

## **Publisher's Comments by Mark Linnemann**

"Don't throw the baby out with the bath water" is an expression that suggests that one shouldn't reject an entire idea or concept or practice just because a part of it is wrong.

But that is exactly what some people would like to do with the Greater Cincinnati USSSA "Players' List" in view of the Cousin Construction debacle that took place several weeks ago during the USSSA "City Slam."

The Cousin Construction ordeal was without question a black eye for the local USSSA program. Here was a team that was not in direct violation of any national rule. They received their classification from an area director, and played in a tournament in April without incident. Then five weeks later in their next event, the USSSA City Slam, they were unceremoniously booted out of the tournament for being in violation of a local rule that in reality not every team could be expected to be aware of. And as far as anyone appears to know, they were not.

The message boards bristled and fumed with criticism of the players' list. Cousin got a "raw deal." They were "jammed" and "screwed" by the local rules. "The powers that be" were "wrong again." "The stupid players' list is flawed," "it sucks," "it's a damn joke," and "it's useless," spewed the critics.

Indeed, what happened to Cousin Construction was a "raw deal." It is a clear glitch in the local players' list system that teams may form and enter tournaments and be blindsided by the list, and yet they are held accountable to it.

So is it time to trash the list? Would local softball be better off without it?

The first time any kind of a "players' list" was introduced to softball was in 1983 when USSSA adopted its "Major Players List." At the time, there was a tremendous amount of controversy in determining whether teams at the top level of the game were "Major" or "A." Naturally the better "A" teams did not want to play "Major," because they "couldn't compete" with them. And at the same time, the mediocre and the weak "A" teams cried foul, complaining that they "couldn't compete" with the better "A" teams.

Sound familiar???

As a way of resolving this, then USSSA Executive Director Al Ramsey came up with the concept of a "Major Players List." If a team had more than a pre-determined number of "Major Players," then they were required to play "Major." The list is now 25 years old. Like the Cincinnati area players' lists, and those throughout the country, the U-Trip "Major Player List" has been called every name in the book, including "flawed," a "joke" and "useless." Countless people have said it "sucks" and complained that it was "political."

But guess what? The list has survived for 25 years despite its critics and several legal challenges. It was an effective tool in differentiating between "Major," "AA" and "A" teams initially, and was later used to keep the USSSA "B," "C," "D," and "E" programs more balanced, as well as the Church, Black American, Corporate, Mixed and other programs. It has served the game well, and helped to make the USSSA program superior to that of other organizations when it comes to parity. In fact, other organizations have copied the concept.

Team organizers have now built their teams around the "Major Players List" for over two decades and found a more level playing field than if the list had not been in place. Fringe players who felt they did not belong on the list have had the opportunity to appeal to be removed. And despite the fact that the list has never been perfect, and that "politics" may have played a role in some of the selections, no person who is close to slow pitch softball can say with honesty that the game would have been better off without it. And despite all the "armchair quarterbacks" and second guessers of the world, no one has ever come up with a better system or tool to help classify teams with the exception of automatic reclassification rules.

The premise behind the "Major Player List" is simple. As controversial and subjective as it will always be, it is an easier and a more objective procedure to classify players than teams. Players can be evaluated by statistics, speed, defensive skills, team history, etc. Then, using the principle that the whole is equal to the sum of its parts, we have some help in how we approach the classification of a team. If a team is made up of players that have historically competed at the "D" level, or who have the skills or statistics of a "D" player, chances are the team is a "D" team. Where this always gets tricky is when there is a mix of players of different classes. At some point, if a team has several players who have played at a higher level, or who have the skills to play at a higher level, someone has to determine if such a team has crossed the line and should be competing at the next level. So why not a player list and a player limit determined by a committee to not only help take some of the guesswork out of it, but also to help share the responsibility of making some tough decisions?

Every argument I've ever heard about the classification of a team has always boiled down to the abilities of the players who made up the team. What better way, then, to gauge the strength of a team, than to focus on the individual team members?

Player lists have been used to clean up classifications throughout the country and they become more popular each year. Without question, the USSSA "B," "C," "D" and "E" World Tournaments were the most balanced in the history of the organization last year, and many people attribute this at least in part to the player lists.

The critics are right: the Greater Cincinnati players' list is flawed. There are players on it who don't belong, and other players who do. But let's be honest: it's gotten better each year and will continue to get better with each passing year. When the list was first compiled, many players wound up on the list simply because they played with an "A," "B" or "C" team the previous year. But players have been given the opportunity to appeal. They can appeal in writing, and if they're not satisfied with the decision, they can appeal in person. And despite allegations that "all you have to do is appeal to be removed from the list," nothing could be further from the truth. Many players have appealed in writing and in person and been denied.

Many people get too hung up on the individual players on the list. They see someone who they disagree with the committee on, so right away the whole system is judged to be flawed. But what the players' list needs to be evaluated on is not whether the committee is mistaken regarding individual players, but whether the teams wind up being classified correctly.

People need to realize first and foremost that one thing has never changed: whether there is a list or not, teams must still be classified by their overall offensive and defensive strength. If a "D" team has a half a dozen players who should be on the list, but the committee only labels two, that doesn't give that team an automatic right to play "D." If they turn out to be a "C" team, the committee needs to put them there, which is exactly what they would have done anyway before the concept of a list ever existed. So the list certainly doesn't allow any more sandbagging than had existed before.

Where the list is effective is that some teams do in fact build their team around it, and some teams do trim their rosters based on it. And some teams have been forced to the next level because of it.

So let's be honest. Teams are still classified by their overall strength offensively and defensively. That hasn't changed. And some teams are forced to either modify their rosters or move up to the next class. That's not wrong, that's not stupid, that doesn't suck, that's not a joke, and the list isn't useless. In fact, it's very useful. It's helped make play more balanced for every softball player in greater Cincinnati.

And don't forget: if players or teams feel the list is in error, or that the committee has made a mistake, they're entitled to appeal in writing or in person. And teams can appeal as often as they like as long as they play in two tournaments before they file. Nobody wants to see anybody playing in a class where they don't belong. But somebody has to decide what class teams belong in.

One message board post was very telling: "it's time to re-do this 'list'... and do it the right way!... I won't get into what I believe the 'right' way is because it doesn't matter."

Truth be told, I don't think this individual had anything helpful to say. Like his fellow critics, he fit into the category of people who prefer to be part of the problem instead of part of the solution.

The greater Cincinnati classification committee has worked tirelessly for the betterment of softball in this area. Let's show them some respect and appreciation and be honest about recognizing what they've accomplished instead of heaping shortsighted and small-minded criticism on them without any real suggestions on how to make things better.

### **In My Opinion by Ron Jeffers**

A couple weeks ago my daughter Misty called me on Monday morning and told me Mick Sharkey had died the day before of a heart attack. I was shocked to say the least. Mick and I had been close friends for thirty plus years, and he had umpired for me for many of those years with the Queen City Umpires. He came home after umpiring a hot Sunday afternoon baseball game and layed down on the sofa to rest and died shortly there after.

Mick always called me Archie as in Archie Bunker and I affectionately called him Meat Head.

This came from the two years he dated my daughter when she was going to college. I didn't want my daughter to date him since he was twelve years her senior, but her and her mother won out, and I saw him almost daily, at my home, for the time they dated.

I have a million stories about Mick, some of which are better left untold, but he had an impact on professional baseball that most people are unaware of, and I will share that story with you. Professional baseball had a rule that you could not have corrected vision (as in contact lenses or glasses) until you reached the major league level. Mick was umpiring in either single A or AA ball when a jealous, perverted umpire wrote to the commissioner's office to tell them that Mick was umpiring wearing contacts. He had been doing this for two years with no one knowing this or complaining, but after the letter they contacted Mick and asked him if he was, in fact, wearing contacts, and he said he was. They fired him on the spot, and he came back to Cincinnati and started umpiring here for me. At the next winter meeting for major league baseball, they brought up the no corrected vision rule they had, and dropped the rule at that time. I am certain their legal department was instrumental in this decision, out of fear of a discrimination lawsuit, and Mick was offered his job back in professional baseball. Mick worked the next year in AA ball, and at the end of that year his contract was not renewed, and he was out of professional baseball. Because of Mick Sharkey, professional baseball does not have the ridiculous rule they once had about no corrected vision in the minor leagues.

Mick again came back home to Cincinnati with three years of professional baseball experience under his belt, and I put him to work again doing our best high school and college baseball in the spring and adult baseball and softball in the summer. Mick absolutely hated softball, but did umpire some of it for me to provide him with money on evenings and mornings when we didn't have any baseball.

I asked him why he hated softball so much, and he told me "softball players can't or won't accept a good call." He said "In baseball you can call a strike on a batter or call a runner out on a close play, and they may not like it, but they won't go crazy like softball players do on any close call you make." Because he was one of my best umpires I used him on the top level softball teams and tournaments, and he hated every moment of it. He was right in his evaluation of this situation. Softball players for the most part can't or won't accept a good call without having a temper tantrum and making a big deal of it.

The players didn't like Mick either, in those days, for he had tremendous self-confidence in his umpiring, and it came across as being very cocky. You have to have tremendous self-confidence to umpire professional sports or they will eat you alive, but as I told him, "there is a fine line between being confident and being cocky, and you have crossed that line." I told him "you have an expression on your face where it

often looks like you are better than the players you are working for and or you look like you don't give a damn." Mick told me he didn't feel that way, and I said, "It doesn't matter how you feel, it is how you are perceived by the people in the game." This may have been the toughest change he had to make, and I know our best umpire at the time, Les Treitel, would not work with him because of this. Les had worked three or four years of professional baseball too, and he was terminated, because he pushed a manager who cursed his dead mother and spit in his face. It is a wonderful life we umpires have, isn't it?

After thirty plus years of managing the business of the Queen City umpires, I gave it up with over 300 local umpires and 3,000 baseball and softball teams, and Mick then started a group of baseball only umpires called Blue Chip Umpires, and as far as I know they still exist to this day.

Mick was unusual in that he lived to be 59 and he never had what we would call a real job. He was studying to be a teacher at UC when he was assigned to do his student teaching at a Catholic grade school on the west side. After a few weeks of this he did not know what he wanted to do for the rest of his life, but he did know he did not ever want to be a teacher. He was able to support himself by officiating football, volleyball, basketball and baseball without your typical 9 to 5 job like the rest of us.

There were two strikes by the major league umpires, one in 1978 and one in 1987, and I assigned the umpires for the games played in Cincinnati during those two years, and one of the umpires I selected and used was Mick. The next strike by the major league baseball umpires was a few years ago, and I doubt there will ever be another, because many of those umpires were never brought back or hired again. Baseball called their bluff, and these men lost their great jobs.

I tried my best to get Mick to work a National ASA tournament on several occasions, because I knew he was an outstanding umpire, and he could be one of the best softball umpires in the world if he would only do it, but he wouldn't. I begged him and got him to work the City Tournament on a few occasions, but he only worked as a favor for me.

Mick was a great looking guy, and women were crazy about him. I really didn't know how much so until my wife, my daughter and Mick and I went to Gatlinburg one weekend. We were in one of the shops there and while my wife and daughter were looking at some things, Mick and I wandered away to chat and kill time when the girl at the cash register came over to us. She calmly said "I would like to go to bed with you." She certainly was not talking to me, and Mick acted like he was not shocked by this at all. Mick very politely said "Thank you but I am with someone." The young lady replied, "If you change your mind I will be right over here at the cash register." I just stood there in shock and thought I must have lived a sheltered and boring life, because nothing like that had ever happened to me in my seven decades on this earth. He acted as if this happened to him all the time, although I am sure it didn't. At least for my own ego, I hope it didn't.

Mick saw me in the stands of a high school state tournament game last year and came up in the stands and said, "Hi, Arch, how are you doing." Even after he and my daughter stopped dating we still remained the best of friends, and I will truly miss him forever. He had a way about him that every one loved except softball players. I don't know where he is today, but I know for sure he is not working a softball game.

I offer my sincere condolences to Mick's wife Anne and his two children Kelsey and Justin. He was too young to die, and I will miss him greatly.

That's my opinion, what's yours?

### **What's Your Gripe? By Ron Jeffers**

**Q. In a tournament we played in last month, we had runners on 1st and 2nd with one out in the bottom of the 7th, and we trailed by a run. The next batter had an extra base hit. On a close play at home, the runner from 2nd slid past home but never touched the plate. The catcher made a swipe tag, but never touched the runner. The umpire hesitated, and then ruled "safe." The catcher then threw to 3rd base to try to get runner from 1st sliding in. The ball got by the third baseman as the**

**runner got up off the ground and raced home. The on deck batter, who saw that the runner who was originally on 2nd missed the plate, pushed him back to home to touch the plate. The umpire then ruled that runner “out” and sent the runner who had originally been on 1st back to 3rd. Our next batter made an out, and the other team scored in the top of the 8th and wound up beating us.**

**Wuz we robbed?**

A. The ASA rule book states that, “After a runner has scored and missed home plate and is physically assisted back to home, the ball is dead, the runner is out, and the run is nullified.”

Missing home plate is an appeal play, and the umpire made the correct call of “safe” when the catcher missed the runner with the tag. When the on deck batter pushed the runner back to home plate this was an act of interference making it a dead ball at that time, and with the runner being declared out.

The umpire should have sent the runners on base back to the last base they occupied at the time the interference, and it appears that is what he did.

I think the umpire did an excellent job in everything he did on this play, and he certainly was correct in his mechanics in handling this play, and also with his application of the interference rule.

**Q. In the top of the first inning in our league game, our team loaded the bases. Since this was our first league game, our number five hitter, who batted fourth for us last year, mistakenly came to the plate. On the first pitch, he hit a ground ball to the shortstop, who stepped on 2nd base for a force out, then threw on to first to record the double play. On the play the runner who was on third scored and the runner who was on 2nd advanced to 3rd. The defensive coach then appealed that we batted out of order, and the umpire called the batter out and made each player return to his base. Was this the right call?**

A. The umpire was absolutely correct in sending the runners back to the base they occupied when the batter came to bat, but he called the wrong person out. The batter who was supposed to bat is the person who is always out on an appeal of batting out of order. The umpire then puts the next batter in the line-up up to bat, which in your play would be the number five hitter. This was the number five hitter who hit the ball to the shortstop. The number four hitter in the lineup just gets skipped on this appeal play.

Remember when a team is found guilty of batting out of order the appeal must always be made by the defensive team, and it must be addressed to the umpire prior to the next pitch. The other important point is the batter who should have batted is the player who is always called out, and the person who follows him in the batting order is the next legal batter.

**Q. In our league game last month, we had the bases loaded and one out. The batter hit a one-hopper to the pitcher, who threw to the catcher standing on home before the runner from third arrived. The catcher then stepped forward into fair territory and tried to throw the batter out at first. The ball hit the batter, who was running inside the foul line about five feet from first base, and ricocheted into right field, and then the umpire called time. The runners from first and second had already advanced one base from before the thrown ball hit the batter-runner, so the umpire awarded each runner two bases. The other team argued the call, but the umpire would not change his mind. Was this the correct call?**

A. The umpire was half right. The runner coming home is out, and when the thrown ball, from the catcher, hit the batter/runner, he is also out, and the ball is dead. The runners that were on base are returned to the base they last legally occupied when the batter/runner was hit with the thrown ball.

The umpire went wrong when he awarded two bases to the base runners, because the ball became dead instantly when the batter-runner was hit with the thrown ball. The batter/runner must run the last half the distance between home and first on or to the outside of the base line by rule, and if he doesn't and is hit with or interferes with the throw to first base it will be a dead ball and the batter will be called out.

At least the umpire knew half of the rule. It is a shame he didn't know all the rule.

**Q. I heard Hall of Fame umpire Richard Zureick was hurt playing in a softball game. Is this true?**

A. Richard still gets out to watch softball games several nights a week, and last week he was watching the Procter & Gamble league when they didn't have anyone to catch during infield practice. He went out to help pick up the balls being rolled in to the batter when he stepped on one of the balls and fell and broke his hip. They took him to Good Samaritan Hospital in the life squad where they put several large bolts and screws in to put everything back in place, and we hope he will be able to watch the city tournament this year in a wheel chair.

Richard is 81 years old, loves softball and the City Tournament and hasn't missed a City Tournament in at least 40 years. I visited him in the hospital, when he came out of surgery, and he appeared to be doing great for his age and overall physical condition.

Richard was not only a great umpire, but more importantly he was a super husband to his late wife Ruth, and two his five sons and many grandchildren. Richard is the greatest friend and humanitarian I have personally ever known. He has stopped and changed tires and went and got gas for thousands of stranded motorists in his lifetime, and all he ever wanted or accepted was a "thanks." They threw away the mold with this guy, and the world is certainly a better place for his being here.

**Central Turners Set Dates For 34th Annual "Corn Boil" Tournament**

The Cincinnati Central Turners have announced the dates for the 34th Annual Corn Boil Tournaments for 2008.

Turners, located at 2200 Pinney Lane in Colerain Township, will again feature two divisions for this popular late-summer extravaganza, including a women's division on August 9-10, and a men's division on August 15-17. The entry fee for the women's division is \$150, while the men's division is \$210.

Last year thirty-three teams - including five women's and twenty-eight men's C/D teams - participated in the two division affair.

So what's the attraction?

"Other than we give away free corn, everybody says there's a good atmosphere and good quality ball," remarks Matt Rich, Turner's Athletic Director.

Rich took over the AD position from his father, Cincinnati Central Turners Vice President Ron Rich, earlier this year.

"They started giving away free corn and it just grew from there," he says.

Rich, who grew up at Central Turners watching his dad play ball until he began to play himself six years ago at the age of 16, says the tournament started in 1974. But for the first twelve years, says Rich, participation was restricted to other Turner Clubs. "Then we decided to open it up because softball became so popular," says Rich.

Rich says the tournament was the dream of several softball players from the mid-seventies who were members of the club, including Charlie Cooper, Dennis Fathergill, Charlie Gamble, Dan Masterpolo, Steve Morano, Marvin Napier, Bud Patters, Ron Rich, Don Royer and Don White.

"The ones who are still alive all come back every year and bring their families," says Rich.

The idea for the Corn Boil was that of Charlie Gamble, recalls Rich.

Turner members shuck the corn, boil it and serve it - with or without butter. The winner of a drawing of the 28 participating teams each year gets a free entry fee into the "Corn Boil" the following season.

But the real attraction, insists Rich, is the softball.

"At one time it was an 'open' tournament and anybody who wanted to get in got in," recalls Rich.

Now there are two divisions, including the women's division. "That was added ten years ago," notes Rich."

Meissner's Insurance, which rallied from a second round 11-9 setback to Hart Environmental to mercy-rule their final two opponents, captured first place in last year's women's Corn Boil. Meissner's routed Side Room 17-6 and R & D Decorating 18-5 in five innings to wrap up a 3-1 weekend. Meissner's also owned an 8-0 shutout victory over Mt. Healthy Store & Lock in their opener. Nancy Pope hit a sizzling .600, and Ali Boltman and Crystal Wilson batted .588 to power the champions.

In the men's C/D division, Indian Creek Tavern rallied to win three of their six games in their last at bat to capture first place. Indian Creek fended off a late charge by Team Spanho, which had disposed of eight straight opponents after losing their opener, 17-12 in the championship game. Chris Wessel, who had shut down all three of Indian Creek's opponents in the top of the 7th in his club's three come-from-behind wins, was named tournament co-MVP along with hitting leader Daniel Tolbert (.731, 14 rbi's, 4 HR's).

The women's division will be held this year on the weekend after the ASA Cincinnati Metro Tournament - August 9-10. The C/D follows one week later on August 9-10.

Rich promises "a festival-like atmosphere" during the tournament. A contest closest to the pin (across the lake) is planned, and various food and beverage booths will be available.

"We'll also try to have a weekend fishing pass for non-members for a small fee," adds Rich.

Rich points out that there will be a \$2 parking charge per team during the Corn Boil tournament. Each car will be eligible for a \$50 cash drawing.

Turners offers a women's league on Tuesday, and men's C/D leagues on Thursday and Friday.

Besides featuring two softball diamonds, a three acre fishing lake and horseshoes, Central Turners offers year-round activities, including dances, pool and dart leagues, and corn hole leagues and tournaments.

"We also have a clubhouse where everyone is welcome," says Rich. "The clubhouse has cold drinks, big screen TV, pool table and dart boards. And we have a large hall that can be rented for receptions, dances and fund raisers."

For additional information on softball leagues or tournaments, call Cincinnati Central Turners at 825-2713.

NOTE: Softball teams participating in the Corn Boil tournament will be required to follow the ASA approved bat list, which can be viewed on the web at [www.softball.org](http://www.softball.org).

**May 17...**

**JLC/Legends Outlast Barnstormers, Big O Softball In USSSA "C-D" Qualifier At Northern Kentucky Sports Park**

Taylor Mill, Ky. - JLC/Legends rallied for three runs in the bottom of the 8th to outlast Barnstormers 13-12 in the winners' bracket finals, then held off a furious 7th inning charge by Big O Softball in the championship game to capture first place in a USSSA "C-D" State-National Qualifier on Sunday, May 18th at Northern Kentucky Sports Park.

Billy Scott's rbi single capped off JLC/Legends' three-run rally against the Barnstormers. Then in the finals centerfielder Paul Laible gunned down the tying run at the plate with two outs in the bottom of the 7th to preserve an 8-7 victory over Big O Softball.

Runner-up Big O Softball earned a berth to the USSSA Great Lakes Division "D" National Tournament Labor Day Weekend in Ft. Knox, Ky.

"Timely hitting" versus the Barnstormers and the "big defensive play in the bottom of the 7th" against Big O Softball helped carry JLC/Legends to the title, said manager Chris Fogt.

"They (Barnstormers) scored two runs in the top of the 8th, but we answered with three straight hits, two walks and another hit," said Fogt about his club's victory in the winners' bracket finals.

In addition to Paul Laible's big throw against Big O, Fogt said his team got some big defensive plays from the left side of his infield as well.

"Chad Johnson (ss) and Paul DeMoss (3b) played great defense that last game," said Fogt. "Not one ball got through them.

Paul DeMoss and Brian Goebel were red hot at the plate, hitting .800 and .727 respectively. But they didn't get much support from the rest of the line-up, said Fogt.

"Paul and Brian were the definite hitting stars for the tournament, but defense was the key," remarked Fogt. "We didn't have our hitting shoes on that day so we picked it up with the gloves. And Shawn Sproles kept the hitters off-balance."

JLC/Legends brushed aside the Renegades 15-5 in five innings in their opener, scoring in every inning to invoke the mercy-rule in the bottom of the 5th. Mike Sellet's rbi double put JLC on the board in a three run 1st. Chris Malay's two-run double capped off a four-run 2nd as the lead swelled to 7-0. The Renegades answered with five in the bottom of the inning, but JLC outscored their opponent 10-0 over the next three innings to squash the rally. Brian Goebel contributed a solo home run in a three-run 3rd, and Mike Sellet in a two run 4th.

Malay and Goebel combined for six hits to pace the offense.

Barnstormers nearly ambushed JLC in the winners' bracket finals, as they grabbed a 12-10 lead in the top of the 8th. But a single by Brian Goebel and back-to-back triples by Danny Sharp and Scotty Moree knotted the score at 12-12. Then after intentional passes to Shawn Sproles and Chad Johnson, Billy Scott singled home Moree with the game winner.

Sharp, Moree, Johnson and Paul DeMoss banged out three hits each for the winners.

In the finals JLC used a four run outburst in the top of the 6th to break a 4-4 tie with Big O Softball, but needed a game-saving throw by outfielder Paul Laible to fend off a last-gasp charge in the bottom of the 7th. Scotty Moree's rbi single put JLC ahead for good at 5-4. Shawn Sprole's two-run single capped off the inning as the lead swelled to 8-4. But Big O came right back with three runs to cut the deficit to one, then put the tying run on 2nd and the winning run on 3rd. Centerfielder Paul Laible then fielded a base hit up the middle and gunned down the runner from 2nd with a BB to catcher Mike Sellet to preserve the win.

Paul DeMoss pounded out four hits, and Brian Goebel three to power the champions.

JLC/Legends' Chris Fogt concluded by thanking Northern Kentucky Sports Park manager Donny Fisher "for having a great tournament," and Legends Bar & Grill in Latonia for sponsoring his team.

### **Lindenwald's Romps, VSC Escapes M & S In Kolping Round Robin Sweeps**

Mt. Healthy, Oh. - Lindenwald's Finest outscored their opponents 50-11, and VSC clipped eventual division runner-up M & S Drywall 10-8 en route to their respective division titles in an eight team, two division Saturday night round robin May 17th at Kolping Park.

Lindenwald's flattened Buckeyes (1-2) 13-1 and Bayes & Sons (0-3) 23-3 before brushing aside McKinley's Pub (2-1) 14-7 in the division one finale.

While in Division two, VSC battled past Auto Express (1-2) 9-6 and M & S Drywall (2-1) 10-8, then polished off Team Vengeance (0-3) 11-7.

**May 31-June 1...**

### **Late Rallies Lift Champions In 7th Annual Billy Backman Memorial-USSSA City Slam... Mike Foulks/Team Insanity Rallies Past Blitz/Easton, Spitz/Mizuno At Eggleston Park**

Colerain Township, Oh. – Mike Foulks/Team Insanity outscored Blitz/Easton 6-0 over the last two innings in the winners' bracket finals to pull out a 21-17 victory, then overcame a 24-5 deficit to outlast Spitz Seeds/Mizuno 26-25 in the championship game to capture first place in the 7th Annual Billy Backman Memorial-USSSA City Slam "B-C" NIT May 30-June 1 at Eggleston Park.

The victory over Spitz/Mizuno wrapped up a 5-0 weekend for the winners, who racked up their third U-Trip "B-C" NIT title of the year and second in as many weeks.

A berth to the USSSA "B" and "C" World Tournament passed down to TPS Reds/Allied/Astros/Riverside and Sentry Fire/Red Eye Sports/LBYC, respectively.

"Team chemistry" and "two out hitting" - especially from tournament MVP Brandon Johnson - carried the champions to the title, said coach Roger Foster.

"We played as a team and didn't get down," said Foster, whose team battled all the way back from a 24-5 deficit over the last four and a half innings of the finals on the heels of rallying past Blitz/Watanabe/Bull/Minges/Wessel/Easton in their final two at bats in the winners' bracket finals.

"Everybody was motivated. Numerous times we scored with two outs. We probably scored half our runs with two outs. We had a lot of timely, two out hits."

Leading the way were Jeremy "Peanut" Ross and tournament MVP Brandon Johnson, who both hit a blistering .826 to pace the offense. Roger Boles followed right behind at .813 and Cory Hogle chipped in at .739. Mike Foulks hit a robust .650 for the weekend.

Foster said Johnson was named MVP for repeatedly coming up with "key hits in clutch situations.

"He kept the team up when we fell behind in the Spitz game," said Foster. "He showed his leadership."

Pitcher T. J. Thompson and infielder Jason Ferguson also stepped up big for Foulks/Insanity, said Foster.

"T. J. pitched a great tournament. He fielded the middle very well," said Foster.

"We had to move Jason from left field to middle infield due to an injury to Eddie Weinberg, and he made several great plays. He made an incredible back-handed stop and throw in the Blitz game," said Foster.

Foulks/Insanity brushed aside their first two opponents, mercy-ruling Balance Fitness/B & A Sports Bar 18-3 in five and Sentry Fire/Red Eye Sports/LBYC 13-8. Insanity used a six run 4th and a five run 5th to break open a 7-3 contest with B & A. Brandon Johnson's two run triple and a two-run single by Seth Tracy were the big blows in the 4th. Jeremy Ross accounted for three runs with a bases-clearing triple in the 5th.

Ross, Jason Ferguson, and Jim Burt were each perfect in four trips to the plate, and Johnson and Cory Hogle went 3-for-4.

Sentry Fire gave Mike Foulks a scare for four innings in game two, as they held a 6-5 lead with only three innings left. But in the top of the 5th, Insanity erupted for six runs, then added one in the 6th and one in the 7th to emerge with a 13-8 victory. Jason Ferguson's launched a three-run blast to break a 6-6 tie in the 5th. Pitcher T. J. Thompson held Sentry at bay, yielding only two runs over the last three innings.

Ross ran his hitting streak to 8-for-8, as he banged out four hits along with Cory Hogle. Donnie Merriman and Brandon Johnson chipped in three hits apiece.

Foulks/Insanity nearly squandered away a thirteen run lead in game three. After jumping out to a commanding 18-5 advantage in the 5th, and taking an apparently safe 20-9 lead into the bottom of the 7th, Foulks watched Spitz Seeds/Mizuno mount a desperate charge to pull within two before succumbing 20-18. Team Insanity never trailed in the game after erupting for six in the 1st and five in the 2nd to go ahead 11-3. Craig Johnson's two-run shot put his club on the board in the 1st. Brandon Johnson cracked a three-run homer and Roger Drake followed with a two-run swat in the 2nd. Brandon Johnson collected two more rbi's with a double in a five-run Insanity 5th as the lead swelled to 18-5.

Brandon Johnson and Roger Boles shared eight hits, and Drake and Craig Johnson went 3-for-4 to lead the winners.

That lifted Mike Foulks into the winners' bracket finals, where they rallied for six runs in their final two at bats to overcome a 17-15 Blitz/Easton lead and pull out a 21-17 victory. An rbi single by Seth Tracy capped off a three-run 6th and put Insanity ahead for good at 18-17. After Blitz put up a goose egg in the bottom of the inning, rbi singles by Cory Hogle, Craig Johnson and Brandon Johnson closed out the scoring in the 7th and gave Foulks a 21-17 victory. T. J. Thompson held Blitz scoreless over the final two innings to preserve the win.

Brandon Johnson pounded out five hits, Roger Drake added four, and Trent Thompson and Roger Boles combined for six hits.

Spitz/Mizuno appeared bent on revenge in the finals, as they exploded to an early 24-5 lead in the top of the 3rd. Undaunted, Insanity roared back with eight in the 3rd, one in the 4th, six in the 5th, and five in the 6th to knot the score then pushed across the game winner in the bottom of the 7th. T. J. Thompson, who held Spitz to a lone run from the 4th through the 7th, got things underway in the 7th with a leadoff walk. Then consecutive singles by Don Merriman and Roger Boles moved Thompson to 3rd and juiced the sacks for Cory Hogle, who delivered a base hit to plate Thompson with the game winner.

Craig Johnson collected five hits, and Merriman, Boles, Brandon Johnson, Jeremy Ross, Roger Drake and Seth Tracy added four each to power the champions.

Insanity's Roger Foster concluded by expressing his appreciation to the tournament operators.

"Eggleston Park held a great tournament," said Foster. "We want to thank (Park Manager) David Maury and his staff for the job they did over the weekend."

#### **WILLIAM D. BACKMAN IV MEMORIAL GREATER CIN. USSSA CITY SLAM "B-C" NIT STANDINGS**

1. Mike Foulks AB/Team Insanity, Covington, KY 5 0

- |     |  |     |
|-----|--|-----|
| 2.  | Spitz Seeds/Mizuno, Mt. Washington, KY         | 5 2 |
| 3.  | Blitz/Wat./Wes./Bull/Minges/Easton, Cin., OH   | 3 2 |
| 4.  | Sentry/Red Eye Sports/LBYC, Erlanger, KY       | 4 2 |
| 5.  | J Taps, Cincinnati, OH                         | 3 2 |
|     | EAP/Wessel/Real Estate Title/Easton, Cin., OH  | 2 2 |
| 7.  | JLC/Legends, Edgewood, KY                      | 3 2 |
|     | KW Sports/Game On/Easton, Cincinnati, OH       | 2 2 |
| 9.  | Cincysoftball/Wessel/EMR/PD, Cincinnati, OH    | 1 2 |
|     | Cronin Ford, Cincinnati, OH                    | 1 2 |
|     | D & S Engineering, Cincinnati, OH              | 1 2 |
|     | TPS/Reds/Allied/Astros/Riverside, Fishers, IN  | 1 2 |
| 13. | B & A Sports Bar, Harrison, OH                 | 1 2 |
|     | Dizzy Roosters/Wick's Pizza, Louisville, KY    | 0 2 |
|     | Local #393 Blue Pipefitters Easton, Cinti., OH | 0 2 |
|     | Weller Roofing, Hamilton, OH                   | 0 2 |
| 17. | Cope Sports, Mason, OH                         | 0 2 |

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

Tom Spille	Sentry/Red Eye Sports/LBYC
Adam Visnic	Sentry/Red Eye Sports/LBYC
Jason Brown	Blitz/Wat./Wes./Bull/Minges/Easton
Michael Rogers	Blitz/Wat./Wes./Bull/Minges/Easton
Dusty Bowling	Spitz Seeds/Mizuno
George Farris	Spitz Seeds/Mizuno
Bobby Grinestaff	Spitz Seeds/Mizuno
Tom Stephens	Spitz Seeds/Mizuno
Roger Boles	Mike Foulks AB/Team Insanity
Roger Drake	Mike Foulks AB/Team Insanity
Jeremy Ross	Mike Foulks AB/Team Insanity
Seth Tracy	Mike Foulks AB/Team Insanity
Joe Horvath - ODP	Spitz Seeds/Mizuno
Jason Ferguson - HR Leader	Mike Foulks AB/Insanity
Brandon Johnson - MVP	Mike Foulks AB/Insanity

**Sportsco/Archie's/Chico's Perfect 5-0 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA C-D Super Qualifier At Expressway by Andy Zureick**

Milford, Oh. - Sportsco/Archie's/Chico's won all five games they played to finish as champions of the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA C-D Super Qualifier on May 31<sup>st</sup> at Expressway Park.

In a preliminary three-game round robin, Sportsco/Archie's/Chico's mercy-ruled each team they faced.

Game one was a match up with Barnstormers. Sportsco won 14-3 in five innings. Eric Geiger was a perfect 4-for-4 in the opening victory. Nick Donley went 3-for-3. Luke Miller chipped in a homerun.

Geiger stayed perfect at the plate, going 3-for-3, in the second game against Buffalo Wild Wings. Teammates Tim Rovekamp and Danny Eigel also turned in 3-for-3 performances. Rovekamp had a homer and four RBI in the 13-1, five-inning affair.

In their third straight run-rule shortened contest, Sportsco topped Cincinnati Diamondbacks 20-6. Eric Geiger capped a perfect round-robin plate effort by going 4-for-4. Chris Osterkamp went 3-for-3. Tim Rovekamp was an RBI machine with a pair of slammers.

As lopsided as the games were in the round robin, that's how close they were in the elimination round for Sportsco. In fact, both games needed extra innings before a winner was determined.

In the semifinals, Sportsco drew Hart Restoration Saints. After eight frames, the score was knotted at 8-8. Eric Geiger led the top of the 9<sup>th</sup> off with a single. That was followed by Chris Osterkamp earning a base on balls. With no outs, Mike Thompson drove both runners in with a double. Those two runs were all Sportsco could manage, but it would prove to be enough as Hart Restoration Saints failed to score in the bottom of the inning making it a 10-8 final. Thompson was 3-for-5 including a three-run homer. Tim Rovekamp was 2-for-3 with a long ball of his own.

That win set up the finals between Sportsco and Extreme Softball. Extreme Softball looked to have Sportsco's number as they jumped out to a 10-run lead in the top of the first. But Sportsco showed a champion's resolve and managed to claw their way back to within striking distance at 21-14 by the time their last bat in regulation came around. "We were just not giving up," explained team manager Brian Lakes, "we chipped away every inning." Then in the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup>, Sportsco capped the comeback when, with two outs, Ben Cosgrove drove Luke Miller with the tying run. In the top of the 8<sup>th</sup>, Extreme Softball failed to score. In their half of the inning, Sportsco put the potential winning run on when Luke Miller knocked a one-out single. Nick Donley moved the runner with a base hit. The next batter made the second out of the inning, bringing Ben Cosgrove to the plate with a chance to be the hero once again. He delivered a single to right field that plated the game-winning run. It was a 22-21 final. Cosgrove was 3-for-5 in the game. Nick Donley and Chris Osterkamp both went 4-for-5.

Thanks to an outstanding run through the round robin, Eric Geiger posted a team-best .895 batting average in the tournament. Tim Rovekamp and Mike Thompson drove in 14 runs apiece. Rovekamp hit .579 with 5 homers; Thompson had three round trippers while batting .526. Chris Osterkamp finished at .667 with nine runs batted in. Jeff Schmutter (.625) and Luke Miller (.643) also had quality offensive performances in the tournament.

"We pretty much followed our leadoff hitter (Eric Geiger) the whole tournament. And Tim Rovekamp came through with guys on base and hit homeruns when they counted," noted Lakes, the manager. "It really helps to hit homers when guys are on base like that."

"It was a hot day early on. We hit really good the first three games. Then the last two games went to extra innings, and our defense was huge," Lakes added. "In the Hart Restoration game, we had a couple of big double plays late in the game to keep them off the scoreboard." The Sportsco/Archie's/Chico's infield was made up of Danny Eigel, first base; Chris Osterkamp, second base; Brad Dormann, middle infielder; Jeff Schmutte, shortstop; and Tim Rovekamp, third base.

Berths to the Ohio USSSA D State Tournament on August 16-17 at Expressway Park and the U-Trip D Nationals in Fort Knox, Kentucky on Labor Day weekend were awarded to Buffalo Wild Wings as all teams finishing ahead of them had qualified in previous events.

#### **49-Year Old Pitcher Holds Six Opponents To Five Runs Per Game...**

#### **Loveless Leads D & D/Dirty Dozen Sweep Of 7th Annual Billy Backman Memorial-USSSA City Slam "E" At Eggleston Park**

Colerain Township, Oh. – Ron "Jockey" Loveless held six opponents to a combined 32 runs to lead D & D/Dirty Dozen to a first place finish in the class "E" division of the 7th Annual Billy Backman Memorial-USSSA City Slam May 30-June 1 at Eggleston Park.

Loveless allowed only one team - Mulligan's - to score more than six runs as D & D/Dirty Dozen marched through the 28-team field undefeated, polishing off Hodapp Funeral Home 7-5 in the championship game.

The victory gave D & D a berth to the USSSA "D" World Tournament September 11-14 in Kissimmee, Fl.

“Pitching and defense were the keys to winning the tournament - without a doubt,” said Dirty Dozen coach Dave Loveless.

“We only gave up 32 runs in six games.”

Loveless said Ron Loveless, shortstop Chris Baker and right-center fielder Derrick Hartness were his team’s defensive standouts for the weekend.

“Ron’s pitching was great,” said Loveless. “He only gave up more than six runs in one game, and he fielded the middle well too.

“Chris turned six or seven double plays throughout the tournament at short,” added Loveless. “He was our best defensive player in the tournament. He turned an unassisted double play and almost turned an unassisted triple play. He helped get us out of a lot of jams.”

Loveless said that Derrick Hartness sparkled in the outfield.

“He made two diving catches against Mulligan’s and ran a lot of balls down that were over his head.”

Chuck Keeney (.767), Ron Loveless (.700) and Joe Cox (.680) carried the offense, and were joined on the All-Tournament team by Chris Baker.

D & D/Dirty Dozen barely survived their first game, needing a three-run rally in the top of the 6th to get past FTX/Finish Line Graphics 6-4. With his team trailing 4-3, Chuck Keeney doubled home two runs to put his club ahead to stay, then scored on a Chris Baker single to close out the scoring. Ron Loveless held FTX scoreless over the final three innings to preserve the win.

Keeney and Derrick Hartness banged out six hits each to pace the winners.

Dirty Dozen needed another come-from-behind victory in game two, rallying for five runs in the top of the 5th to overcome a 3-2 deficit and grab a 7-3 advantage over Godbey Law. Derrick Hartness rbi single put D & D on top for good at 4-3. Joe Cox followed with a big two-run double.

Chuck Keeney collected three more hits, and Danny and Jimmy Loveless chipped in two hits apiece. Ron Loveless again held D & D’s opponent at bay in the late inning, as Godbey put up goose eggs in the 6th and 7th.

Dirty Dozen engineered yet another late rally en route to a 23-10 win over Mulligan’s. But the game was a much closer contest than the score indicated. After falling behind 8-2 after three, D & D battled back to within one at 10-9 after six, then in the top of the 7th exploded for 14 unanswered runs. A sac fly by Carl Hartness gave his club the lead at 11-10. George McClain and Chris Baker each contributed a three-run, inside-the-park home run to help their team score eleven runs with two outs.

Joe Cox went 4-for-5, and Hartness, Baker and Josh Wiehoff shared nine hits.

Dirty Dozen rallied from behind yet again in game four, using a five-run, 5th inning outburst to erase a 4-2 lead by Young Bloods. Ron Loveless proved invincible once again in the late innings, as he shut down Young Bloods over the final four frames.

Chuck Keeney had his third, three-hit game, and Jim and Ron Loveless and Joe Cox had two hits each.

D & D’s modus operandi worked to perfection again in the winners’ bracket finals, where they rallied for three runs in the bottom of the 4th to tie Hodapp Funeral Home at 6-6, then pushed across the game winner in the bottom of the 6th while Ron Loveless handcuffed Hodapp in the 5th, 6th and 7th. In the 6th, Carl Hartness singled with one out, went to 3rd on Jimmy Loveless’ double, and trotted home with the eventual game winner on a George McClain sac fly.

Carl and Derrick Hartness, Joe Cox and Dave, Danny and Ron Loveless combined for a dozen hits for Dirty Dozen.

D & D never trailed in the finals, breaking out to a 4-0 lead in the bottom of the 1st on a two-run double by Joe Cox, an rbi double by Chris Baker and an rbi triple by Carl Hartness. Hodapp cut the deficit to 4-3 in the top of the 3rd, but D & D slammed the door on their challengers with three runs in the bottom of the inning. Rbi singles by Chuck Keeney and Carl Hartness and an rbi double by Chris Baker accounted for the runs. Hodapp scored the game's last two runs in the top of the 5th to make the final 7-5.

Cox and Baker pounded out three hits each, and Carl Hartness and Dave and Ron Loveless added two to power the champions.

Dirty Dozen coach Dave Loveless said his club won "with a bunch of young talent.

"We're just a bunch of young dudes with the exception of Jim and Ron Loveless, who are 45 and 49 years old," said Loveless. "We have five kids who are younger than 18 playing. Our 2nd baseman, George McClain is only 15."

### **Pitching Key For Gary's Roofing In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men's D-E State-National Qualifier by Andy Zureick**

Milford, Oh. – Pitchers John Drake and Jimmy Hargett combined to give up only 17 runs in three games as Gary's Roofing won first place in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men's D-E State-National Qualifier at Expressway Park on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

On a Sunday where defense was the name of the game, the first contest between Gary's Roofing and Syndicate was the highest scoring of the day. Going into the top of the 5<sup>th</sup>, Gary's trailed 9-8. Matt Hines tied the game in with a run-scoring double. Jim Hargett later capped what would be a five-run inning with an RBI single that made it 13-9. Gary's Roofing added two insurance runs in the top of the 7<sup>th</sup> to make it a 15-9 final. Dan Nichols, Sr. led the way at the plate going 3-for-5. Shawn Drake and John Drake were both 2-for-3. Pitcher John Drake tossed three shutout innings to close out the game.

Outstanding pitching would be the dominant theme on the day as the Gary's Roofing hurlers allowed only eight more runs in the final two contests. "We made the routine plays, but nobody really stood out defensively other than our two pitchers," noted team manager Matt Hutchinson. "Our team batting average was only .323 on the day, so it wasn't our offense that carried us. Our pitching won the tournament for us."

Game two matched Gary's and Pipefitters Local #392 Red. In the bottom of the 6<sup>th</sup>, Butch Campbell's sacrifice fly plated a run to break a 3-3 tie. Chris Handley followed with a run-scoring single to make it 5-3. John Drake once again held the opponent scoreless for the final three innings of the game while Dan Nichols, Sr. turned in another team-leading effort at the plate, this time going 2-for-3.

The final match-up of the three-game round robin pitted Gary's against Lindenwald's Finest. Gary's trailed early but got four runs in the top of the 4<sup>th</sup> to tie the game at 5-5. In that at bat, Matt Hutchinson doubled in two runs. Shawn Drake added a solo dinger to knot the score. Hutchinson collected another RBI in the top of the 6<sup>th</sup> to make it 6-5 in favor of Gary's. That would prove to be the final score as Lindenwald's Finest saw their offense stall after the early innings - they failed to score in the final four at bats. Butch Campbell was 3-for-4 in the victory. Hutchinson had two hits in as many official plate appearances. Zac Schenz was 2-for-3.

Campbell and teammate Shawn Drake tied for top honors at the plate on the day with .500 batting averages.

"Pitching and defense carried us throughout the day and put us in a position to win the tournament," Gary's Matt Hutchinson emphasized. "We were very fortunate to come away with a win...a little luck helped us pull through."

The tournament championship earned Gary's an invite to the USSSA D Nationals on Labor Day weekend in Ft. Knox, Kentucky. Gary's and second-place Pipefitters Local #392 Red secured berths to the state tournament back in Milford at Expressway Park on August 16-17.

### **Red Horse Saloon/SBD Softball Dominates Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" World Qualifier At Expressway Park by Andy Zureick**

Milford, Oh. - Red Horse Saloon/SBD Softball posted five wins without a defeat to finish first in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA E World Qualifier May 31<sup>st</sup> at Expressway Park. The young upstarts with a baseball background have only one player over the age of 21, but according to team manager Adam Clayton, they are starting to figure it out. "We're just starting to mesh together. We're hitting well throughout the lineup and everybody is starting to know their roles."

Red Horse Saloon/SBD started a 3-0 blitz through the round robin portion of the tournament with an 11-6 win over BW3/Wolfpack. Ryan Faehr, Kyle Faehr, and Eugene Ball were all 3-for-4 in the victory.

Game two was a grind-it-out 6-3 besting of Nuway Drywall. Brandon Kessler was a perfect 2-for-2. Jeff Tonges and teammate Ryan Faehr were both 2-for-3.

The final contest of the round robin would be one of the closest calls of the day for Red Horse. They escaped a challenge by Hot Boys/Saints by the narrowest of margins, 10-9. The quartet of David Kessler, Derek Ball, Jeff Tonges, and Eugene Ball were all 3-for-4 in the game.

That win sent Red Horse to the elimination round to face the Fighting Pheasants. In the top of the 1<sup>st</sup>, Adam Clayton put his team out in front with a two run double. Kyle Faehr and Andrew Stenken chipped in two more RBI each en route to an eight-run at bat. That would be more than enough as pitcher Eugene Ball blanked "the birds" for a 21-0, four-inning mercy rule win. Adam Clayton, Jeff Tonges, and Kyle Faehr were all a perfect 4-for-4 at the plate.

Red Horse needed extra innings to polish off Fat Daddy's in the championship game. With the score tied 8-8, Ryan and Kyle Faehr singled and scored on Thomas McCalahan's double. Two outs later, McCalahan came home on a double by Ryan Jarvis. Fat Daddy failed to dent the plate in their last at bat making it an 11-8 final. Ryan Faehr and Thomas McCalahan each went 3-for-4 in the championship effort.

Kyle Faehr posted a team-best .705 batting average for the tournament. "He's been that way all year," commented Red Horse manager Adam Clayton. "He is the most consistent hitter on the team. Kyle is always there with people on base driving them in. He's batting .595 for the season...just tearing it up."

Close behind him was game five hero Thomas McCalahan and Brandon Kessler, both at .687. Other notables included David Kessler and Ryan Faehr who batted .631 and .611, respectively.

The defense was led by several outstanding individual performances according to Clayton. "Jeff Tonges threw two or three people out at home from left field. David Kessler had some great catches against the wall in left center." The manager chipped in some highlight reel diving snags of his own while patrolling right center.

"Eugene Ball pitched a great tournament," added Clayton. "He had a couple of K's. He's really smart about placing pitches and getting ground balls and fly outs when we need them."

All in all, a fine outing for such a young collection of budding ballers. "It's only our second season playing softball," Clayton emphasized. "Eugene is the only player over 21, but we all played baseball together."

For their efforts Red Horse was awarded berths to the USSSA E State Tournament in Harrison on August 16-17, the nationals on Labor Day weekend in Indianapolis, and the big show, the World Tournament in Kissimmee, Florida on September 11-14.

Fat Daddy's also punched their ticket to the state and national events. Fighting Pheasants and BW3/Wolfpack both received state tourney invites.

### **Smokin' Aces Clip BW3/Wolfpack 9-8 In Expressway Finale**

Milford, Oh.--The Smokin' Aces squeezed out a 9-8 victory over BW3/Wolfpack in the championship game of a four team round robin on Sunday, June 1st at Expressway Park.

Smokin' Aces battled past Wahoo (1-2) 9-7 and Hot Ballers (1-2) 16-13 to set up the deciding game with BW3/Wolfpack (1-2).

**June 7-8...**

### **Richmond, Spicer Lead Champions To Title...**

**EAP/Easton Double-Dips PRI/Easton 11-6, 11-10 For Easton-Westside Rumble-USSSA "C" NIT Crown At Pastime Park**

Harrison, Oh.-EAP/Wessel/Real Estate Title/QCN/Tigerfitness.com/Longshots/Easton double-dipped PRI/Easton 11-6 and 11-10 to capture first place in the Easton-Westside Rumble USSSA "C" National Invitational June 7th at Pastime Park.

EAP/Easton battled all the way back from an opening round 17-15 loss to JLC/Legends to claim the title, scoring the winning run in the top of the 7th in the championship game. Gary Hammerle doubled, then scored all the way from 2nd on a ground out to produce the eventual game winner. EAP then got a big defensive play in the bottom of the 7th to preserve the win when middle-infielder Josh Baird threw out the tying run at the plate with two outs on a relay from right-fielder Craig Harden.

A berth to the USSSA "C" World Tournament September 18-21 in Sterling Heights, Mi. was awarded to Team Chaos.

Ryan Richmond led the champions offensively with a robust .793 average. He was followed by Shane "Cheese" Spicer at .692, Chris Young at .689, Gary Hammerle at .681 and Josh Baird at .615.

Richmond, Hammerle and Pete Stokes were named to the All-Tournament team. Spicer was selected tournament MVP.

"Cheese deserved it," stated EAP manager Rob Schlemmer. "Beside hitting .692, he did a great job on the mound all day. He deserves the credit for our ability to win those one-run games. He kept saying all day 'just get me the lead.' If you tell him how many runs he's got to work with, he'll pitch around a guy to get to somebody else."

Schlemmer also credited the win to "great defense" and "timely hitting."

"It's obvious when you win by a run on multiple occasions that we had timely hitting," said Schlemmer. "A lot of guys came up with big two-out hits."

Ryan Richmond, Gary Hammerle and Craig Harden were the defensive standouts for EAP, said Schlemmer.

"Ryan's defense at short was steady as usual, and Gary Hammerle catches everything in centerfield. I'm pretty sure he didn't have a ball go over his head all day. And Craig Harden keeps the guys honest on the gap shots. They're not going to run on his arm," said Schlemmer.

"The whole outfield did a good job," he added. "They all came up with big plays every game."

EAP/Easton barely got past the second round, escaping with a one-run victory over Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati after falling to JLC/Legends 17-15 in their opener. The winners scored three in the 1st, two in the 4th and one in the 5th to take a 6-1 lead, then survived a four-run rally by the Good Guys in the top of the 6th to pull out a 6-5 victory. Steve Schon launched a two-run shot to put his club on the board in the 1st. A walk to Ryan Richmond and a single by Chris Young produced the two runs in the 4th. Steve Williams singled home the final run in the 6th.

Richmond banged out four hits, and Shane Spicer went 3-for-3 to pace the offense.

Things didn't get any easier in game three. Trailing 18-17 going into the bottom of the 7th, EAP got back-to-back doubles by Steve Schon and Josh Baird to knot the score. Then, after a walk to Shane Spicer, Steve Williams plated Baird with the game winner.

Baird and Ryan Richmond pounded out five hits each, and Spicer and Williams went 4-for-5.

Pitching and defense took control over the next three contests, as EAP mowed down Cronin Ford 15-5, EZ Cash 16-4 and Pri 11-6.

Against Cronin, EAP broke open a 5-5 game with three in the 4th and seven in the 6th. Rob Andres' rbi double put his club ahead to stay in the 4th at 5-4. Then in the 6th, Josh Baird cracked a three-run homer and Steve Williams followed with a two-run belt to account for five of EAP's seven scores.

Chris Young was perfect in four at bats, and Gary Hammerle chipped in with a 3-for-3 effort.

Next EAP erased EZ Cash, jumping out to a 6-1 lead in the bottom of the 1st, then pulling away with four in the 4th and five in the 6th. Shane Spicer's slammer highlighted the 1st. Steve Schon doubled home two runs and Josh Baird swatted a two-run homer in the 4th. Then in the 6th Steve Williams contributed a two-run double as the score swelled to 16-2.

Ryan Richmond, Chris Young and Pete Stokes collected four hits apiece for the winners.

In the first finals EAP overcame a 6-4 deficit with three runs in the top of the 4th. A Kyle Richmond two-run single put his team ahead to stay at 7-6. EAP added a run in the 5th, two in the 6th and one in the 7th to pull away 11-6. Shane Spicer went solo to close out the scoring in the 7th. Ryan Richmond led the offense with four safeties. Rob Andres and Steve Schon combined for six hits.

A nine run 4th proved to be the pivotal inning in the second finals, as EAP used a nine run outburst to overcome a 3-1 PRI lead. Craig Harden put his club on top for good at 4-3 with a two-run tater. Chris Young followed with a two-run single, then Steve Schon capped off the inning with a slammer and EAP had a seven run lead at 10-3. PRI finally broke a scoring drought with five runs in the bottom of the 6th to cut the deficit to 10-8.

EAP added what proved to be a valuable insurance run in the top of the 7th when Gary Hammerle doubled, moved to 3rd on a ground out to 2nd, then scored on another grounder to 2nd. EAP got back-to-back two-out singles in the bottom of the 7th, and both runs scored when PRI's Brandon Bellamy socked one over the Craig Harden's head in right. But Harden fired the ball back to middle-infielder Josh Baird, who turned and gunned down Bellamy at the plate to preserve the win.

Hammerle and Harden shared six hits for the champions.

EAP manager Rob Schlemmer said that after his team dropped their opener, winning the tournament was the furthest thing from his mind.

"Our guys played their guts out," said Schlemmer. "And with our depleted roster, I thought we might have a chance to go 3-2, and that wouldn't be a bad showing. But the guys just rallied and stayed in it all day."

Schlemmer concluded by thanking Pastime Park and sponsor Easton Sports for some outstanding awards, and team sponsors Bob Shad of EAP and Wessel Sports.

“Also our fans were out there all day, so we want to thank our family and friends who came oiut to support us,” said Schlemmer.

#### **EASTON-WESTSIDE RUMBLE-USSSA CLASS “C” NATIONAL INVITATIONAL FINAL STANDINGS**

1.	EAP/Wessel/Real Estate Title/Easton, Cin., OH	6 1
2.	PRI/Easton, Cincinnati, OH	3 2
3.	EZ Cash, Grove City, OH	2 2
4.	Cronin Ford, Cincinnati, OH	3 2
5.	JLC/Legends, Edgewood, KY	2 2
	Team Chaos, Franklin, OH	2 2
7.	Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati, Erlanger, KY	1 2
	Team PBSI, Cincinnati, OH	1 2
9.	Design Concepts, New Richmond, OH	1 2
	Falcon Theatre, Cincinnati, OH	0 2
	Hart Restoration/Saints, Newport, KY	0 2

#### **EASTON-WESTSIDE RUMBLE-USSSA MEN’S CLASS “C” NIT ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM**

Eric Keeton      Cronin Ford  
Eric Saxton      EZ Cash  
Brett Bowman    EZ Cash  
Brandon Bellamy PRI/Easton  
Scott Harper    PRI/Easton  
Ronnie Smith    PRI/Easton  
Ryan Richmond EAP/Wessel/Real Estate Title/Easton  
Peter Stokes    EAP/Wessel/Real Estate Title/Easton  
Gary Hammerle EAP/Wessel/Real Estate Title/Easton  
Terry Rosenbalm - ODP    PRI/Easton  
Shane Spicer -MVP      EAP/Wessel/Real Est. Title/Easton

#### **Miller, Dale Lead Champions To Title At Eggleston Park...**

#### **BCP/ASC/Big Sonny’s Fends Off Clark County In Easton-Westide Rumble-USSSA “D” NIT Finals**

Colerain Township, Oh. – BCP Associates/ASC/Big Sonny’s held off Clark County Merchants 11-10 in the second championship game to capture first place in the Easton-Westside Rumble-USSSA “D” National Invitational June 7th at Eggleston Park.

Clark County had forced an “if” game in the first finals, outscoring BCP 7-1 over the last three innings to pull away to an 11-5 victory. The two clubs then battled to a 9-9 stalemate through five innings in the finals before BCP pushed across lone runs in the 6th and 7th to escape with an 11-10 win and the title.

A berth to the USSSA “D” World Tournament September 18-21 in Kissimmee, Fl. passed down to third place Schmoe’s/Western Hills Window/QCA. BCP picked up \$600 in travel expense money.

Tournament MVP Alan Miller (.722) and pitcher Rod Dale led BCP to the title, said manager Jack McCallister.

“Alan was the laser man all weekend. He hit nothing but scuds,” said McCallister. “And Rod did a great job pitching. There weren’t too many scores against us.”

Dale held his club's six opponents to only 31 runs overall, and a miserly ten runs as BCP swept through the winners' bracket.

Other hitting leaders included Joe Davis (.611) and Ryan Disbennett (.600). They were joined on the All-Tournament team by Chris Romine, Tim Nease and Rod Dale.

McCallister said that Davis, Disbennett and Nease anchored the defense for BCP.

"Joey (Davis) covers a lot of ground in left-centerfield," said McCallister. "He made an ESPN highlight catch on ball ball when he hit the pole and held on. Ryan (Disbennett) also played a nasty outfield, and Timmy (Nease) made a lot of really good stops at 3rd base."

BCP's defense was virtually impregnable as they mowed down the Merchants 17-3, Nasty Boys 7-2, Team Emanon 12-3 and Clark County 13-2 in the winners' bracket.

A seven-run 1st followed by a four-run 2nd helped carry BCP past the Merchants in five. Joey Davis and Justin Wagner each contributed a two-run double in the 1st. Wagner's two-run single capped off the 2nd. Ryan Disbennett pounded out four hits, and Davis added three for the winners.

Next BCP used a four run 5th to break open a 2-1 contest with Nasty Boys. Chey Romine's sac fly capped off the inning. Alan Miller, Tim Nease and Chad Adams combined for six hits.

BCP rolled past Team Emanon 12-3 in game three, scoring four in the 1st, three in the 2nd and four in the 4th to take a commanding 11-1 lead. Chad Adams' rbi single put his club ahead to stay at 2-1 in the 1st. Adams added a two-run double to cap off the 3rd. Matt Brown delivered a big two-run single in the 4th.

Adams and Alan Miller shared six hits to pace the offense.

BCP then polished off Clark County Merchants handily by a 13-2 score in the winners' bracket finals. After nursing a 2-1 lead over the first two innings, BCP plated three in the 3rd, two in the 5th, three in the 6th and three in the 7th to pull away from the Merchants. Ryan Disbennett's two-run double highlighted the 3rd, Rod Dale's two-run single was the big blow in the 5th, and pinch-hitter Jeremy Webb came through with a two-run double to close out the scoring for BCP in the 7th.

Ryan Disbennett and Alan Miller went 3-for-4 to fuel the offense.

Clark County avenged their loss in the first finals, ambushing BCP 11-5 to force an "if" game. Then in the second finals, they battled BCP to a 9-9 tie through five before BCP pushed across the go-ahead run on Tom Beck's rbi single, then added an insurance run on a Joey Davis sac fly. Clark County mustered a final tally in the bottom of the 6th to make the final 11-10.

Rod Dale collected three hits, and Davis, Ryan Disbennett and Jarod Mucciardi pitched in with two apiece for the champions.

McCallister said his team "finally came together" after personnel struggles earlier in the season.

"We've had a few guys hurt and a few who have quit, so we picked up a couple different players and we're just now starting to come together," said McCallister.

#### **EASTON-SOFTBALL MAGAZINE-USSSA "D" NIT FINAL STANDINGS - JUNE 9, CINCINNATI, OH**

1. BCP/ASC/Big Sonny's Pawn, Columbus, OH 5 1
2. Clark County Merchants, South Vienna, OH 5 2
3. Schmoe's/W. H. Window/QCA, Cinti, OH 4 2
4. Playmakers/Wiliron/Lightningwear, WCH, OH 4 2

- 5. Auto Express Reloaded, Cincinnati, OH 3 2  
Team Emanon/Wessel/Pediatrics, Cincinnati, OH 2 2
- 7. Caribbean Jerks/JKD/Absolute, Columbus, OH 2 2  
Triple L, Columbus, OH 2 2
- 9. Ante Up, Union, KY 1 2  
Merchants, Florence, KY 1 2  
Nasty Boys, Dayton, KY 1 2  
Six Pack, Louisville, KY 1 2
- 13. Cincinnati SportsMedicine, Cincinnati, OH 0 2  
Crosley's/St. Bernard Eagles, Cincinnati, OH 0 2  
RLED/Hofbrauhaus, Bellevue, KY 0 2  
Silvertowne/Justin Howard, Winchester, IN 0 2

**EASTON-WESTSIDE RUMBLE-USSSA MEN'S CLASS "D" NIT ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM**

- Carl Warning Playmakers/Wiliron/Lightningwear
- Dean Merriman Playmakers/Wiliron/Lightningwear
- J. J. Clark Schmoie's/W. H. Window/QCA
- Mike Kichler Schmoie's/W. H. Window/QCA
- Shawn Haymaker Clark County Merchants
- Kevin Johnson Clark County Merchants
- Justin Johnson Clark County Merchants
- Brian Shay Clark County Merchants
- Rod Dale BCP/ASC/Big Sonny's Pawn
- Joey Davis BCP/ASC/Big Sonny's Pawn
- Ryan Disbennett BCP/ASC/Big Sonny's Pawn
- Timmy Nease BCP/ASC/Big Sonny's Pawn
- Chris Romine BCP/ASC/Big Sonny's Pawn
- Todd Boardem - ODP Clark County Merchants
- Alan Miller - MVP BCP/ASC/Big Sonny's Pawn

**Defense, Pitching Carry Old Bag Of Nails In Easton-USSSA "Westside Rumble" USSSA "E" World Qualifier At Pastime Park**

Harrison, Oh.--Old Bag of Nails held six opponents to a combined 29 runs en route to a first place finish in the Easton-USSSA "Westside Rumble" Men's "E" World Qualifier on Saturday, June 7th at Pastime Park.

Old Bag of Nails held five of their six opponents to single digit scoring on their way to the title, romping past Cotner Funeral Home 17-6 in the championship game to complete the sweep of the twelve team affair. Getcha Some - Old Bag of Nails' first round opponent - was the only team to score in double figures or more than six runs against the champions' strong pitching and smothering defense.

The title netted Old Bag of Nails a berth to the USSSA "E" World Tournament September 11-14 in Kissimmee, Fl.

Old Bag of Nails manager Nick Boden credited his club's championship to team chemistry, defense and pitching.

"We all click together well and our defense is pretty solid," understated Boden. "We make all the simple plays and some of the real hard plays, and we don't make many errors.

"Also John Tomer pitched really well. He struggled a little from time to time, but once he got the first pitch across for a strike, he got into a groove and our defense played really well behind him," said Boden.

Boden said that he "couldn't really single anybody out" on defense.

“In one game one person would make a big play, and in the next game somebody else would make a big play,” he said.

Tomer, Cole Courtney, and Matt Stokes made the All-Tournament team. Johnny Saunders was named Most Valuable Player.

“John (Tomer) hit well and pitched some great games,” said Boden. “And Cole was a hitting machine. He hit well all tournament. We named Matt (to the All-Tournament team) for his play at short and his enthusiasm.”

Boden said that Saunders was picked MVP for his play “on both sides - offense and defense.

“He played well at 1st base, stretching and scooping up everything. And he was hitting the ball hard all day,” remarked Boden. “He hustled, stretched singles into doubles and doubles into triples, and he had some big hits in key situations.”

Old Bag of Nails mowed down three round robin opponents, brushing aside Getcha Some in a 19-13 slugfest, Syndicate 9-3 and Down-N-Dirty in an 11-10 John Tomer shutout.

A three-run 1st and a three-run 3rd carried Old Bag of Nails past Moose Lodge 1469/Lights Out 7-3 in the first elimination round game. A Johnny Saunders’ sac fly and a two-run Nick Boden double accounted for the three 1st inning runs. Boden doubled home two more runs in the 3rd as the lead swelled to 6-0. Saunders and Johnny Tomer combined for six hits to pace the offense.

Old Bag of Nails used the same formula against Big Hogz in game two, racing out to a 7-0 lead with four runs in the 1st and three in the 3rd. Jeff Boden continued to provide the scoring punch, collecting two more rbi’s with a two-run single in the 1st. A two-run single by Josh Forrest highlighted the 3rd. Old Bag of Nails finally blew the game open with four more runs in the 6th to take an 11-2 lead with the help of a two-run single by Chase Minister.

Minister banged out four hits, and Cole Courtney added three for the winners.

Cotner Funeral Home held an early 5-2 lead through three innings in the finals, but could muster only one more run over the last four innings as Old Bag of Nails outscored the Columbus-area rival 15-1. A two-run single by Cole Courtney knotted the score at 5-5 in the top of the 4th, then Nick Boden followed with a two-run double to put his club on top to stay at 7-5. The lead grew to 11-5 after six, then in the top of the 7th Old Bag of Nails erupted for six runs to seal a 17-6 victory. Matt Wilhelm’s two-run double was the big blow of the inning.

Aaron Swart pounded out five hits, and Courtney, Josh Forrest and Johnny Saunders shared a dozen to power the champions. Boden and Tyler Gleason chipped in with three hits apiece.

Old Bag of Nails manager Nick Boden said his team “surprised” their opponents with their youth and speed.

“We’re all 19 or 20 years old,” noted Boden. “Our oldest player is twenty years old, and that was surprising to a lot of teams. We have a lot of speed and played baseball together since we were real little and graduated from the same high school. That’s why we get along so well.”

#### **EASTON-WESTSIDE RUMBLE-USSSA CLASS “E” WORLD QUALIFIER FINAL STANDINGS**

1. Old Bag Of Nails, Grove City, OH 6 0
2. Cotner Funeral Home, Galloway, OH 4 1
3. Big Hogz, Grove City, OH 3 2

- Down 'N Dirty, Middletown, OH 3 2
- 5. Syndicate, Erlanger, KY 2 2
- Moose Lodge 1469/Lights Out, Cres. Sprgs., KY 1 3
- 7. Hot Boyz/Saints, Newport, KY 1 2
- Team TC's, Newport, KY 1 2
- 9. FTX/Finish Line Graphics, Burlington, KY 1 2
- Maxed Out Softball, Franklin, OH 1 2
- Getcha Some, Lawrenceburg, IN 0 3
- Team Lightning, Cincinnati, OH 0 3

**EASTON-WESTSIDE RUMBLE-USSSA MEN'S  
CLASS "E" NIT ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM**

Damon Jordan Big Hogz  
 Wes Seymour Big Hogz  
 Josh Hudson Down 'N Dirty  
 B. G. Gross II Down 'N Dirty  
 Matt Warner Cotner Funeral Home  
 Brian Clemens Cotner Funeral Home  
 John Tomer Old Bag Of Nails  
 Matt Stokes Old Bag Of Nails  
 Cole Courtney Old Bag Of Nails  
 Dylan Kelly - ODP Cotner Funeral Home  
 Jonny Saunders - MVP Old Bag Of Nails

**Stingy Trailblazers Win Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "C-D" Qualifier Behind Fiscus by Andy Zureick**

Milford, Oh. – The Trailblazers surrendered only one run in three games to walk away with first place in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "C-D" State-National Qualifier June 8<sup>th</sup> at Expressway Park.

Pitcher Tony Fiscus put together a run of 16 straight scoreless innings, as he did not give up a run until the last game of the day. "Tony had a helluva day," noted Trailblazer manager Nate Fite. "He just turned 50 over the winter and he is just a winner. I've learned so much from that guy. He knows how to play the game. I appreciate Tony still coming out and playing as hard as he does every weekend."

Game one of the event matched the Trailblazers with Rogue Softball. Nate Fite's RBI single in the bottom of the first would prove to be the game winner as Tony "Fishy" Fiscus tossed his first of two consecutive shutouts. The final was 11-0 in five innings. Matt Ellington had a pair of two-run doubles, one in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and another in the 5<sup>th</sup>. Fite, Chris Dunn, and Rob Nicely were all a perfect 3-for-3 in the victory.

Pipefitters Local #392 Red hooked up with the Trailblazers for a pitcher's duel in game two. In the bottom of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Floyd Turner brought Jason Wells into score with a sacrifice fly to give the Trailblazers a 1-0 lead. That was the only run scored in the game by either team. Nate Fite led the meager offensive output by going 2-for-3.

The bats warmed back up for the Trailblazers in the final game of the day versus Gary's Roofing. In the bottom of the 1<sup>st</sup>, the first seven batters would come into score to give the Trailblazers an insurmountable 7-0 lead. Tony Fiscus got the scoring underway with an RBI single. Matt Ellington added to the lead with a two-run double. Rob Nicely capped the inning with a single that plated the final two runs. Gary's Roofing did manage to do what no other team had done all day when they scored a run in the top of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning. That was the only run Tony Fiscus would give up on the day. Fiscus, along with teammates Chris Dunn and Nate Fite, was also 3-for-4 at the plate. Matt Ellington had three hits in as many at bats.

Fite hit a team-best .800 in the tournament. "I had a good tournament," noted Fite, modestly. Tony Fiscus and Chris Dunn both batted .700. "They've been pretty consistent all year. They're two guys we rely on when they step up to the plate." Matt Ellington finished with a very respectable .667 average.

Fite also lauded his defense for their play backing up pitching ace Tony Fiscus. "It makes people play harder because they're pulling for Tony. Our outfield (Chris Dunn, right field; Jason Wells, center field; Brian George, left field) did a real good job this weekend. They cut the gaps down and kept a lot of extra hits from falling in. And in the infield, Rob Nicely played a real good shortstop for me. He came to play this weekend."

With all other participating teams having previously qualified for postseason play, Pipefitters Local #392 Red was awarded berths to the USSSA State Tournament back in Milford on August 16-17 and the nationals in Ft. Knox, Kentucky on August 30<sup>th</sup> – September 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **American Tickets/Buffalo Wild Wings Survives Late Rallies To Win Worth-Bud Light-USSSA D-E Qualifier by Andy Zureick**

Milford, Oh. - American Tickets/Buffalo Wild Wings withstood rallies in the late innings of two games, going 3-0 to win the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA D-E Qualifier June 8<sup>th</sup> at Expressway Park.

American Tickets opened the three-game round robin against Team Lightning. Tyler Pille's RBI single got his team on the board in the top of the 1<sup>st</sup> as Tickets took a 2-0 lead. They tacked on five more in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and nine in the 4<sup>th</sup> to blow the game wide open. The final was 16-2 in five innings. Todd Peck was a perfect 3-for-3 in the contest. Pille finished 3-for-4.

Game two versus OC Softball was tied going into the top of the 5<sup>th</sup>. There Chad Packer gave his team the lead with a two-run double. Brian Cootway drove in another run to make it 10-7. OC cut the lead to 10-9 with two runs in the bottom of the next frame. Tickets failed to score in their last at bat, leaving pitcher Jeff Merrill no margin for error in the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup>. He rose to the challenge and blanked OC to secure the second win of the day. The trio of Packer, Merrill, and Todd Peck shared nine hits in the victory.

The deciding game matched American Tickets with American Made. Tickets scored eight runs in the top of the 7<sup>th</sup> to erase an 11-9 deficit. Todd Peck gave his team the lead with an RBI single. Shawn Meyers capped the inning with a grand slam. It was the only homerun hit by his team on the day. American Made made it interesting in their at bat by scoring five runs. They had the tying and go-ahead runs on base when pitcher Jeff Merrill coaxed a game-ending fly ball to Brian Daniel in right. The final was 17-16. Merrill also led the way at the plate, pounding our four hits. Chad Packer and David Chavez combined for six hits. Meyers was 2-for-4 including the grand salami.

Jeff Merrill posted the top batting average on the day. "It's great when your leadoff hitter can hit .700," noted Tickets manager David Chavez. "He started a lot of rallies for us and did exactly what you'd expect out of your leadoff hitter."

Other top hitters included Brian Daniel at .667, Todd Peck at .636, Chad Packer at .600, Tyle Pille at .583, David Chavez at .555, and Shawn Meyers at .500.

"We hit the ball [well] as you can tell by some of these averages," Chavez observed. "Unfortunately we left a lot of people on base. Because we're slow, it takes a lot of base hits for us to score runs. When you have 7 of 11 people hitting .500 or better...that's why we scored so many runs. We just hit for average more than power."

Merrill, the pitcher, and left fielder Todd Peck were also standouts on defense according to Chavez. "Jeff has been our pitcher since '01 or '02 and he's been consistent throughout the year. He had another consistent tournament throwing strikes and minimizing the walks. Todd makes our defense. He's a young, fast kid who can run down balls in the gaps. He turned extra base hits into outs by using his speed."

The tournament championship qualified American Tickets for the USSSA D State Tournament back at Expressway on August 16-17 and the nationals in Ft. Knox, Kentucky on Labor Day weekend. Second-place American Made also qualified for state tournament action.

## **Receptions/American Trading Co. Clips Mound 3-2 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “E” Finals At Expressway Park by Andy Zureick**

Milford, Oh. – Receptions/American Trading Co. won three games by a total of seven runs, clipping the Mound 3-2 in the deciding game, as they captured the championship title in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA E State-National Qualifier June 8<sup>th</sup> at Expressway Park.

Action started with Receptions/American Trading Co. facing Timber Tech. In the bottom of the 4<sup>th</sup> with the score tied 2-2, Zach Cooke singled in a run that gave his team a lead they would never surrender. Receptions would total five runs in that at bat to break the game wide open. Four of those resulted from Timber Tech errors. Tech got three back in the top of the 5<sup>th</sup>, but they could get no closer. The final was 7-5. Jason Hugentobler, Aaron Ferris, and Dustin Brown all had two hits in the winning effort.

Receptions had their best offensive performance in game two versus Maysville Softball. An outstanding individual performance from Aaron Ferris was the story in this one. He drove in two during a four-run 1<sup>st</sup>. He doubled in two more in the 2<sup>nd</sup> as the advantage increased to 8-0. In the 4<sup>th</sup>, Ferris collected another two RBI. He also came in to pitch in the top of the 3<sup>rd</sup> when teammate and co-manager Aaron Ruther began to struggle. “I couldn’t throw stikes,” Ruther lamented. The final was 12-8 with Ferris going 3-for-4 with 6 runs batted in. Dustin Brown was also 3-for-4.

In the deciding game of the day against The Mound, pitching and defense was again the dominant theme. Ferris continued to handle the pitching duties and gave up only two runs in the contest – one in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and one in the 5<sup>th</sup>. Meanwhile Nick Scholle and Johnny Lee each drove in a run in the top of the 1<sup>st</sup>. Zach Cooke added another in the 2<sup>nd</sup>. The final was 3-2. Aaron Ruther led all hitters, going 3-for-3.

Aaron Ruther topped the Receptions/American Trading Co. offensive honor roll with a .667 average.

Jason Hugentobler at .625 was the tournament MVP. “He played great at short, went 5-for-8, always moved runners over, and scored four runs.”

Nick Scholle and Aaron Ferris both finished at .500. Dustin Brown batted .454 and scored a team-high five runs.

Receptions averaged just over seven runs in the tournament, so it was not surprising that Ruther, the co-manager, pointed to his team’s defense and overall speed as keys to success.

“We only made four errors in the whole tournament. Nothing got through – if the ball went up in the air to the outfield, it got caught. Mike Brown in left field made three diving catches that saved big innings, two in the second game and one in the third.”

“We played great defense the whole tournament. We have so much speed in the outfield, nothing dropped.” That outfield is manned by Brown in left, Dustin Brown in left center, Johnny Lee in right center, and Nick Scholle in right.

“I have to give co-manager Brett Walter the credit for getting this much talent together,” concluded Ruther. “We don’t have enough funding to play in as many tournaments as we’d like, but I think our team is as talented as any E team I’ve seen. If we start hitting, I think we’ll be able to beat anybody.”

Receptions will get a chance to test that hypothesis against the best as they earned berths to the USSSA State Tournament on August 16-17 in Harrison and the nationals on Labor Day weekend in Indianapolis.

Second-place Mound also qualified for the state tournament.

**New Generation, Absolute Softball Sweep Kolping Round Robin**

Mt. Healthy, Oh. - New Generation and Absolute Softball swept undefeated en route to their respective division titles in a seven team, two division Saturday night round robin Jun 7th at Kolping Park.

New Generation romped past Stoop Pigeons (1-1) 14-3 and Cardinals (0-2) 12-1 to claim the division one title. While in division two, Absolute Softball out-slugged Eddie's Chuggers (0-3) 15-13, then disposed of Secret Service (1-2) 13-1 before polishing off Quality Tire (2-1) 21-9 in a showdown for first place.

### **Pitching, Defense Carry Fraley's/Lowbobs To Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Blue Chip NIT "Open" Title At Expressway Park**

Milford, Oh.--Fraley's/Low Bob's held three elimination round opponents to seven runs or less en route to a first place finish in the "Open" division of the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "Blue Chip Class" National Invitational June 7th at Expressway Park.

Fraley's/Low Bob's polished off Shooters 6-4 in the championship game to wrap up a 4-1 weekend. The Frankfort, Ky. team rebounded from a 1-1 record in pool play - including a humbling 20-6 setback to Dented Bats - to mow down three elimination-round opponents and claim the title.

The championship netted Fraley's/Low Bob's a berth into the USSSA Women's "C" World Tournament September 19-21 in Kissimmee, Fl.

Amanda Brown, a 22-year old phenom at short who was named tournament MVP, and pitcher Jose Conlan were instrumental in holding Fraley's opponents to a combined 14 runs.

"Amanda was really solid," said Fraley's manager Ted Carter. "She played really good fundamentals. She made the routine plays and you rarely see her make any errors. She gets into position to make the plays and she's basically a very smart ball player."

Carter said Jose Conlan "did an excellent job pitching.

"She throws strikes, gets ahead of the batter and keeps the hitters off-balance," said Carter.

Shannon Ellingsworth, Annie Rardin and La Donna West also helped anchor the defense, noted Carter.

"Shannon was also solid defensively and turned several double plays at 2nd base," said Carter. "And Annie is very fast and ran down several balls in right-centerfield. She and La Donna (lf) didn't let any balls get away from them to allow the runners to take an extra base. They fielded the ball cleanly and got it in to the infield to keep the fielder's choice intact."

Rardin (.667), Ellingsworth (.556), and West were named to the All-Tournament team along with Leigh Ann Bowen (.471, 2 HR's) and Brown (.632). Jose Conlan and Amanda Wright each hit .526 to help support the offense.

"Basically, we played some good defense and got some timely hitting," observed Carter. "We didn't leave a lot of people on base. When we got people into scoring position, we scored them."

Fraley's/Low Bob's used a five-run 3rd and a four-run 4th to break open a 1-1 contest with D & S Engineering and claim an eventual 12-3 victory in their first elimination round game. Leigh Ann Bowen and Shannon Ellingsworth each contributed a two-run single to account for four of their club's five runs in the 1st. Bowen collected three more rbi's on an out-of-the-park blast in the 4th.

Bown, Ellingsworth and Amanda Brown combined for nine hits to pace the offense.

In the semi-finals, Fraley's jumped out to a 4-0 lead in the top of the 1st against Stage II, then put the game away with a five run 6th en route to a 12-7 win. Annie Rardin who delivered the big blow in the 1st with a

two-run single, struck for a two-run double in the 6th. Patricia Wimsatt also doubled home a pair of runs in the 6th.

Amanda Brown pounded out four hits, and Rardin chipped in with a 3-for-4 effort.

Fraleley's scored two in the 1st, one in the 2nd and two in the 3rd to build a 5-0 lead against Shooters in the finals, and the Dayton club never recovered. Annie Rardin tripled in a run and scored on Jose Conlan's rbi single in the 1st. Amanda Wright doubled in both runs in the 3rd as the lead swelled to 5-0. Conlan delivered another rbi single in the top of the 7th to give her club a four run cushion after the Shooters had cut the deficit to 6-2. A last-gasp Shooters' rally in the bottom of the 7th made the final 6-4.

Conlan and Wright shared six hits to lead the champions.

Fraleley's Ted Carter, whose team captured the ASA "C" National Tournament last year and an NSA "C" World title two seasons ago, credited his team's success to "team chemistry.

"We've played together for several years, so we play with real good chemistry," said Carter. "This is our first USSSA tournament in a couple of years and we're looking forward to going back to Expressway Park on Labor Day Weekend for the Great Lakes Nationals and to the USSSA World in September."

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

1. Fraley's/Low Bobs, Lexington, KY 3 0
2. Shooters, Dayton, OH 2 1
3. Dented Bats, Mooresville, IN 0 1  
Stage II, St. Louis, MO 0 1
5. D & S Engineering, Loveland, OH 0 1  
Ty-1-On, Cincinnati, OH 0 1

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

Sandy Fletcher Stage II  
Jodi Landreth Dented Bats  
Nicole Weed Dented Bats  
Heidi Gildow Shooters  
Dana Johnson Shooters  
Jenn Yontz Shooters  
Leigh Ann Bowen Fraley's/Low Bob's  
Shannon Ellingsworth Fraley's/Low Bob's  
Annie Rardin Fraley's/Low Bob's  
La Donna West Fraley's/Low Bob's  
Trish Hudson - Co-MVP Shooters  
Amanda Brown - Co-MVP Fraley's/Low Bob's

#### **ITAM30/K & G Staves Off Hill & Griffith Charge To Claim Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Blue Chip NIT "D" Title At Expressway Park**

Milford, Oh.--ITAM30/K & G staved off a furious charge by Hill & Griffith to capture a first place finish in the "D" division of the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "Blue Chip Class" National Invitational June 7th at Expressway Park.

After ITAM30/K & G had relegated Hill & Griffith to the losers' bracket in a second round game 13-3 in five innings, H & G charged past six losers' bracket opponents to earn a rematch with ITAM30/K & G in

the finals. There H & G roared back from a 12-4 deficit with four runs in the 5th and three in the 6th to cut the deficit to one before going down one-two-three in the bottom of the 7th.

“You have to give them credit,” said ITAM30/K & G manager Gary Carlson of ITAM30/K & G. “They played nine games in one day. And in the bottom of the 6th we turned a double play with runners on 1st and 3rd to get out of the inning. They’re a very good team.”

The championship gave ITAM30/K & G a berth to the USSSA Women’s “D” World Tournament September 19-21 in Kissimmee, Fl.

“We had already qualified for the state and national, and now we’ve qualified for the World, so we’re very excited about that,” said Carlson.

Defense carried ITAM30/K & G to the title, said Carlson.

“We only gave up six runs a game for the tournament, and only eleven in the last game, so our ladies played very good defense,” said Carlson. “We really stress defense. We have a saying that offense wins games, but defense wins championships.

The offense was led by Chris Sheely, who hit a red-hot .667.

“She’s 39-years old and is the second oldest player on the team,” noted Carlson of his team’s leadoff hitter. “She plays left field and plays very good defense. Our outfield is one of the best I’ve seen in a long time. They don’t make many mistakes. When she hits like that it’s just a bonus.”

Following Shelly’s team-high .667 mark were Michelle Tenney and Megan Saccomen at .583, Kelly Carlson at .538 and Carrie Playforth at .533.

Sheely, Saccomen and Carlson were joined on the All-Tournament team by Andrea Gipson. Shortstop Rachel Fehr was named tournament MVP.

“We wanted to give it to a defensive player,” said Carlson. “She’s really not our shortstop. She’s our 2nd baseman. Our regular shortstop just had a baby and she’s not back yet. So Rachel filled in very nicely and did a heckuva job.”

ITAM30/K & G jumped out to an 11-2 lead with five runs in the 1st and six in the 2nd to seal a 13-3, five inning mercy-rule win over Hill & Griffith in their opener. An rbi single by Kelly Carlson put her club ahead to stay at 2-1 in the 1st. Kristy Pratian’s two-run double was the big blow in the 2nd. Carlson and Protian shared six hits for the winners.

That proved to be ITAM30/K & G’s last laughter as they won their next three games by a combined four runs.

First they pushed across two runs in the bottom of the 6th to take a 5-4 lead over Meissner’s Insurance on rbi singles by Chris Sheely and Andrea Gipson. Pitcher Kelly Carlson then shut out Meissner’s in the top of the 7th to preserve the win

Carrie Playforth and Chris Sheely each went 3-for-4 to pace the offense.

Crosley’s Sports Bar fell next 9-7 in the winners’ bracket finals. ITAM30/K & G broke the game open with three runs in the top of the 6th and one in the 7th to forge a 9-4 lead. Chris Sheely’s rbi single capped off the 6th, while Carrie Playforth closed out the scoring for her club with an rbi single in the 7th. Crosley’s rallied for three runs in the bottom of the 7th before succumbing 9-6.

Sheely collected three more hits, and Rachel Fehr, Michelle Tenney and Beth Summerix contributed two hits apiece.

In the finals, ITAM30/K & G overcame a 3-2 deficit with a six run outburst in the top of the 3rd to grab an 8-3 lead. Kelly Carlson's rbi single put her club ahead to stay at 4-3. Megan Saccomen followed with a big three-run double. ITAM30/K & G added one in the 4th, then appeared to put the game away with three in the 5th as the lead swelled to 12-4. But H & G refused to roll over, and outscored ITAM30/K & G 7-0 before putting up a goose egg in the 7th.

Chris Sheely pounded out three hits for the champions.

"We want to thank Myra (Ohio State Women's Director Myra Burwell) for a very well run tournament," said ITAM30/K & G manager Gary Carlson. "That was the first time we had been to Expressway Park, and it's a beautiful facility. Everybody was just so nice. It was a beautiful experience for us, and the competition was very good. This is only our third year together, so hopefully this experience will make us a little better down the road."

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

1. ITAM30/K & G, Warren, OH 4 0
2. Hill & Griffith, Cincinnati, OH 7 2
3. Crosley's Sports Bar, Cincinnati, OH 3 2
4. Hub Victor, Alliance, OH 4 2
5. Intimidators, Batavia, OH 2 2
- Meissner's Insurance, Cincinnati, OH 2 2
7. Bedrock Softball, Ravenna, OH 2 2
- Indy Phoenix, Indianapolis, IN 2 2
9. Copies Plus/Byer's/Outlaws, Columbus, OH 0 3
- S. O. S. Softball, Silver Grove, KY 0 3
- Stingers II, Urbana, OH 0 3
- Team Kentucky, Elsmere, KY 0 3

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

Rhonda Joliffe Hub Victor  
 Diana Poe Hub Victor  
 Pam Young Hub Victor  
 Dana Hott Crosley's Sports Bar  
 Punky Kater Crosley's Sports Bar  
 Kristy Booker Hill & Griffith  
 Heather Sauerbeck Hill & Griffith  
 Tracey Wharff Hill & Griffith  
 Kelly Carlson ITAM30/K & G  
 Andrea Gipson ITAM30/K & G  
 Megan Saccomen ITAM30/K & G  
 Chris Sheely ITAM30/K & G  
 Carla Kampschmidt - Co-MVP Hill & Griffith  
 Rachel Fehle - Co-MVP ITAM30/K & G

**June 14-15...**

**Louisville No. 502/TPS "Hits Stride," Stuns 14-Time Champion 18-17...**  
**McMahel Walk-Off Ends Lansing Reign In 31st U. A. "A" Finals At Riverstar**

Joey McMahel's three-run, walk-off home run in the bottom of the 7th lifted Louisville Pipe Trades Local #502/TPS past ten-time defending champion Lansing #333 18-17 in the championship game of the 31st Annual U. A. National Tournament June 13-15 at Riverstar Sportsplex.

The victory completed an eight game sweep for Louisville #502, and marked the end of what is believed to be the longest running national tournament dynasty in softball history. Lansing #333 had won ten consecutive titles and fourteen overall in the 31-year history of the U. A. Nationals.

The championship came as no surprise to Louisville/TPS, said manager Mike Gabhart.

"The last two years we came in third and then runner-up last year, and we knew this year with the right pick-ups we'd give Lansing everything they wanted," said Gabhart. "We don't play a lot of tournaments, but we played in Cincinnati the weekend before and I knew we were hitting our stride coming into this tournament."

Indeed. Gabhart's club averaged 25 runs per game en route to the title, never scoring less than 17 runs and twice putting up 34. They swept Lansing in three meetings, 34-22, 29-19 and 18-17.

And offense, predicted Gabhart, would be just what it would take to unseat Lansing.

"I knew we were solid defensively," said Gabhart. "I told some people before we left that if we hung in there on defense and the sticks got to working like they could, that's all we'd need to do. After we beat Lansing in the round robin, I think they knew then that we were for real. The last couple of years we had gotten better and were on a streak and that's exactly what happened.

"We got down to Lansing 14-3 in the round robin and came back on them, and that pretty much spelled the way we played the rest of the weekend," remarked Gabhart. "We knew if we could come back on Lansing, we could come back on anybody."

Louisville's prolific offense was powered by Derrick Nevitt (.829), Bubby Roberts (.778), Ernie Gum (.765), Joey McMahel (.757), Chad Thompson (.714), DeWayne Nevitt (.710), John Taylor (.667) and Curtis Cochran (.618).

McMahel, who had two walk-off home runs - including the one to slay Lansing in the finals - was named tournament MVP.

"He led us in home runs with ten, rbi's with 39 and runs with 26," noted Gabhart. "He pretty much did it all. Defensively he had one helluva tournament at middle infield. He's our leader. He hits the ball well, plays defense and he's a smart player. He does what it takes to win ball games."

Gabhart also heaped praise on his team's hitting leader, Derrick Nevitt.

"Probably for a 20-year old, he's got more potential than anyone I've seen around in years," said Gabhart. "He has all the potential in the world. He has as much pop in his bat as anyone I've seen. He plays the game hard and with enthusiasm, and has a good time doing it. Give that boy two or three more years to get the game under his belt and he's going to be a real good one."

First baseman Bubby Roberts and center-fielder Chad Thompson anchored the defense, said Gabhart.

"Bubby had a very good weekend at first base," said Gabhart. "He makes the routine plays, and also makes the spectacular plays every now and then. As far as an all-around player, he's one of our best."

But the best defensive effort of the tournament, said Gabhart, came from Chad Thompson.

"If I had to name the defensive player of the weekend, it was probably Chad Thompson," said Gabhart. "He made some excellent plays in centerfield."

Local #502 made a statement in round robin play, mowing down New York Local #1 18-8 in five, Cincinnati Local #392 Blue 30-27, Lansing #333 34-22, Cincinnati Local #392 Red 23-8 in five, and Sprinkle Fitters Local #669 17-16.

Then the Kentucky club roared into the elimination round, exploding for 13 runs in the 1st, nine in the 2nd and twelve in the 3rd to seal a 34-5, three-inning rout of New York #1. Bubby Roberts, Derrick Nevitt, John Taylor and Dave Pitman each cracked a two-run homer in the thirteen-run 1st. Joey McMahel launched a three-run blast, and Ernie Gum and DeWayne Nevitt had two-run shots in the 2nd. Chad Thompson's two-run triple was the big blow in the 3rd.

McMahel banged out four hits, and Gum, Roberts, DeWayne and Derrick Nevitt and Chad Thompson shared fifteen hits for the winners.

That lifted Louisville into the winners' bracket finals against the legendary Lansing team, and the old guard battled Local #502 to a 19-19 stalemate through two and a half innings. But Louisville plated five unanswered runs in the bottom of the 3rd and five more in the 4th while Lansing put up goose eggs in their next two at bats to fall by the mercy-rule, 29-19. Joey McMahel delivered the big hit in the game, cracking a three-run homer in the 3rd to put his club in the lead for good. Bubby Roberts followed with a two-run double to cap off the scoring. Louisville used the same formula in the 4th, as Ernie Gum belted a three-run homer and John Taylor doubled home a pair to close out the scoring.

McMahel collected four more hits, and Roberts, Derrick Nevitt and Chad Thompson each went 3-for-5.

Lansing bounced back to dispose of arch-rival Local #392 Blue in the losers' bracket finals, then managed to take a 17-15 lead in the top of the 7th against Local #502. But in the bottom of the inning, Jeremy Nevitt and Chad Thompson singled, setting the stage for Joey McMahel's three-run walk-off.

Nevitt, Thompson, McMahel, Curtis Cochran and Bubby Roberts combined for fifteen hits to power the champions.

Louisville manager Mike Gabhart called his team's championship "a total team effort.

"We had enough ball players who had been around long enough to know what it takes to win a tournament, and they did what it takes to win," summed up Gabhart.

### **31ST ANNUAL UNITED ASSOCIATION INVIT. CLASS "A" DIVISION FINAL STANDINGS**

1.	Louisville #502	3 0	
2.	Lansing #533	3 2	
3.	Cincinnati Blue #392	2 2	
	New York #1	2 2	
5.	Cincinnati Red #392	0 2	
	Sprinklefitters #669	0 2	

### **11th Hour Rallies Carry Chicago No. 597 Past Muscle Shoals In 31st U. A. National "B" At Riverstar**

Chicago Pipefitters Local #597 rallied for seven runs in their final at bat to stun Muscle Shoals 13-11 in the winners' bracket finals and 12-11 in the championship game to complete a six game sweep of the class "B" division of the 31st Annual U. A. National Tournament June 13-15 at Riverstar Sportsplex.

Chicago Local #597 overcame an 11-6 deficit against Muscle Shoals #760 in the winners' bracket finals, then battled back after trailing 9-5 in the finals. Both rallies came in the bottom of the 6th.

It was a tale of two tournaments for the champions. After mercy-ruling their first three victims, Chicago had to overcome late deficits in each of their final three contests to claim the title.

Local #597 was led by pitcher Jim Kotell and slugger Chuck Wittington, who were named co-Most Valuable Players.

“Jim was selected because of his pitching,” said Chicago coach Ron Danno. “He only gave up five walks except for the one-pitch game, which was pretty remarkable. He also batted .542.”

Tournament operators played some of Friday’s games using a one-pitch format due to inclement weather.

Danno said Wittington proved to be Chicago’s most productive offensive player.

“His on base percentage was .760 and he had four home runs, and only one was a solo home run,” noted Danno. “The others were all two-run shots and came at critical times.”

Danno attributed his club’s success to “good, consistent pitching, good defense and timely hitting.

“We did not have any errors,” said Danno. “And the guys didn’t get down on themselves.”

Local #597’s defensive standouts were infielder Kenny Kesselica and outfielder Josh Munn, said Danno.

“Kenny knocked down quite a few line shots at 3rd base and threw out the runners,” said Danno. “He started a big double play in the 2nd inning of our first game against Muscle Shoals. It was a hard shot to his glove side and we rolled a 5-4-3 double play. That was a key play at the time because we were only up 3-2.”

Danno said left-fielder Josh Munn “made quite a few putouts,” and also turned in a big play to help stop an opponent.

“In our first game against Dayton, he caught a ball on the left field line with runners on 1st and 3rd, and he threw out the runner trying to tag (from 1st base) at 2nd. They already had a couple of runs that inning, so they went from no outs and a couple of runners on base to two outs and a runner at 3rd. That was a big momentum shifter.”

Chicago hardly worked up a sweat in brushing past Dayton #162 17-7 in six, Evansville #136 in six, and Columbus #189 in five.

Against Dayton, Local #597 jumped out to a 14-3 lead with five runs in the top of the 2nd, five in the 3rd and four in the 4th and never looked back. Consecutive doubles by Josh Munn, John McGowan and Brian Sullivan made it 2-0 in the 2nd. A two-run, inside-the-park home run by Ken Kesselica capped off the inning. McGowan had a two-run homer and Marty Soya a two-run double in the 3rd. McGowan and Chuck Wittington each launched a two-run homer in the 4th.

Munn, McGowan and Sullivan each went 3-for-4 to pace the offense.

Next Chicago used a nine-run 2nd to overcome a 6-3 deficit against Evansville. Josh Munn vaulted his team into the lead for good with a slammer to make it 9-6. The Illinois club then used an eight run outburst in the 6th to blow open an 18-11 game and take a commanding 27-11 lead. Tim Goncher and Josh Munn each contributed a two-run homer for the winners.

Jim Kotel banged out four hits, and Munn, Goncher and Ken Kesselica shared nine.

Against Columbus, Local #597 broke open a 6-4 contest with six runs in the top of the 4th to forge a 12-4 lead. A two-run single by Josh Munn and a two-run double by Brian Sullivan were the big blows in the inning. Munn, Sullivan, Chuck Wittington and Jerry Krueger combined for a dozen hits.

Chicago needed four runs in the bottom of the 5th to overcome a 10-8 Connecticut #777 lead in game four. Ken Kesselica's three-run, inside-the-park home run - his second of the tournament - put his club ahead to stay at 12-10 and closed out the scoring. Pitcher Jim Kotell shut down Local #777 over the final two innings to preserve the win.

In the winners' bracket finals Local #597 erupted for seven runs in the bottom of the 6th to erase an 11-6 deficit against Muscle Shoals. John McGowan ignited the rally with a two-run blast. Chris Turner's two-run triple put his club gave his club a 12-11 lead. Jim Kotel, who held Muscle Shoals scoreless in the bottom of the 7th, also collected three hits along with Chuck Wittington and Ken Kesselica.

The championship game was almost a carbon copy of the winners' bracket finals, with Chicago rallying for seven runs in the bottom of the 7th to stun Muscle Shoals again, this time 12-11. With his team trailing 9-5, Ken Kesselica doubled in two runs and scored on a Nicholas Kimmer triple to cut the lead to one at 9-8. Kimmer then scored the tying run on a Muscle Shoals error. Rbi singles by Jerry Krueger, John McGowan and Brian Sullivan lifted Local #597 into a 12-9 lead. Muscle Shoals answered with two runs in the top of the 7th but left the tying and winning runs on base when pitcher Jim Kotel induced the final batter to fly out to Josh Munn on the left field line.

Nicolas Kimmer had two hits, including a double and a triple, and Chuck Wittington went 2-for-3 to lead the champions.

Was Chicago manager Ron Danno surprised that his team mercy-ruled its first three opponents?

"I thought we were the best team out there," said Danno. "We were one of the higher seeded teams, and it could have been that the other teams just didn't play well, like Dayton. They're not a bad team. They went into the losers' bracket and took third place."

Danno saluted Local #597 player-manager Jim Kotel for guiding his team to the title. "We also want to thank our business agent, Billy Dean, for getting us there. He's the reason we're together, and our business manager James Buchanan. Also thanks to John Lean, our apprenticeship coordinator, for allowing us to go out there."

### **31ST ANNUAL UNITED ASSOCIATION INVIT. CLASS "B" DIVISION FINAL STANDINGS**

1.	Chicago Pipefitters #597	6 0	
2.	Muscle Shoals #760	5 2	
3.	Dayton #162	7 2	
4.	New York #638	4 2	
5.	St. Louis #562	5 2	
	Connecticut #777	3 2	
7.	Cleveland #120	4 2	
	Portsmouth #577	4 2	
9.	Columbus #189	2 2	
	Detroit #98	2 2	
	Milwaukee #75	2 2	
	Sprinklefitters #669 Kentucky	2 2	
13.	Central New Jersey #9	2 2	
	Chicago #281	2 2	
	Detroit #636	2 2	
	Monroe #677	2 2	
17.	Boston #539	1 2	
	Chicago #130	1 2	
	Evansville #136	1 2	
	Lansing #333	1 2	

Monaca #47 1 2  
Parkersburg #563 1 2  
Peoria #353 1 2  
Sprinklefitters #669 New York 1 2

### **Homer, Kappas Lead Pittsburgh No. 449 Sweep In 31st U. A. National "C" At Riverstar**

Pitcher Bob Homer held six straight opponents to single digit scoring and Nick Kappes batted .684 and anchored the defense to lead Pittsburgh Steamfitters Local #449 to a six game sweep of the class "C" division of the 31st Annual U. A. National Tournament June 13-15 at Riverstar Sportsplex.

Homer and the Pittsburgh #449 defense allowed only 30 runs and closed out the event with an 8-0 shutout victory over Yonkers #21 in the championship game.

The champions only had two close calls - come-from-behind victories over Yonkers (5-4) in their opener and against Joliet #422 (13-9) in the winners' bracket finals. They sandwiched three impressive mercy-rule wins in between those contests, then blanked Yonkers in the finals.

Local #449 manager Jim Harding credited his club's title to "great defense and great pitching by Bobby Homer.

"Our defense was almost flawless," said Harding. "We didn't make too many mistakes. You could probably count on one hand how many errors we had."

Harding said Homer was one of his team's two candidates for MVP honors.

"In addition to batting .529, he gave up no runs in the last game, and only 30 in six games," pointed out Harding. "And he started four double plays."

But in the end, shortstop Nick Kappas received the award.

"That was a tough decision for us," said Harding. "You never win a tournament with one player. I don't like to pick them (MVP awards). It could have very easily gone to Bob."

Harding pointed out that Kappas "hit great all weekend (.684), and defense is what won it for us, and he turned five double plays. He also played a part in 33 outs in our 38 innings. So he was almost getting an out for us each inning."

Other defensive standouts included outfielders J. D. Atchison, Bob Lorenzi, and Dan Weifling.

"Our outfield was really solid," said Harding. "They made four great catches in the championship game," said Harding. "J. D.'s defense in left field was unbelievable. He is so fast. He breaks on the ball really well and has a great arm. Bob played a great left-center. He's really smart. He never throws to the wrong base. He makes good decisions and breaks on the ball well when it's hit. Danny made a big catch in right-center in the championship game that probably would have scored two runs. He made a break on a ball between right and right center and came in and made a great catch."

Offensively, Pittsburgh was led by Kappes (.684), Jim Kirsch (.563), Gary Stacy (.533), Homer (.529) and Joe McMonagle (.500).

Local #448 got off to a slow start, easing past Yonkers #21 5-4 after scoring three runs in the bottom of the 4th to overcome a 4-2 deficit. A two-out single by Bob Kappas and Chris Spring's two-run double accounted for the three runs. Nick Kappes paced the offense going 2-for-3. Pitcher Bob Homer held Yonkers scoreless over the final four innings to preserve the win.

Next Pittsburgh used a nine run 6th to break open a 6-5 contest and mercy rule Indianapolis #440 15-5 in six innings. A pair of two-run singles - one by Bob Lorenzi and one by Joe McMonagle - highlighted the inning.

Lorenzi, McMonagle, Nick Kappas and Gary Stacy shared eight hits for the winners.

Game three was an exact replica of game two, with Local #449 blowing open a 6-5 game with nine runs in the 6th to mercy-rule Morgantown #152 in six. Two run singles by Bob Homer, Nick Kappes and Jim Kirsch proved to be the big blows in the inning. Homer, Kappas, and Kirsch banged out three hits each to lead the offense.

In game four, Pittsburgh scored six runs in the 2nd and 3rd and five in the 4th to build a 17-5 lead over Cleveland #55 and never looked back in a 17-7, five inning rout. Gary Stacy and Nick Kappes each contributed a two-run single in the 2nd, and Stacy collected two more rbi's with a base hit in the 3rd. Then in the 5th Chris Spring doubled home a run and Jim Kirsch and Joe McMonagle each had an rbi triple.

Kappas banged out three hits, and Stacy and McMonagle chipped in two apiece.

Joliet #422 held a narrow 3-2 lead over Local #449 through three innings in the winners' bracket finals, but in the top of the 4th, Pittsburgh erupted for seven runs to take the lead for good at 9-3. Bob Homer gave his club a 5-3 advantage with a two-run single. Nick Kappas also singled home two runs in the inning. Kappas added a two-run double in the 6th to help give #449 another six-run cushion after Joliet had cut the deficit back down to two. Joliet added two more runs in the 6th, but Bob Homer shut them down in the 7th as Pittsburgh escaped with a 13-9 victory.

Homer, Kappas, Bob Lorenzi, Jim Kirsch and Dan Wiefling combined for ten hits.

A sac fly by Mark Rovine got Local #449 on the scoreboard in the 1st inning of the finals, and proved to be the only run his club would need as pitcher Bob Homer tossed an impressive 8-0 shutout over Yonkers #21. The winners added two runs in the 2nd and two in the third, then sealed the win with a three-run 6th. Jim Kirsh and Joe McMonagle had rbi singles and Chris Spring a sac fly in the 6th.

Rovine, McMonagle, Chad Swortz and Gary Stacy shared eight hits for the champions.

### **31ST ANNUAL UNITED ASSOCIATION INVIT. CLASS "C" DIVISION FINAL STANDINGS**

1.	Pittsburgh #27	6 0	
2.	Yonkers New York #21	7 2	
3.	Joliet #422	3 2	
4.	Cleveland #55	3 2	
5.	St. Louis #562	4 2	
	Chicago #592	3 2	
7.	Rock Island #25	4 2	
	Norfolk #10	3 2	
9.	Aurora #501	1 2	
	Morgantown #152		1 2
	Peoria #353	1 2	
	Savoy #149	1 2	
13.	Toledo #50	2 2	
	Lima #776	1 2	
	Indianapolis #4400	2	
	Ontario #67	0 2	
17.	Buffalo #22	0 2	
	Charleston #625	0 2	
	Dayton #162	0 2	

Sprinklefitters #669      0 2  
Toronto #46      0 2

### **Fat Daddy's Finally Breaks Through In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" World Qualifier At Triple Creek By Andy Zureick**

Colerain Township, Oh. – Fat Daddy's went 5-0 to claim first place in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" Qualifier at Triple Creek Park on June 14<sup>th</sup>. The championship earned Fat Daddy's an invitation to the USSSA World Tournament in Kissimmee, Fl. on September 11-14. "We have finished second a couple of times, we're happy to finally win one," admitted team manager Quinn Crabtree. "It feels pretty good."

Fat Daddy's opened pool play with a 9-3 spanking of KJ's Sports Bar. Brian Krastheffer and Dustin Tyler were both 3-for-4 in the victory.

They followed that up with a 9-7 clipping of Titan Healthcare/Cornerstone/Express. Dustin Tyler led the way again with another 3-for-4 performance.

The elimination round started with a rematch between Fat Daddy's and KJ's Sports Bar. Fat Daddy's took the lead for good in the top of the 4<sup>th</sup> when they scored three for a 4-1 advantage. Kenny Moss drove in two of those runs. Billy Schneider doubled in the final run of the inning. They added an insurance run in the 6<sup>th</sup> on Floyd Rinehart's RBI single. The final was 5-3. Moss and Schneider were both 2-for-3 in the contest.

Fat Daddy's added to their momentum in the semifinals versus Irish Softball by posting their best offensive output of the day. In the top of the 1<sup>st</sup> they put four runs on the board, including two on a Kenny Moss triple. Billy Schneider capped the inning with an RBI single. The Irish came back with three runs in the bottom of the frame, but from that point on it was all Fat Daddy's. They scored five more in the 3<sup>rd</sup> to break the game open. Moss started it with a two-run inside the park homer. Floyd Reinhart tripled to tack on two more. Quinn Crabtree capped it with a sacrifice fly that made the score 9-3, and Fat Daddy's went on to post an easy 15-3 win in five innings. Billy Schneider, Brian Krastheffer and Jeremy Swanson combined for nine hits.

The finals matched Fat Daddy's with UAW #863. With the score was tied 4-4 going into the bottom of 6<sup>th</sup>, Fat Daddy's bats took over. Mark Conley broke the tie with a three-run double. Steve Lowery tripled in two more as Fat Daddy's tallied nine big runs to close out the scoring and claim a 13-4 victory. Brian Krastheffer and Dustin Tyler pounded out four hits each for the champions. Steve Lowery added three hits.

Krastheffer posted a team-high .789 batting average in the tournament, and was followed by Dustin Tyler at .684. "They pretty much had the best tournament for us all around," noted manager Quinn Crabtree. "Brian is like that every tournament – consistent. All he does is hit. Dustin is your typical leadoff guy. He hits everything on the ground and beats it out. He always hustles...he's been a great pickup for us." Krastheffer had a team high nine RBI. Tyler also scored seven runs.

Steve Lowery batted .599 in the tournament with three triples. Mark Conley finished at .588. Kenny Moss hit .500 including a homerun.

Despite those performances, team manager Quinn Crabtree insisted the key to Fat Daddy's success was their play in the field. "Our defense was outstanding. Justin Tyler is new to our team and he's doing a great job at third base. And not many balls hit the ground in the outfield with Mike Crabtree in left field, Kenny Moss in left center, Brian Krastheffer in right center, and Billy Schneider in right field. They made a lot of putouts out there for us. Our offense struggled in a couple games but they kept us in it."

Based on the results, UAW #863 and Titan Healthcare earned berths to the USSSA State Tournament in Harrison on August 16-17 and the Great Lakes Nationals on Labor Day weekend in Indianapolis. Brew Crew also secured an invite to state tournament action.

## **Fusion Softball Proves To Be On Right Track In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “E” World Qualifier At Kolping by Andy Zureick**

Mt. Healthy, Oh. – Fusion Softball went 3-0 to take first place in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “E” World Qualifier June 14<sup>th</sup> at Kolping Park. The championship qualifies them for the USSSA National Tournament in Indianapolis on Labor Day weekend and the world tournament in Kissimmee, Florida on September 11-14. Team manager Brian Honerlaw feels his team has arrived as a contender even though it has taken some time to get to this point. “We’ve been building this team three or four years to compete in tournaments and finally we have got the right group of guys together to do it.”

Fusion Softball got the tournament started against Rounding Third. Nine runs in the bottom of the 5<sup>th</sup> allowed Fusion to erase a 3-2 deficit. Nick Bergar tripled in two runs to give his team the lead at 4-3. Chris Sample later capped the inning with a bases-loaded triple that increased his team’s advantage to 11-3. Rounding Third never recovered. The final was 13-6. Wade Roush and Courtney Leach were both 4-for-5 in the game. Cody Campbell went 3-for-4.

Game two versus Budweiser was a defensive struggle that was not decided until late in the game. Going into the bottom of the 6<sup>th</sup>, Fusion Softball trailed 3-2. Brian Honerlaw led that at bat off with a single. Pinch runner and base-pad specialist Tony Huber replaced Honerlaw and came around to score the tying run on Nick Bregar’s double. Jerry Huber gave his team the lead when he singled in Bregar. Budweiser failed to dent the plate in the top of the 7<sup>th</sup> against pitcher Coleman Walford, making the final score 4-3. Wade Roush was 2-for-3 in the win.

Fusion was looking to make it a clean sweep as they squared off against Bushwackers in the third and final game of the day. It did not look good early on as Bushwackers put seven runs on the board in the top of the 1<sup>st</sup>. But the eventual champions got their act together in the 3<sup>rd</sup> by scoring 11 runs to take a 12-7 lead. Brian Honerlaw got the rally underway with a two-run single. Nick Bregar and Mark Ramsey each drove in two more to knot the score at 7-7. Cody Campbell got his team over the hump by drawing a bases loaded walk. That gave Fusion their first lead of the game at 8-7. They never looked back. Brian Honerlaw came into pitch for Fusion in the second inning and allowed only one more run the rest of the way. Courtney Leach knocked in an insurance run in the 4<sup>th</sup> to cap the scoring and make it a 13-8 final. Wade Roush led all hitters at 4-for-4. Mark Ramsey was a perfect 3-for-3. Nick Bregar was 3-for-4.

Bregar was also named team MVP for the tournament thanks to a .889 batting average and seven runs batted in. “He always came up with big hits when we needed them and played steady defense at first base,” noted Honerlaw, the manager. “He was always hustling and giving that extra effort.”

Close behind Bregar was Wade Roush at .833. Courtney Leach batted .636 and scored six runs. Mark Ramsey (.556), Brian Honerlaw (.545), and Chris Sample (.500) also made solid contributions at the plate for Fusion Softball. Tony Huber made his presence known as pinch runner, scoring the go-ahead run in two of the three games his team played.

Great all-around play in the field and the pitching of Coleman Walford and Brian Honerlaw were also integral parts of Fusion’s success. The infield of Cody Campbell, shortstop, Andy Hunt, second base, and Jerry Huber, third base, anchored the Fusion defense. “They just fielded everything that was hit to them and turned three double plays,” explained Honerlaw. “Jerry played an incredible third base...they just took all the hits away.”

Chris Sample was the leader in the outfield. “He made some incredible catches when we needed them.

“I was very impressed with our team, everybody played 110%,” Honerlaw concluded. “It was an overall team effort and we never quit.”

Fusion Softball pocketed \$250 cash to go along with their postseason berths. Bushwackers and UAW Bulldogs also qualified for the USSSA State “E” Tournament in Harrison of August 16-17.

**June 21-22...**

**Winners Sweep Past PRI At Expressway Park For Third Title...**

**Roesch, Carter Power Blitz/Watanabe/Bull/Minges/Wessel/Easton In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "B-C" NIT**

Milford, Oh.--Jason Roesch batted .864 and Jimmy Carter belted four home runs and collected seventeen rbi's to power Blitz/Watanabe/Bull/Minges Drywall/Wessel/Easton to a five game sweep of a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "B-C" National Invitational June 21-22 at Expressway Park.

Blitz/Easton polished off Mojo/Creative Stucco/Worth 19-11 in the finals to wrap up their third U-Trip NIT title of the year.

A berth to the USSSA "C" World Tournament September 18-21 was awarded to Design Concepts.

The champions were never seriously challenged, as they mercy-ruled two opponents, including Mojo/Creative Stucco/Worth - the only other "B" team they faced - in a third round game. Blitz/Easton did not allow their other three victims any closer than seven runs.

Jason Roesch, who led his club in hitting with an .864 weekend, and Jimmy Carter, who had a team-high four home runs and seventeen rbi's, did most of the offensive damage. Pitcher Trevor Barth, Ryan Minges (.783), Brad Tabler (.667) and Jeff Click (.647) were named to the All-Tournament team. Larry Wert chipped in with a .636 effort. Blitz/Easton batted .613 as a team.

Roesch was named tournament MVP.

"He was on fire most of the weekend," said Blitz/Easton manager Terry Walton. "He was fifteen for his first fifteen at bats. He didn't make an out until the winners' bracket finals. He was second on the team with rbi's (15) so he drove in a lot of runs for us."

Jimmy Carter had a big weekend for Blitz, said Walton.

"He didn't hit for as high of an average as he normally does, but he drove in a lot of runs. He led us in rbi's (17) and home runs (4), including two home runs."

Pitching, a solid overall performance by Jeff Click, effective use of home runs, and the ability of the top of the order to get on base were all keys to winning the tournament, noted Walton.

"Trevor Barth really pitched well, which was especially important in view of our injury to Frank Gruber," pointed out Walton. "He pitched every inning of every game of the tournament and did a good job."

"We also had good infield play behind him, especially by Jeff Click, our shortstop. One of the reasons he was named to the All-Tournament team was that he not only had a good hitting tournament, but he also played a good shortstop," said Walton.

"And we used our home runs very well. Eight of our thirteen were either three-run home runs or grand slams. We only hit two solo home runs the whole tournament. In the majority of our games, we only got three home runs, so it was crucial that we used them wisely," said Walton.

"Another key was that Trevor Barth and Ryan Minges, our number one and two hitters, set the table for Roesch and Carter throughout the tournament. Also Jeff Click did a nice job of getting us back to the top of the line-up time and time again," added Walton.

Design Concepts appeared set to ambush Blitz/Easton after jumping out to a 6-0 lead in the top of the 1st. But Blitz answered with twelve to quickly squash any hopes of an upset. A three-run bomb from Justin Minges vaulted Blitz/Easton into the lead at 8-6, then Jason Roesch followed with a slammer to cap off the

inning. Three innings later Blitz used a nine-run outburst to build a 27-9 lead seal the win. Michael Rogers closed out the scoring with a three-run blast.

Minges, Roesch and Rogers were all perfect in four trips to the plate.

Blitz/Easton never trailed against Cronin Ford in game two, putting up six runs in the top of the 1st with the help of a two-run Brad Tabler shot. Blitz finally pulled away with six runs in the 6th to open up a 17-7 bulge. Larry Wert's two-run double was the big blow in the inning. Jason Roesch cracked a two-run homer in the 7th to make it 19-9. Cronin answered with two runs of their own to make the final 19-11.

Roesch collected five hits in the game altogether. Ryan Minges went 4-for-5 and Tabler and Wert added three hits each.

Next Blitz/Easton scored two in the 1st, four in the 2nd, three in the 4th, five in the 6th and five in the 7th to brush aside Mojo/Creative/Worth 21-5. Jeff Click's two-run single capped off the scoring in the 2nd. Jimmy Carter provided all three runs in the 4th with a homer. Kevin Greene's two run double highlighted the 6th, and Brad Tabler connected on a two-run swat in the 7th.

Roesch continued to be unstoppable at the plate, collecting his fourteenth consecutive hit. Trevor Barth banged out four, and Steve Bosch and Jimmy Carter chipped in three each.

In the winners' bracket finals, Blitz/Easton used an eight run 4th to break open a 6-3 contest and roll to an eventual 14-7 victory over PRI/Easton. Jason Brown doubled in two runs and Larry Wert socked a three run homer to cap off the 4th. Brown, Wert and Ryan Minges shared nine hits.

Mojo/Creative Stucco/Worth drew first blood with four runs in the top of the 1st in the championship game, but Blitz/Easton knotted the score on a Jimmy Carter grand slam in the bottom of the inning, then surged ahead with five runs in the 2nd. A three-run blast by Ryan Minges and a two-run Michael Rogers double accounted for the five runs in the 2nd. Mojo cut the deficit to three in the top of the 5th, but Blitz answered with four in the 5th and four in the 6th to take a commanding 19-11 advantage. Jimmy Carter provided all four runs in the 5th with his second grand slam of the contest. Michael Rogers solo home run and a two-run single by Jeff Click were the big blows in the 6th. Trevor Barth shut down Mojo in the top of the 7th to preserve the win.

Minges, Rogers and Click pounded out four hits each to power the champions. Brad Tabler went 3-for-4.

#### **WORTH-USSSA MEN'S CLASS "B-C" NATIONAL INVITATIONAL TOURN. FINAL STANDINGS**

1.	Blitz/Wat./Bull/Minges/Wessel/Easton, Cin., OH	5 0
2.	Team Mojo/Stucco/Elite/Worth, Columbus, OH	5 2
3.	PRI/Easton, Cincinnati, OH	3 2
4.	House Rules/Holy Grail/Crosley's, Cinti., OH	4 2
5.	Mike Foulks/Team Insanity, Union, KY	3 2
	JLC/Legends, Edgewood, KY	2 2
7.	Cronin Ford, Cincinnati, OH	2 2
	EZ Cash, Grove City, OH	2 2
9.	Design Concepts, New Richmond, OH	1 2
	EAP/Wessel/Real Estate/Easton, Cincinnati, OH	1 2
	Hart Restoration/Saints, Newport, KY	1 2
	J Taps Softball, Cincinnati, OH	1 2
13.	Blue Collar, Independence, KY	0 2
	Dirty Birds/A1Fab/Skyline, New Richmond, OH	0 2
	KW Sports/Game On/Easton, Cincinnati, OH	0 2
	Team Chaos, Franklin, OH	0 2

**WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA MEN'S CLASS "C-D"  
NATIONAL INVITATIONAL ALL-TOURN. TEAM**

Mike Dillon House Rules/Holy Grail/Crosley's  
Nick Masur PRI/Easton  
Chase Voskull PRI/Easton  
Matt Albert Mojo/Stucco/Elite/Worth  
Bob Niemet Mojo/Stucco/Elite/Worth  
Eric Workman Mojo/Stucco/Elite/Worth  
Trevor Barth Blitz/Watanabe/Bull/Minges/Wessel/Easton  
Jeff Click Blitz/Watanabe/Bull/Minges/Wessel/Easton  
Ryan Minges Blitz/Watanabe/Bull/Minges/Wessel/Easton  
Brad Tabler Blitz/Watanabe/Bull/Minges/Wessel/Easton  
Brad Cahill - Co-MVP Mojo/Stucco/Elite/Worth  
Jason Roesch - Co-MVP Blitz/Watanabe/Bull/Easton

**Walerius, Painter Lead Kentucky's Finest Sweep Of Worth-Bud Light-Ohio USSSA District IX "D" Field**

Mt. Healthy, Oh.--Pitcher Bob Walerius limited three opponents to a combined thirteen runs, and Alex Painter batted .818 to lead Kentucky's Finest to a first place finish in the Worth-Bud Light-Ohio USSSA District IX "D" Championship June 21st at Kolping Park.

Kentucky's Finest pounded Nati Express 28-9 in between mercy-rule wins over Deaf Team (11-1) and Wings & Rings/Smokin' Pigs (15-3) in round robin play.

That gave Kentucky's Finest a bye in the elimination round, where they were eventually awarded a co-championship with Team Bring It/Mad Max due to inclement weather.

Team Bring It, third place Team Quality and fourth place Nati Express were awarded berths to the Ohio USSSA "D" State Tournament August 16-17 in Milford.

Team Bring It and Team Quality also qualified for the U-Trip Great Lakes "D" Nationals Labor Day Weekend in Ft. Knox, Ky.

"Clutch hitting, solid pitching and solid defense" carried Kentucky's Finest to the championship, according to manager John Schwalbach.

"We had a lot of big two-out hits. Our fast guys got on base and set the table for our rbi guys," said Schwalbach. "We also had solid pitching. Bob Walerius only gave up thirteen runs in three games. That's a pretty darn good tournament. He pitched very well."

Schwalbach said his team's defense "leads us in every tournament.

"It's just solid," said Schwalbach.

Curtis Bezold (ss) and Davey Johnson (cf) were Kentucky's Finest's defensive standouts for the weekend, said Schwalbach.

"Curtis stands out every tournament," said Schwalbach. "He makes every play. He didn't make an error the entire tournament. He catches any ball hit near him. He has a real quick release and he's a solid ball player all the way around.

"And Davey Johnson made some outstanding catches for me in centerfield," added Schwalbach.

Alex Painter turned in a hefty .818 performance for the champions.

“He’s a young up-and-comer,” commented Schwalbach. “He’s only come out a few times for us and every time he does he just keeps getting better and better. I really look for him to improve a lot by the end of the season.”

Brian Kelly also turned in a big weekend with an .800 effort. Davey Johnson followed right behind at .769, and Paul Van Benschoten chipped in with a .700 day.

Kentucky’s Finest scored two in the 1st and two in the 2nd, then put the game away with four in the 4th and three in the 5th as they mercy-ruled Deaf Team 11-1 in game one. Alex Painter put his club on the board with an rbi double in the bottom of the 1st, then scored on an rbi single by John Schwalbach. Brad Schultz’ two-run double capped off the four run 4th, then Dave Kelm closed out the scoring with a two-run single in the 5th.

Seven team member, including Painter, Schwalbach, Schultz, Eric Clark, Curtis Bezold, Jeff Henry and Chris Stallings, combined for fourteen hits to fuel the offense.

Next Kentucky’s Finest used a seven run 5th and a ten run 7th to break open an 8-8 tie with Nati Express. Paul Van Benschoten’s rbi single put his club ahead to stay at 9-8 in the 5th. Brian Kelly had a two-run single to cap off the inning as the lead swelled to 15-8. Kentucky’s Finest padded their lead with three in the 6th, then exploded for ten in the 7th with the help of two-run singles by Eric Clark and Brad Schultz. Davey Johnson pounded out six hits, Alex Painter and Brian Kelly shared ten, and Bobby Walerius went 3-for-4.

A four-run 1st was all Kentucky’s Finest needed to get past Wings & Rings/Smokin’ Pigs 15-3 in a five inning finale. Jeff Henry and Garrett Hadden got things underway with one out singles. Brian Kelly plated both runners with a double, then scored on a two-run single by Eric Clark. Davey Johnson’s three-run triple made it 7-2 in the 2nd. Bobby Walerius’ two-run single was the big blow in a five-run 4th as the lead swelled to 12-2. Then Garrett Hadden’s two-run single closed out the scoring in a three-run 5th.

Kelly, Clark, Johnson and Paul Van Benschoten banged out three hits each to power the champions.

“This was a good win for our team,” commented manager John Schwalbach. “We got some swings in and had some fun and it was a great tournament for us against good competition.”

### **Cincinnati Impact Outlasts Team Emanon In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “D-E” At Riverstar**

Cincinnati Impact outlasted Team Emanon/Wessel/Pediatrics 12-11 in the championship game to capture first place in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “D-E” State-National Qualifier on Sunday, June 22nd at Riverstar Sportsplex.

Cincinnati Impact went 2-1 in pool play in the sixteen team, four division combination round robin, single elimination affair, falling hard to Team Emanon 17-2 in five innings. But their 2-1 record gave them a berth into the tournament’s elimination round, where they mercy-ruled their next two opponents to earn a re-match with Emanon for the overall title.

The victory netted Impact a paid national tournament berth. Team Emanon qualified for the Ohio USSSA Men’s “D” State Tournament August 16-17 in Milford, and the Great Lakes “D” National Tournament August 30-September 1 in Ft. Knox, Ky.

Cincinnati Impact dominated their opponents except for Team Emanon, mercy-ruling every other team.

“We just had some big, two-out hits and made some big defensive plays in some of the games,” commented Impact manager Walter Burchett. “And we took some big early leads and didn’t have to play from behind.”

“But in the game Emanon beat us, they just hit the ball really well. They hit it all over the field and we didn’t have a good game defensively. They have a really good team and they crushed us,” said Burchett.

Brian Zobel and Mike Heis powered the champions, batting .888 and .833 respectively.

“Those two guys in the middle of our line-up were getting big hits continuously all day,” said Burchett.

Tony Robinson (.714) and Mark Schorsch (.667) also had a big day with the sticks.

Heis, Tom Taulbee and Dan Carroll were Impact’s defensive standouts, said Burchett.

“Mike made a couple of big plays in centerfield in that final game against Emanon, and Tom played middle infield really well and Danny had a good day at short,” said Burchett.

Impact only needed four innings to brush aside Wolfpack/BW3 18-1 and Goof Troop 18-2 in round robin play before being drilled by Team Emanon. A nine-run 2nd broke a 1-1 tie with Wolfpack and Impact never looked back. Josh Smith’s rbi single put his club on top for good at 2-1. Tony Robinson added a two-run double, and Bryan Zobel a two-run single.

Robinson, Zobel and Tom Taubee were all perfect in three at bats for the winners.

Next Impact used a six-run 1st and a nine run 3rd to jump out to a commanding 15-1 lead over Goof Troop. Tom Taulbee had a two-run double and Mike Schorsch a two-run single to account for four of their club’s six runs in the 1st. Bryan Zobel contributed a two-run double and Shannon Loudon a two-run single in the 3rd.

Tony Robinson banged out four hits, and Loudon and Josh Smith shared six to pace the offense.

After being spanked by Emanon in the round robin finale, Impact went back to work, mercy-ruling Big O Softball 15-4 and Huber Lawn Care 17-2. Impact grabbed a 6-0 lead in the top of the 2nd against Big O, then put the game away with nine in the 5th. A Danny Carroll two-run double and a two-run single by Rick Powers were the big blows in the 2nd. Mike Cronin and Mike Heis each plated two runs with singles in the 5th. Heis, Bryan Zobel and Tony Robinson each went 3-for-4 for the winners.

Cincinnati Impact overpowered Huber Lawncare 17-2 in the semi-finals. An rbi single by Mark Schorsch put the eventual champions ahead to stay at 2-1 in the bottom of the 2nd. Impact added five runs in the 3rd to break open a 3-1 contest and take an 8-1 advantage. A two-run triple by Mike Heis and Bryan Zobel’s two run single highlighted the inning. Impact then sealed the win with a nine-run outburst in the 4th. Tom Taulbee and Dan Carroll did most of the damage with a pair of two-run singles.

Heis and Schorsch pounded out four hits each, and Zobel and Shannon Loudon chipped in with three hits.

Impact exploded to a 9-1 lead over Emanon in the finals, but their opponent was undaunted, and battled back to take a 10-9 lead in the bottom of the 6th. But in the top of the 7th, Impact scored three runs, while pitcher Shannon Loudon limited Emanon to a lone run in the bottom of the inning to preserve a 12-11 victory. Mike Heis delivered a big two-run single to give Impact an 11-10 lead, then Tom Taulbee doubled home Heis with an insurance run. Emanon pushed across a run in the bottom of the 7th and loaded the bases with two outs, before Loudon induced the final batter to fly out to left field.

Heis, Taulbee, Bryan Zobel and Tony Robinson combined for a dozen hits for the champions.

Cincinnati Impact manager Walter Burchett was more than a little concerned about how his team would respond to Team Emanon in the finals after being routed 17-2 earlier in the tournament.

“I thought they would have an edge on us emotionally because they beat us so soundly,” said Burchett. “I thought if we ran into each other again, we’d better score early so we’d get the taste of that beating out of our mouths.”

Impact’s plan worked initially, as they jumped out to a 9-1 lead. But when Emanon came back and took the lead, Burchett had to have a talk with his team.

“We got the guys together and said ‘we’ve been playing well all day. Let’s keep it up and see what happens here.’ And we took the lead and held on,” said Burchett.

Burchett said the tournament was “very well run,” and that “everybody in the tournament was a class act. It was nice playing some of these teams that we hadn’t seen before. We like playing Emanon - they’re a good group of guys.”

### **WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA MEN’S CLASS “D” STATE-NATIONAL QUALIFIER FINAL STANDINGS**

1. Cincinnati Impact, Cincinnati, OH 5 1
2. Team Emanon/Wessel/Pediatrics, Cincinnati, OH 5 1
3. Ante Up, Union, KY 4 1
- Huber Lawn Care, Maysville, KY 4 1
5. Big O Softball, Florence, KY 2 2
- Hitmen Softball, Hillsboro, OH 2 2
- Syndicate/Don Catchen & Sons, Erlanger, KY 2 2
- Gary’s Roofing, Cincinnati, OH 1 3
9. Kentucky’s Finest, Villa Hills, KY 2 1
- Arsenal, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
- East End Softball, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
- Goof Troop, Milford, OH 1 2
13. We Don’t Have One, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
- FTX Softball/Finish Line Gr., Burlington, KY 0 3
- Team Miller, Loveland, OH 0 3
- Wolfpack/BW3, Cincinnati, OH 0 3

### **Bill’s Open Door Outduels D&D/Dirty Dozen 14-10 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “E” Finals At Riverstar Sportsplex By Andy Zureick**

Bill’s Open Door fended off D&D/Dirty Dozen 14-10 in the second championship game to capture first place in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “E” World Qualifier June 21<sup>st</sup> at Riverstar Park. The championship earned Bill’s travel money and a paid berth into the USSSA “E” World tournament September 11-14 in Kissimmee, Fl. They also qualified for the nationals on Labor Day weekend in Indianapolis and the state tournament in Harrison on August 16-17.

Bill’s Open Door started the day against Hot Boyz/Saints. Trailing 1-0, Boe Tussey tied the game in the bottom of the 2<sup>nd</sup> with a run-scoring single. Mike Patterson’s three-run double later in the inning helped lead the way to an 8-1 advantage. Five more in the 4<sup>th</sup> broke the game open, 14-5. Brian Berry and Mike Bowley each contributed a two-run single. The final was 17-12. Bowley and teammate Todd Gomia both went 3-for-4.

Game two matched Bill’s Open Door with Sorrell Farms. A nine run 4<sup>th</sup> proved to be the deciding inning. Robbie Kraft picked up two RBI to help his team claim a 12-2 lead. The game ended in six innings via the mercy rule with Bill’s Open Door on top, 17-6. Todd Gomia and Mike Bowley again led the way as both matched their 3-for-4 performances of the first game.

Sibcy Cline/BW3 looked to be a more formidable opponent in game three, jumping out to a 6-0 lead in the top of the first. But Bill’s kept their composure and chipped away at the lead. Josh Beason’s two-run

double capped a four-run 3<sup>rd</sup>, giving Bill's Open Door their first lead at 7-6. Beason drove in two more in the 6<sup>th</sup> to cap the scoring. Boe Tussey held Sibcy Cline scoreless over the final six innings for a 9-6 victory. Beason and Todd Gomia combined for six hits.

Bill's rolled past All-State 15-9 in game four. Chris Gomia, Boe Tussey, and Dave Staton had two hits apiece to pace the offense.

In the semifinals Bill's exploded for nine runs in the top of the 1<sup>st</sup> and never looked back in a 13-1, five inning rout of Eagles/D&D Trophy. Brian Berry's three-run double highlighted the inning. Berry and Mike Patterson shared six hits.

D & D/Dirty Dozen then ambushed Bill's Open Door 16-10 in eight innings in the first championship to force an "if game."

"In the first game of the finals, we had the winning run thrown out at the plate [in the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup>]," noted manager Brian Berry. "They scored six in the top of the 8<sup>th</sup>. We could have easily given up there."

The second finals wasn't decided until the top of the 6<sup>th</sup>, where Bill's scored three runs to break a 9-9 tie. Zach Sorrell gave his the team the lead with an RBI double. Sorrell drove in two more insurance runs in the top of the 7<sup>th</sup> to make the score 14-10. D&D/Dirty Dozen then put up a goose egg in the bottom of the inning. Sorrell and Davey Staton pounded out three hits each for the champions.

Shortstop Todd Gomia hit a team-high .653 and was equally valuable in the field, said Brian Berry. "He came up with a lot of big plays and double plays when we needed them.

"We had a lot of guys contribute who usually aren't outfielders," added Berry. "Josh Beason and Boe Tussey moved to the outfield because we were shorthanded. Also, our pitching was very good all weekend." Mike Patterson pitched five games, while Boe Tussey tossed the other two.

Four other members of the team had big days at the plate, including Berry at .615, Mike Bowley at .571, Mike Patterson at .556, and Boe Tussey at .538.

Berry pointed to the resolve his team displayed after their first defeat as being key to his team's success. "We kept fighting back and never gave up. Our team is a mixture of veterans and young players and we're really coming together as a team."

### **Moose Lodge 1469/Lights Out Outlasts Dixon/Putter's 23-19 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" Finals At Expressway Park by Andy Zureick**

Milford, Oh. - Moose Lodge 1469/Lights Out outlasted Dixon Softball/Putter's Tavern 23-19 in the championship game of a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" World Qualifier June 21<sup>st</sup> at Expressway Park.

In a three-game round robin that opened the tournament, Moose Lodge knocked off Wolfpack/BW3 7-2, then escaped with a 13-12 win over Timber Tech. But Dixon Trucking/Putter's Tavern was there to stop the sweep, slapping Moose Lodge with an 8-6 setback.

Their 2-1 record got them into the single-elimination round to face OC Softball. That game proved to be the pivotal game of the tournament. After two and a half innings, Moose Lodge found themselves in an 11-1 hole. "We thought either the tournament was over for us or that we would come back and win it," commented team manager John Miller. "We persevered and came back." The bottom of the 3<sup>rd</sup> saw Lights Out rally for 11 runs and claim a 12-11 lead. Brain Daniele had the big blow, a bases loaded triple that made the score 11-6. Kenny Robinson capped the inning with an RBI single that gave his team a one-run advantage. Dave Boxterman drove in the last two runs in the 4<sup>th</sup> as the lead swelled to 16-11. Pitcher Bill Brinkman held OC Softball scoreless over the last five innings, making it a 17-11 final. John Miller banged out three hits, and Kenny Robinson added two.

Following a two and a half hour rain delay, the finals pitted Moose Lodge against nemesis Dixon Trucking. "It was a benefit to us," concluded manager John Miller about having to play the one team that had beaten them in the round robin. "We knew what we were getting into ahead of time. Assistant Manager Tim Webb did an excellent job getting everyone into the right position."

Moose Lodge got off to a quick start with four runs in the top of the 1<sup>st</sup>. Jeff Iker had a two-run double to cap the inning. Iker did the same in the 2<sup>nd</sup> as he team tallied five more runs for a 9-0 lead. Dixon Trucking/Putter's Tavern had the lead cut to 11-8 going into the 5<sup>th</sup>, but Lights Out once again pulled away. Brian Daniele had two RBI in a four-run 5<sup>th</sup> and John Miller added two more in a six-run 6<sup>th</sup> to give their club a ten run bulge at 21-11. Moose Lodge scored their final two runs in the top of the 7<sup>th</sup>, making the score 23-12 going into the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup>. That is when things got "really scary," said Miller. "They got their first six guys on before they made an out. Luckily we were able to make the plays we needed to make and fight them off." Dixon scored seven runs to fall just short in their come-from-behind bid. The final was 23-19. John Miller pounded out five hits, and Jeff Iker was 4-for-5 with three doubles and five RBI. Kenny Robinson was a perfect 4-for-4.

Moose Lodge's John Miller led by example with a team-high .737 batting average and ten runs scored. Kenny Robinson followed just behind at .700, and Mike Daniles batted .579. Jeff Iker and Brian Daniele tied for top run producer honors, each driving in eight runs.

"It was nice to get our first win under our belts," added Miller, "hopefully there are more to come."

Moose Lodge qualified for the USSSA Great Lakes "E" Nationals in Indianapolis on August 30 – September 1. They also earned a paid berth into the world tournament in Kissimmee, Florida on September 11-14.

OC Softball punched their ticket to the nationals and the USSSA "E" State Tournament on August 16-17 in Harrison. Timber Tech also qualified for state tournament play.

### **Diamond Foolz Outlast Naturals 11-8 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" State-National Qualifier At Expressway Park By Andy Zureick**

Milford, Oh. – Diamond Foolz capped an up and down weekend by taking first place in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA State-National Qualifier June 22<sup>nd</sup> at Expressway Park. "We played Saturday in an 'E' World Qualifier and went 1-3 and really played poorly," said team manager Tom Robbins. "We didn't hit real bad but our defense was shaky. We came back Sunday and tried to right the ship. We beat three good teams and stepped up and played a little better ball."

The four-team round robin opened for Diamond Foolz against Wise Guys. With the score tied at 3-3 going into the bottom of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Diamond Foolz erupted for seven runs to break the game open. Steve Sheets started the rally with a run-scoring single. Tristan Young and Jeremy Hayden both collected two RBI in the inning. Young drove in two more in the four-run 4<sup>th</sup> as the lead increased to 14-6. The final was 15-8. Jeremy Hayden was a perfect 4-for-4 in the victory. David Kennard went 3-for-4.

Facing Hoosier Daddies, Diamond Foolz scored five times in the top of the 2<sup>nd</sup> to take an 8-1 lead in game two. Tom Robbins had a two-run single. Brandon Riscon plated two more with a triple. Diamond Foolz added three more in the 4<sup>th</sup> and two in the 5<sup>th</sup> on a Jeremy Hayden's RBI triple. Hoosier Daddies cut the lead to 13-11 in the top of the 6<sup>th</sup>, but could get no closer. Mark Moller drove in an insurance run in the bottom of the inning, making it a 14-11 final. Chris "Frog" Froelicher and Brandon Riscon combined for eight hits. Jeremy Hayden and David Kennard were both 3-for-5.

The third and deciding game of the tournament pitted two undefeated teams against one another, the Diamond Foolz and The Naturals. Chris Froelicher singled in two runs in the bottom of the 1<sup>st</sup> to give Diamond Foolz their first lead at 4-2. The lead swelled to five runs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> thanks in large part to a Jim Wolfe two-run base hit. Wolfe collected another RBI to cap the three-run 4<sup>th</sup> and make it 10-3. The Naturals threatened with four runs in the top of the 5<sup>th</sup>, but a defensive change snuffed out the rally. "They

hit us out of our five man [outfield] and we were forced to go to a four man,” said manager Tom Robbins. “They were hitting our gaps...that proved to be the difference.” The final scored was 11-8. Jim Wolfe had his best game of the day, going 4-for-4. Tristan Young, Steve Sheets and Jeremy Hayden shared nine hits.

Young finished the tournament with a team-high .818 batting average. “He’s a good kid who loves to play ball...very energetic. He is our vocal leader and is always upbeat,” said Robbins.

Other offensive leaders included Mark Moeller at .778, Jim Wolfe and Chris Froelicher at .727, and Jeremy Hayden at .714.

Defense was also much improved from the day before, noted Robbins. “We played solid defense. The outfield of Jason Taylor, left field, Jeremy Hayden, center field, and David Kennard, right field, cut down a few base runners. They probably had four assists on the day.

“Pitching [by Mark Moeller and Scott Nuespickle] was also pretty solid. We didn’t walk a lot of people,” said Robbins.

“It was the first time all year Brandon Riscon played third base. He’s normally our shortstop, but our regular third baseman wasn’t there and he picked it up at third and did a really fine job filling in.”

With Diamond Foolz having already qualified for postseason play, berths to the Ohio USSSA E State Tournament on August 16-17 and the Great Lakes Nationals on Labor Day weekend were passed on to second-place finishers, the Naturals.

### **Diamond Freaks, Plating Tech Share Kolping Titles**

Mt. Healthy, Oh. - The Diamond Freaks and Plating Tech each went 3-0 to claim a share of first place in a six-team, Sunday morning round robin June 22nd at Kolping Park.

Diamond Freaks sandwiched a narrow 8-7 win over Maxed Out (1-2) in between routing Rice Electric (1-2) 11-1 and DPP (1-2) 13-3. While Plating Tech overwhelmed RTF (0-3) 20-0, DPP (1-2) 16-6 and Rice (1-2) 17-1.

### **Cable Leads Champions At Pastime Park..**

### **Dented Bats Rolls To 5th Title In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Queen City City Classic Women’s “C” NIT**

Harrison, Oh.--Dented Bats mercy-ruled their first two opponents, then polished off Fraley’s 12-7 in the championship game to complete a three-game sweep of the class “C” division of Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Queen City Classic Women’s “D” National Invitational June 21st at Pastime Park.

The championship was Dented Bats fifth in six outings this year. The Hoosier club blew past D & S Engineering 13-3 and Lady Quality 15-5 in five innings before disposing of Fraley’s/Low Bob in a four-inning, fog shortened finale.

The pitching of tournament MVP Kelly Cable, defense, and a potent offense that boasted five players with .700 batting averages or higher carried Dented Bats to the title.

“Kelly pitched and hit really well,” observed Dented Bats manager Donnie Brown. “Usually if the pitcher does well, they pretty much deserve the MVP award. She only gave up fifteen runs and only walked one person the whole tournament.

“We showed a lot of patience and drew a lot of walks,” added Brown, whose club was the recipient of sixteen walks in their three games. “And our defense was really strong.”

Dented Bats’ defensive standout was shortstop Ashley Whitaker, said Brown.

“She played a great shortstop. She had a lot of hard shots hit right at her and she doesn’t move out of the way,” said Brown. “She’s learning the position. She hasn’t been there long. She moved over there from first base and she’s just getting the hang of it. She also plays a great shortstop for being a lefty.”

Bridget Jones hit a robust .900 to pace the offense. Cable followed at .857, Ashley Kaiser and Jodi Landreth batted .800 and Jodi Callen .700.

“Bridget was on fire,” said Brown. “She’s been hitting well all year. She and Jodi Landreth are leading our team right now and batting about .750.”

Dented Bats scored three runs in the bottom of the 1st and eight in the 2nd to jump out to an 11-1 lead never looked back in a 13-3, five-inning rout of D & S Engineering in game one. Melinda Rhymes’ three-run triple quickly erased D & S 1-0 lead in the bottom of the 1st. Rhymes collected three more rbi’s with a bases-clearing double in the bottom of the 2nd to push the lead to 7-1.

Bridget Jones banged out three hits, and Debbie Pigg and Ashley Whitaker each went 2-for-2 to lead the winners.

Game two was almost a mirror image of game one, as Dented Bats used a four run 1st and a seven-run 3rd to forge an 11-2 lead over Lady Quality in an eventual 15-5 spanking. Jodi Landreth doubled in the first two runs of the game, then scored on Jodi Callen’s single in the 1st. Dented Bats took advantage of three consecutive walks in the 3rd. Melinda Rhymes and Debbie Pigg each contributed a two-run single to account for four of their club’s seven runs.

Callan and Amy Cannon pounded out four hits each, and Landreth Kelly Cable, Bridget Jones and Ashley Kiser combined for a dozen.

Fraleys/Lob Bob grabbed an early 3-0 lead in the top of the 1st in the finals, but it was short-lived as Dented Bats answered with six in the bottom of the inning. Jodi Callan’s grand slam quickly erased Fraley’s lead and put her club ahead to stay at 4-3. Shannon Poland’s two-run single capped off the inning. Dented Bats added three in the 2nd and three in the 3rd to improve their lead to 12-7. Melinda Rhymes’ three-run triple gave Dented Bats a four-run lead in the 2nd after Fraley’s had cut it to 6-5. Ashley Kiser’s two-run single and an rbi single by Ashley Whitaker closed out the scoring in the 3rd as fog brought a premature end to the tournament in the 4th.

Kiser, Bridget Jones and Jodi Landreth shared nine hits for the champions.

Dented Bats manager Donny Brown said he didn’t expect his team to be as strong as they’ve been, posting five U-Trip tournament wins out of six attempts.

“We’re a solid team, but I didn’t know we’d be this good,” said Brown. “It’s hard to judge right now because we’re playing the same teams week after week. When we play ‘C’ teams, we actually do better than when we play ‘D’ teams. There are a lot of really good teams over in Ohio.”

The keys to his team’s success, said Brown, are “good hitting and good pitching.

“We haven’t given up a whole lot of runs,” said Brown. “Also, we’ve had the luck of the draw...we haven’t had to play the tougher teams until the end.”

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

1. Dented Bats, Mooresville, IN 3 0
2. Fraley’s/Low Bob, Lexington, KY 3 2
3. D & S Engineering, Cincinnati, OH 2 3

4. Team Quality/Cincinnati, OH 1 2  
Shooters, Dayton, OH 1 3

**WORTH-BUD LIGHT-QUEEN CITY CLASSIC USSSA NIT  
WOMEN'S CLASS "C" ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM**

Christa Brinker D & S Engineering  
Emily Cannady D & S Engineering  
Tonya Woodruff D & S Engineering  
Amanda Brown Fraley's/Low Bob  
Mindy Hardison Fraley's/Low Bob  
LaDonna West Fraley's/Low Bob  
Jodi Callan Dented Bats  
Bridget Jones Dented Bats  
Jodi Landreth Dented Bats  
Ashley Whitaker Dented Bats  
Shannon Ellingsworth - Co-MVP Fraley's/Low Bob  
Kelly Cable - Co-MVP Dented Bats

**Strong, Dickerson Lead Champions To First '08 Title At Pastime Park...  
Pitching, Defense Carry S. O. S. Softball To Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Queen City City Classic  
Women's "D" NIT Title**

Harrison, Oh.--S. O. S. held five opponents to a combined 23 runs en route to a first place finish in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Queen City Classic Women's "D" National Invitational June 21st at Pastime Park.

S. O. S. never allowed more than seven runs on their way to the title, as they swept to a 5-0 record. The champions went 3-0 in pool play, then steamrolled past elimination round opponents Battin' Bullets 19-6 in five innings and Hill & Griffith 10-3 in the finals.

The victory gave S. O. S. a berth into the Ohio USSSA Women's "D" State August 9-10 in Milford, Oh., the Great Lakes Division Women's Class "D" Nationals Labor Day Weekend in Milford, and the U-Trip "D" World September 19-21 in Kissimmee, Fl.

"Two out hitting and defense" carried S. O. S. to the title, said co-manager Butch Holloway.

"Our defense played really well," remarked Holloway. "We held every opponent under ten runs...that's pretty tough in this division. We made the big plays when we needed to make them, and we turned double plays to stop big innings. And Lou (pitcher Lou Strong) pitched strong all weekend. She pitched ahead of the batters. They hit her pitch a lot of times. She did a heckuva job...she only gave up five runs per game."

Holloway said his defensive standouts were Jess Smith and Beth Fields.

"Jess played well in left field. She made four or five great catches," noted Holloway. "She covers a lot of ground and catches everything out there."

Holloway said shortstop Beth Fields "gets to balls most girls don't get to.

"She has a lot of range," said Holloway.

Heather Dickerson led S. O. S. in hitting with a .765 average and was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player.

"She was 13-for-17 with ten runs batted in," said Holloway of Dickerson's selection.

Other hitting leaders included All-Tournament selections Amber Greene at .750, Freedom Fogt at .625 and Mindy Sawyer at .583.

In round robin action, S. O. S. brushed aside Dizzy Hen 4-2 (Amber Greene 3-for-3), Intimidators 17-7 (Heather Dickerson 5-for-5, Mindy Sawyer 4-for-4, Amber Greene 4-for-5) and Friendship State Bank Sharks 10-5 (Freedom Fogt 3-for-3).

In the elimination round contest, S. O. S. used a nine run 3rd to break open a 5-5 contest and roll to a five-inning, 19-6 rout of the Battin' Bullets. Heather Dickerson's rbi single put her club ahead for good at 6-5. Later in the inning Freedom Fogt contributed a big two-run single to make it 9-5, then Jess Smith capped off the inning with a two-run triple. The winners added five in the 4th to close out the scoring.

Dickerson, Fogt, Mindy Sawyer and Jessica Hardy combined for a dozen hits to pace the offense.

In the finals S. O. S. never trailed against Hill & Griffith, jumping out to a 4-0 lead with a run in the 1st and three in the 3rd. Beth Fields' two-run single highlighted the 3rd. H & G answered with two in the bottom of the 3rd, but S. O. S. tacked on a run in the 4th, then blew the game open with a five run 5th. Kelly Throckmorton's two-run double got the scoring underway. Heather Dickerson followed with an rbi single to make it 8-2, then Lou Strong closed out the scoring for S. O. S. with a two-run single.

Amber Greene banged out three hits, and Throckmorton, Dickerson and Jess Smith chipped in with two hits apiece.

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

1. S. O. S., Silver Grove, KY 5 3
2. Hill & Griffith, Cincinnati, OH 4 1
3. Battin Bullets, Indianapolis, IN 3 2  
Intimidators, Batavia, OH 3 2
5. Crosley's Sports Bar, Cincinnati, OH 3 1  
Pfaff Electric, Brook Park, OH 2 2
7. Dizzy Hen, Louisville, KY 1 2  
Columbus Jams, Columbus, OH 1 2
9. Amvets/Fitness Layne, Troy, OH 1 2  
Hart Environmental, Springfield, OH 0 3  
Friendship State Bank Sharks, Harrison, OH 0 3  
Unique Design, Cincinnati, OH 0 3

#### **WORTH-BUD LIGHT-QUEEN CITY CLASSIC USSSA NIT WOMEN'S CLASS "D" ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM**

Susan Mattes Intimidators  
Kim Mayne Intimidators  
Becky Rahe Battin Bullets  
Steph Royal Battin Bullets  
Becky Hicks Hill & Griffith  
Linda Wiesenhahn Hill & Griffith  
Freedom Fogt S. O. S. Softball  
Amber Greene S. O. S. Softball  
Mindy Sawyer S. O. S. Softball  
Lou Strong S. O. S. Softball  
Kristy Booher - Co-MVP Hill & Griffith  
Heather Dickerson - Co-MVP S. O. S. Softball

**June 28-29....**

**Victims Double-Dipped By Champions Second Time In June...**

**EAP/Easton Trips Up PRI/Easton 14-12, 22-7 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "C-D" NIT Finals At Riverstar Sportsplex**

EAP/Wessel/Real Estate Title/QCN/Tigerfitness.com/Longshots/Easton toppled PRI/Easton 14-12 and 22-7 to win their second National Invitational of the month in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men's "C-D" NIT June 28-29 at Riverstar Sportsplex.

EAP/Easton had double-dipped PRI/Easton just three weeks earlier in a U-Trip NIT in Harrison.

PRI had relegated EAP to the losers' bracket with a 9-7 victory in the winners' bracket finals. But EAP exploded for a dozen runs in their final two at bats to dispose of JLC/Legends 21-3 in the losers' bracket finals, then tripped up PRI in the finals.

EAP/Easton earned \$600 travel money in the event, while D & S Engineering laid claim to the paid berth to the USSSA "C" World September 18-21 in Sterling Heights, Mi.

BCP/ASC/Big Sonny's grabbed \$250 travel expense as the highest finishing, previously qualified "D" team. Kentucky's Finest and the Merchants were both awarded an unpaid berth to the USSSA "D" World September 18-21 in Kissimmee, Fl.

Named to the All-Tournament team for EAP were Steve Williams (.739), Josh Baird (.730), Chad Vordemesche (.640) and Ryan Richmond. Craig Harden chipped in with a .695 performance, Steve Schon won home run honors, and Shane Spicer was named Tournament MVP.

"He's become our team leader," remarked EAP manager Rob Schlemmer. "He pitched well all weekend and played good defense. And every time we needed a big hit or a lift, he got it for us."

Schlemmer said Williams had been known as an "ASA dead pull hitter his whole career" until this season.

"Now he's really starting to get his USSSA game going. He's working hard at it and now is capable of going to any field."

"Good team play overall and good defense" carried EAP to the title, said Schlemmer.

"With the averages as high as they were, everybody picked everybody up. If one of the guys had an off-game, somebody right behind him would pick him up," observed Schlemmer.

Ryan Richmond and Rob Andres started defensively in the infield, said Schlemmer.

"Ryan had another steady weekend at shortstop. He catches just about every ball. He had a couple of real hard one-hoppers and took them off his chest or fielded them clean," said Schlemmer. "Rob Andres also had some tough hops at 1st, and he made some good scoops that really helped us out."

Schlemmer said his team also got a big lift from Greg Bennett.

"He had some big hits for us off the bench," said Schlemmer.

EAP scored seven in the 1st, three in the 2nd, one in the 3rd and three in the 4th to close out the scoring at 14-2 in an opening round rout of Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati in game one. Josh Baird put his club on the board in the 1st with a two-run double, and Steve Schon followed with a two-run home run. Pete Stokes connected on a two-run homer to cap off the 4th.

Chris Young and Chad Vordemesche were both perfect in three trips to the plate.

D & S Engineering drew first blood in the top of the 1st with three runs, but EAP outscored D & S 21-2 over the next three innings in a four inning 21-5 drubbing. Josh Baird knotted the score in the 1st with a two-run double, then Rob Andres put his club ahead to stay at 5-3 with a two-run single. A two-run single by Stokes highlighted a five run 2nd as the lead swelled to 10-3. Then EAP blew the game open with an eleven run 3rd that featured a two-run Steve Williams shot and a three-run blast by Josh Baird.

Ryan Richmond banged out four hits, and Chris Young and Gary Hammerle added three each to pace the offense.

Cooper Auto/Tanel 360 held a narrow 10-9 lead over EAP through two and a half innings in game three, but EAP outscored Cooper 13-5 over the next three and a half innings to forge a 22-14 lead, then fended off a seven run Cooper last-gasp in the 7th to escape with a 22-21 win. Craig Harden put EAP on top for good at 11-10 with a two-run swat in the 3rd. Chad Vordemesch's two-run single made it 13-10 in the bottom of the 4th. Josh Baird capped off a five-run 5th with a two-run single to make it 18-12. Shane Spicer tripled home three runs, then scored on Josh Baird's bingle to make it 22-14 in the 6th.

Baird collected five hits for the game, Chris Young went 4-for-5 and Steve Schon homered and went 3-for-5.

After being ambushed 9-7 by PRI in the winners' bracket finals, EAP rallied for a dozen runs in their last two at bats to dispatch JLC/Legends 21-13. Steve Schon erased an 11-10 JLC lead with an rbi single in the 6th. Chad Vordemesche capped off the six run inning with a two-run double to give his club a four-run cushion. Pete Stokes closed out scoring for EAP's six-run 6th with a two-run double to make it 21-11. JLC answered with a pair of runs in the top of the 7th to make the final 21-13. Craig Harden had four hits to lead the winners.

Late scoring also lifted EAP past PRI in the first finals. Trailing 11-10 after four, EAP took a 12-11 lead on a two-run Craig Harden double in the top of the 5th, then padded their lead to 14-11 on Steve Schon's two-run single in the 6th. PRI scored a lone run in the 6th, but pitcher Shane Spicer held them at bay in the 7th to preserve a 14-12 win.

Spicer and Steve Williams combined for eight hits.

The finals was all EAP. After taking a 5-0 lead on the strength of a three-run Shane Spicer bomb and a Steve Schon solo in the 1st, EAP blew open a 7-4 contest with a four-run 3rd and an eight-run 4th to take a commanding 19-7 lead. Chris Young's two-run single capped off the 3rd. Josh Baird connected for a three-run double in the 4th. Meanwhile Shane Spicer held PRI scoreless over the final three innings, and EAP pulled away to a 22-7 victory.

Craig Harden and Pete Stokes shared six hits for the champions.

EAP manager Rob Schlemmer said his team remained focused in the losers' bracket, despite clinching the \$600 travel expense.

"We knew going into the JLC game that we had won the travel money already, but the guys took it upon themselves to step up and worried about winning the whole thing more than they cared about the money," said Schlemmer. "The guys know we're one of the better teams and going into the losers' bracket shouldn't be a reason why we shouldn't win a tournament."

Schlemmer concluded by acknowledging his team's backers.

"We want to thank Bob Shad of EAP and Bill Chard and Jim Wessel of Wessel Sports," said Schlemmer.

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

1.	EAP/Wessel/Real Estate/Easton, Cincinnati, OH	6 1
2.	Pure Romance/Easton, Cincinnati, OH	4 2
3.	JLC/Legends, Edgewood, KY	5 2
4.	D & S Engineering, Cincinnati, OH	5 2
5.	BCP/ASC/Big Sonny's, Columbus, OH	3 2
	Cooper Auto/Tanel 360, Huber Heights, OH	3 2
7.	Dizzy Roosters/Wick's Pizza, Louisville, KY	2 2
	Hart Restoration/Saints, Newport, KY	2 2
9.	TPE, Trenton, OH	3 2
	Kentucky's Finest, Villa Hills, KY	2 2
	Merchants, Florence, KY	2 2
	Sportsco/Archie's/Crosley's/Chico's, Cin., OH	2 2
13.	Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati, Erlanger, KY	2 2
	Sentry Fire/Red Eye/LBYC, Erlanger, KY	2 2
	Great Lakes Xpress/Hype Athlet., Dearborn, MI	1 2
	Team Emanon/Wessel/Pediatrics, Cincinnati, OH	1 2
17.	Cincysoftball/Wessel/EMR/Plant Det., Cin., OH	1 2
	Schmoe's/Western Hills Window/QCA, Cin., OH	1 2
	Cronin Ford, Cincinnati, OH	0 2
	Crosley's/St. Bernard Eagles, Cincinnati, OH	0 2
	J Taps Softball, Cincinnati, OH	0 2
	Last Call/Club Trio, Cincinnati, OH	0 2
	Nick & Jimmy's, Toledo, OH	0 2
	Wildman Uniform/Kote It, Ft. Wayne, IN	0 2
25.	Cincy Trailblazers, Cincinnati, OH	0 2
	Hawks, Cincinnati, OH	0 2

**WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA "C-D" NATIONAL INVITATIONAL TOURN. - ALL-TOURN. TEAM**

Pat Philhower D & S Engineering  
Steve Hunt JLC/Legends  
Jason Kraemer JLC/Legends  
Dan Feichtner PRI/Easton  
Everett Hibbard PRI/Easton  
Terry Rosenbalm PRI/Easton  
Josh Baird EAP/Wessel/Real Estate/Easton  
Ryan Richmond EAP/Wessel/Real Estate/Easton  
Chad Vordemesche EAP/Wessel/Real Estate/Easton  
Steve Williams EAP/Wessel/Real Estate/Easton  
Steve Schon - HR Leader EAP/Wessel/Real Estate/Easton  
Tony McKinney - ODP PRI/Easton  
Shane Spicer - MVP EAP/Wessel/Real Estate/Easton

**Weinal Single Lifts Lindenwald's/Baker Chiropractic Past Trio's In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" Finals At Riverstar**

Wes Weinel's rbi single in the bottom of the 7th capped a four-run rally and lifted Lindenwald's Finest/Baker Chiropractic past Trio's/Old Spice/Win Place Show 8-7 in the championship game of a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" World Qualifier on Sunday, June 29th at Riverstar Park.

The victory over Trio's capped off a five-game sweep of eight-team affair. Lindenwald's/Baker went 3-0 in pool play before rolling past Syndicate/Don Catchen & Sons 8-3 and Trio's 8-7 in the elimination round.

The champions qualified for the Ohio USSSA "E" State tournament August 16-17 in Harrison, the U-Trip Great Lakes "E" National Tournament August 30-September 1 in Indianapolis, and the USSSA "E" World Tournament September 11-14 in Kissimmee, Fl.

Runner-up Trio's also garnered a state and national berth.

Lindenwald's/Baker Chiropractic manager Bobby Hensley attributed the title to his club's "all around play.

"Our offense hit well and we made some key defensive plays today," summed up Hensley.

Eddie Gleason led Lindenwald's in hitting with a sizzling .800 day.

"He's a great all-around player for us," remarked Hensley. "One of the best we have at playing this game."

Andrew Jones followed with a .769 average, Josh North batted .692, Doug Webb hit .667, Harold Still .571 and Mike Gray .533.

Defensively, Hensley said that infielder Andrew Jones and outfielder Jamie Winkle stood out for the winners.

"Andrew made three or four good plays at 3rd base, turned a couple of double plays and made a big diving catch for us," said Hensley. "And Jamie tracked down everything that was hit out in left field."

Hensley called Mike Botkins, who held all four of his club's opponents to seven runs or less, a "great pitcher.

"He keeps the ball good and low and keeps the other teams hitting it on the ground," said Hensley. "He also pitched a shutout and held Syndicate to only three runs."

In pool play Lindenwald's disposed of Wise Guys 12-0 on Mike Botkins' shutout pitching, J & J Painting 7-0 on a forfeit, and Sibcy Cline 12-7. Eddie Gleason collected three hits, including two doubles, a triple and four rbi's against Wise Guys, while Josh North banged out four hits, and Andrew Jones went 3-for-4 versus Sibcy Cline.

Lindenwald's rolled past Syndicate/Don Catchen 8-3 in the semi-finals, breaking a 2-2 tie with three runs in the bottom of the 2nd. Eddie Gleason doubled home a pair of runs, then scored on Keith Downs' base hit. Gleason struck again in the 4th, doubling home two more runs as the lead swelled to five at 7-2. A lone run in the 6th closed out the scoring.

Gleason and Andrew Jones combined for eight hits, and Doug Webb and Mike Gray shared four to pace the offense.

In the finals Lindenwald's entered the bottom of the 7th trailing 7-4 against Trio's, but went to work quickly to tie the score on an rbi double by Andrew Jones and a two-run double by Eddie Gleason. Gleason went to third on a Keith Downs single, then raced home with the game winner on a base hit by Wes Weinal.

Gleason and Weinal each went 3-for-4 to lead the champions.

Lindenwald manager Bobby Hensley said he "still had hope" when his team entered the bottom of 7th trailing by three in the finals.

"We were kinda down, but we went out there and hit the ball and the guys clutched up and came through and we won the game," said Hensley.

## **Waialai, Snider, Perry Lead Dixon/Putter's To Worth-Bud Light-Ohio USSSA District IX "E" Title At Expressway Park**

Milford, Oh.--Ivan Waialai batted .856 and Jeremy Snyder .833, and Chris Perry limited six opponents to a combined 22 runs to lead Dixon Softball/Putter's Tavern to a first place finish in the Worth-Bud Light-Ohio USSSA District IX "E" Championship June 28th at Expressway Park.

Dixon/Putter's knocked off Team Lightning 5-2 in the title game to wrap up a six game sweep of the twelve-team affair.

Dixon/Putter's was awarded \$250 cash, Team Lightning received a paid World tournament berth and third place Titan Healthcare was awarded an unpaid berth to the USSSA "E" World Tournament September 11-14 in Kissimmee, Fl.

The champions were led by the trio of Ivan Waialai (.857), Jeremy Snider (.833) and pitcher Chris Perry, who gave up only 22 runs in six games and tossed an 8-0 shutout against Team Lightning in the winners' bracket finals.

Picking an MVP from among the three was no small task, said Dixon manager Rob Dixon.

"Ivan had a great day, but Jeremy got picked because he had more rbi's than anybody else, and he had a lot of big hits to drive in runs," said Dixon. "But it could have gone to Jeremy or Chris for his pitching. If we could have given out three MVP awards, all three of those guys could have gotten one. But unfortunately, they only gave out one."

Dixon said this is Perry's first year pitching and "he's come a long way.

"He's learning what to throw and what not to throw," said Dixon. "Also, he's become one of the best fielding pitchers up the middle that you'll find anywhere. He started a lot of our double plays."

The keys to winning the tournament, said Dixon, were that his team "only gave up 22 runs in six games and we scored 64 runs. We had a team batting average of .632, and we turned a lot of double plays in the infield."

Following Ivan Waialai and Jeremy Snider's team high .857 and .833 averages were Aaron Brewster at .786, Jason Bronner at .667, Matt Hosterman at .619 and Larry Hamm at .600.

In pool play, Dixon/Putter's battled past Nuway 9-7 in game one behind four hits each from Snider and Brewster. Hamm and Waialai chipped in with three hits. Dixon then spanked Jokers 17-2 in five as Snider, Matt Hosterman and Jason Bronner combined for a dozen hits, and Brewster and Waialai went 3-for-3.

Dixon needed two runs in the top of the 3rd to break a 6-6 tie and grab an 8-6 advantage over OC Softball, then added single runs in the 5th, 6th and 7th to pull out an 11-6 victory in game one of the elimination round. Rbi singles by Jeff Wilson and Ivan Waialai put their club ahead to stay in the 3rd.

Jeremy Snider and Jason Bronner went 4-for-5 and Waialai, Rob Dixon and Chris Perry added three hits each.

Next Dixon erupted for seven runs in the top of the 7th to break open a 6-5 contest and rout Titan Healthcare 13-5. Jeremy Snider, whose two-run double highlighted the inning, shared a dozen hits with Jeff Wilson, Scott Hornsby and Ivan Waialai.

In the winners' bracket finals, Jason Bronner's rbi single in the 1st proved to be all Dixon would need as Chris Perry took matters into his own hands and tossed an 8-0 shutout over Team Lightning. After a two-

hour rain delay, Dixon put up five more runs in the 3rd to open up a 6-0 bulge. Jeremy Snider and Scott Bray each contributed back-to-back doubles.

Bronner, Snider, Bray, Scott Hornsby, Ivan Waialai and Matt Hosterman shared eighteen hits to pace the offense.

Dixon met Team Lightning again in the championship game, where the two finalists battled to a 2-2 stalemate through six. But in the top of the 7th, Scott Bray delivered a leadoff inside-the-park home run to put his team on top for good at 3-2. A two-run triple by Brian Walton plated a pair of insurance runs, then pitcher Chris Perry shut down Team Lightning in the bottom of the 7th to preserve the win.

Ivan Waialai and Jeff Wilson collected three hits each, and Walton, Perry and Larry Hamm added two hits apiece.

Dixon manager Rob Dixon concluded by thanking Expressway Park for getting the fields ready so quickly following a two-hour rain delay, then laid down a challenge for his players.

“If the team keeps playing like this, we’ll be a contender in state, national and world,” said Dixon. “But the guys have to keep up the pace.”