the “C/D” division.

In the “D” division, BJ’s Boyd Shop routed All Season Reload (0-3) 12-2, trimmed Epps (1-2) 8-6, then polished off Accurate Masonry (2-1) 16-8 in a showdown for first place.

While in the “E” division, the Diamond Cutters used a solid defense to hold three opponents to single digit scoring, as they battled past Edgewood Smash (2-1) 7-4 in a key first round match-up with the eventual division runners-up, RTFS (0-3) 4-2 and Pacific Bombers (1-2) 9-8.

June 9-10 Articles...

Harrington Blanks JLC/Legends/Countrywide 9-0 In Finals...

Wright Powers Extreme/Moose/Shirtworks/Fents In Softball Magazine-Easton-USSSA “C” NIT At Pastime Park

Harrison, Oh.--Josh Wright hit .750 and pitcher Steve Harrington held four of five opponents to single digit scoring to lead Extreme/Moose/Shirtworks/Fents to a first place finish in the Softball Magazine-Easton-USSSA “C” National Invitational June 9th at Pastime Park.

Harrington blanked JLC/Legends/Countrywide 9-0 in the championship game to give Extreme a five game sweep of the ten-team event. Extreme was only seriously challenged once, when they outslugged Falcon Theater/USB 18-15 in a third round game.

The victory gave Extreme a berth into the USSSA “C” World Tournament September 20-23 in Kissimmee, Fl.

Wright, who homered in three of his team’s five games, including two in an opening round 11-6 win over All-Stars/Rookies/Websters, and Harrington, shared MVP honors.

“Josh hit .750 and used his home runs wisely,” pointed out Extreme manager Danny DeWitt. “And his hits were all clutch hits that seemed to get us going. He had some big hits and big rbi’s.

“We also selected Steve because of the job he did pitching going 5-0 and he batted .538,” said DeWitt. “I don’t think I’ve ever had a pitcher shut a team out in the finals of a tournament. He also pitched a good game against Brock Restoration and JLC in the winners’ bracket finals. He’s one of the few pitchers I’ve had who could take over a game.”

T. J. Hill also played a big role in Extreme’s championship, batting a hefty .684. Dean Merriman chipped in with a .579 mark. Overall, however, DeWitt said his team’s offense was not up to par.

“When you look at the averages, you wonder how you won,” said DeWitt. “We didn’t hit like we’re capable, but we had some timely hitting, and we picked each other up throughout the day. There were a lot of two out hits.”

Fortunately, said DeWitt, the defense and pitching were stellar.

“We played a four-man the whole weekend and you don’t see that hardly ever anymore. And when you’re in a four-man, you leave your pitcher out there and he fielded the middle well all weekend. No one ever drove us into the three,” remarked DeWitt.

“We made the plays we needed to make,” he added. “Our whole infield - T. J. Hill at 2nd, Dan Rickman at short, and Andy DeWitt at 3rd - made the plays all day. And since our outfield was in a four-man, nobody had to do anything outstanding and it saved the wear and tear on them and enabled them to make the plays they were supposed to make.”

Extreme never trailed in their first two games, as they disposed of All-Stars/Rookies/Websters 11-6 and Brock Restoration/Hot Wings/Schmoe’s Collision 12-4.

Josh Wright collected three hits, including two home runs, and six rbi’s, and Steve Harrington and Dale Fent each went 2-for-3 against Websters. Wright tripled with the bases loaded and scored on a Dan Rickman sac fly as Extreme went up 4-0 in the top of the 1st. Wright clubbed a three run homer to make it 7-2 in the 5th. Andy DeWitt contributed a key two run double in the 6th.

Next Extreme jumped out to a 10-1 lead over Brock Restoration after three innings and never looked back. A two run double by Jeremy Journal and a two run shot by Mark Horn accounted for four of Extreme’s five runs in the bottom of the 1st. Josh Wright made it 8-0 with a three run blast in the 2nd. Andy DeWitt’s two run double made it 10-1 in the 3rd. T. J. Hill and Dale Fent each went 3-for-4 to pace the offense.

Falcon Theater/USB held a 6-4 lead for two innings in game three, but Extreme rallied for five runs in the top of the 3rd and outscored Falcon 14-9 over the final five innings to emerge with a hard-fought 18-15 victory. Jeremy Journal’s two run single put his club ahead to stay at 8-6 in the 3rd. Jason Ferguson’s two run double capped off a three run 4th as the lead swelled to 12-7. Two innings later Mark Horn belted a two run homer to make it 15-10. Finally in the 7th Josh Wright closed out the scoring with a two run triple to give his club an 18-12 advantage. Falcon answered with three in the bottom of the inning to make the final 18-15.

Dean Merriman pounded out five hits, and Wright added four for the winners.

That lifted Extreme into the winners’ bracket finals against JLC, who drew first blood with a run in the top of the 1st. But Extreme took control quickly with six in the bottom of the 1st and six in the 2nd to forge a 12-1 lead, and JLC never recovered, falling 17-7. Josh Wright put his team on the board with a three-run rip in the 1st. Mark Horn followed with a two run double. A pair of two run doubles - one by Jason Ferguson and the other by Dan Rickman, and a two run homer by Jeremy Journal made it 12-1 in the 2nd.

T. J. Hill banged out four hits, and Wright, Dean Merriman and Andy DeWitt shared nine.

Both teams appeared tight in the finals, but Extreme finally got on the board in the top of the 4th when Josh Wright tripled and scored on Jeremy Journal’s base hit. A three run swat by J. T. Hill made it 4-0 in the 5th, then Mark Horn doubled in two runs in the 6th as the lead swelled to 6-0. Then in the 7th Jason Ferguson launched a three-run homer to close out the scoring at 9-0. Journal, Hill and Horn each went 2-for-3 for the champions.

EASTON-SOFTBALL MAGAZINE-USSSA “C” NIT FINAL STANDINGS - JUNE 9, HARRISON, OH

1. Extreme/Moose/Shirtworks/Fent, Springfield, OH 5 0

2. JLC/Legends/Countrywide, Elsmere, KY 4 2
3. Brock/Hot Wings/Schmoe's Col., Cinti., OH 4 2
4. All-Stars/Rookies/Websters, Zionsville, IN 3 2
5. Falcon Theater/USB, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
- M & S Drywall/Easton, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
7. Game Time Softball, Cincinnati, Oh 1 2
- Hitmen, Hillsboro, OH 1 2
9. Dino's/T & T Freightways, Richwood, KY 0 2
- Taylor Flooring/Max Softball, Cincinnati, OH 0 2
- PRI/Easton, Cincinnati, OH 0 2

Murphy, Sandlin Lead Champions At Eggleston Park...

Good Guys/GBI Double-Dip Cooper Auto/Tanel 360 10-9, 9-4 In Softball Magazine-Easton-USSSA "D" NIT

Colerain Township, Oh. – Pitcher Doug Murphy held six of seven opponents to single digit scoring, and Brian Sandlin hit a sizzling .769 to lead Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati to a first place finish in the Softball Magazine-Easton-USSSA "D" National Invitational June 9th at Eggleston Park.

Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati double-tipped Cooper Auto-Tanel 360 10-9 and 9-4 in the finals to wrap up a 6-1 day and earn a berth to the USSSA "D" World Tournament September 20-23 in Sterling Heights, Mi.

Cooper/Tanel had rallied for six runs in the top of the 8th to saddle the Good Guys with their only loss in an 11-5 setback in the winners' bracket finals.

The champions won behind the pitching of tournament MVP Doug Murphy, who held five of his team's six victims to four runs or less.

"If it hadn't been for the six runs Cooper scored on us in the 8th inning in the winners' bracket finals, Doug would have given up less than ten runs in every game we played," remarked Good Guys/GBI manager Terris Allen. "He set the tone and pitched to our five-man."

Defense and pitching were the keys, summed up Allen.

"We played outstanding defense. In a couple of games we didn't score a lot of runs, and we left a lot of men on base, but our defense was there the whole tournament," said Allen.

The infield was anchored by middle infielder Scott Goetz and shortstop Chad Goetz, who "turned numerous double plays," said Allen.

Allen said his outfield "is as fast as any around.

"Brian Stevenson (lf), Brett Hopkins (cf) and Ryan Hayes (rf) played great," said Allen. "They played a three-man the entire seven games."

Offensively, Brian Sandlin turned in a red-hot .769 performance. Ryan Hayes followed right behind at .739, Scott Goetz batted .667, Brian Stevenson .640 and Chad Goetz chipped in with a .586 effort.

The Good Guys manhandled their first two opponents, routing Blast Softball 16-4 and Two-N-Out.com 14-3 to open play. Good Guys scored four in the 1st, three in the 2nd and five in the 4th to build a 13-3 lead over Blast and never looked back. Brian Sandlin put his team on the board with a two run single in the 1st. Scott Goetz' two run double capped off the 3rd, and a two run single by Sandlin and Brian Stevenson's two run triple accounted for four runs in the 4th.

Doug Murphy banged out four hits, and Sandlin, Brent Hopkins, Chad and Scott Goetz, and Nick Bibbins each went 3-for-4 to pace the offense.

In game two Good Guys grabbed a 5-0 lead in the top of the 1st, then put the game away with a six run 5th. Brian Sandlin again singled in the first two runs of the game in the 1st. Adam Carr's two run double capped off the inning. The 6th featured a two run single by Brian Stevenson and a pair of two run doubles - one by Nick Bibbins and the other by Matt Turner.

Sandlin, Stevenson, and Chad and Scott Goetz combined for a dozen hits.

For the third straight game Brian Sandlin delivered a two run single in the 1st to ignite the scoring as Good Guys took a quick 2-0 lead over TPE/Backstabbers 5-2 in game three. Sandlin then doubled home a run in the 3rd. Ryan Hayes single made it 4-0 in the 4th, then Chad Goetz plated Good Guys' final run with a double in the 7th. TPE finally got to Doug Murphy with two runs in the bottom of the 7th to avoid the shutout.

Chad Goetz had his third consecutive three hit game, and Brian Sandlin and Ryan Hayes each went 2-for-3 for the winners.

Cooper Auto then ambushed Good Guys 11-5 in eight innings to relegate the Northern Kentucky team to the losers' bracket.

Waiting was TPE, who battled the eventual champions to a 4-4 stalemate through three and a half innings. But in the bottom of the 4th, Good Guys took the lead for good on Matt Turner's sac fly. Ryan Busse then singled home an insurance run. A two run Brian Stevenson double made it 8-4 in the 5th, and the Good Guys added one more in the 6th to make the final 9-4. Stevenson, Brian Sandlin, Adam Carr and Brent Hopkins shared twelve hits in the win.

In a ten-inning final, Cooper Auto was poised to make it a sweep when they finally took a 9-8 lead in the top of the 10th. But Good Guys would not be denied. With one out, Brian Sandlin doubled and scored on Doug Murphy's triple to knot the score. Then, after Cooper issued two intentional passes to set up a possible double play, the next batter hit a ball to Cooper's middle infielder, who stepped on 2nd for the second out, but then overthrew 1st base to allow Murphy to score the game winner.

Sandlin collected four hits, and Hopkins, Stevenson and Chad and Scott Goetz each went 3-for-5.

The lead changed hands three times over the first four innings in the second finals, but in the bottom of the 5th, the Good Guys went ahead to stay with a four run outburst. Brian Sandlin drove in the go ahead runs, breaking the 3-3 tie with a two run double. Nick Bibbins then singled in two more runs as the lead swelled to 7-3. Brent Hopkins contributed two more runs with a two run single in the 6th. Cooper scored the final run of the game in the top of the 7th before bowing out 9-4.

Brian Sandlin pounded out four hits, and Bibbins, Brian Stevenson and Chad Goetz added three each.

Good Guys' manager Terris Allen said he believes the victory will prove to be a breakout event for his club.

"This tournament can finally get our team over the hump to become an even better team in the future," said Allen. "We haven't won a signature tournament. We've finished second five times but never could get that big tournament victory. In three NIT's this year, we've finished first, second and seventh."

Allen said his team added two veterans in the off-season - Doug Murphy and Brian Sandlin - and they made the difference.

"It feels great to get this NIT victory and World berth out of the way in early June," concluded Allen. "Now we can relax the rest of the season and play a lot looser."

EASTON-SOFTBALL MAGAZINE-USSSA "D" NIT

FINAL STANDINGS - JUNE 9, HARRISON, OH

1. Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati, Edgewood, KY 6 1
2. Cooper Auto/Tanel 360, Huber Heights, OH 4 2
3. TPE/Backstabbers, Cincinnati, OH 4 2
4. Two-N-Out.com, Florence, KY 3 2
5. Team Chaos, Franklin, OH 3 2
- Best Way Frame/Nasty Boys, Bellevue, KY 2 2
7. Team Havoc, Wilmington, OH 2 2
- Clark County Merchants, Springfield, OH 1 2
9. Accurate Masonry/Queen City Acc., Cinti., OH 1 2
- Cotner Funeral Home, Columbus, OH 1 2
- Blast Softball, Indianapolis, IN 0 2
- M & M Connection/Saints, Newport, KY 0 2
13. CJ's Roofing/Dirty Dozen, Cincinnati, OH 0 2
- Triple Threat, Cincinnati, OH 0 2

EASTON-SOFTBALL MAGAZINE-USSSA MEN'S CLASS "D" NIT ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM

Anthony Weber Two-N-Out.com
Mike Sellet Two-N-Out.com
Adam Shepherd TPE/Backstabbers
Matt Feathers TPE/Backstabbers
Rusty Beatty TPE/Backstabbers
Marcus Adams Cooper Auto/Tanel 360
Justin Evans Cooper Auto/Tanel 360
Eric Heinrich Cooper Auto/Tanel 360
James Hatcher Cooper Auto/Tanel 360
Dave Potter Cooper Auto/Tanel 360
Brian Sandlin Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati
Chaz Goetz Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati
Brian Stevenson Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati
Ryan Hays Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati
Scott Goetz Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati
Brian Dinsmore - ODP Cooper Auto/Tanel 360
Doug Murphy - MVP Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati

Pitching, Defense Carries Champions Past 24-Team Field...

Pamco/ECC Escape Playmakers, Rout Mabe's In Softball Magazine-Easton-USSSA "E" Finals At Pastime Park

Harrison, Oh.--Pamco/ECC escaped with a 15-14 victory over the Playmakers, then spanked Mabe's 14-2 in the championship game en route to a first place finish in the Softball Magazine-Easton-USSSA "E" World Qualifier June 9th at Pastime Park.

The victory over Mabe's wrapped up a five game sweep for the champions, who went 3-0 in pool play before disposing of Playmakers and Mabe's. Pamco/ECC will now advance to the USSSA "E" State Tournament August 18-19 in Dayton, the U-Trip "E" Nationals Labor Day Weekend at Expressway Park, and to the "E" World September 13-16 in Lake Buena Vista, Fl.

Runner-up Mabe's also qualified for state and national play, and Stongo Mongo's, T-Squad and Oops Towing/12 Angry Batters earned state tournament berths.

Pitching and defense carried Pamco/ECC to the title, said manager Scott Code.

“Pitching-wise, Brad Morris only walked one batter the entire tournament and struck out three,” observed Code. “He made the other teams put the ball in play.

“And our defense was really good. We allowed only 5.2 runs per game, committed only five errors in five games, and turned four double plays,” noted Code. “Our outfield play was outstanding. We only had one error in the outfield for the entire tournament.”

Amazingly, said Code, this was all accomplished with a patchwork defense.

“We had some people missing, and we moved a lot of guys around. We only had three guys in their natural positions, so I was really pleased for us to play that kind of defense with so many guys in different positions,” said Code.

Code said his team also “ran the bases very well.

“We tried putting our speed guys in front of our left-handed batter or our right-handed batters who hit the ball to right so we would be able to go from 1st to 3rd,” said Code.

Jason Sickmeijer turned in a hefty .750 average for the day to lead Pamco offensively. Code followed at .667, Todd Theiland and Mike Rom each batted .746 and Brad Morris .625.

Morris was named tournament MVP.

“He hit the ball well and led our team in rbi’s, and he only walked one batter for the tournament,” said Code. “He was the only person who always had the ball in his hands on every single play, plus he’s the one who takes the ball off his shins and has the rockets hit right back at him.”

Pamco/ECC brushed aside their round robin opponents without working up a sweat, romping past Stink Pickles 15-6, Hoosier Motor Sports 17-0 and Ballin Bombers 16-4.

Brad Seiter banded out three hits, and Mike Rom drove in six runs and went 2-for-3 along with Todd Theiland against Stink Pickles. Brad Morris tossed the shutout over Hoosier Motor Sports, and collected four hits, and Theiland and Josh Feldman chipped in two hits apiece. Then against the Bombers, Mike Schmidt pounded out five hits, Mike Rom knocked in four runs and shared eight hits with Gret Ditrick.

It took Pamco six innings to shake the Playmakers in the semi-finals. With the score knotted at 9-9, Pamco erupted for six runs, taking the lead on Mike Schmidt’s rbi single. A two-run single by Scott Code capped off the inning. The Playmakers answered with five runs, but were held scoreless in the 7th with the help of a game-saving catch by outfielder Brad Seiter.

Scott Code was perfect in four at bats, and Todd Theiland and Jason Sickmeijer each went 3-for-4 to pace the offense.

Mabe’s drew first blood with two runs in the top of the 1st in the finals. It was the first - and last - time Pamco would trail in the tournament, as they outscored Mabe’s 14-0 over the next six innings. Pamco overtook Mabe’s with four runs in the bottom of the 3rd to grab a 5-2 lead. Brad Morris’ rbi single put his club ahead to stay at 3-2. The lead swelled to 6-3 after five and a half, then in the bottom of the 6th, Pamco exploded for eight runs to break the game open. A pair of two-run singles - one by Todd Theiland and the other by Brad Morris - highlighted the inning.

Mike Rom collected four hits, and Scott Code, Jason Sickmeijer and Brad Seiter each went 3-for-4 to lead the champions.

Was Pamco surprised to handle their opponents with such ease?

“It was only our second USSSA tournament in the past two years, so I was pretty pleased with our performance,” commented Scott Code.

Getting past the Playmakers was “huge,” said Code.

“They came back two times against us. Every time we jumped in front of them they answered,” said Code. “In the bottom of the 7th with two runners on and two outs, Brad Seiter made a spectacular catch to save the game. If it would have gotten past him, both runs would have scored and they would have won. Instead, it was the third out.”

Another key, said Code, was for Pamco to win its bracket.

“By winning our pool, we had one less good team to go through,” pointed out Code.

Late Rallies Carry Champions To Third Title...

Ty-1-On Escapes Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Blue Chip Classic NIT “C” Field At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--Ty-1-On escaped with an 18-13, eight inning win over Hill & Griffith in their first game after trailing for five innings, then rallied for two runs in the bottom of the 6th in the finals to nip the Shooters 10-9 en route to a first place finish in the class “B-C” division of the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Blue Chip Classic June 9-10 at Expressway Park.

The victory over the Shooters wrapped up a 3-0 weekend for the winners, who are now perfect in three tournament outings kicking off the 2007 season.

“We seem to be on a roll,” acknowledged Ty-1-On manager Colleen Needham. “We aren’t running up against the kind of competition we’ll see in the ‘B’ World, so we still need to work on our game.”

Indeed. Despite their 3-0 record, Ty-1-On has looked like anything but the team that finished third in the 2006 USSSA “B” World.

But, as usual, they find a way to win. And this time, said Needham, they did it with “timely hitting” and composure.

“We didn’t really hit well as a team,” said Needham. “We didn’t play our best defense, and we got behind in every game. But we didn’t panic, and kept chipping away until we got ourselves in a position to win.

Lisa Richter and Andrea Costa each batted a sizzling .700 to pace the offense. Jane Eltzroth followed right behind at .667, Erin Engelkmap hit .571, Shelly Cummins .555 and Karen Kron and M. J. Ranz chipped in with a .500 effort.

Lisa Richter garnered MVP honors.

“Besides starting several rallies at the bottom of the order that helped us come from behind, she played left field the whole tournament and cut off a lot of balls that would normally be doubles and held them to singles in crucial situations that kept us in the game and allowed us to the opportunity to come from behind.”

Richter got some strong support from outfielder Jane Eltzroth, noted Needham.

“Jane played right and right-center, and on Saturday she really made an outstanding play with a diving catch against Hill & Griffith in the bottom of the 8th.”

Karen Kron anchored the infield, said Needham.

“She always plays a good second base for us and she turned some big double plays.”

After a shakey 1st inning in which they fell behind Hill & Griffith 9-6, Ty-1-On chipped away at the lead, finally tying the game on Karen Kron's rbi single in the top of the 6th. After a scoreless 7th, Lisa Richter singled to lead off the 8th, went to 3rd on Shelly Cummins' base hit, then scored the go-ahead run on a fielder's choice. Theresa Hirschauer and Erin Engelkamp followed with singles to load the bases, and Brenda Ryan delivered a two-run double to make it 16-13. The lead swelled to 17-13 on a Celia Fritz sac fly, then singles by Shirley Cummins and Jane Eltzroth closed out the scoring.

Eltzroth pounded out five hits to lead the winners. Andrea Costa and Erin Engelkamp added three hits each.

In game two Ty-1-On found themselves trailing again, this time to the Shooters, 6-3, after three and a half. But in the bottom of the 4th, Ty-1-On exploded for sixteen runs to mercy-rule the stunned Dayton club 19-6. A single by Rhonda Klette knotted the score at 6-6, then an rbi single by Shelly Cummins put her club ahead to stay at 7-6. Celia Fritz followed with a two-run single to plate a couple of insurance runs. Later Andrea Costa made it 12-6 with a two run single. Finally Theresa Hirschauer singled home two runs to invoke the mercy rule.

Fritz, Costa and Richter combined for six hits.

The Shooters disposed of Team BP 16-11 in the losers' bracket finals to earn a re-match with Ty-1-On, and the two finalists battled to an 8-8 stalemate until the bottom of the 6th. After Lori Wilp walked to lead off the inning, the Shooters retired the next two hitters. But Lisa Richter singled to keep the inning alive and set the stage for a clutch two-run Shelly Cummins' double. The Shooters refused to quit, however, and loaded the bases with one out in the top of the 7th. But pitcher Brenda Ryan induced the next batter to line out to Shirley Cummins at 3rd, then recorded the final out on a fly ball to Lisa Richter in left field.

Richter, Shelly and Shirley Cummins and M. J. Ranz shared eight hits for the champions.

WORTH-BUD LIGHT-BLUE CHIP CLASSIC USSSA NIT WOMEN'S CLASS "B-C" DIVISION FINAL STANDINGS

1. Ty-1-On, Cincinnati, OH 3 0
2. Shooters, Dayton, OH 3 2
3. Team BP, Rockford, IL 3 2
4. Chuck Chicks, Louisville, KY 2 2
5. Tilton Trucking, Urbana, OH 2 2
6. American Legion, Sidney, OH 0 3
7. Hill & Griffith, Cincinnati, OH 1 3

BUD LIGHT-BLUE CHIP CLASSIC USSSA NIT WOMEN'S CLASS "B-C" ALL-TOURN. TEAM

Joanna Sharp Team BP
Katie Weiss Shooters
Terry Bennett Shooters
Michelle Cummins Ty-1-On
Jane Eltzroth Ty-1-On
Andrea Costa Ty-1-On
Karen Kron Ty-1-On
Trish Hudson - MVP Shooters
Lisa Richter - MVP Ty-1-On

Tournament MVP Christy Yeager Blanks Three Opponents...

Milford Hit-Hers/Porter-Guerin Double-Dips Bedrock 2-1, 11-0 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Blue Chip Classic NIT "D" Finals At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--Milford Hit-Hers/Porter-Guerin upended Bedrock Tanning 2-1 and 11-0 in a double finals to capture first place in the class "D" division of the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Blue Chip Classic June 9-10 at Expressway Park.

The victories over Bedrock capped off a 6-1 weekend for the champions. Bedrock had slapped a 9-3 setback on the Hit-Hers in the winners' bracket finals, but were handcuffed by tournament MVP Christy Yeager in the finals. Yeager limited Bedrock to a lone run in the last two games.

Yeager stole the show in the sixteen team event, tossing an unheard of three shutouts, including a 9-0 blanking of Bedrock in the finals. Previously she had recorded shutouts over Hart Environmental (10-0) and Yadda/Premium East (1-0).

But Yeager's pitching performance were just part of her contributions, said Hit-Hers' player-manager Amy McCarty.

"She walked only three people the entire tournament, she hit .600, and she fielded the middle and led the team throughout all seven games of the tournament from the mound," praised McCarty. "And she held all seven opponents to only 28 runs and had three shutouts."

Leading the Hit-Hers offensively were Marie Belcher (.688), Yeager, McCarty (.590) and Becky Taylor. Belcher, McCarty, Taylor and Karen Rick were named to the All-Tournament team.

McCarty said that Belcher "led us in almost every game with her hitting and got the bottom of the line-up to the top every time.

"I couldn't have asked any more from her," said McCarty.

McCarty also lauded the performance of Nicky Massey, who had several clutch hits throughout the tournament.

"She's one of our top run-producers and usually leads our team in rbi's," said McCarty.

But it was team defense that carried Milford to the title, stressed McCarty.

"We didn't hit our best this weekend, but we played solid defense. We had four or five double plays and tried to make all the routine plays.

"Everybody just did their part," she continued. "We hardly made any errors. It was a team effort."

Christy Yeager garnered her first shutout in the Hit-Hers' opener, a 10-0, six inning rout of Hart Environmental. Milford scored a run in each of the first three innings, then put the game away with three in the 4th and four in the 6th. Nicky Massey's rbi double put her team on the board in the 1st. Yeager had a sac fly in the 2nd, and Taylor an rbi single in the 3rd. Hart proved to be its own worst enemy in the 4th, opening the inning with three consecutive walks. A two run single by Susan Council capped off the scoring.

Massey, Council and Amy McCarty each went 2-for-3 to pace the offense.

The Hit-Hers used an eight run outburst in the top of the 4th to overcome an 8-6 deficit to Tri-County Softball and take a commanding 14-8 lead in game two. Danielle Smith's two run single put her team ahead to stay at 9-8. Each team added a pair of runs to make the final 16-10. Kelly Taylor, Amy McCarty and Christy Yeager banged out three hits each for the winners.

Game three proved to be a defensive struggle, with the Hit-Hers finally pulling out a 1-0 victory over Yadda/Premium East in the bottom of the 7th. Singles by Nicky Massey, Susan Council and Linda Mullen

loaded the bases with one out, then Linda Mullen worked Yadda for a walk for force in the game winner. Massey and Council shared two hits.

That lifted the Hit-Hers into the winners' bracket finals against Bedrock, who promptly ambushed the locals 9-3. The Hit-Hers continued their swoon in the losers' bracket finals, where Wilson Concrete came within one inning of sending Milford home. Wilson took a 7-5 lead into the top of the 7th, but there the Hit-Hers came to life, scoring four runs to grab a 9-7 lead. Singles by Marie Belcher and Christy Yeager and back-to-back walks to Amy McCarty and Kelly Taylor cut the deficit to 7-6. Then rbi singles by Nicky Massey and Becky Taylor gave their a 9-7 lead. Wilson mustered a lone run in the bottom of the 7th to make the final 9-8.

Belcher and Yeager were both perfect in three at bats for the Hit-Hers.

Two runs in the bottom of the 1st proved to be all the scoring Milford would need in the first finals, as pitcher Christy Yeager limited Bedrock Tanning to a lone run in the top of the 4th. Amy McCarty singled and went to third on Kelly Taylor's double, then trotted home with the game's first run on Nicky Massey's single. Becky Taylor then followed with a single to plate Kelly Taylor. Becky Taylor collected three hits, and Amy McCarty chipped in two for the winners.

A Nicky Massey rbi single in the bottom of the 1st proved to be the only run the Hit-Hers would need in the finals, as Christy Yeager recorded her third shutout. But any doubt about the outcome was erased in the bottom of the 2nd, when Milford exploded for ten runs to seal an 11-0 victory. Emily Molina ignited the rally with a leadoff triple, and scored on a base hit by Karen Riek. An rbi single by Susan Council closed out the scoring.

Riek and Leslie Gentil combined for six hits to power the champions.

Playing with intensity from start to finish was the key to winning the tournament, said Milford's Amy McCarty.

"Our team never gave up throughout the whole tournament whether we were down or had a comfortable lead," said McCarty. "We kept pushing until the very end.

"It was great to win at our home park (Expressway) after coming out flat the first half of the season," added McCarty. "This is a nice way to start the second half."

WORTH-BUD LIGHT-BLUE CHIP CLASSIC USSSA NIT WOMEN'S CLASS "D" DIVISION FINAL STANDINGS

1.	Milford Hit-Hers/Porter-Guertin, Milford, OH	6 1
2.	Bedrock Tanning, Ravenna, OH	4 2
3.	Wilson Concrete, North Vernon, IN	4 2
4.	Yadda/Premium East/PRI, Milford, OH	3 2
5.	Crosley's Sports Bar, Cincinnati, OH	3 2
	Tri-County Softball, Akron, OH	3 2
7.	Cincinnati Heat, Cincinnati, OH	2 2
	D & S Engineering, Loveland, OH	2 2
9.	Dented Bats, Mooresville, IN	2 2
	Hart Environmental, Dayton, OH	2 2
	Intimidators, Batavia, OH	2 2
	James Arnold, Cincinnati, OH	2 2
13.	Lady Thumpers, Maysville, KY	0 3
	Pelle's, Silver Grove, KY	0 3
	Precision Homes, New Richmond, OH	0 3
	YaYa's, Middletown, OH	0 3

**BUD LIGHT-BLUE CHIP CLASSIC USSSA NIT
WOMEN'S CLASS "D" ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM**

Sarah Melvin	Yada Club
Sue Owens	Wilson Concrete
Nicole Weed	Wilson Concrete
Liza Lash	Bedrock Tanning
Tara Savage	Bedrock Tanning
Chris Cerny	Bedrock Tanning
Marie Belcher	Milford Hit-Hers/Porter-Guertin
Amy McCarty	Milford Hit-Hers/Porter-Guertin
Caryn Rieck	Milford Hit-Hers/Porter-Guertin
Becky Taylor	Milford Hit-Hers/Porter-Guertin
Cindy Belle - MVP	Bedrock Tanning
Christy Yeager - MVP	Milford Hit-Hers/Porter-Guertin

Moose 501, Avalanche, Franchise 3-0 In Queen City Round Robins

West Chester, Oh.--Moose #501, Avalanche Softball and Franchise each went 3-0 to claim their respective division titles in a twelve team, three division Sunday morning round robin June 10th at Queen City Sports Complex.

Moose #501 overwhelmed their three opponents, trampling The Lunatics (1-2) 15-1, Pacific Bombers (1-2) 17-2 and RTFS (1-2) 23-7.

Avalanche Softball routed Rolling Thunder (1-2) 15-4 and Caribbean Storm (15-1) before out-dueling Undecided (2-1) 14-13 in a showdown for first place.

While in division three, Franchise romped past Rush Auto/Cincinnati Canes (1-2) 17-10, Bad Company (0-3) 14-2 and B & B Products (2-1) 15-5.

Lyster, Broyles Lead Winners To 14th Overall Championship...

Lansing No. 333 Bags 10th Straight U. A. National "A" Title At Riverstar Park

Lansing #333 toyed with six opponents en route to their tenth consecutive "A" division title in the 30th Annual U. A. National Tournament June 15-17 at Riverstar Park.

Local #333 outscored six opponents 109-44, and mercy-ruled all three of their elimination round victims on their way to the championship, steamrolling Louisville #502 16-5 in the finals.

In the thirty year history of the tournament, Lansing has now won an amazing fourteen titles.

"Defense and the pitching of Jason Broyles" were the keys to winning the tournament, according to manager John Dobernick.

"Jason did a heckuva job," said Dobernick of Broyles, who was named co-MVP for the tournament. "He led our team in home runs and with his pitching, and it's his first tournament of the year. He hasn't played at all this year. For not taking a swing, he did a pretty good job."

Anchoring the defense were middle infielder Ryan Lyster, who shared MVP honors with Broyles, and centerfielder Troy Smith, said Dobernick.

"Ryan caught just about everything hit anywhere in his vicinity, and he turned a lot of double plays along with B. J. Smith at shortstop.

“We named him MVP for his hitting and defense,” said Dobernick. “He led our team in hitting and made so many great defensive plays.

Dobernick said that opponents kept Troy Smith busy in centerfield all weekend.

“It seems like they hit everything to center and he made some fantastic plays,” said Dobernick. “And he made some real good throws cutting down runners.

“But it was an all-around team effort,” stressed Dobernick. “It was evenly distributed.”

Offensively, Ryan Lyster paced the winners with a sizzling .810 performance. Hitting .700 or better were Harold Franks at .714, B. J. Smith at .708 and Troy Smith at .700. Jason Broyles chipped in with a fine .652 weekend.

Lansing tuned up for the double elimination division of the tournament by brushing aside Sprinklefitters #669 16-8, Cincinnati Blue #392 16-10 and Louisville #502 17-2.

Louisville regrouped to battle Local #333 to an 8-8 standstill through three innings in Lansing’s elimination round opener, but the wheels came off the wagon when the Michigan club outscored Local #502 18-2 over the next three innings to invoke the mercy-rule at 26-13. Ryan Lyster tripled and scored the go-ahead run on Troy Smith’s single to ignite a five run 4th. Bud Gould followed with a two run shot and it was suddenly 12-8. Josh Onstott and Andy Peterson each launched a two run homer in a six run 5th, and Mike Pawson went solo and Scott Beglin cracked a two run homer as the lead swelled to 26-10.

B. J. Smith collected four hits, and Lyster, Troy Smith and Josh Simon shared nine for the winners.

In game two, Lansing’s long-time nemesis Cincinnati #392 Blue took a short-lived 4-3 lead in the bottom of the 1st, but it was all Lansing after that, as they outscored the host team 15-2 on their way to an 18-6, five inning rout. Mike Pawson put his club ahead to stay at 5-4 with a two run swat in the top of the 2nd, and Troy Smith followed with an rbi single to make it 6-4. Cincinnati answered with one to stay close at 6-5, but Lansing broke the game open with six in the 3rd, two in the 4th and four in the 5th. Pawson delivered another two run shot to highlight the 3rd, while Harold Franks went yard to account for both his club’s runs in the 4th. Onstott added a two run blast in the 5th.

Troy Smith, Ryan Lyster and B. J. Smith combined for nine hits to pace the offense.

Lansing never trailed in the finals after jumping out to a 7-0 lead in the top of the 2nd in yet a third encounter with Louisville #502. Ryan Lyster’s rbi single put his club on the board. Troy Smith had the big blow in the inning with a two run double. Louisville answered with four in the bottom of the 3rd, but Local #333 delivered the knock-out blow with a nine run 4th. Ryan Lyster sealed MVP honors with a two run homer - the first home run of his career - as the lead grew to 9-4. Josh Onstott followed with a three run bomb and it was all over but the trophy presentation.

Lyster and Jason Broyles each went 3-for-3 for the champions.

Lansing manager John Dobernick said that two things surprised his club about this year’s tournament.

“This was the first time in ten years we haven’t played Cincinnati Blue in the finals,” noted Dobernick.

He was also surprised with the ease with which Local #333 won the tournament.

“It was determination on our part,” he remarked. “Our guys didn’t take things so much for granted. It was rough the last few years.

“Everything was fine as always,” noted Dobernick. “And the weather was good. After Gene (retired tournament director Gene Blom) stepped down, Rex (tournament director Rex Kern) did a fine job. We just need a couple more teams in the upper division.”

Dobernick announced at the tournament that the 30th annual event would be his last as a manager.

“It’s a good time for me to get out,” he said. “We just won ten in a row. It’s a very gratifying feeling to win that many times. The last few years we had to come through the losers’ bracket to do it.

“Next year, I’ll be on the sidelines. I’m retired now and I’m going to start doing more things with my family. I can’t do it all with the softball.”

**30TH ANNUAL UNITED ASSOCIATION INVIT.
CLASS “A” DIVISION FINAL STANDINGS**

1. Lansing #333 3 0
2. Louisville #502 2 2
3. Cincinnati #392 Blue 1 2
4. Sprinklefitters #669 0 2

Locals Prevail 11-5 In Second Championship Game ...

Cincinnati Red #392 Outlasts New York #1 In U. A. National “B” Division At Riverstar Park

Cincinnati Red Local #392 held off New York City #1 11-5 in the second championship game to capture first place in the class “B” division of the 30th Annual U. A. National Tournament June 15-17 at Riverstar Park.

New York had trimmed Cincinnati 9-7 in the first finals to force an “if” game, then took a 5-2 lead over Local #392 after two and a half innings in the second finals. But pitcher Bob Broxterman and the Cincinnati Red defense held New York scoreless over the final four innings while Cincinnati’s offense outscored New York 9-0 to pull out an 11-5 victory.

Cincinnati had previously battled past New York 16-15 in dramatic fashion in the winners’ bracket finals, rallying for five runs in the top of the 7th to overcome a 12-11 deficit. New York answered with three runs in the bottom of the 7th, and had runners on 1st and 3rd with two outs when right-fielder Tony Ploeger reached over the fence to pull back a home run attempt by New York.

Cincinnati had just pulled out an 18-17 victory over Dayton #162 in the previous game, also winning in their last at bat. The champions went 5-1 against the 28-team field.

“We had a lot of timely hits,” said Local #392 spokesman Mark Parris of his team’s two come-from-behind wins. “Everybody stayed up. Nobody at any time thought we were going to get beat. We stayed focused. Everybody’s head was up.”

Jerry Haskin led Cincinnati offensively with a hefty .739 average. Eric Geers also eclipsed the .700 mark at .733, Jamie Ramsey batted .632, Zach Meyers .609, Bob Broxterman .571, Troy Graybill .565, Tony Ploeger .555 and Mark Parris .527.

Graybill also led the team in home runs with six.

Haskin was named tournament MVP.

“He’s played on the Red team the longest,” pointed out Parris. “He’s been on the team for ten years. He hit well and played well in the field. He was our team leader. We had a lot of close games and he kept everybody up.”

The defense of centerfielder Chris Jones, solid infield play, and an effective pitching effort by Eric Geers and Bob Broxterman helped carry Cincinnati to the title, said Parris.

“Chris made some outstanding plays, including some diving catches that were incredible,” remarked Parris. “And our whole infield - Dave Watts at 3rd base, Zach Meyers at short, Jamie Ramsey in the middle, Jerry Haskin at 2nd base and Jason Armbruster at 1st - caught everything. I can’t count one or two errors in the infield the whole weekend. They played great.

“We were also lucky to have two good pitchers in Eric Geers and Bob Broxerman,” added Parris. “They switched every other game and did a heckuva job.

“Everybody did their part, and everybody had their role,” continued Parris. “That’s why we won. There were no superstars.”

Another big key was Tony Ploeger’s game-saving circus catch in the bottom of the 7th in the winners’ bracket finals,” said Parris.

“They had a guy on 3rd and their number four hitter came up, and he had eleven home runs and we walked him to get to the next batter,” recalled Parris. “And the next guy up was a lefty, and we pulled the ball hard and Tony ran back and jumped at the fence and made a great catch. I thought it was gone. That was big. We would have had to come back and beat them twice.”

Local #392 got off to a slow start against Milwaukee #75 in their opener. After falling behind 3-2 after two and a half innings, Cincinnati rallied for three runs in the bottom of the 3rd. Neither team could muster another run and Local #392 held on for the 5-3 victory. Consecutive singles by Zach Meyers, Jerry Haskin and Mark Parris knotted the score, then with two outs Chris Jones singled home two runs to close out the scoring.

Meyers collected three hits, and Haskin and Dave Watts each went 2-for-3.

In game two Cincinnati Red found themselves locked in a 5-5 stalemate with Chicago #597 through three and a half, but in the bottom of the 4th used a six run outburst to take the lead for good at 11-5. Singles by Meyers, Haskin and Parris made put their club ahead 6-5, then Troy Graybill cracked a three run homer to push the lead to 9-5. Jamie Ramsey followed with a two run single to cap off the inning. Graybill added a two run shot in the bottom of the 6th to make the final 15-8.

Graybill homered three times in the game and shared fifteen hits with Zach Meyers, Jerry Haskin, Mark Parris and Jamie Ramsey.

Dayton #162 had Local #392 against the ropes in game three, as they took a 17-16 lead into the bottom of the 6th. But there Cincinnati took an 18-17 lead on a two run Chris Jones double, then held Dayton scoreless in the 7th.

Jerry Haskin banged out four hits, and Zach Meyers chipped in three. Dave Watts connected on a grand slam.

Cincinnati needed another late-inning rally to overtake New York City #1 in the winners’ bracket finals. Trailing 12-11 after six, Local #392 erupted for five runs in the top of the 7th, then staved off a furious New York rally in the bottom of the inning to emerge with a hard-fought 16-15 win. Eric Geers’ rbi single put his team ahead to stay at 13-12, then Tony Ploeger doubled in a pair of runs and scored on Zach Meyers’ base hits to increase the lead to 16-12.

But New York refused to lay down, answering with three runs to cut the deficit to one, then putting runners on 1st and 3rd with two outs before Tony Ploeger’s game-saving catch at the fence snuffed out the rally.

Geers, Troy Graybille and Dave Watts combined for a dozen hits, and Meyers and Jerry Haskins each went 3-for-5.

New York then disposed of Chicago #597 to earn a re-match with Cincinnati Red, and promptly saddled the home team with a 9-7 setback. Then in the second finals New York jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the top of the 1st, but could manage only two more runs the rest of the game against Local #392's Dave Broxterman.

With Broxterman holding New York at bay, Cincinnati got back into the game with a two-run Troy Graybill bomb in the bottom of the 1st, then exploded for five runs in the bottom of the 3rd to go ahead 7-5. Local #392 added a run in the 4th, two in the 5th and one in the 6th to make the final 11-5. Rbi singles by Tony Ploeger and Mark Parris put Cincinnati within one at 5-4, then Graybill connected again - this time launching a three run blast - to give his club the lead for good at 7-5. Jerry Haskin delivered a big two-run single in the 5th to give Local #392 a five run cushion.

Bob Broxterman pounded out three hits, and Graybill, Geers, Parris, Haskin, and Ramsey contributed two hits each for the champions.

30TH ANNUAL UNITED ASSOCIATION INVIT. CLASS "B" DIVISION FINAL STANDINGS

1.	Cincinnati #392 Red	5	1
2.	New York City #1	6	2
3.	Chicago #597	6	2
4.	Dayton #162	4	0
5.	Milwaukee #75	5	2
	Lansing #333	3	2
7.	Peoria #353	4	2
	St. Louis #562	4	2
9.	Ann Arbor #190	3	2
	Evansville #136	2	2
	Indianapolis #4401	2	
	Muscle Shoals #760	1	2
13.	Boston #537	2	2
	Central NJ #9	2	2
	Cleveland #120	1	2
	Philly #420	1	2
17.	Columbus #189	1	2
	Detroit #636	1	2
	Parkersburg #5651	2	
	Yonkers #21	1	2
	Chicago #281	0	2
	Ft. Wayne #166	0	2
	Morgantown #152	0	2
	Toledo #50	0	2

Williams, Cox Lead Winners In Romp...

Portsmouth #577 Mercies U. A. National "C" Division At Riverstar Park

Brian Williams batted .733 and clubbed five home runs, and pitcher Tim Cox limited five opponents to 21 runs and shut out Monroe #671 10-0 in the championship game to lead a Portsmouth #577 romp past the "C" division of the 30th Annual U. A. National Tournament June 15-17 at Riverstar Park.

Portsmouth completely overpowered the sixteen-team field, mercy-ruling all five of their victims while outscoring their opposition 81-21.

Local #577 was so dominating en route to the title that only one team - finalist Monroe - scored more than five runs against the champions. That came in a 19-6, five inning rout in the winners' bracket finals. In addition, the winners only trailed in one game during the entire tournament. That lasted for half an inning against Champaign #149 in game three.

Craig Felts paced the offense with a robust .833 average, followed by Brian "Hammer" Williams at .733, Tony Cunningham at .688, Glenn Hannah at .632, Larry Cunningham at .625, Mike Hall at .588 and Ryan Morrow at .571.

Williams was named tournament MVP.

"We picked him for his outstanding leadership and quality of play on the field," said Portsmouth manager Dan Simon. "He's been a member of our team since 1997. He's our senior player."

But it was "outstanding defensive play from all our players," and the pitching of Tim Cox that carried Local #577 to the title, said Simon.

"Craig Felts was outstanding in left-centerfield and I just can't say enough about him," said Simon. "He also had our highest batting average. Our infielders also made some great defensive plays. Tony Cunningham (ss) and Glenn Hannah (2b) turned several double plays, and Brian Williams (1b) made some great catches which pulled him off the bag, and he made some great sweeping tags."

Simon said pitcher Tim Cox was "solid" and "played hard.

"He has a great field presence," noted Simon. "He keeps his team up and aware of what is going on all the time."

Portsmouth also got some leadership from catcher Larry Cunningham, said Simon.

"He's our field general. He's the guy who stays on top of where the players hit the ball and keeps everybody in the game at all times."

A strong bench also proved to be a key, said Simon.

"Vince Kennedy made some outstanding plays in left-center when Craig Felts got hurt in one of our games, and Chase McGraw came in our final two games and made three great plays at 3rd base and went 3-for-5 at the plate. You couldn't ask for a better performance from a guy coming off the bench."

Portsmouth erupted for four runs in the top of the 1st, five in the 2nd, six in the 3rd and three in the 4th to build a 19-2 lead over St. Louis #562 and went on to cruise to an easy 22-5, five inning victory in game one. Back-to-back rbi doubles by Craig Felts and Larry Cunningham put their club on the board in the 1st. Brian Williams connected on a grand slam in the 2nd and Craig Felts added a slammer in the 3rd. Felts banged out four hits, and Ryan Morrow and Tony Cunningham each went 3-for-4.

Felts collected four more hits along with Glen Hannah as Portsmouth sailed past Joliet #22 15-3 in five innings in game two. Local #577 jumped out to a 12-0 lead before Joliet even got on the board and never looked back. Brian Williams launched a three run homer to account for three of his team's four runs in the 1st. Portsmouth added two in the 2nd, then put the game away with a six run 3rd.

Portsmouth steamrolled Champaign #149 15-5 in six innings in game three. Champaign drew first blood with three runs in the bottom of the 1st, but the lead was short-lived. Portsmouth answered with six runs in the top of the 2nd, taking a 4-3 lead on Craig Felts' rbi single, then padded their lead with three in the 3rd and one in the 5th before closing out the scoring with a five run 6th. Brian Williams, who belted a two-run shot to push the lead to 13-5 in the 6th, shared nine hits with Bobby Yates and Larry Cunningham.

In the winners' bracket finals, Portsmouth romped past Monroe #671 in five, exploding for six in the 1st, two in the 2nd and six in the 3rd to forge a 14-4 advantage. Brian "Hammer" Williams demonstrated the reason for his nickname, as he belted a three-run shot in both the 1st and 3rd. Williams collected four hits in the game, and Glen Hannah, Mike Hall, Chase McGraw and Tony Cunningham combined for a dozen safeties.

The championship game was effectively over after Local #577 grabbed a 5-0 lead in the bottom of the 1st. Brian Williams put his club on the board with an rbi single, and Mike Hall capped off the inning with a two-run double. Portsmouth added one in the 3rd, then sealed the deal with a four-run 5th. Bobby Yates' two-run triple invoked the mercy rule in the 5th.

Craig Felts was perfect in three at bats for the winners. Yates, Tony Cunningham and Mike Hall each went 2-for-3.

Portsmouth manager Dan Simon, who has been with the team since 1983, called Local #577's performance a "total team effort.

"These guys checked their attitudes at the game and didn't leave anything on the field," said Simon. "We have solid players all around, great depth on our bench and all of our players are an asset to the team."

Simon concluded by thanking his scorekeeper, Andrew Simon, for keeping the team's book.

30TH ANNUAL UNITED ASSOCIATION INVIT. CLASS "C" DIVISION FINAL STANDINGS

1.	Portsmouth #577	5 0	
2.	Monroe #671	5 1	
3.	Joliett #422	5 2	
4.	Sprinklefitters # 669		4 2
5.	Champaign #149	2 2	
	Pittsburgh #449	2 2	
7.	Cleveland #55	2 2	
	Rock Island #25	2 2	
9.	Aurora #501	1 2	
	Marietta #168	1 2	
	Pittsburgh #27	1 2	
	Toronto #46	1 2	
13.	Charleston #625	0 2	
	Dayton #162	0 2	
	Ontario #67	0 2	
	St. Louis #562	0 2	

Tournament MVP Christy Yeager Blanks Three Opponents...

Milford Hit-Hers/Porter-Guerin Double-Dips Bedrock 2-1, 11-0 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Blue Chip Classic NIT "D" Finals At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--Milford Hit-Hers/Porter-Guerin upended Bedrock Tanning 2-1 and 11-0 in a double finals to capture first place in the class "D" division of the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Blue Chip Classic June 9-10 at Expressway Park.

The victories over Bedrock capped off a 6-1 weekend for the champions. Bedrock had slapped a 9-3 setback on the Hit-Hers in the winners' bracket finals, but were handcuffed by tournament MVP Christy Yeager in the finals. Yeager limited Bedrock to a lone run in the last two games.

Yeager stole the show in the sixteen team event, tossing an unheard of three shutouts, including a 9-0 blanking of Bedrock in the finals. Previously she had recorded shutouts over Hart Environmental (10-0) and Yadda/Premium East (1-0).

But Yeager's pitching performance were just part of her contributions, said Hit-Hers' player-manager Amy McCarty.

"She walked only three people the entire tournament, she hit .600, and she fielded the middle and led the team throughout all seven games of the tournament from the mound," praised McCarty. "And she held all seven opponents to only 28 runs and had three shutouts."

Leading the Hit-Hers offensively were Marie Belcher (.688), Yeager, McCarty (.590) and Becky Taylor. Belcher, McCarty, Taylor and Karen Rick were named to the All-Tournament team.

McCarty said that Belcher "led us in almost every game with her hitting and got the bottom of the line-up to the top every time.

"I couldn't have asked any more from her," said McCarty.

McCarty also lauded the performance of Nicky Massey, who had several clutch hits throughout the tournament.

"She's one of our top run-producers and usually leads our team in rbi's," said McCarty.

But it was team defense that carried Milford to the title, stressed McCarty.

"We didn't hit our best this weekend, but we played solid defense. We had four or five double plays and tried to make all the routine plays.

"Everybody just did their part," she continued. "We hardly made any errors. It was a team effort."

Christy Yeager garnered her first shutout in the Hit-Hers' opener, a 10-0, six inning rout of Hart Environmental. Milford scored a run in each of the first three innings, then put the game away with three in the 4th and four in the 6th. Nicky Massey's rbi double put her team on the board in the 1st. Yeager had a sac fly in the 2nd, and Taylor an rbi single in the 3rd. Hart proved to be its own worst enemy in the 4th, opening the inning with three consecutive walks. A two run single by Susan Council capped off the scoring.

Massey, Council and Amy McCarty each went 2-for-3 to pace the offense.

The Hit-Hers used an eight run outburst in the top of the 4th to overcome an 8-6 deficit to Tri-County Softball and take a commanding 14-8 lead in game two. Danielle Smith's two run single put her team ahead to stay at 9-8. Each team added a pair of runs to make the final 16-10. Kelly Taylor, Amy McCarty and Christy Yeager banged out three hits each for the winners.

Game three proved to be a defensive struggle, with the Hit-Hers finally pulling out a 1-0 victory over Yadda/Premium East in the bottom of the 7th. Singles by Nicky Massey, Susan Council and Linda Mullen loaded the bases with one out, then Linda Mullen worked Yadda for a walk for force in the game winner. Massey and Council shared two hits.

That lifted the Hit-Hers into the winners' bracket finals against Bedrock, who promptly ambushed the locals 9-3. The Hit-Hers continued their swoon in the losers' bracket finals, where Wilson Concrete came within one inning of sending Milford home. Wilson took a 7-5 lead into the top of the 7th, but there the Hit-Hers came to life, scoring four runs to grab a 9-7 lead. Singles by Marie Belcher and Christy Yeager and back-to-back walks to Amy McCarty and Kelly Taylor cut the deficit to 7-6. Then rbi singles by Nicky

Massey and Becky Taylor gave their a 9-7 lead. Wilson mustered a lone run in the bottom of the 7th to make the final 9-8.

Belcher and Yeager were both perfect in three at bats for the Hit-Hers.

Two runs in the bottom of the 1st proved to be all the scoring Milford would need in the first finals, as pitcher Christy Yeager limited Bedrock Tanning to a lone run in the top of the 4th. Amy McCarty singled and went to third on Kelly Taylor's double, then trotted home with the game's first run on Nicky Massey's single. Becky Taylor then followed with a single to plate Kelly Taylor. Becky Taylor collected three hits, and Amy McCarty chipped in two for the winners.

A Nicky Massey rbi single in the bottom of the 1st proved to be the only run the Hit-Hers would need in the finals, as Christy Yeager recorded her third shutout. But any doubt about the outcome was erased in the bottom of the 2nd, when Milford exploded for ten runs to seal an 11-0 victory. Emily Molina ignited the rally with a leadoff triple, and scored on a base hit by Karen Riek. An rbi single by Susan Council closed out the scoring.

Riek and Leslie Gentil combined for six hits to power the champions.

Playing with intensity from start to finish was the key to winning the tournament, said Milford's Amy McCarty.

"Our team never gave up throughout the whole tournament whether we were down or had a comfortable lead," said McCarty. "We kept pushing until the very end.

"It was great to win at our home park (Expressway) after coming out flat the first half of the season," added McCarty. "This is a nice way to start the second half."

June 16-17....

Winners Fend Off BCP, Mercy-Rule Final Three Opponents...

Jamison Powers Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putters In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "B-C" NIT At Fairfield Park

Fairfield, Oh.--Jon Jamison and Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putters were almost perfect.

Jamison went 16-for-17 (.941) while Freeze mercy-ruled their final two opponents en route to a 4-0 record in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "B-C" National Invitational June 16th at Fairfield Park.

Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putters fended off BCP Associates/Mr. Tint/TPE 26-21 in their opener, then trampled Mike Foulks/Team Insanity 25-8, Steve's Drywall/Jeds/R & L Concrete 30-15 and Blitz/Watanabe/TTP/Wessel/A & K/Easton 27-11 in the championship game.

A berth to the USSSA Men's "B" World Tournament September 21-23 in Kissimmee, Fl. passed down to Classic/Boombah/Red's Boys/TPS of Verona, Ky. Triple L of Columbus, Oh. won a berth to the U-Trip "C" World, also in Kissimmee on September 20-23.

A "relentless offense" simple overcame some outstanding pitchers, said Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putters manager Homer Matheny.

"This was without a doubt our best offensive showing of the year," said Matheny, whose club scored at least 25 runs in every game. "And we faced four pretty strong pitchers. Dave Grooms of BCP is awfully good, T. J. (Thompson) is really coming on with Team Insanity, and Birdie (Jim Burbrink of Steve's Drywall) and Frank Gruber (Blitz/Easton) are all four top-notch pitchers. So I was really pleased with our offense considering the pitching talent we were facing."

No fewer than four team members eclipsed the .750 mark to aid Jamison's efforts, including Scott Stigers at .786, Jayson Scott at .777, and Mike Canupp and Richie Jones at .765. Trevor Barth chipped in with a .667 day, plus a solid pitching performance, said Matheny.

"He pitched all four games and did a great job. He held Steve's and Blitz to some pretty low scoring."

But if there had been an MVP named, it would have been Jamison, said Matheny.

"He only made one out for the weekend. Everything else he hit was a missile or a bullet somewhere."

Matheny credited his club's offensive fireworks to the shorter base paths at Fairfield Park.

"We were able to use it to our advantage offensively, and defensively we were solid enough to keep it from hurting us."

Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putters needed all seven innings to shake BCP Associates/Mr. Tint/TPE 26-21 in game one. In fact, the Columbus team led at the midway point, taking an 11-10 advantage into the bottom of the 4th. But there Freeze erupted for eight runs to take the lead for good at 18-10, then added five in the 5th and three in the 6th to pull out a hard-fought 26-21 victory. Jeff Click's rbi single put his club on top to stay at 12-11 in the 4th. George Farris contributed a two-run triple and Rob Menke's rbi single capped off the inning. Jayson Scott had a two-run triple to highlight the 5th, and Trevor Barth had a big two-run, inside-the-park home run in the 6th.

Jon Jamison and Mike Canupp combined for eight hits, and Richie Jones went 3-for-4 to pace the offense.

Freeze used a seven run 4th and a seven run 6th to break away from Mike Foulks/Team Insanity in game two. Nursing a 6-5 advantage, Freeze struck for seven runs in the 4th to build a 13-5 lead with the help of a two-run Jayson Scott double. A two-run shot by Jon Jamison and a George Farris slammer accounted for six of seven runs in the 6th as the lead swelled to 20-8. Richie Jones launched a three-run blast in a five run 7th as Freeze made the final 25-8.

Scott collected five hits, Jamison, Mike Canupp and Rob Menke shared twelve, and Richie Jones and Scott Stigers each went 3-for-4.

Freeze never trailed in the winners' bracket finals after jumping out to a 17-4 lead over Steve's Drywall in the bottom of the 7th. Jayson Scott cracked a three-run homer to cap off a six-run 1st. Trevor Barth smacked a three-run shot, and Scott Stigers tripled with the bases loaded to do most of the damage in an eleven run 2nd. Steve's never recovered, falling 30-15 in six.

Barth and Jon Jamison were both perfect in five at bats, and Stigers and Jeff Click in four. Mike Canupp, who delivered a two-run homer in the 3rd, was 3-for-5 along with Scott, Don Sikora and Richie Jones.

That lifted Freeze into the finals against Blitz/Easton, which put together back-to-back four run innings to take an early 8-6 lead in the top of the 2nd. But Freeze outscored their Cincinnati rival 19-0 over the next inning and a half to seal an eventual 27-11, five-inning rout. Jeff Click doubled home two runs to put his team ahead for good at 9-8 in the bottom of the 2nd. Richie Jones followed with a two-run double as the lead grew to 11-8. An rbi single by George Farris capped off the inning with Freeze ahead 14-8. After Blitz put up a goose egg in the top of the 3rd, Freeze went back to work, scoring four runs on a pair of two run swats - one by Mike Canupp and the other by Jon Jamison. Rob Menke had a two-run double, and Trevor Barth had his second inside-the-park home run of the day as Freeze built an insurmountable 25-8 lead.

Jones and Jayson Scott banged out four hits each, and Jamison and Barth chipped in with three hits.

Was Freeze's Homer Matheny surprised to win the tournament so handily.

“The way we’ve been playing? Yes,” said Matheny. “It was kind of a relief to everyone to see that we still had it in us.”

Matheny said that after a sluggish start, Freeze seems to have finally turned their season around.

“We started out slow, but also we didn’t play a lot of games in April and May. But we’ve played several weekends with only one weekend off lately, and that’s what most of our guys needed. They want to play every weekend and our schedule is finally allowing us to do that, and that’s the biggest reason for our success,” summed up Matheny.

WORTH-USSSA MEN’S CLASS “B-C” NATIONAL INVITATIONAL TOURN. FINAL STANDINGS

1.	Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putter’s, Cincinnati, OH	4 0
2.	Blitz/Watanabe/TTP/Wes./AK/Easton, Cin., OH	4 2
3.	Steve’s Drywall/Jeds/R & L, Perrysburg, OH	2 2
4.	Classic/Boohbah/Red’s Boys/TPS, Verona, KY	3 2
5.	Loveless Hardwood/Conveyor, Cincinnati, OH	1 2
	Mike Foulks/Team Insanity, Covington, KY	1 2
7.	Triple L, Columbus, OH	1 2
	House Rules, Cincinnati, OH	0 2
9.	BCP Associates/Mr. Tint/TPE, Columbus, OH	0 2

Boisel Tire Outlasts American Tickets In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men's “D” State-National “Super” Qualifier At Queen City Sports Complex

By Andy Zureick

West Chester, Oh. - Boisel Tire made the best of their road-trip from Springfield to Queen City Sports Complex by winning the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men's “D” State-National “Super” Qualifier on June 16th. “It was a well run tournament,” said team manager Chad Boisel. “We really like playing down at Queen City - they run things pretty nice down there.” The first place finish and the \$375 cash his team took back north no doubt accounted for Boisel's warm sentiments about the experience.

The tournament started with a three-game round robin. In the opener, Boisel Tire topped Ante Up Softball, 13-3. They followed that by dropping a 10-5 decision to American Tickets. It would be their only misstep of the tournament. They got back on track in the opening-round wrap up with a 24-4 crushing of Bull Dogs.

Game one of the single-elimination round pitted Boisel against Boot Hill. Things did not look good early for the boys from Springfield as they trailed 8-0 after two innings of play. But they chipped away at the lead over the next few frames and after five it was knotted 8-8. After Boot Hill put one on the board in the top of the 6th, Boisel claimed their first lead in the bottom of the inning with four runs. Jordan Baldwin followed Chad Boisel's leadoff walk with a single. A fielder's choice advanced the runners to second and third. Dave Grisso then tied the game with a run-scoring single. After a fly out, Jake Baldwin drew another walk to load the bases. Paul Little tripled to bring all three runners into score and give his team a 12-9 lead. Boot Hill managed only one run in their final chance, making it a 12-10 final. Dave Grisso and Jake Baldwin were both 3-for-3 in the victory. Paul Little was 3-for-4 including the game-winning RBI.

Bo Johnson drove in two runs and Tony Rice three more in the bottom of the 1st against Covington's Finest as Boisel took a 6-3 lead in game two. They would not trail from that point on. Three more runs in the bottom of the 3rd put the game out of reach for good. The final score was 12-5. Tony Rice, 3-for-3, and Chad Boisel, 2-for-2, were both perfect at the plate in the win. Dave Grisso went 2-for-3.

The tournament final was a rematch between Boisel and American Tickets, the only team to beat the eventual champs in the round robin. The game was tied 7-7 going into the bottom half of the 5th when

Boisel took the lead 8-7 thanks to a Brian Shay single that scored Jake Baldwin. A pair of RBI from Tom Castle and Dave Grisso in the 6th increased the Boisel advantage to 10-7. American Tickets failed to answer in the top of the 7th and that score would stand as the final. Jake Baldwin was a team-best 3-for-4. The trio of Tom Castle, Tony Rice, and Dave Grisso posted two hits apiece.

Grisso also led all Boisel hitters in the tournament with a .833 average. "He's our leadoff hitter and is one of the best on-base guys I've ever seen," explained Boisel's Chad Boisel. "He's pretty much automatic from the top of the order."

Other notable performances were turned in by Shane Keaton (.777), Chad Boisel (.714), Tony Rice (.704), and Jerome Knyard (.681).

"We played great defense all day," Boisel added. "We only had four errors the whole tournament."

"Jake Baldwin in the outfield made several outstanding plays in left for us. I only walked one guy, made them put the ball in play and fielded my position," noted Boisel, the team's pitcher.

Boisel and runner-up American Tickets both won berths to the USSSA State and National tournaments later in the year. Those will be played in Harrison on August 18-19 and Indianapolis on Labor Day Weekend, respectively. A berth to the state event was also awarded to Boot Hill.

Diamond Freaks Escape Young Guns, Rout ABP, Lights Out/Easton In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" State-National Qualifier At Queen City

By Andy Zureick

West Chester, Ohio - Diamond Freaks won all three games they played to earn a first place finish in the Worth/Bud Light/USSSA "E" State-National Qualifier at Queen City Sports Complex on June 16th. Two of their games were ended early via the mercy rule, while the other took nine innings to decide a winner.

Game one versus ABP was one of those that only took five innings to complete. Matt Boggs singled in both of his teams two runs in the bottom of the 1st as the Diamond Freaks jumped out to a 2-1 lead. Again in the 2nd it was Boggs with the big hit, a bases-loaded triple, as the Freaks plated six more runs to take control of the game. The final would be 13-3 in a run-rule shortened affair. Derrick Moberly and Levi Pierson were each 3-for-3 in the win. Andy Burson was 2-for-3.

The second contest of the day between Diamond Freaks and Young Guns was a grind. At the end of regulation the game was tied, forcing extra innings. Finally in the top of the 9th, the Young Guns scored a run to take 12-11 lead. In the bottom of the frame with their backs against the wall, the Diamond Freaks got a one-out triple from Jimmy Cramton. Andy Burson singled him in to tie the game at 12-12. Matt Boggs followed with a walk. Cliff Doyle loaded the bases with a single. Ryan West then picked up the game-winning RBI with a single, making it a 13-12 final. Mark Young was 4-for-5 in the victory. Jimmy Cramton was also 4-for-5 including an inside-the-park homer and two triples. Josh Fisher was a perfect 3-for-3. Derrick Moberly also chipped in three hits.

Eight runs from the Diamond Freaks in the top of the 5th broke open an 8-5 game against Lights Out/Easton. Jimmy Cramton's three-run triple capped the inning. Lights Out/Easton failed to score in their final chance. The run-rule ended the game with the score standing at 16-5. Levi Pierson was a team best 3-for-3. Derrick Moberly and Jimmy Cramton each went 3-for-4.

Pierson and Cramton also tied for the top offensive performance in the tournament as each batted 0.727. "They were playing a three-man outfield and we were hitting the gaps and taking advantage of it," explained Cramton, the Diamond Freaks manager. "Levi has been hitting like that all year."

Right on their heels was Cliff Doyle at .70. Derrick and Kyle Moberly both hit .692. Matt Boggs finished at a healthy .600.

Despite some outstanding performance at the plate, Cramton credited the play in the field for the success his team had experienced. "Our whole season it's been our defense. That's how we win. If all of our guys bat .500, we'll win every time because of our defense."

"Our middle infield turned double plays when we needed them and we never let any inning start off big. If a team opened up with a single or two, we'd turn a double play. Our third baseman, Ryan West, didn't make an error all day," Cramton added.

"We play solid defense and score runs when we need them. We don't hit bombs. Just single, single, single - that's how we've been winning all year."

The Diamond Freaks came into the tournament having already qualified for postseason play. Therefore, a berth to the USSSA Great Lakes Nationals in Milford, Ohio on September 1-3 was awarded to ABP.

Champions Notch Third Straight NIT Win At Expressway...

Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putters Stops DO/Butch's/Hype 17-13 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "B-C" NIT Finals

Milford, Oh.--Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putters bounced back from a 28-17 shelling in the first finals to fend off DO/Butch's/Hype Athletic 17-13 in the second and roll to their third consecutive NIT victory in the World-Bud Light-USSSA Men's "B-C" National Invitational June 23-24 at Expressway Park.

Freeze jumped out to a 12-2 lead in the top of the 3rd in the championship game, then withstood an eleven run rally by Butch's to emerge with the title. Pitcher Bobby Noeth, the tournament MVP, held the Michigan club scoreless in their final two at bats to preserve the win.

Berths to the USSSA "B" and "C" World Tournaments September 20-23 in Kissimmee, Fl. were awarded to DO/Butch's/Hype and Design Concepts, respectively.

The return of Bob Noeth to Freeze's line-up made the difference, said manager Homer Matheny.

"Having Bob back from his injuries was the key," said Matheny. "He led the team in hitting and pitched the finals and held a pretty hot-hitting team to 13 runs. The game before they scored close to thirty on us."

Noeth went 12-for-16 (.750) to pace the offense for Freeze. Also named to the All-Tournament team were Jon Jamison (.733), Richie Jones (.650), Homer Matheny (.579) and Trevor Bart (.565).

Matheny was quick to point out that it wasn't a one-man show on the mound for Freeze.

"It was a combination of Bobby and Trevor Barth," stressed Matheny. "They give us a change in pace" at the pitching position.

"Trevor pitched the winners' bracket finals on Saturday and held a hot-hitting EZ Cash team to only two runs," said Matheny. "It works out better if we have two pitchers that have a different way of winning. It was nice to throw a different pitcher at them (Butch's) the second game.

"Trevor seems to get away with a faster, flatter pitch, and Bobby seems to win with his defense and knuckle ball," explained Matheny.

Solid defense led by middle infielder Rob Menke also played a big role in Freeze's championship, noted Matheny.

"Rob Menke always stands out defensively up the middle and pretty much runs the show along with our pitchers setting up the defense," said Matheny. "He's a very important part of our defense in turning double plays and it seems like he made every play this weekend."

Freeze barely worked up a sweat in brushing aside Putter's Tavern & Grill 21-0 in four innings in game one. Aided by six walks and a two-run Pat Phillips single, Freeze jumped out to a 6-0 lead in the top of the 1st, then sealed the win with a 13 run explosion on the 2nd. Jon Jamison launched a three-run blast and Richie Jones added a two run shot to cap off the inning. Phillips, Jones, Bob Noeth, Rob Menke and Scott Stigers combined for ten hits to pace the offense.

Next Freeze escaped Blitz/Watanabe/TTP/Wessel/A & K/Easton 9-8 in eight innings. Trailing 8-3 after five and a half, Freeze rallied for five runs in the bottom of the 6th to knot the score, then pushed across the game winner in the 8th. Bobby Noeth proved clutch, tying the game with a two-single in the 6th, then driving in Rob Menke with an rbi single in the bottom of the 8th. Noeth collected four hits in all. Menke chipped in with a 3-for-4 effort.

Design Concepts also gave Freeze fits in game three, as they took a 10-9 lead into the bottom of the 4th. But Freeze outscored Design Concepts 10-2 over the next inning and a half while Trevor Barth held Concepts scoreless in the last two innings in an eventual 19-12 victory. A two-run triple by Jeff Click followed by a Jon Jamison two-run shot gave Freeze a 13-10 lead in the 4th. Richie Jones trumped that with a slammer to account for four of his team's six runs in the 6th to close out the scoring at 19-12.

Barth, Click and Darrell Hall each went 3-for-4 for the winners.

Rbi singles by Rob Menke and Bob Noeth gave Freeze a 2-0 lead in the bottom of the 2nd in the winners' bracket finals against EZ Cash, then the Cincinnati club padded their lead to 6-1 with a four run 3rd highlighted by a Jon Jamison two-run swat. Pat Phillips and Rob Menke both singled home runs in the 5th to make it 8-1. EZ Cash pushed across one more run to make the final 8-2. Phillips and Menke were both perfect in three at bats.

DO/Butch's then disposed of EZ Cash in the losers' bracket finals 17-12 to avenge a 20-17 setback, and promptly slapped a 28-17 loss on Freeze to force an "if" game. But Freeze methodically built a 12-2 lead after two and a half innings, then, after Butch's erupted for seven runs in the bottom of the 3rd to cut the deficit to 12-9, outscored Butch's 5-4 over the last four innings to emerge with a 17-13 victory and the title. Homer Matheny put Freeze ahead to stay with a three run homer in his team's four run 1st. The lead swelled to 10-2 with a six-run 2nd that featured a two run Richie Jones double. Pat Phillips went solo in a two-run 3rd, and Richie Jones cracked a two-run homer to give his club some breathing room at 14-9 in the 4th. A two-run George Farris shot in the 7th closed out the scoring at 17-13.

Jones and Jon Jamison collected four hits each, and Scott Stigers, Bobby Noeth and Jeff Click shared nine hits for the champions.

Freeze manager Homer Matheny attributed his club's turnaround from a slow start in April and May to "a little more unity and a batting order that seems to be flowing a little better.

"We were just coasting along," said Matheny. "I just think that we realized as a team that no one ever really wins anything big early in the year."

Matheny said his team's victory was especially meaningful "in view of the fact that we were missing four players on Saturday.

"We didn't win the tournament with our most solid team out there, so that was a big thrill for me that we won it short-handed."

Matheny concluded by expressing his appreciation to Expressway Park for running an outstanding event and to sponsors Jim Freeze, James Arnold, Putters and JAC for supporting the team.

**WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA MEN'S "B" NIT
FINAL STANDINGS JUNE 23-24, 2007 - MILFORD, OH**

1. Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putters, Cincinnati, OH 5 1
2. DO/Butch's/Hype 5 2
3. EZ Cash, Columbus, OH 3 2
4. Total Package Express, Cincinnati, OH 3 2
5. Design Concepts, Cincinnati, OH 2 2
Steve's Drywall/Jeds/R & L, Perrysburg, OH 2 2
7. Brock Restor./Hot Wings/Schmoe's, Cinti., OH 2 2
Pure Romance/Easton, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
9. Blitz/Watanabe/TTP/Wessel/AK/Easton, Cin., OH 1 2
Chico's/Fox Premier Hardwood, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
Dawg Pack/Wessel/A-1 Fab, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
Game Time, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
13. Mike Foulks A. B./Team Insanity, Covington, KY 0 2
Putter's Tavern & Grill, Cincinnati, OH 0 2

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

Larry Land Total Package Express
 Doug Shanyfelt EZ Cash
 Brian Blount EZ Cash
 Gene Boyce DO/Butch's/Hype
 Billy Romes DO/Butch's/Hype
 Curtis Wilson DO/Butch's/Hype
 Trevor Barth Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putter's
 Jon Jamison Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putter's
 Homer Matheny Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putter's
 Richie Jones Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putter's
 Chad Trudell - HR Leader DO/Butch's/Hype
 Chad Trudell - Co-MVP DO/Butch's/Hype
 Bob Noeth - Co-MVP Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putter's

Winners Finally Avert Double-Dipping...

**Coyle Single Lifts Cooper Auto/Tanel 360 Past Alpha AC/Stiffler 10-9 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA
"D" NIT Finals At Armco Park**

Lebanon, Oh.--After getting double-dipped in back-to-back NIT's the previous two weekends, Cooper Auto/Tanel 360 rallied for three runs in the bottom of the 7th to trim Alpha AC/Stiffler 10-9 in the championship game of Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" National Invitational June 23-24 at Armco Park.

Bob Coyle's single to right-centerfield plated Rich Kolhbacher with the game winner to cap off a three-run rally and wrap up a five game sweep of the 24-team event.

The victory gave Cooper/Tanel a berth into the USSSA "D" World Tournament September 20-23 in Sterling Heights, Mi.

The winners ended two weeks of frustration with the victory after falling in the second championship game in back-to-back NIT's in Cincinnati June 9-10 and Ft. Knox June 16-17.

"That set our morale back," acknowledged Cooper/Tanel manager Mike Cruea. "But this time too many guys just wouldn't let that happen.

"We're glad to get the monkey off our back and get a World berth," said Cruea.

The fact that Kolhbacher scored the winning run in the finals was fitting. Kolhbacher let his club in hitting with an .834 performance to earn Most Valuable Player honors.

“He made no errors and came up with clutch hit after clutch hit,” said Cruea. “And after the two NIT’s we played in the last two weeks, he looked more hungry and more focused than he ever was.”

Other all-tournament selections for Cooper/Tanel included Tim Coover, who batted .800 and collected ten rbi’s, Brad Havens, Brian Ankney, Justin Evans and Burch McKinney. Marcus Adams chipped in with a .688 mark.

But it was “defense and not getting down on ourselves when another team took the lead on us” that carried Cooper/Tanel to the title, said Cruea.

“In our game against Boisel Tire right out of the gate we were down 6-0, but we hung in there and came right back,” said Cruea. “We used a solid defense and timely hitting. We played small ball, hitting a sacrifice fly or hitting to right field to move the runner. Nobody worried about their average.

“We won it more with our fielding than our hitting,” continued Cruea. “Our infield made only two errors the whole tournament.”

Rich Kolhbacher and Tim Coover anchored the outfield, while Butch McKinney took charge in the infield, said Cruea.

“Rich and Tim made no errors the whole weekend and played pretty well considering they’re two of the older guys on our team,” quipped Cruea.

“And in the championship game, Butch had two unassisted double plays and made a diving catch against the fence,” said Cruea. “He also went into the gap between 1st and 2nd and threw a runner out at 2nd.”

Game one was never in doubt as Cooper/Tanel jumped out to a 7-0 lead after four, eventually extending that to 13-0 before Adis Place finally scored their lone run in the bottom of the 7th. An rbi double by Brian Dinsmore and an rbi single by Tim Coover put their club ahead 2-0 in the top of the 1st. Cooper added single runs in the 2nd and 3rd, then blew the game open with three in the 4th. Brian Ankney tripled and scored on David Potter’s sac fly to account for the three runs. Jim Watkins collected four hits, and Dinsmore, Coover, Butch McKinney, Marcus Adams and Rich Kolhbacher combined for fifteen.

Cooper/Tanel fell behind Boisel Tire 6-0 after an inning and a half in game two, but rallied for seven runs in the bottom of the 4th to overcome a 7-6 deficit and grab a 13-7 lead. Boisel never recovered. A bases loaded triple by Eric Heinrich broke a 7-7 tie and put his team ahead to stay at 10-7 in the 4th. Butch McKinney followed with a two run triple and scored on a James Hatcher sac fly to cap off the scoring. Cooper/Tanel added two more runs to make the final 15-7.

McKinney banged out four hits and drove in five runs, and Jim Watkins, Rich Kolhbacher and Dave Potter each went 3-for-4.

Next Cooper/Tanel escaped with a narrow 6-4 victory in a defensive struggle with the Trailblazers. Cooper scored four runs in the top of the 1st with the help of a two run double by Bob Coyle. Each team scored twice over the next three innings to make it 6-2, then in the 5th the Trailblazers pushed across the last two runs of the game. Pitcher Bob Coyle held the ‘Blazers scoreless over the last two innings.

Rich Kolhbacher, who drove in the first run of the game in the bottom of the 1st, went 2-for-3 along with Coyle, Justin Evans and Tim Coover.

In the winners’ bracket finals against The Merchants, Cooper/Tanel used an eight run outburst in the top of the 6th to blow open a 6-1 game. Justin Evans had the big blow of the inning - a two-run single. Evans also drove in the first run of the game as Cooper/Tanel took a 2-0 lead in the top of the 1st.

Marcus Adams pounded out four hits, and Brian Ankney, Tim Coovert and Rich Kolhbacher chipped in three apiece to pace the offense.

Cooper/Tanel appeared to be destined to their third double finals in as many weekends in the championship game, as opponent Alpha AC/Stiffler took a 9-7 lead into the bottom of the 7th. But Brad Havens singled, went to 2nd on a fly out, then scored on Justin Evans' base hit to cut the lead to 9-8. Rich Kolhbacher singled Evans into scoring position, and Tim Coovert followed with an rbi double to knot the score. After an intentional pass to Butch McKinney, Bob Coyle singled to right-center to plate Kolhbacher with the game winner.

Adams, Evans, Kolhbacher and Coovert shared a dozen hits for the champions.

WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA "D" NATIONAL INVITATIONAL TOURN. FINAL STANDINGS

- 1. Cooper Auto/Tanel 360, Huber Heights, OH 6 0
- 2. Stiffler Softball, Powell, OH 7 2
- 3. The Merchants, Alliance, OH 3 2
- 4. Two-N-Out.com, Florence, KY 5 2
- 5. Creekside, Versailles, OH 3 2
- Trailblazers, Amelia, OH 3 2
- 7. D-Town Softball, Delaware, OH 2 2
- M & M/Saints, Newport, KY 2 2
- 9. Huber Lawn Care, Mays Lick, KY 3 2
- M. J. Lowe, Lancaster, OH 2 2
- Boisel Tire, Springfield, OH 1 2
- Hitmen, Hillsboro, OH 1 2
- 13. Adis Place, Cincinnati, OH 2 2
- Cotner Funeral Home, Galloway, OH 1 2
- Dirty Birds, Mt. Orab, OH 1 2
- Southwest Bombers, Carlisle, OH 1 2
- 17. Maxed Out II/TBR, Hamilton, OH 1 2
- Nance Concrete, Columbus, OH 1 2
- Accurate Masonry, Cincinnati, OH 0 2
- C & R Pharmacy, DeGraff, OH 0 2
- Covington's Finest, Taylor Mill, KY 0 2
- Crazy Gophers, Middletown, OH 0 2
- Extreme/Turner Property Svcs., Hamilton, OH 0 2
- TPE/Backstabbers, Cincinnati, OH 0 2

WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA "D" NATIONAL INVITATIONAL TOURN. FINAL STANDINGS

- Shawn Sproles Two-N-Out.com
- Mike Sellet Two-N-Out.com
- Vince Hachett The Merchants
- Caleb Hill The Merchants
- Chris Fleck The Merchants
- Doug Snyder Stiffler Softball
- Dennis Nisbet Stiffler Softball
- Dave Masterson Stiffler Softball
- Jeff Suhrhop Stiffler Softball
- Brian Angney Cooper Auto/Tanel 360
- Brad Havens Cooper Auto/Tanel 360
- Butch McKinney Cooper Auto/Tanel 360

Justin Evans Cooper Auto/Tanel 360
Rich Kohlbacher - MVP Cooper Auto/Tanel 360

Pitching, Defense Carries Itex In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" World Qualifier At Riverstar

Pitcher Timmy Stanley and a defense that held five opponents to six runs or less carried Itex to a first place finish in Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" State, National and World Qualifier on June 23rd at Riverstar Park.

Itex polished off Barnstormers 9-5 in the championship game to complete a five game sweep of the fourteen team affair and capture \$300 in USSSA team travel expense. An unpaid berth to the USSSA "E" World Tournament September 14-16 in Kissimmee, Fl. passed down to Trustaff. Trustaff and GFY Softball also qualified for the USSSA Great Lakes "E" National Tournament Labor Day Weekend in Milford, Oh., and for the Ohio U-Trip "E" State August 18-19 in Dayton.

Mike Beckett turned in a red-hot .722 day, and Nate Chau batted .682 to pace the Itex offense.

But it was pitching and defense that carried the day, according to Itex manager Mike Beckett.

"Timmy Stanley hasn't pitched that much for us this year, but he came in and threw strikes and did what he had to do," remarked Beckett. "And our defense didn't give up more than six runs per game, and we only gave up that many once. That's what the key to our team is and what we're built around: holding strong on the defensive end.

"We turned a lot of double plays and there weren't many errors on the defensive side," continued Beckett. "It was a very strong defensive effort the whole day."

Beckett was especially pleased with his three-man outfield.

"They played the whole day and didn't get a break. I have to tip my hat to those guys," said Beckett. "They stuck it out til the finals, which didn't get over until 10 PM, and they were tracking down everything. They cut the balls off in the gaps - not too many balls hit the fence. They didn't give up many extra base hits."

MVP honors went to Nate Chau and Beckett.

"Nate is a young talent that we were fortunate enough to pick up right out of college and it seems like he hits around .700 every weekend," said Beckett. "I was also named MVP, but it was a team effort."

Beckett said his team was inspired by the play of Mike Walpole.

"Mike had a badly bruised knee and came out and played right field and was able to track balls down even though he was limping," said Beckett.

"We were also missing sever back-ups, along with a couple of starters," pointed out Beckett. "For our guys to grind it out over such a long day was a really awesome thing."

Itex jumped out to a 9-2 lead after two innings and never looked back in a 14-6 rout of BCS in game one. Mike Beckett doubled home two runs to put his club on the board, and J. D. Lucas' two-run single capped off the inning as Itex went ahead 4-0. Lucas delivered another big blow in the 2nd with a bases loaded triple that made it 9-2. BCS never recovered.

Nate Chau collected four hits, and Curtis Baker, Mike Walpole and Mike Beckett each went 3-for-4 to lead the offense.

Early scoring also helped carry Itex past Pamco/ECC 15-2 in five innings in game two. After taking a 2-0 lead in the top of the 1st, Itex erupted for nine runs in the 2nd to take a commanding 11-0 lead. Mike

Walpole and Nate Chau each contributed a two-run single, and Mike Beckett a two-run double for the winners. Chau and Mark Faber were both perfect in four at bats, and Beckett chipped in three hits.

Itex rolled past GFY Softball 10-5 in game three, scoring three runs in the top of the 2nd to break a 2-2 tie, then adding two in the 5th and three in the 6th to nail down the win. Nate Chau's rbi single put his club ahead for good at 3-2 in the 2nd. Mike Beckett capped off the inning with a two-run single. Itex scored all three of their 6th inning runs with two outs, with Roger Moore and J. D. Lucas delivering rbi doubles, and Todd Peck an rbi single.

Lucas banged out four hits, and Chau and Mark Faber each went 3-for-5.

Next Itex sailed past the Barnstormers 12-2 in six, plating four runs in the bottom fo the 6th to invoke the mercy-rule. The Barnstormers drew first blood with a run in top of the 1st, but Itex answered with three in the home half of the inning and never trailed again. Roger Moore's rbi single put his club ahead to stay at 3-2. Itex strung together three rbi doubles - one each by Beckett, Moore and Lucas - in the four run 6th. Beckett, whose double drove in two runs, pounded out four hits, and Nate Chau went 3-for-4.

Itex never trailed in the finals, grabbing a 4-0 lead in the top of the 2nd, then adding two in the 3rd, one in the 4th and two in the 5th en route to a 9-5 victory over the Barnstormers. Curtis Baker had a two run single to put Itex on the board in the 1st and cap off the scoring in the 5th. Pitcher Timmy Stanley held the Barnstormers scoreless in the 6th and 7th. Mike Walpole collected three hits, and Baker went 2-for-3 with four rbi's for the champions.

Itex manager Mike Beckett said his team was "excited to see some of the better teams around the state.

"We saw how we stacked up against teams of that caliber," said Beckett.

"We're a young team," he continued. "We have a lot of players who are new to softball...young guys making our team with their attitude and willingness to learn and go out every day and play hard. That guys are willing to sit and be team players has made it a fun year thus far."

WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA "E" SUPER QUALIFIER FINAL STANDINGS - JULY 23, 2007 RIVERSTAR PARK

1. Itex, Columbus, OH 5 0
2. Barnstormers, Independence, KY 3 2
3. Trustaff, Amelia, OH 4 2
4. GFY Softball, Riverside, OH 2 2
5. Dino's/Young Guns, Florence, KY 4 2
- JB's, Cincinnati, OH 4 2
7. Cincinnati Diamondbacks, Milford, OH 4 2
- BCS, Wallingford, KY 1 3
9. Dirty Dawgs, Maysville, KY 1 2
- Express/Titan Healthcare Services, Sardinia, OH 1 2
- Maxed Out Mudcats, Franklin, OH 1 2
- Pamco/ECC, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
13. Goodfellas, Jeffersonville, IN 0 3
- Weezin Skeezers, Cincinnati, OH 0 3

OC Softball Outlasts Ballin' Bombers 9-7 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" State-National-World Qualifier At Expressway Park

By Andy Zureick

Milford, Ohio - After starting the day with a blow out, OC Softball barely survived its last three games of the day. Still, they had enough to capture the title in the Worth/Bud Light/USSSA "E" State-National-World Qualifier played June 23rd at Expressway Park.

OC Softball started the day by taking on the Ballin' Bombers. Justin Rash singled in a run in the top of the 1st. It gave his team a lead they would never surrender. In all, they pushed three runs across in the inning. Three more in both the top of the 2nd and 3rd extended the advantage to 9-1. It took them the full seven innings, but they eventually came away with a decisive 15-3 victory. Steve McCarthy and Shawn Forsee led the way at 4-for-4. Justin Rash was 4-for-5; Adam Ausman and Greg Kelly chipped in three hits each.

After five innings of play of game two against Brew Crew, OC found themselves on the wrong side of a 7-6 score. Then in the top of the 6th, Josh Lippmier tripled in two runs to give his team the lead. Justin Rash collected two RBI in the top of the 7th to pad the lead to 10-7. Brew Crew managed only one run in the bottom of the frame and OC narrowly escaped, 10-8. Adam Ausman was a team-best 4-for-4. Justin Bargo went 3-for-3. Greg Kelly, Jeremy Sullivan, and Justin Rash were all 3-for-4.

A victory in the third game versus Budweiser would earn OC a chance to play for the championship. Four runs in the top of the 6th helped OC overcome a 9-8 deficit. Steve McCarthy led off with a double. Dusty Bargo followed with a single. Greg Kelly then tied the game with an RBI single. Jeremy Sullivan and Justin Rash added back-to-back run scoring doubles to make it 12-9. That is how it would end as pitcher Ricky Spivey shutdown the Budweiser team over their last two at bats. Sullivan and teammate Adam Ausman finished at 4-for-4. Greg Kelly and Justin Rash were 3-for-4 for the second game in a row. Spivey was also 3-for-4 at the plate.

The finals was a rematch between OC and Ballin' Bombers. Adam Ausman doubled in two runs in the top of the 7th to break a 9-9 tie. But despite the clutch hit, the big play, as explained by Ausman, the team manager, was turned in by shortstop Greg Kelly in the bottom of the inning. "There were two runners on and one out. A ball was going to fall in between left and right center and Greg fully extended and made a diving catch. Nobody else could get to it." As a result, Ricky Spivey tossed another shutout inning and Ballin' Bombers failed to score. OC won, 11-9.

Leading the way offensively for OC Softball in the tournament was Justin Rash who batted .824. "He was clutch," said Ausman. "Every time he got up to the plate you were guaranteed some runs or that he'd get on base."

Other hitting leaders included Ausman (.764), Greg Kelly (.764), Jeremy Sullivan (.706), and Dusty Bargo (.600).

"Everybody hit. When it came time to do something, they did it," Ausman commented.

Pitcher Ricky Spivey was a defensive standout. He walked only three players in the four games OC played.

"Everybody played their positions well and hit the cutoff man like a team should," concluded the manager. "That's what won it for us - we played like a team."

The tournament victory qualified OC for the USSSA Great Lakes "E" Nationals on Labor Day Weekend back at Expressway Park in Milford. Second-place Ballin' Bombers earned a berth to the state tournament in Dayton on August 18-19.

Pitching Carries Playmakers In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men's "E" World Qualifier At Queen City

By Andy Zureick

West Chester, Ohio - Playmakers pitcher Charles McCormick was in charge all day as his team went 5-0 to win the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men's "E" World Qualifier at Queen City Sports Complex on June 23rd.

In the five games played, McCormick posted an ERA of 4.81. "The biggest thing for us was our pitching," explained team manager Brandon Runk. "Charles was pretty awesome. He only walked one batter in five games and kept them off balance all day long."

McCormick was also the beneficiary of solid run support as evidenced in game one versus Win, Place, Show. Playmakers put up five runs in the bottom of the 6th to invoke the run rule in a 14-4 victory. Shad Bartuff and Mark Merriman were both 4-for-4 in the win.

The stellar run production continued in game two of pool play against Finatics. In the top of the 1st, Playmakers sent 16 batters to the plate and tallied 11 runs. They went on to win 14-0 as Charles "Digger" McCormick tossed his only shutout of the day. Josh Morton and Jason Havens each went 3-for-3 in the blow out.

Win, Place, Show got another chance at Playmakers in the final game of the round robin. They jumped out to an early 3-0 lead in the top of the first, but later found themselves in unfamiliar territory when they trailed 4-3 going into the 3rd. Seven runs including the go-ahead RBI from Cameron Quigley erased the deficit and gave Playmakers a 10-4 lead. Win, Place, Show only managed three more runs in their last five at bats to make it a 10-7 final.

That made the Playmakers 3-0 going into the elimination round to face Fat Batz. In the top of the 5th, Brandon Runk and Adam Connor each drove in two runs as Playmakers took control, 8-2. Connor's RBI single later capped off a six-run 6th that extended the lead to 14-5. Pinch hitter Brad Burbage doubled in two and Jay Runk capped the scoring in the top of the 7th with a run-scoring single. That made it 23-5 and it was all over but the crying. Fat Batz needed a Herculean effort in their last bat but did not even cross the plate once and that score stood as the final. Jason Havens was collected hits in all five of his plate appearances. Cory Ward, Mark Merriman, and Joey George were all 4-for-5.

The finals matched Playmakers with Team Certified. Four runs in the top of the 1st including a three-run double from Adam Connor gave Playmakers the early lead. They tacked on two more in the 2nd as Charles McCormick and Cory Ward each drove in a run. They plated one more in 3rd, 4th, and 7th to make the score 9-6. In the bottom of the last frame, McCormick surrendered a base hit to the first batter. He followed by getting the next man to line out. Each of the next two hitters then flew out and the deal was done. Cory Ward posted four more hits in as many at bats. Josh Morton and Jason Havens went 3-for-4.

Havens was also the batting leader on the day with a .800 average. "It was only his second tournament all year long, he just got out of the police academy," noted the manager. "It helped out a lot, that's for sure."

Close behind Havens was Cory Ward at .750 and Mark Merriman who hit .720.

"Every game somebody different stepped up - it was a team effort," said Runk. "Everybody seemed to make the plays all day long. We turned a lot of double plays in key situations. Our defense only made four errors in five games."

"Anytime you can win a paid berth and keep everybody healthy, it's a good feeling...a good weekend!"

Playmakers qualified for the USSSA "E" Nationals in Milford, Ohio on September 1-3. They also earned a berth to the World Tournament on September 13-16 in Kissimmee, Florida. Team Certified also received an invite for nationals along with the state event in Dayton on August 18-19.

Stingy Dixon Softball Victorious In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men's D-E State-National Qualifier At Expressway Park

By Andy Zureick

Milford, Ohio - Dixon Softball gave up only 16 runs in three games en route to a first place finish the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men's D-E State-National Qualifier at Expressway Park on Sunday, June 24th.

In two games, they held their opponents to only four runs. In the third, they gave up eight but still managed to win by way of the mercy rule.

Dixon began the three-game round robin opposite Team Chaos. They jumped out to an early lead thanks to a five-run top of the 1st. Chris Perry got the scoring underway with a two-run single. Josh Cooper followed later with a three-run homer. They tacked on two more in both the 2nd and 4th as the lead swelled to 9-4. Neither team scored from that point forward making that the final score. Cooper drove in four runs in the victory while Todd Hawks was a perfect 3-for-3 at the plate. Rob Dixon, Matt Hosterman, and Jeremy Snider were all 3-for-4.

Game two of the day versus Kubota Crush was the first of two games Dixon would win by run rule. The decisive inning in this one was the nine-run bottom of the 2nd. Going into that at bat, they trailed 7-2. Jeremy Snider's grand slam cut the deficit to 7-6. Steve Floccari and Scott Hornsby drove in runs that tied the game and eventually put Dixon ahead. Todd Hawks capped the inning with a sacrifice fly that pushed the tally to 11-7. In their next at bat, Josh Cooper stretched the lead with a triple that drove in two. Pitcher Steve Floccari held Kubota Crush scoreless over the final two innings as Dixon secured an 18-8 five-inning mercy-rule victory. Snider went 4-for-4 in the game with five RBI. Aaron Brewster was a perfect 3-for-3. Rob Dixon and Matt Hosterman each went 3-for-4.

The tournament finale for Dixon brought up The Mound as the opposition. Scott Hornsby and Steve Floccari drove in two runs apiece in the bottom of the 1st as their team went ahead 5-0. Two innings later, Floccari plated four more runs with an inside-the-park grand slam. Brian Walton later in the inning doubled in two as the lead was increased to 12-0. Each team put four runs on the board over the final two frames, ending the game at 16-4 in five innings. Four members of the Dixon Softball team - Aaron Brewster, Scott Hornsby, Ivan Waiialae, and Brian Walton - were 3-for-3 in the victory. Matt Hosterman was 3-for-4 for the third time in as many games.

Hosterman finished the day hitting .750, but that was not even close to a team best. Ivan Waiialae and Scott Hornsby each batted .778, good for second on the team in the tournament. Top honors at the plate went to Aaron Brewster who hit a perfect 1.000. "He was an extra guy and came in as the designated hitter and went 6-for-6," explained team manager Rob Dixon. "He was strokin' the ball!"

Steve Floccari, Jeremy Snider, and Brian Walton all had solid days as each hit .667.

Floccari and Snider, along with teammate Josh Cooper, were also responsible for a large part of their team's run production in the tournament. Of the 42 runs scored by Dixon Softball, the trio drove in 21 them.

Floccari and Snider also shared pitching duties, allowing an average of just over five runs per game.

Besides the efforts of the dynamic duo, Dixon felt that his team's ability to make routine plays was integral to their success. "It's something we haven't done quite as often as we've wanted this year. Defensively everybody made their plays. We only made two errors in three games. We played a three-man outfield and they picked up the balls they needed to pick up."

Since Dixon Softball had already qualified, berths were passed to Kubota Crush for the USSSA "E" State Tournament in Dayton on August 18-19 and the nationals on September 1-3 back at Expressway Park.

Moree Leads Pelle's To Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Queen City Classic Women's "D" Title At Pastime Park

Harrison, Oh.--Pitcher Stacy Moree held five of six opponents to single digit scoring and hit a team high .731 to lead Pelle's to a first place finish in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "Queen City Classic" Women's "D" National Invitational June 23rd at Pastime Park.

After going 2-1 in round robin play, Pelle's routed Crosley's Sports Bar 11-1 and Wilson Concrete 12-4 before outslugging the Intimidators 19-13 in the championship game. Pelle's didn't put the game away until the top of the 7th when they used a five run outburst to break open a 14-12 contest.

Stacy Moree paced the offense with a .731 mark en route to MVP honors. Davanna Gulley followed at .636, Laura Mitchell batted .600, Freedom Fogt hit .520, Cassie Brock .519 and Beth Fields .500.

Pelle's manager Butch Holloway said that Moree was named MVP because "she hit .731 and pitched all six games. And up until the last game, she held the other teams to single digits every game."

Despite Moree's individual performance, Holloway insisted that Pelle's title was a team effort.

"Everybody on the team could have been named MVP," said Holloway. "We had twelve players there and they all played really well."

Holloway said his team finally put it altogether after struggling most of the season.

"We hit the ball and we fielded the ball consistently for a change," said Holloway. "Prior to this weekend we either hit the ball or played defense, but this weekend we did both. We only had eight errors in six games," said Holloway.

Anchoring the defense were shortstop Beth Fields, Freedom Fogt and Cassie Brock, said Holloway.

"In the championship game Beth threw two girls out at 3rd base on relays from the outfield and made a great catch in foul territory. Also Freedom Fogt played a heckuva 1st base, and Cassie Brock did excellent in left centerfield."

Pelle's opened strong, mercy-ruling the Dirt Devils 12-2 in five innings in their first round robin contest. Pelle's used a nine-run 4th to break open a 2-1 contest. The inning featured a two-run double by Ashley Bryant and a Beth Fields three-run home run. An rbi single by Heather Dickerson invoked the run-rule in the 5th.

Freedom Fogt, Laura Mitchell and Stacy Moree combined for nine hits.

The Battin' Bullets stunned Pelle's 8-7 in game two, scoring five runs in the top of the 7th for the win.

Then in game three, Pelle's scored two runs in the bottom of the 6th on rbi singles by Laura Mitchell and Heather Dickerson to break an 8-8 tie and pull out a 10-8 victory over Cincinnati Heat.

Dickerson collected three more hits, while Liz Werrmann, Ashley Bryant and Amy Messman each went 2-for-3.

In the first round of elimination play, Pelle's jumped out to an 11-1 lead over Crosley's Sports Bar, scoring three runs in the 1st, three in the 2nd and five in the 3rd, then held Crosley's at bay the next two innings to win by the mercy-rule. A two-run triple by Beth Fields erased a 1-0 Crosley's advantage in the 1st. Stacy Moree tripled home two runs and scored on Heather Dickerson's rbi single in the three run 2nd, then added a two-run single in the 3rd. Moree and Dickerson were both perfect in three trips to the plate, and Fields and Cassie Brock added two hits apiece.

After trading two runs with Wilson Concrete in the 1st, Pelle's exploded for six runs in the top of the 2nd to take an 8-2 lead and never looked back in a 12-4 rout. Laura Mitchell, who banged out five hits, had a two-run single to put her club ahead to stay in the 2nd. An rbi single by Liz Werrmann capped off the inning. Pitcher Stacy Moree limited Wilson to two runs over the final six innings to preserve the win. Moree also went 4-for-5. Davana Gulley and Ashley Bryant shared six hits.

Pelle's never trailed in the finals, but couldn't shake the Intimidators until a five-run outburst in the top of the 7th to take a 19-12 lead. Pelle's scored six runs in the top of the 1st with two outs. Cassie Brock's two-run triple put her team on the board. Liz Werrmann followed with a triple to make it 3-0. A two-run double by Laura Mitchell highlighted a four-run 4th as Pelle's took an 11-5 advantage. Cassie Brock delivered a big two-run single in the 7th.

Brock, Davana Gulley, and Freedom Fogt pounded out four hits each, and Stacy Moree went 3-for-4 to help power the champions.

Pelle's had fifty-five hits in their last two games.

Pelle's Butch Holloway said the Intimidators kept the pressure on his team up until the final inning in the finals.

"They're a great team," said Holloway. "Every time we play them it's usually a one-run game one way or the other. When we play them, we know we're going to have to hit. Going into the 7th, it was only a two-run game."

WORTH-BUD LIGHT-QUEEN CITY CLASSIC USSSA NIT WOMEN'S CLASS "D" DIVISION FINAL STANDINGS

1. Pelle's, Silver Grove, KY 5 1
2. Intimidators, Batavis, OH 5 1
3. Underdogs, Indianapolis, IN 3 2
Wilson Concrete, North Vernon, IN 2 2
5. Crosley's Sports Bar, Cincinnati, OH 2 2
Dirt Devils, Hamilton, OH 2 2
7. James Arnold, Cincinnati, OH 1 3
8. Cincinnati Heat, Cincinnati, OH 0 4
Hart Environmental, Cincinnati, OH 0 4

June 30-July 1 Stories...

Goodfellows Survive Early Tests, Sweep Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "C-D" NIT Field At Riverstar Park

Goodfellows Pub survived a pair of early challenges, then swept to a 6-0 mark to best a monster 31-team field and capture first place in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "C-D" National Invitational June 30-July 1 at Riverstar Park.

Goodfellows was awarded a 7-0 forfeit victory over Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati in the championship game after the runners-up reportedly opted to settle for second place rather than try to upend the Northern Ohio club twice.

Perhaps they were intimidated by Goodfellows' 23-11 thrashing of Chico's/Fox Premier Hardwood in the winners' bracket finals.

If so, they shouldn't have been.

Goodfellows won their first four games by a combined 17 runs.

And while that wasn't impressive, it was effective, nonetheless.

"It wasn't a dominating win, but it was good enough to win," summed up Goodfellows manager Dan Shipley. "Early in the tournament we won our first two games by three runs each, but we got a little better as the tournament went on. It just took us a while to get switched over to USSSA."

Goodfellows had been playing strictly ASA and NSA the last month, said Shipley.

“We won our first two games with some timely hitting, then against BCP in game four we had scored only two runs in our four four at bats, but outscored them 10-3 over the next two innings. Then in our game against Chico’s Sunday morning we finally hit the ball pretty decent,” said Shipley.

The victory earned Goodfellows \$600 in USSSA travel expense, while runner-up Good Guys/GBI claimed \$250. An unpaid berth to the USSSA “C” World Tournament September 20-23 in Kissimmee, Fl. passed down to third place Chico’s, while Nu-Way Drywall received an unpaid berth to the U-Trip “D” World September 20-23 in Sterling Heights, Mi.

The offensive leaders for Goodfellows included All-Tournament selections Jeremy Litteral and Scott Carr at .600, Eric Workman at .580 and Andy Steck at .560. Jeffrey Brooks was also picked to the All-Tourney team. Matt Montgomery chipped in with a .550 average.

Litteral was named tournament MVP.

“He was one of our two players who hit .600, he had two of our eight home runs, thirteen rbi’s and did an excellent job playing middle infield,” observed Shipley.

Other defensive standouts included outfielder Eric Workman and pitcher Doug Virdon, said Shipley.

“Eric ran down a lot of balls in centerfield, and considering Doug hasn’t pitched USSSA in a month, he also did a pretty good job for us,” said Shipley. “It takes a while to go from ASA to USSSA. He has to change his arch. But he did a pretty good job of that. Also he keeps the ball down and forces people into hitting some bad pitches.

“Obviously we played pretty darn good defense. The most runs we gave up was eleven,” noted Shipley.

Goodfellows needed an eight run 4th to overcome a 9-2 deficit against Dirty Birds/Skyline/Howser Distributing. They added two in the 5th and one in the 6th to come away with a 13-10 victory. A two-run home run by Jeff Brooks and a two-run double by Scott Carr pulled Goodfellows to within one at 9-8, then Jeremy Litteral launched a two-run homer to put his club ahead to stay at 10-9. Litteral went 3-for-4 to pace the offense.

Next Goodfellows broke a 7-7 tie with four runs in the bottom of the 5th, then added three in the 6th to emerge with an eventual 14-11 win over JLC/Legends/Countrywide. Jeff Brooks’ rbi single put Goodfellows on top for good at 8-7. Jason Slcak, who belted a two-run homer in the bottom of the 4th to tie the score at 7-7, banged out three hits along with Matt Montgomery, Scott Carr and Matt Albert.

Goodfellows got a breather in game three, as they rolled past TPE/Backstabbers 12-5. Goodfellows jumped out to a 7-2 lead in the bottom of the 1st, then added three runs in the 2nd and never looked back. Jeremy Litteral erased a 2-0 deficit with a three-run swat in the 1st, and Dana Waddell homered to account for all three of his team’s runs in the 2nd. Litteral also contributed a sac fly and walked twice, while Waddell went 2-for-2.

BCP appeared poised to ambush Goodfellows in game four, as they took a 5-2 lead into the bottom of the 5th. But there the wheels fell off the wagon, as Goodfellows erupted for six runs in the 5th to grab an 8-5 advantage. BCP plated three in the top of the 6th to knot the score, but Goodfellows stormed back with four unanswered runs in the bottom of the 6th to nail down a 12-8 victory. Goodfellows scored all four of their 6th inning runs with two outs, taking the lead on a Jason Slack base hit. Scott Carr then singled in an insurance run, and Eric Workman’s two-run double closed out the scoring.

Workman also homered in the game and shared a dozen hits with Carr, Jeremy Litteral, Andy Steck, and Tito and Buck Workman.

Goodfellows never trailed against Chico's in the winners' bracket finals after putting up five runs in the top of the 1st. Jeremy Litteral's rbi single put his team on the board, and Doug Virden capped off the inning with a two-run double. Chico's battled back to within one at 6-5 in the bottom of the 2nd, but then in the top of the 3rd Goodfellows exploded for ten runs, then outscored Chico's 7-0 over the last three innings to seal a 23-11 win. A three-run triple by Scott Carr and a two-run double by Jeremy Litteral highlighted Goodfellows' big ten-run 3rd.

Scott Carr had a double and two triples and went 4-for-5 along with Litteral and Jeff Brooks, and Eric Workman, Matt Albert, Andy Steck and Matt Montgomery combined for a dozen hits to power the champions.

Ten Run 5th Lifts Royals Past Ground Texx In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" Finals At Queen City

West Chester, Oh.--The Royals rallied for ten runs in the top of the 5th to overcome an 11-5 deficit and grab a 15-11 lead, then held on to defeat Ground Texx 16-12 in the deciding game of a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" State-National Qualifier June 30th at Queen City Sports Complex.

The victory over Ground Texx wrapped up a 3-0 effort by the champions, who had previously disposed of Benton Metals 8-2 and Team America 12-7.

The Royals will now advance to the Ohio USSSA "D" State Tournament August 18-19 in Harrison, and the U-Trip Great Lakes Division "D" National Tournament September 1-3 in Indianapolis.

Rob Drozd, Tony Zaya, and Jay Steer each turned in a blistering .800 day to pace the offense.

Steer, the Royals' player-manager, said the key to winning the tournament was "just being patient.

"We knew we'd eventually have our inning when we needed to have it," said Speer. "We just relaxed and waited for it to come and avoided trying to force it."

Rob Drozd, Tony Zaya and Scott Lynch anchored the defense, said Speer.

"Rob played a pretty good shortstop, Tony made a couple of big defensive stops at 3rd and Scott was big in the outfield," said Speer.

The Royals never trailed in either of their first two games after jumping out to a 4-0 lead. Rob Drozd and Tony Zaya collected three hits apiece in the win over Benton Metals. Ryan Dooley went 3-for-3 and Mike Brewer chipped in with a 2-for-3 effort versus Team America.

That pitted the Royals against the only other undefeated team - Ground Texx - for the championship. Ground Texx built an 11-5 advantage through four innings, but the Royals' bats came to life in the 5th, exploding for ten runs to take a 15-11 lead. Ground Texx never recovered, managing to muster only one more run to make the finals 16-12. Tony Zaya's leadoff triple ignited the Royals in the 5th. Rob Drozd delivered a big three-run triple, and Jay Steer launched a two-run homer to highlight the inning.

Jack Weston banged out three hits, and Drozd contributed a double and a triple and shared six hit with Zaya and Steer.

OC Softball/Eureka Ranch/Mimi's Café Blows Away Field In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" State-National Qualifier

By Andy Zureick

West Chester, Ohio - OC Softball/Eureka Ranch/Mimi's Café run ruled three of their four opponents as they won the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" State-National Qualifier at Queen City Sports Complex on June 30th. Their average margin of victory was in excess of 12 runs per game.

The first game of the day versus Pitt Ohio Express was actually the toughest of the day for OC. Despite the 15-4 final score, it lasted all seven innings. It would be the only game that would do so. Rick Callaway and Adam Ausman each had a two-run double in the five-run top of the 1st. With an early 5-0 lead, OC started a run that would not see them trail an opponent all day. They added three runs in the top of the 7th, two on a Josh Lippmeier double, to increase their lead to eleven runs. Pitt Ohio Express failed to rally in the bottom of the frame, making that the final score. Rick Callaway and Dusty Bargo were both 3-for-4 in the win.

The Young Guns must have known they were in trouble when OC put 13 runs on the board in the top of the 1st of game two. Rick Callaway had a pair of two-run doubles to go with Josh Lippmeier's inside-the-park grand slam. Adam Ausman capped the inning with a double that scored two more. This one took only four innings to finish. The final was 22-4. Jason McCarthy was a solid 4-for-4 with three doubles, a triple, and five RBI. Greg Kelly was a perfect 3-for-3. Cory Lippmeier, Adam Ausman, and Rick Callaway were all 3-for-4.

Jason McCarthy got OC on the board in the bottom of the 1st against Lolligagers with a two-run double. Greg Kelly picked up two more RBI with a triple in the five-run second. That pushed the score to 8-0. The Lolligagers never got on track as the game ended 14-4 in five innings. This time it was Rick Spivey leading the way, going 4-for-4 with three triples and a double. Greg Kelly and Steve McCarthy were also 4-for-4. Jeremy Sullivan was a perfect 3-for-3.

The Fat Batz barely managed to dent the plate in the final game of the day for OC. After a scoreless opening inning, OC put a five-spot on the board in the top of the 2nd. Four more in the top of the 6th, including a two-run single by Jeremy Sullivan, stretched the lead to 11-1. Fat Batz had no answer in the bottom of the inning and the mercy rule ended it there. Dusty Bargo collected three hits in as many tries. Greg Kelly and Rick Callaway went 3-for-4.

Kelly, the leadoff batter, hit .812 on the day to lead OC. Jeremy Sullivan and Dusty Bargo tied for the second-best batting average on the team at .714. Rick Callaway and Josh Lippmeier were just behind them at .667. Other top performers included Ricky Spivey (.642), Jason McCarthy (.583), and Adam Ausman (.538).

Team manager Adam Ausman was to the point with his comments afterwards, simply restating the obvious. "Once we got there, the bats were on fire and we didn't stop. We just played as a team."

OC came into the day having already qualified for all levels of postseason play. Berths were awarded to John Sauber Promotions for the USSSA "E" World Tournament in Kissimmee, Florida on September 13-15, Nationals on Labor Day Weekend in Milford, Ohio, and the State Tournament in Dayton on August 18-19.

Renegades Fend Off Fat Batz In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" World Qualifier At Riverstar

By Andy Zureick

Cincinnati, Oh. - Renegades posted four wins without defeat as they captured first place in the eight-team Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" World Qualifier played Sunday, July 1st at Riverstar Park.

Game one versus Lightning was the first of three straight mercy-rule wins for the Renegades. In the top of the 2nd, Brent Corbin and Mike Brashear smacked a pair of two-run doubles to lead their team to five runs and a 6-1 lead. Justin Fulmer tripled in three runs as part of the six-run 4th. That increased the Renegade lead to 12-1. The Lightning managed only one more score in their final two at bats to make it a 14-2 final. Brett Mullins was 3-for-4 in the game. Dustin Martin was a perfect 3-for-3.

The Renegades found themselves in a slugfest with The Mound in their second game of the day. Going into the bottom of the 4th, Renegades were in a 17-14 hole. Terry Burdine put his team ahead in that at bat with an RBI single. After The Mound failed to score for the first time in the top of the 5th, Renegades erupted for nine runs in the bottom of the frame to invoke the run rule. The big blow was provided by Dustin Martin, a two-run inside-the-park homerun. The final score was 27-17. Steve Presser was a team-best 5-for-5 with five runs batted in. Justin Fulmer and Brent Corbin were each 4-for-5. Dustin Martin and Terry Burdine finished at 3-for-4.

The Renegades continued the stellar run production in their first of two games with the Fat Batz. Nine runs in the bottom of the 5th helped them overcome what was a 6-4 deficit. Justin Fulmer made the score 7-6 when he doubled in the go-ahead run. Bradley Stevenson later added two more with a run-scoring single. Terry Burdine capped the five-run 5th with a triple that plated two runs and ended the game at 18-8. Burdine was 3-for-3 in the contest. Dustin Martin, Brett Mullins, and Justin Fulemer all went 3-for-4. Mullins also collected four RBI in the victory.

The Fat Batz won their way back for another shot at the Renegades in what would be the tournament championship game. Brent Corbin's two-run double in the top of the 4th put the Renegades ahead 5-4. The game would never be any closer. Renegades tacked on four more runs in their final three at bats to make it 10-4 going into the Fat Batz half of the 7th. They managed only two runs, making it a 10-6 final in favor of the Renegades. Corbin was 4-for-4. Bradley Stevenson and Steve Presser were both 3-for-3. The trio of Justin Fulmer, Jim Wolfe, and Josh Fulmer were all 3-for-4.

The key to the tournament according to Renegades manager Steve Presser was their play in the field. "We played pretty solid defense for the whole tournament. We had a couple of big putouts by Brett Mullins in left centerfield. We had some solid pitching from Chris Stacy - he probably only walked four guys at the most."

"Brent Corbin at shortstop turned a couple double plays by himself. Third baseman Keith Thornberry made a couple of diving catches and made a real nice catch between the five and six hole and turned a double play off of it."

Presser led his team at the plate for the tournament by hitting .818. Just behind him was Dustin Martin at .800 "Dustin did a heckuva job with runners in scoring position," noted Presser. Bradley Stevenson hit .769. Justin Fulmer and Brent Corbin both finished at .750. Fulmer also had 11 runs batted in. "He did a heckuva job hitting to the opposite field the whole tournament. He's been trying to work on it."

Other noteworthy plate performances were turned in by Brett Mullins (.667), Terry Burdine (.571), Mike Brashear (.555), and Jim Wolfe (.533).

The championship earned the Renegades \$300 for travel expenses along with a berth in the USSSA "E" World Tournament in Kissimmee, Florida on September 13-16.