

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

"Where are all the softball teams?"

Of all the questions I might hear during the course of a softball season, that one is easily the most prevalent. And while I don't claim to be an authority on the topic, I do have some opinions, which I will now share in this column.

It's no secret that softball participation is down. I went to a meeting in Chicago several years ago sponsored by the National Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (NSGMA) at which the major softball governing bodies were present. The purpose of the meeting was to try to increase participation in softball and baseball. The most sobering and disturbing statistic that I saw that weekend was a graph showing softball had declined about five percent a year for a dozen consecutive years. That's about a sixty percent decline if you're doing the math. Nationally the associations are registering about half the teams they once did when their numbers peaked in the late eighties and early nineties.

Regrettably, there's no evidence that the decline is tapering off. In fact, if local league registrations are any indication of a national trend, 2007 may just be the worst year in the history of the game. Some league operators are reporting a twenty five percent decline. Other leagues have completely folded up. One local park will only offer league play one night a week. And we are all left wondering: what has happened?

First of all, let's dispense once and for all with the prevailing myth associated with declining participation. And that is that it's the money. We've all heard it before: the price of bats is ridiculous. Parks are ripping us off by making us pay for our own balls. The gate fees and league fees have gotten too high.

Regarding the price of bats, I agree - somewhat. It has gotten out of hand. But this really only affects a small percentage of players; specifically the serious league and tournament participant. I would speculate that more than seventy five percent of league participants are recreational level teams who would be classified below "E" if such a level existed. Knowing how competitive "E" has become in recent years, these teams probably would merit a "recreational" or "novice" classification. Players on these teams can get by without their own \$300 bats, and often share their sticks with other team members - especially in lower level mixed leagues.

I am not a fan of teams providing their own balls. At most private softball complexes, this is largely just another burden on the team organizer. He's not likely to obtain ball money from his sponsor prior to the season, and consequently will probably have to pay for balls out of his own pocket. With team organizers declining in numbers each year, I don't believe it's wise to put this additional burden on the selfless individual who's already putting up with all the other problems associated with running a team. That being said, I realize not all parks have fences on their foul lines to help keep balls in play. And with the bats nowadays, balls are flying over the fences at an unprecedented rate. So providing balls is becoming a greater burden on private parks than ever before. It's a daily struggle to keep back-up balls in stock.

But truth be known, outside of the Cincinnati area, which has an unrivaled number of private softball complexes, most teams play at city and county parks where there is no

on-site office and manager who can provide teams with an unlimited supply of softballs. That is a luxury many Greater Cincinnati teams have grown accustomed to, but nationwide it is the exception, not the rule. If requiring teams to provide their own balls were driving them out of the game, we would see a greater level of decline in participation at public parks than at private. But teams are declining EVERYWHERE. In fact, the private facilities, with their many amenities, generally speaking appear to be losing teams at a slower pace than city and county leagues.

Entry fees. Interestingly, no matter what the entry fees are, whether they are astronomically high at a private facility, or nominally low at a public one, the teams are disappearing at relatively the same rate. And not just in the Cincinnati area. And again, private facilities actually seem to be doing a little better than public ones. It would seem that teams are willing to pay for more amenities if available. Perhaps a higher level of enjoyment from all the bells and whistles at private parks helps keep them coming back.

Regardless, let's face it. The reality is that when you compare the cost of playing softball with that of just about any other organized sport, softball continues to be a steal. Most costs associated with playing softball have not exceeded the cost of inflation, despite continually rising costs in umpire fees, gas and electric, insurance, supplies, etc. One local park advertises that their entry fees are actually lower than they were several years ago. Sure, gate admission has gone up, but at about the same rate as inflation. And balancing the price of playing softball between gate fees and entry fees has been a sensible approach to spreading out the costs of participating between players and sponsors, as well as spreading them out over the course of the season.

So if it's not the money, then what is driving people away from the game?

I believe more than any other single factor, it's a matter of time. Or should I say, a lack thereof. People are busier than ever before. Twenty years ago when softball was growing at an amazing pace, we didn't have emails. We didn't have a hundred and fifty channels to choose from on television, or movie videos delivered to our mail boxes. Adults weren't playing soccer instead of softball. If our kids were involved in sports, we took them to practice on Wednesday and to their game on Saturday. Nowadays, having a kid involved in sports is almost a full time job. They're all in clubs, and they practice all week long and play all weekend long. And not down the street, but in some other state. And while it's not a bad thing to keep our kids busy doing something productive, and that we're spend more time with them, it does force us to spend less time doing other things, like playing softball.

And what about our jobs? I read in a magazine not long ago that people are working twelve to fifteen hours more a week than they did ten to twelve years ago. That's got to cut deeply into our recreation time as well.

Want another reason why softball participation is down? How about abortion? In 1973 we began killing about one out of every four unborn children in their mother's wombs. It was no coincidence that some twenty years later, when many of the one and a half million children killed by abortion would have begun playing softball, that participation started to suddenly decline.

Also, Americans are not replacing themselves. We're having fewer children - less than the number needed to sustain the population at a healthy level.

Yet one more reason why slow pitch softball has suffered was the emergence of fast pitch in the nineties. Thousands upon thousands of girls' youth slow pitch teams vanished almost overnight, sacrificed at the altar of college scholarship opportunities and the Olympics. And while I begrudge no one who plays fast pitch, or prefers fast pitch over slow pitch, or who pursues a scholarship through fast pitch, I do believe that rewarding and enjoyable athletic opportunities for perhaps millions of young women in this country were dealt a formidable setback in order to advance the over-blown scholarship opportunities and olympic dreams of a relatively elite few. Adult women's and mixed softball, which lost its feeder system, will never recover. And the irony of the entire saga now is that fast pitch has lost its status as an olympic sport. I will go to my grave believing that the game of softball would have been better off in the long run had the rise of fast pitch never occurred.

So is there anything that can be done?

Despite the best efforts of the NSGMA and others, slow pitch softball continues its downslide. People and ideas have surfaced here and there that have been responsible for pockets of temporary growth and encouragement. But they have had little staying power and do not appear to be infectious. I would like to believe that someday the decline will level off, but then I do not see the competition for people's time from other diversions abating, only growing more intense.

I hope and pray that I am wrong.

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

As I follow the topics Mark Linnemann has suggested for me and that I have ignored for years, this month's topic is "Umpires Are Their Own Worst Enemy."

I could write a book on this topic, or a series of articles that would be longer than my life, so I will just make a list of what umpires should do before the game even starts.

1. Get to the game early enough to visually look over the field and determine what your ground rules are going to be. Do not wait until you have the managers out there before you determine what is going to be in and out of play.
2. Look like a professional umpire when you walk on the field. Make a good first impression. You can only make a first impression one time.
3. When you go into the dugout area to check the bats, ask the manager if he or she has a copy of their league rules. Every local league feels compelled to add or delete from the rules as they are written in the book, and they assume the umpire knows all their weird rule changes. This is the time to learn what rules they have changed, and if they are playing ASA or USSSA. Checking the bats, and asking for their league rules will blow them away.
4. Call both managers out to give them the ground rules, five minutes before the scheduled game time. Do not allow the team in the field to take infield practice at this time. You can stand to the side of the plate and allow the pitcher to take his warm-up pitches at this time, though.

5. Introduce yourself to both managers, and tell them what you are using for an out of play line on both sides of the field. Start with one side of the backstop and talk them all the way around the outfield until you get back to the other side of the backstop. Do not ask them if they have any questions, and do not say, "We are going from the end of the backstop straight out." If you have a point A (the end of the backstop) you must have a point B. Straight out to your point B may be different than the managers', and it must be identified at the time of the ground rules. When you are finished. Do not say anything else except, "Okay, let's play ball," and then "Give me a batter."

These five simple - but important - tasks every umpire should do before the game ever starts, and it will get the game started off in the right way, and prevent a ton of troubles from happening once the game does get started. Less than ten percent of umpires will do these five simple things before the game starts, because they are too lazy to do them. What other reason could they have?

I can tell if someone can umpire before the first pitch is thrown, and so can you. Watch and see if your umpire does these five simple things this year, or see if he just skips these things and makes the determination they are unimportant. If he does skip these things, I will bet you that he will not hustle either. That will not be important to him either!

This is my opinion. What is yours?

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

**Q. If a batter is squared around to bunt, in a fast pitch game, and the pitch is in on her fists, is she out if the ball hits her bat and goes foul? Oh, by the way, the batter had two outs on her when the pitch hits the bat.**

A. The batter has to make some attempt to hit the pitch for it to be a strike, in this play. What you have is a dead ball, foul ball, and the batter is not out for bunting the ball foul with two strikes. She didn't make any attempt to hit the ball, so she cannot be called out for the pitch accidentally hitting the batter's bat.

This is an example of something that looks weird, but when you know the playing rules it is very basic and simple.

**Q. I saw this play in a major league baseball game earlier in the season, and I would like your opinion. The umpires made their call, and then a few innings later they changed their decision. I have never ever seen umpires at this level seem so confused, and then to have them change their decision was unbelievable.**

**There were runners on first and third base with one out when the batter hit a long fly ball to left field. The runner on first base just took off, but the runner on third base waited and tagged up as he should have. The ball was caught, for the second out, and thrown back to first base where they called the runner out there for the third out.**

**The runner on third base clearly scored before the ball got back to first base, but the umpire did not allow the run, because the third out of the inning was a force out at first base. They reversed this decision several innings later, and allowed**

**the run to score. Now I am as confused as the television announcers. Which decision was right?**

A. First of all you can never, ever have a force out at first base. The rule book clearly states a force out occurs when a RUNNER is forced to advance to another base, and it states that no run can score when the third out of any inning is the result of a force out or failure of the batter to reach first base safely.

What you saw was an appeal play at first base, and the runner was called out there for leaving the base before the batted ball was first touched by one of the defensive players. This is not a force play. It is an appeal play and if the runner on third base legally touched home plate, prior to the ball reaching first base, the run should be allowed. Remember, you can never have a force play at first base, by rule, in baseball or softball. This is a very basic, simple appeal play. It shocks me that the umpires had any problem with the decision at all.

**Q. In fast pitch softball are bases awarded when a pitched ball goes off the catchers glove or shin guards and goes into the dead ball area?**

A. Yes. This is a dead ball and all runners are awarded one base from where they were at the time the pitch was thrown.

**Q. In a fast pitch game what happens if a pitched ball hits the ground and then hits the batter?**

A. The rule is exactly the same in baseball and fast pitch softball. It is a hit batter and the batter is awarded first base. Base runners also advance if forced. In slow pitch the pitch is simply ruled a ball.

**Q. Ron, I know you are very critical of umpires at times. Is the umpiring getting better or worse, and why do you believe this?**

A. Umpiring is much the same as the players. Maybe five or ten percent of the players are really good, about forty percent are average and about fifty or sixty percent do not have a clue, but the game has to have them all I guess, because it has been this way for at least fifty years. The umpire's biggest problem today can be found in two words. Accountability and availability. Most umpires today are no longer accountable to any one, and there is such a shortage of available decent umpires that league and tournaments have to take any warm-bodied umpire they can get. It has nothing to do with money either, because the local umpires are very well paid, and the quality and number of decent available umpires is still a problem.

A lot of the umpires I see working today I would have fired when I was assigning all the umpires in the tri-state area, but that probably would not be politically correct today either. In today's society I am shocked we are still keeping score. When I watch some of my grandchildren's games, they stop putting points on the board now or stop playing the game if the score gets lopsided. Heaven forbid, you certainly wouldn't want to hurt anyone's feelings or embarrass a team by having their players or some of their followers see them get their butts kicked.

I think we are raising a society of average everything's where we no longer teach our children or allow them to excel. You know Hillary says it takes a village, but I can only hope it is not a village of idiots.

## **CRC News by Ron Odenbeck**

### **CRC Summer Softball League Registration Begins May 7th; Fall Season Registration Begins In July**

**By Ron Odenbeck**

The Cincinnati Recreation Commission begins registration for the 2007 Summer Softball season on May 7th. Registration will continue until leagues are filled. Leagues will begin on Sunday, June 10th, or as soon as spring leagues are completed. Leagues are offered for Co-Rec and Men's teams, and all games in the summer season will be played at Schmidt Fields.

The league fee for an eight game season is \$285 for the Sunday unlighted league and \$350 for all other leagues. The league fee includes umpire fees, bases and balls. The league fee is due at the time of registration. Your registration is not complete without the payment.

#### **Applications And Payments**

Applications and payments will be accepted at the CRC Athletic Office Monday through Friday from 8:00 a. m. until 4:30 p. m. Payment may be made with cash (in person only), check, money order or Visa/MasterCard. Credit card payments for applications that are faxed (352-1605) or submitted online ([www.cincyrec.org](http://www.cincyrec.org)) require that you phone the Athletic Division with the credit card number and expiration date to complete the registration process.

#### **Refunds**

No entry fees will be refunded after league schedules have been completed unless the league supervisor is unable to place your team in one of the leagues. Teams withdrawing prior to completion of league schedules will be assessed a \$25 service charge for clerical and material fees.

#### **Rosters**

Rosters are due in the Athletics office before the first played game. Rosters and rule books are available on the web site.

League Packets

Packets must be picked up at the CRC Athletic office prior to your first game. Schedules and rosters will be emailed out.

#### **Fall Season**

Fall season registration will begin in July. The fall season at Salway fields will begin in August. Schmidt fields fall season will begin as soon as the summer league is completed (Sunday August 26 is the approximate starting date for fall).

Recreation programs and facilities are open to all citizens regardless of race, sex, color, religion, nationality or disability. CRC is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is committed to supporting the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please call if you require any special accommodations.

### **CRC Leagues To Offer USSSA World, National, State Tournament Berths**

All Cincinnati Recreation Commission men's, women's, mixed couples and black american leagues will again offer berths into USSSA championship tournaments in 2007.

Men's, women's and mixed leagues will offer berths into both State Championship and Great Lakes Division National Championship Tournaments. Black American teams will be awarded World Tournament berths from selected leagues.

In men's, women's and mixed leagues, a berth into the Ohio USSSA State Championship will be awarded to the first, second and third place teams in each league. A berth to the USSSA Great Lakes Division National Championship Tournament will be awarded to the first place team in each league.

A berth to the USSSA Black American World Tournament will be awarded to the first place finishers in the Salway (Sunday) league.

Teams accepting berths are responsible for paying their own entry fee. The CRC League Supervisor and USSSA officials will determine the proper team classification. Tournament packages for Great Lakes Division National Tournaments and Ohio State Tournaments will be mailed to eligible teams by the USSSA. Teams must meet USSSA eligibility requirements to advance.

### **ASA News by Danney Saylor**

#### **ASA Urges Early Registration For 55th Annual EMR Group-Cincinnati Metro Championship**

Metro Cincinnati Amateur Softball Association Commissioner Danney Saylor is issuing a "friendly reminder" to teams planning to register for the 55th Annual Cincinnati Metro Championship Tournament July 13-15 (Industrial Divisions) and July 26-August 7 (Men's Open Divisions) at Rumpke Park, Eggleston Park, Northside K of C, Riverfront West, Riverstar Sportsplex, Spoils Field and Westside Sports Park.

Saylor's message is simple: "apply early.

"Last year we had 340 teams in the Men's open divisions of the tournament, and at least 150 waited until the last day to register," says Saylor.

This summer will mark the 55th year for the event, and several special events are planned, notes Saylor.

While Saylor's office is prepared to deal with the deluge of last minute paperwork for the event, last minute registrations result in another problem that his office simply cannot remedy.

"If we don't know the teams, we don't have the time to track down their league directors and their tournament background to see if they're in the right division," explains Saylor. "Due to our lack of knowledge of the team, we'll have to bump them into a division that perhaps they shouldn't be in."

Saylor says the integrity of the tournament won't be compromised because of late entries. And his office will go to any extreme to safeguard the balance of the Metro tournament and preserve its reputation for parity in every division - even if that means seeding teams into divisions where they probably can't compete.

"We've moved teams into divisions where they've gotten killed because we didn't have the time to check them out," says Saylor.

"We urge all teams to apply early so they can be evaluated correctly. Every year we're flooded with entries two or three days before the deadline. Ideally we need teams to register at least a week in advance to be evaluated properly."

Another concern teams need to be cautious of, says Saylor, is eligibility.

"If teams don't understand the eligibility rules for the Metro Tournament, we urge them to contact our office for information," stresses Saylor.

"This is particularly imperative in view of the Recreational Division we started last year," explains Saylor. "We need to scrutinize this level of play more carefully than any other in order to assure the remarkable success that the event enjoyed last year.

"For teams that have not played in the Metro before, this may be the division to get their feet wet," he suggests.

Saylor says that applications are available at Rumpke Park, or can be obtained by calling 738-2646.

The deadline for all Industrial division entries is Monday, July 9th, at noon, and for Men's Open division entries the deadline is Saturday, July 21st at noon. Entries must be received at the park by the noon deadline.

Saylor says this year's Metro will continue with the two major changes adopted prior to last year's tournament.

Last year, for the first time in the tournament's 53-year history, teams participating in the "open" divisions were permitted to play in more than one event. The result was an increase in fourteen teams in the Metro's top division. The "Open" division, as it's known, which had a paltry six teams in 2005, mushroomed to twenty last August.



“We’re going to continue to allow ‘A’ and ‘B’ open teams to enter in the ‘Open’ division so they can showcase their teams while still competing for a title at their own level,” explains Saylor.

Also this year, a consolation tournament will be held again for Men’s “C,” “D” and “E Rec” teams, says Saylor.

“Any teams that go 0-2 or 1-2 in the Men’s ‘C,’ ‘D’ or ‘E Rec’ divisions will advance to a consolation tournament at Eggleston Park beginning Thursday, August 2nd.”

### **Honoree Sought For John Earls Memorial Award**

Crosby Township, Oh.--Applications are now being accepted for the ninth annual “John Earls Memorial Award,” which will be presented during the EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro Tournament July 26-August 7 at Rumpke Park.

The award is given in honor of former Watanabe/TPS first baseman John Earls, who lost a battle with cancer on October 17th, 1998. The three-time ASA All-American helped power his team to an ASA “A” National Championship and USSSA “A-AA” State title in 1993. Earls led the city in home runs in 1990 and ‘91, and hit over 100 home runs every year from 1994 through 1997. He was a first team All-City selection for ten consecutive years. He was inducted into the Norwood Sorrento’s Greater Cincinnati Softball Hall of Fame posthumously in 2005.

But Earls was more than an athlete, recalls his former sponsor-manager, Dave Watanabe.

“John was a great family person and just a great person in general,” points out Watanabe. “As a coach, he was one of those individuals you wanted to have on your team. He carried himself as a gentleman on and off the field. He was our team leader by example, and very dependable. It was a pleasure to have him on the team.”

“This award represents the better aspects of the game,” adds ASA Cincinnati Metro Commissioner Danney Saylor. “Things like friendships and loyalty and sportsmanship and honor. It’s not just based on talent. It’s what you do for the game - what you give back to the game.

“If you know someone with these qualities,” we would encourage you to contact Rumpke Park at 738-2646 for details about submitting an application,” says Saylor.

The first winner of the John Earls award was Earls’ former friend and teammate, Pat Shanks, in 1999. Then John Angstadt, manager of the TGIF softball team, and a softball coach and manager for 25 years, received the award in 2000. Bruce Kraus, a veteran player and manager; was presented with the award in 2001. Paul Spaulding, an ASA umpire and player with the M & S Drywall men’s and mixed couples teams, received the award in 2002. Former ASA Metro and National Championship team manager Jim Del Monaco, who managed Pastime Park from 1981 until his death in 2002, was the 2003 recipient. Jack Erp, a player and manager for some 40 years, received the award in 2004. The 2005 winner was Gary Macke, a player who sacrificed a year of softball and a kidney for a co-worker who needed a transplant.

## **All-Star Games To Kick Off 55th Annual EMR Group-ASA Metro; Shriner's Burn Institute Named 2007 Charity Designee**

Crosby Township, Oh.--Three All-Star games pitting the 2006 Class "B," "C" and "D" Metro champions versus respective All-Star teams selected from the "B," "C" and "D" divisions of last year's Metro Tournament will kick off the 2007 EMR Group ASA Cincinnati Metro Tournament on Thursday, July 26th, at Rumpke Park.

Metro officials will contact teams that competed in the ASA "B," "C" and "D" divisions last year to select the All-Star teams. The "B" Division champions last year was TPE/AST. B & B Tree Service/In Between won the "C" division, while Secret Service took the "D" crown. The "C" All-Star game will begin at 7 PM, followed by the "D" at 8 PM, and then the "B" at 9 PM.

The following night, Friday, July 27th, All-Star games will be held featuring last year's "A" division winner, Mike Foulks Auto Body, and an "A" All-Star team at 7 PM. Then at 8 PM defending "Major" division champion Storm/Wessel will take on an All-Star squad comprised of "Major" division players from 2006.

Metro officials have also announced that the Shriner's Burn Institute has been designated the local charity to benefit from various charitable fund raising functions held at this year's Metro, including the annual home run hitting contest.

For any information prior to the tournament, contact Rumpke Park at 738-2646.

## **USSSA News**

### **14th Annual Expressway Park Round Robin Appreciation Jacket Championship September 22nd**

Milford, Oh.--The 14th Annual Expressway Park Round Robin Appreciation Jacket Championship has been scheduled for Saturday, September 22nd.

The tournament will feature the top sixteen teams from Expressway Park round robin play based on order of finish and participation in the park's 2007 weekend round robin program.

Adopted by Expressway Park in 1994, the program has proven to be a popular enhancement for Expressway's mini and maxi men's D-E round robins.

"Teams will accumulate points in Expressway Park's round robin tournaments played at the park in 2007," explains park manager Bob Owens. "Teams will receive 1,000 points for first place, 800 for second, 600 for third, and 500 for participating. The top sixteen teams will qualify for the appreciation series on September 22nd."

Owens says the tournament will feature tournament champion jackets, and a \$100 credit to be used during the 2007 season at Expressway Park for either league or tournament fees. The tournament will also feature a special entry fee structure, with the top three teams receiving a free entry fee, and a \$99 fee for the remaining thirteen teams.

Owens says that only D and E teams and players will be eligible to play in the appreciation series finals on September 22nd. Teams will accumulate points in mini and maxi round robins through the weekend of August 25-26.

Owens says that a "top 16" will be listed beginning in the July issue of the CINCINNATI SOFTBALL NEWS and posted at the park. Teams may also call the park to find out their standing anytime beginning June 30th.

Following round robins on September 8-9, Expressway Park will notify the top sixteen teams regarding their eligibility for the appreciation series by mail. Teams will have until September 17th to register.

Expressway Park has continued its popular round robin awards program in 2007, which provides "Expressway Bucks" that teams earn towards award options while participating in the park's mini and maxi round robins. Award options include t-shirts, trophies, jackets, caps and pro shop merchandise. In addition, after playing in their first mini round robin at the regular price of \$99, teams can participate in their second round robin for \$89, their third round robin for \$79, and each additional round robin for only \$69.

For additional information, call Expressway Park at 831-2273.

### **Wayne Rust Memorial-6th Annual Expressway Park Mid-Summer League Championship Series**

Milford, Oh.--This year in memory of Wayne Rust, former Buckeye Umpire Umpires U-I-C, who passed away in February, the tournament will be free to all Expressway Park league teams that play first and second season. Teams playing only the first season will be charged only \$75 for entry into the tournament. The format will remain the same as prior years, with a three game round robin during Tuesday through Friday, and all teams advancing to a double elimination on the weekend.

The tournament, which will feature \$2,500 in cash awards, will be open to Expressway Park Men's Class D, E and Mixed teams only. Teams are restricted to players on their league rosters.

This year the Men's divisions will continue to offer an expanded format, with three divisions - Men's D, Men's E and Men's Recreational E. The Recreational E division will be open to Expressway Park E league teams with sub-.500 records.

Expressway Park manager Bob Owens says that in addition to the cash awards, which will be distributed equally between the D, E, Recreational E and Mixed divisions, the tournament will offer several other special awards and features.

"We'll be giving away sweatshirts, t-shirts and other softball merchandise, and awarding "E Rec" "E" World, National and State berths, "D" National and State berths, and Mixed Couples National and State berths," says Owens. "Also there will be special concession pricing at the park for the entire week.

"If you only play in one tournament a year, this is the one," says Owens.

Owens says that July 31-August 3 will be a “bye” week at Expressway Park, with no league games scheduled from Tuesday, July 31st, through Sunday, August 5th, based on a minimum number of entries.

Also according to Owens, tournament openings are limited. Game times will be 6:30 PM through 9:30 PM. Tournament packets will be available May 31st at Expressway Park. The registration deadline is July 14th.

### **March 31-April 1 Stories...**

#### **BCP Associates, ITEX Sweep To 4-0 Records In Armco Park Early Bird Division Titles**

Lebanon, Oh.—A pair of Columbus area teams - BCP Associates and ITEX - swept past four opponents to claim first place in their respective divisions in the “9<sup>th</sup> Annual Early Bird Tournament” March 31<sup>st</sup> at Armco Park.

BCP Associates overpowered four opponents in the upper division, trampling Fat Batz 19-4, the Hitmen 20-2, JAFT 17-2 and BW-3's 21-0. The championship earned BCP a berth into the USSSA Great Lakes “C” National Tournament Labor Day Weekend in Ft. Knox, Ky. Runner-up JAFT was awarded a berth to the U-Trip “D” Nationals in Indianapolis, In., also slated for September 1-3.

In the tournament's lower division, ITEX held four straight opponents to single digit scoring, mowing down Neal's Excavating/Coyote Ridge 11-5, Maxed Out II/TBR 11-9, Middletown Transmission 15-3 and George Steele 12-2. ITEX secured a berth to the USSSA Great Lakes Nationals, while second place Maxed Out II took home a State Tournament berth.

### **April 21-22 Stories...**

#### **Hitmen Escape Bombers 6-5, Team Midnight Sweeps For 13th D. K. Trophy Division Titles At Armco Park**

Lebanon, Oh.--The Hitmen rallied from a runner-up finish in round robin play to best Realty Solutions 12-6 and the Southwest Bombers 6-5 in the upper division, while Team Midnite swept undefeated past four opponents en route to a first place finish in the 13th Annual D. K. Trophy Invitational April 21st at Armco Park.

The Hitmen went 2-1 in round robin play, overpowering Maxed Out II/TBR 19-5 and Realty Solutions 23-15 before suffering a 10-6 setback to Southwest. Then in the elimination round, the Hitmen spanked Realty Solutions once more 12-6 to earn a re-match with the Bombers, this time avenging their previous loss with a narrow 6-5 victory.

In the lower bracket, Team Midnight held four opponents to single digit scoring, mowing down Softballs of Steel 12-7, eventually runner-up DHR Hound Dogs 10-6, Monroe Wings & Rings 7-4, and Kelly's Dawg Pound 12-2.

### **April 28-29 Stories...**

#### **Pitcher Holds Five Teams To Fourteen Runs...**

## **Cupp Handcuffs Louisville Slugger/TPS-USSSA "D" NIT Field At Expressway Park**

Milford, Oh.--Pitcher Danny Cupp limited five opponents to a combined fourteen runs to lead Extreme/Turner Properties to a first place finish in the Louisville Slugger/TPS-USSSA "D" National Invitational Tournament April 28-29 at Expressway Park.

Extreme/Turner out-dueled Good Guys/GBI of Cincinnati 7-5 and 9-3 in the semi-finals and finals to complete a five game sweep of the 22-team event and earn a berth to the USSSA "D" World Tournament September 20-23 in Sterling Heights, Mi.

Carlton Brock paced the offense with a .722 weekend and nine runs scored. Jason Black followed right behind at .714, Chris Hilton batted .667, Mike Cooper .571, Matt Leugers .563 with nine rbi's, and Aric Mills hit an even .500 with a team high ten rbi's.

Brock, Black, Cooper and Josh Zickgraf made the All-Tournament team.

But it was pitching and defense, underscored Hilton, the team's player-manager, that carried his club to the title.

"No doubt about it," said Hilton. "Our team only made one error in five games, which is probably the best defensive tournament I've ever been involved in. Our pitcher, Danny Cupp, just has a way of going up there and controlling the hitters. He's been around a long time, and time and time again, he holds our opponents to under ten runs per game."

Cupp was a no-brainer for MVP honors.

"He's a great pitcher - one of the best around in 'D' right now. He can make a hitter hit where he wants him to when he's on. He fields the middle really well. We're lucky to have him."

Shortstop Aric Mills and centerfielder Josh Zickgraf anchored the defense, said Hilton.

"Aric made two or three diving plays and went all out in the tournament," said Hilton. "He made all the routine plays. He was a real leader in our infield this weekend.

"And Josh covered the gaps well," said Hilton. "He gets a great jump on the ball. He's our leader in the outfield and did a great job.

"The outfield as a whole, including Josh, Jeremy Williams (lf) and Matt Leugers (rf) had a heckuva weekend," added Hilton.

It was a walk in the park for Extreme/Turner in game one, a 19-2, five inning rout of Ante Up Softball. Matt Leugers' rbi single put his club on the board, and Aric Mills had a two run single to cap off a four run 1st. Extreme/Turner put the game away with a seven run 5th to improve their advantage to 13-2. Bryon Simpson and Matt Leugers each contributed a key two run single.

Josh Zickraff banged out four hits, Simpson and Leugers drove in four runs each and shared fifteen hits with Jason Black, Jeremy Williams and Mike Cooper.

From there Extreme/Turner's offense went into a coma, scoring only 26 runs over their next four games. But it proved to be enough.

First they disposed of DeHaan & Bach/Trailblazers 6-2, jumping out to a 5-0 lead in the top of the 1st, then holding the 'Blazers at bay. Matt Leugers doubled home two runs. Carlton Brock was perfect in three trips to the plate.

Nick & Jimmy's fell next 4-2 as Extreme/Turner pushed across two runs in the bottom of the 2nd to take the lead for good at 3-1, then added a run in the 5th to build a three run lead. Nick & Jimmy's could only muster one more run for the contest against the Extreme/Turner defense. Danny Cupp and Jeremy Williams each contributed an rbi single in the two run 2nd. Mike Cooper doubled home his club's final run in the 5th.

Cooper, Josh Zickgraf, Bryon Simpson, Chris Hilton, Aric Mills and Jason Black combined for a dozen hits.

That lifted Extreme/Turner into the winners' bracket finals against the Good Guys, who held a precarious 4-3 lead after five. But in the top of the 6th, Extreme/Turner plated four runs to take a 7-4 advantage, then held the Good Guys to one run in their final two at bats to preserve the victory. Chris Hilton's rbi double put Extreme/Turner ahead for good at 5-4. Mike Cooper plated an insurance run with a sac fly, and Jeremy Williams doubled in his team's final run to improve the lead to 7-4.

Hilton pounded out four hits, and Carlton Brock chipped in with a 3-for-4 effort to lead the winners.

The same two teams squared off in the finals, where Extreme/Turner never trailed after stringing together six straight hits to take a 3-0 lead in the bottom of the 1st. Carlton Brock's rbi single ignited the scoring. Extreme/Turner effectively put the game away with four runs in the bottom of the 3rd to take a 7-2 lead. A two run Aric Mills triple highlighted the inning. The lead swelled to 9-3 in the 5th on an rbi single by Matt Leugers and a sac fly by Chris Hilton.

Jeremy Williams and Carlton Brock collected three hits each, and Mills, Leugers, Hilton and Jason Black chipped in two apiece.

Extreme/Turner's Chris Hilton said that if someone had told him his team would score only 26 runs in their last four games, he would have told them "you're crazy.

"There's no way you could have told me we weren't going to hit and still win some games," said Hilton.

"But we did have some timely hits, and we knew that scoring three, four or five runs was going to be big, so just had to get them in. It was a very rare day. We were very confident five or six runs were going to win games for us on that particular day."

Hilton said that "Expressway Park did a heckuva job keeping the fields in excellent shape.

"The infields were beautiful," said Hilton. "We didn't have a lot of errors. Those were some of the best infields I've played on in quite some time. They worked on them in between games. Every two games they were out dragging the fields."

Hilton concluded by expressing his appreciation to Turner Property Group for sponsoring his team, and to the Hillerich & Bradsby Company for sponsoring the tournament.

"It was a great prize package," observed Hilton.

Hilton also called finalist Good Guys "a great group of guys. We look forward to seeing them in some battles in the future.

"It was a tough field," said Hilton. "So to be in the finals was a great feeling."

### **LOUISVILLE SLUGGER/TPS-USSSA "D" NATIONAL INVITATIONAL - EXPRESSWAY PARK, MILFORD, OH**

1.	Extreme/Turner Property Services, Hamilton, OH	5 0
2.	Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati, Edgewood, KY	4 2
3.	Nick & Jimmy's, Sylvania, OH	5 2
4.	TPE/Backstabbers, Cincinnati, OH	3 2
5.	Long Shot, Cleves, OH	5 2
	D-Town Softball, Delaware, OH	4 2
7.	Dizzy Roosters, Louisville, KY	3 2
	M & M Connection/Saints, Newport, KY	2 2
9.	Schmoe's Collision/Blair Masonry, Cinti., OH	3 2
	The Merchants, Alliance, OH	2 2
	DeHaan & Bach/Trailblazers, Cincinnati, OH	1 2
	Dirty Birds/Skyline/Howser, Mt. Orab, OH	1 2
13.	Nu-Way Drywall, Newport, KY	2 2
	Accurate Masonry/Queen City Acc., Cinti., OH	1 2
	Ante-Up Softball, Cincinnati, OH	1 2
	Two-N-Out.com, Florence, KY	0 2
17.	CJ's Roofing/Dirty Dozen, Cincinnati, OH	0 2
	Cincinnati Hurricanes, Cincinnati, OH	0 2
	Clark County Merchants, Springfield, OH	0 2
	Dino's/T & T Freightways, Burlington, KY	0 2
	Kahoots, Cincinnati, OH	0 2
	Team Crosley's/All-In-One Softball, Cinti., OH	0 2

### **LOUISVILLE SLUGGER/TPS-USSSA "D" NATIONAL INVITATIONAL TOURN. ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM**

Rusty Beaty TPE/Backstabbers  
Ryan Upchurch Nick & Jimmies  
Mike Miller Nick & Jimmies  
Brian Sandlin Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati  
Chaz Goetz Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati  
Brent Hopkins Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati  
Mike Cooper Extreme/Turners  
Carlton Brock Extreme/Turners

Jason Black Extreme/Turners  
Josh Zickgraf Extreme/Turners  
Doug Murphy - ODP Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati  
Danny Cupp - MVP Extreme/Turners

### **Late Rallies Lift NKY Thunder In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "C-D" At Expressway Park**

Milford, Oh.--NKY Thunder rallied for two runs in the bottom of the 7th to win their opener, then used a six run rally in the top of the 5th in game two to clinch a first place finish in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "C-D" National qualifier on Sunday, April 29th at Expressway Park.

NKY Thunder stumbled in their finale, falling short in their bid for a sweep with a 13-12 setback at the hands of Local #392 Red. Thunder, Local #392 and DeClaire Insurance each went 2-1 in the four team round robin affair. Thunder was awarded the title based on run differential.

The victory gave NKY Thunder a berth into the USSSA Great Lakes Division Class "D" National Tournament Labor Day Weekend in Indianapolis. Local #392 Red qualified for the Ohio U-Trip "D" State August 18-19 in Harrison. DeClaire Insurance, the highest finishing "C" team, qualified for the USSSA Great Lakes "C" National in Ft. Knox, Ky. and the "C" State August 18-19 back at Expressway.

NKY Thunder manager Gene Callen credited his team's title to solid infield play and pitching.

"We turned seven double plays in three games in the infield, and Matty Lay pitched all three games and did a great job," said Callen.

Donny Hoehn batted .714 to pace the offense. Steve Coffee and Terry Maddox each turned in a .667 day, and Robbie Mitchell hit .545 and led his club in runs scored with six.

Callen called Hoehn a "spectacular shortstop.

"He played great all day and had several key hits," said Callen.

Defensive kudos went to centerfielder Jason Wells.

"He catches everything," said Callen. "Nothing hits the grass in centerfield. He made so many diving plays I can't remember them all."

NKY Thunder scored two runs in the bottom of the 6th, then held Airway scoreless in the top of the 7th to preserve a narrow 7-6 victory in game one. Matt Lay's two run, two out shot in the 6th gave his club the win. Lay, Jason Wells and Steve Coffee each went 2-for-3 for the winners.

DeClaire Insurance fell next as NKY Thunder overcame a 6-5 deficit on the strength of a six run outburst in the top of the 5th. Thunder later sealed an eventual 15-9 win with a four run 7th. Angel Barton's two run single put NKY Thunder ahead to stay at 7-6, and



Dave Kessler belted a two run homer to highlight the 5th. Chris Stallings had a key two run single in the 7th.

Robbie Mitchell homered twice, including an inside-the-parker, collected four rbi's and went 4-for-4 a-long with Terry Maddox. Donny Hoehn chipped in with a 3-for-4 effort.

### **Lawson, Lock-N-Load Rocks Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" Field At Expressway Park**

Milford, Oh.--Sam Lawson hit a blistering .846 to lead a red-hot Lock-N-Load softball team to a first place finish in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" State-National Qualifier on Sunday, April 29th at Expressway Park.

Lock-N-Load averaged just under 25 runs-per-game as they overpowered the three team field on the strength of a .725 team batting average. The champions swatted aside the Hitmen 30-6 in a five inning opener, held off Green Dot 14-10 after squandering an 11-2 lead, then trampled the High Rollers 29-6 in four in the finale.

The victory earned Lock-N-Load a berth to the Ohio USSSA Men's Class "D" State Tournament August 18-19 in Harrison, and to the U-Trip Great Lakes "D" National Tournament Labor Day Weekend in Indianapolis.

Following Lawson's robust .846 performance were Ryan Becht, Chris Hudson and Lee Dumford at .833.

"Sam is fairly new to the game," observed Lock-N-Load manager Erick Carter. "He's only 19 and he's still learning, but he's a great addition to our team this year."

Carter said his team "came out hitting and didn't stop all day long" en route to the title," and that his team won with "all around team play."

Defensively, said Carter, Ryan Becht "was the key to our three man outfield and our defense."

Lock-N-Load jumped out to a 15-2 lead against the Hitmen in game one and never looked back in a 30-6, five inning laughter in game one. A Buddy Moore slammer capped a six run 1st, and a three-run double by Sam Lawson highlighted a nine run 2nd.

Lawson, B. J. Pearson and Lee Dumford combined for twelve hits to pace the offense.

Lawson's rbi single put his club on the board as Lock-N-Load grabbed an early 4-0 lead in the top of the 1st in game two against Green Dot. A seven run 4th gave Lock-N-Load a comfortable 11-2 margin, but Green Dot answered with seven runs in the top of the 5th to cut the deficit to two. Lock-N-Load responded with three runs in the bottom of the 5th, then held on for a 14-10 victory. Ryan Becht collected four hits, and Sam Lawson added three for the winners.

Game three was a mirror image of the opener, as Lock-N-Load exploded for 17 runs in the first two innings and rolled past the Hi-Rollers 29-6 in four. Leed Dumford doubled home two runs, and Erick Carter followed with a three run double to help their team off to

a 6-0 start in the 1st. Buddy Moore had a key two run double in an eleven run 2nd as the lead mushroomed to 17-1.

Carter, Sam Lawson, Ryan Becht and Bill Richey shared sixteen hits for the champions.

“If we keep doing this all year, we’re going to win a lot more of these,” remarked Lock-N-Load’s Erick Carter. “It’s a pretty good ratio for our team to score 73 runs and hold three teams to 22.”

Was Carter surprised that his team scored so many runs?

“Against the Hitmen we were. They’re a pretty good team. We came out and jumped on them and never let up,” said Carter.

### **Southwest Bombers, Lebanon Eagles Claim Divisions In J. R And Syl Stidham Memorial At Armco Park**

Lebanon, OH.—The Southwest Bombers and the Lebanon Eagles claimed their respective division titles in the 16-team J. R. and Syl Stidham Memorial Tournament April 28<sup>th</sup> at Armco Park.

The event was run in honor of the popular father and son duo who both served as umpire-in-chief of Ohio USSSA District XIII as well as league director and umpire assigner at Armco Park.

The Bombers held three straight opponents – Kendrick Moving & Storage 10-6, Bud Light 6-3 and 4 Corners 22-8 – to single digit scoring before waxing the Long Balls 15-10 in the championship game of the upper division.

The Lebanon Eagles slugged their way into the lower division finals by overpowering the Players 21-6, Middletown Moose 24-11 and Crystal Recycling 21-16. Meanwhile the Backyard Boys, which had fallen to Crystal Recycling 16-15 in the second round after disposing of Assault Softball 16-12, was marching through the losers’ bracket. They mowed down Monroe Wings & Rings 18-4 and Assault Softball 18-16 prior to avenging their loss to Crystal in a lopsided 16-1 decision.

In the finals the Backyard Boys stopped the Eagles 17-16 to force an “if” game, only to have mother nature intervene as a heavy downpour forced cancellation of the championship game. The Lebanon Eagles won a coin toss to take home the first place trophy.

### **Tucker Single Lifts Jet/Goof Troop Past Ice 14-13 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “E” Finale At Expressway Park**

Milford, Oh.--Josh Tucker’s rbi single in the bottom of the 7th lifted Jet/Goof Troop to a 14-13 victory over Ice Softball in the championship game of a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “E” State-National Qualifier on Sunday, April 29th at Expressway Park.

Ice had rallied for seven runs in the top of the 6th, the knotted the game in the 7th after nearly getting mercy-ruled by Jet/Goof Troop earlier in the game. But it all went for

naught when Sean Emmitt singled and went to 2nd on a fly ball, then scored on Tucker's rbi single.

The victory gave Jet/Goof Troop a sweep of the four team field and a berth to the Ohio USSSA "E" State August 18-19 in Dayton, and to the U-Trip Great Lakes "E" Nationals Labor Day Weekend back at Expressway Park.

Ice Softball also qualified for the state tournament.

Jet/Goof Troop had needed eight innings to get past the Nighthawks 14-13 in their opener, then mercy-ruled Fat Batz 13-3 in game two before outlasting Ice in the finals.

Josh Hunter paced the offense with a .919 (10-for-11) effort for the day. Jake Sexton followed with a hefty .800 performance, Josh Tucker and Sam Steele batted .667, and James "Bear" Deters, Jason Emmitt and Tim Kappel each chipped in with a .625 average.

Jet/Goof Troop manager Sam Steele attributed his club's success to "getting on top early and keeping the lead.

"We played small ball and kept it in the park since you could only hit one home run," remarked Steele.

Pitching was also a key, indicated Steele.

"We have three good pitchers, and if one gets in struggles, another can come in.

"We have a pretty solid team," he added. "We have fifteen guys so we can use a little strategy."

Steele said his club's leading hitter, Josh Hunter, "kept it in the park.

"He wasn't worried about hitting it out. He knew how to move the runners and got two doubles and two triples," said Steele.

Defensively, Steele cited the efforts of infielders Jason Emmitt, Tim Kappel and James "Bear" Deters.

"Jason (ss) turned a couple of double plays and worked it up the middle pretty good with Tim Kappel (2b). And Bear knocked locked down 3rd base for us."

Jet/Goof Troop barely survived its first game, pushing across two runs in the bottom of the 8th to upend the Nighthawks, 14-13. Jason Emmitt singled and went to 3rd on Sean "Bug" Emmitt's double, then Andrew Tucker plated both runners with a single to give his club the victory.

Jake Sexton blasted a three run homer and went 3-for-4 along with Tucker and Josh Hunter.

Next Jet/Goof Troop mercy-ruled Fat Batz 13-3 in five behind three hits each from Sexton and Tim Kappel. A three-run shot by James Deters helped break open a 4-3

contest in the bottom of the 3rd and the winners never looked back. Sam Steele had a pair of hits and walked three times, and Jason Emmitt played a flawless game at short.

That set up a showdown between the tournament's two undefeated teams - Jet/Goof Troop and Ice Softball. After squandering a big lead midway through the game and allowing Ice to knot the score at 13-13 in the top of the 7th, Jet/Goof Troop's Sean Emmitt singled, moved into scoring position on a James Moore fly out, then raced home with the game winner.

Hunter doubled twice and went 3-for-4 along with Jake Sexton, and Jake Sexton, Sam Steele, and Jason Emmitt combined for six hits for the champions. Billy Skidmore connected for a big three run homer in the 3rd.

"We've played five tournaments this year and won four, so we're kinda on a roll right now," commented Jet/Goof Troop's Sam Steele. "We're really turning it on in tournaments for a first year team."

### **Camel Towing Bests Chili Co., Lindenwald's Finest Tops DHR Hound Dogs In Queen City Finales**

West Chester, Oh.--Camel Towing bested Chili Co. 12-5 in the deciding game in the "D" division, while Lindenwald's Finest topped DHR Hound Dogs by an identical score in the "E" division finale, to claim first place in their respective divisions in a ten team, two division round robin on Sunday, April 29th at Queen City Sports Complex.

Camel Towing routed EMR (0-3) 16-2 in their opener, then got past No Names (0-3) 11-7 before polishing off Chili Co. (3-1) 12-5. M & S Drywall (2-1) finished third.

Lindenwald's romped past Al Smith's Roofing (0-3) 15-4, RTF (1-2) 16-0, and Caribbean Storm (11-1) prior to steamrolling DRH (2-1).

### **Blanton, Throckmorton Lead High Octane To Worth-Bud Light-Mike Adler-USSSA Mixed NIT Title At Riverstar**

It was only fitting that Kevin Blanton would start - and Kelly Throckmorton would finish - the rally that gave High Octane a first place finish in the Worth-Bud Light-Mike Adler-USSSA Mixed Couples National Invitational Tournament April 28th at Riverstar Park.

With their club trailing Wessel Sports 19-18 with two outs in the bottom of the 7th in the first championship game, Blanton singled and scored the tying run on Nicole Dean's double. Dean then took third on a Darrin Brock safety, and trotted home with the game winner on Kelly Throckmorton's game winning single.

The victory gave High Octane a four game sweep of the twelve team affair, and a paid berth to the USSSA Mixed "C" World Tournament October 19-21 in South Carolina. Wessel, the highest finishing U-Trip "B" team in the tournament, and Buckeyes, the highest finishing "D" team, also received a paid World berth to their respective World Tournaments October 19-21 in Lake Buena Vista, Fl.

Blanton and Throckmorton were named co-MVP's.

“Kevin was phenomenal,” said High Octane manager Rodney Wolfe. “We didn’t have him in our first game of the day, but we had him for the next three games, and he hit .833 and made some great plays at shortstop for us.”

Throckmorton, said Wolfe, “came through in the clutch.

“We had to give her the MVP award because not many girls with two outs looking at you and runners in scoring position are going to win the game for you. But she came through for us, and everybody on the team agreed (to name her MVP).”

Throckmorton was turned in the highest batting average for High Octane among their female players at .635.

Other hitting leaders included all-tournament selections Darrin Brock (.687), Rob Coffey (.667), Jessica Hardy (.600) and Nicole Dean (.562). Chip Turner batted .687, Kenny Throckmorton .533, and Jeremy Dick and Linda Weisenhahn chipped in with a .500 day.

“We had a solid ball club all day,” commented High Octane’s Rodney Wolfe. “In our first two games we struggled because we’re a new team, and everybody was trying to get used to one another. But we came out of our slump, and ended up scoring quite a few in the 5th inning of our first game.

“Our hitting really came alive in the last two games,” noted Wolfe. “Our women really stepped it up and one of our keys is we really have a group of really good girls, and you have to have good girls.”

Defensively, Wolfe was hard-pressed to pick a standout for High Octane. “Linda Wiesenhahn played a great 3rd base for us, and Jessica Hardy made some really good plays at 2nd. Rob (Coffey), Darrin (Brock) and Kevin (Blanton) also played well, along with our pitcher, Kenny Throckmorton. It’s hard to single out one certain person - everybody played so good.”

Premier Players put an early scare into High Octane in game one, as they held a 6-3 lead through four and a half innings. But in the bottom of the 5th, the wheels fell off the wagon, as High Octane exploded for nine runs to grab the lead for good at 12-6. Darrin Brock delivered a two run double to put his club ahead at 7-6,, then Rob Coffey followed with a three run double make it 10-6. Coffey, Nicole Dean and Justin Dick each went 3-for-4 to pace the offense.

A four run 4th broke a 4-4 stalemate and gave High Octane an eventual 8-4 victory over the Buckeyes in game two. Kelly Throckmorton singled home the go-ahead run and Kevin Blanton singled home two runs to cap off the inning. Pitcher Kenny Throckmorton held the Buckeyes scoreless over the final three innings to preserve the win.

Kelly Throckmorton was perfect in three at bats, and Justin Dick,, Linda Wiesenhahn and Toinya Feinauer shared six hits.

Wessel Sports grabbed an early 4-1 lead over High Octane after two innings in the winners’ bracket finals, but High Octane plated four runs in the top of the 3rd to take a 5-4 lead, then added oine in the 4th, three in the 5th and four in the 6th to forge a 13-5

advantage before Wessel rallied for three to make the final 13-8. Rob Coffey put High Octane on top to stay at 5-4 with a two run double in the 3rd.

Kevin Blanton banged out four hits, and Chip Turner, Jessica Hardy, Kelly Throckmorton and Darrin Block each went 3-for-4.

Wessel Sports let a 14-4 lead slip away over the last five innings in the championship game, with High Octane doing most of the damage with a seven run outburst in the bottom of the 3rd. Wessel took a precarious 19-18 lead into the bottom of the 7th, and was poised to force an "if" game after retiring the first two batters. But Kevin Blanton singled and scored on Nicole Dean's double, then Dean went to 3rd on Darrin Brock's base hit, setting the stage for Kelly Throckmorton to plate Dean with an rbi single.

Brock, Chip Turner and Rob Coffey combined for a dozen hits, and Blanton, Dean and Jeremy Dick chipped in with three apiece for the champions.

"We thought for sure that we were going to have to play an extra game there at the end," sighed High Octane's Rodney Wolfe. "We thought we had the team to beat Wessel, but you never know how it's going to work out, especially with a new team. They have some guys on that team who can flat out play ball. They're definitely a very good team."

Wolfe concluded by saluting Riverstar for a well-run event.

"Our thanks to Riverstar - they did a good job with the tournament," said Wolfe. "We just hope we can keep it up for the rest of the year."

#### **WORTH-BUD LIGHT-MIKE ADLER-USSSA MIXED COUPLES C-D NATIONAL INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT**

1. High Octane, Cincinnati, OH 4 0
2. Wessel Sports, Cincinnati, OH 4 2
3. Dented Bats Softball, Mooresville, IN 4 2
4. Speed Kills, Lewis Center, OH 2 2
5. Buckeye Softball, Lebanon, OH 2 2
- Run Rulers, Edgewood, KY 2 2
7. Bullet Proof/Team Dreams, Cincinnati, OH 2 2
- Moldmasters/Bulldogs, Willoughby, OH 2 3
9. Touch 'Em All, Indianapolis, IN 1 2
- Premier Players, Louisville, KY 1 3
- Team Lightningwear, Wash. Court House, OH 0 3

#### **WORTH-BUD LIGHT-MIKE ADLER-USSSA MIXED COUPLES C-D NIT ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM**

Billy Moore Speed Kills  
Jean Yontz Speed Kills  
Kurt Kurtstierwalt Dented Bats  
Nicole Weed Dented Bats  
Kevin Greene Wessel Sports  
Everett Hibbard Wessel Sports  
Liz Ulland Wessel Sports

Amy Schweinefus    Wessel Sports  
Rob Coffey    High Octane  
Darren Brock    High Octane  
Nicole Dean    High Octane  
Jessica Hardy    High Octane  
Kevin Blanton - MVP    High Octane  
Kelly Throckmorton - MVP    High Octane

### **May 5-6 Stories...**

#### **Simpson, Cupp Lead Extreme/Turner To Cincysoftball.com-Big 64 USSSA "D" At Rumpke Park**

Crosby Township, Oh.—Bryon Simpson batted .926 and pitcher Danny Cupp held six of seven opponents to single digit scoring to lead Extreme/Turner Properties to a first place finish in the Cincysoftball.com-Big 64 USSSA "D" World Qualifier May 5<sup>th</sup> at Rumpke Park.

The title was the second in as many weeks for Extreme/Turner, which had just captured a U-Trip "D" NIT the previous weekend at Expressway Park in Milford.

Extreme/Turner rallied all the way back from an opening round 6-2 setback to J-Taps to steamroll Grountexx/Ramsey 19-4 in five innings in the championship game and wrap up a 6-1 day.

A paid berth to the USSSA "D" World Tournament Labor Day Weekend in Sterling Heights, Mi. passed down to runner-up Groundtexx.

Unlike in their victory in Milford, when they relied exclusively on pitching and defense, scoring only fourteen runs in five games, Extreme/Turner clicked on all cylinders in the Big 64, averaging fifteen runs per game while allowing just over five following their first round loss to J-Taps.

"Last weekend we won the NIT with pitching and defense," recalled Extreme/Turner player-manager Chris Hilton. "This weekend it was a totally different story. We won with timely hitting. We had to hit to win this weekend and we got the job done."

Bryon Simpson was practically unconscious for his club, going 25-for-27 to post a robust .926 average.

"It was one of the best hitting displays I've ever seen," said Hilton. "He was amazing. He couldn't miss.

"He put on a hitting clinic," continued Hilton. "Every time he walked up to the plate he looked like he was going to get a hit and he did."

Simpson had plenty of help. Josh Zickraf hit a sizzling .792 with a team high sixteen runs scored, Hilton chipped in with a .731 and team high 20 rbi's, Mike Cooper batted .560 and Carlton Brock collected 13 rbi's.

Danny Cupp, who only allowed 40 runs in seven games, also anchored the defense, said Hilton.

“He’s unbelievable,” said Hilton. “He’s consistently held teams under ten runs in most of our games over the last two years. He’s 42-years old, he doesn’t juke, he just throws it up. He has a good breaking ball and pitches to the defense. He also fielded the middle really well and as always, only walked one guy in seven games.”

Hilton also commended his outfield’s performance.

“Our three-man ran around out there for seven games, and I take my hat off to them,” said Hilton.

Extreme/Turner’s outfield consisted of Jeremy Wills in left, Josh Zickgraf in center and Adam Harmon in right.

“Adam is fresh back from college and is with us full-time now,” observed Hilton.

Extreme/Turner got an early wake-up call when J-Taps ambushed the eventual champions 6-2 in game one. But Extreme/Turner evened their record quickly with a 17-2 rout of Serv-All Electric, the battled past Team Havoc 13-9 to finish pool play at 2-1.

Next they disposed of NKY Thunder handily, 14-4, behind four hits from Bryon Simpson and three each from Carlton Brock and Matt Leugers. The winners overcame a 1-0 deficit with a seven run outburst in the top of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and later used a four run 6<sup>th</sup> to seal the win. Adam Harmon put his club ahead to stay at 3-1 with a two run single. Later in the inning Jeremy Williams delivered a key two run double. Simpson ignited Extreme/Turner’s four run 6<sup>th</sup> with a two run double as the lead swelled to 12-3.

Next Extreme/Turner used a five run 2<sup>nd</sup>, a six run 4<sup>th</sup> and a four run 6<sup>th</sup> to build an 18-7 lead and went on to spank D’s Restoration 19-10. An rbi single by Mike Cooper capped off a five run 2<sup>nd</sup> as Extreme took a 7-0 lead. Jason Black’s two run double highlighted a six run 4<sup>th</sup> as the advantage swelled to 15-4. Chris Hilton delivered a big three run triple in the 6<sup>th</sup>.

Josh Zickgraf and Bryon Simpson pounded out five hits each, and Hilton drove in six rbi’s and went 4-for-5 along with Cooper and Aric Mills.

That lifted Extreme/Turner into the semi-finals for a defensive struggle with Accurate Masonry. The two clubs fought to a 5-5 standstill through three and a half innings, but in the bottom of the 4<sup>th</sup>, Extreme/Turner struck for three unanswered runs, taking the lead for good at 6-5 on Danny Cupp’s rbi single. Cupp then took charge on the mound, holding Accurate scoring over the final three frames.

Bryon Simpson, Chris Hilton, Adam Harmon and Jason Black each went 2-for-3 to pace the offense.

Extreme/Turner never trailed in the finals. Carlton Brock tripled, then scored on a Chris Hilton single to make it 2-0 in the bottom of the 1<sup>st</sup>. Then in the bottom of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Extreme/Turner exploded for ten runs to forge a commanding 14-1 lead and never looked back. A two run single by Adam Harmon, a two run double by Jason Black and a



two run single by Chris Hilton provided six of their club's ten runs in the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Chris Hilton continued to be his team's big run producer with five more rbi's. Hilton also shared eight hits with Carlton Brock. Danny Cupp and Mike Cooper combined for six hits.

Winning back-to-back tournaments was a "great feeling," said Extreme/Turner's Chris Hilton, "especially with the caliber of the two tournaments.

"We're jelling at the right time, and it's a great feeling. We fought hard for both. We've fought hard for six or seven years and we're learning how to win some games after being together for six or seven years."

### **Hitmen Rally Behind Tolliver, Downing In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D-E" At Expressway Park**

Milford, Oh.—After falling to Airtight Plumbing 14-9 in their opener, the Hitmen rallied behind the infield play of Brian Tolliver and Joe Downing to dispose of their next three opponents and capture first place in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D-E" State-National qualifier on Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup> at Expressway Park.

Tolliver and Downing, the Hitmen's shortstop and second baseman, helped their team turn eleven double plays on the day to snuff out rally after rally as they mowed down D & S Engineering/Greenies 12-4, runner-up Cincinnati Sizzle 11-7 in a key third round showdown, and the Backyard Boys 13-9.

A berth to the Ohio USSSA "D" State August 18-19 in Harrison, and to the U-Trip Great Lakes "D" Nationals Labor Day Weekend in Indianapolis, were awarded to Sizzle. Third place Airtight, the highest finishing "E" team in the tournament, qualified for the Ohio USSSA "E" State August 18-19 in Dayton, and for the U-Trip "E" Nationals Labor Day Weekend back in Milford.

Tim Roth paced the offense, hitting .727 with eight rbi's. Greg Carson chipped in with a .688 performance and scored a team-high eight runs, and Brian Tolliver batted .667.

But it was the Hitmen's infield defense that carried the day, pointed out player-coach Greg Carson.

"Our infield defense was excellent," said Carson. "We turned eleven double plays in our four games."

Roger Fields (3b) and Tim Roth (1b) man the corners for the Hitmen's infield.

But most of the credit went to the men in the middle, Tolliver and Downing, said Carson.

"They turn the double play real quickly," said Carson. "They've probably turned more double plays this year than we have the entire season over the last couple of years. That really helps kill some rallies."

The Hitmen didn't look like eventual champions in their first game, as they fell to Airtight 14-9. But a 12-4 rout of D & S Engineering quickly righted the ship. The winners scored in every inning, taking the lead for good with a run in the bottom of the 2<sup>nd</sup> to break a 2-2 stalemate. Greg Carson's sac fly produced the go-ahead run. Tim Roth's two run shot

in the 3<sup>rd</sup> made it 5-2, and Roger Fields contributed a two run triple as the lead swelled to 8-2 in the 4<sup>th</sup>, and Airtight never recovered.

Carson, Fields and Joe Downing combined for nine hits in the victory.

Game three provided a must-win match-up with previously undefeated Cincy Sizzle. After battling to a 7-7 tie through five and a half innings, the Hitmen used a four run outburst in the bottom of the 6<sup>th</sup> to pull out an 11-7 victory. Roger Fields' three-run double proved to be the big blow in the contest, breaking the 7-7 tie in the 6<sup>th</sup>.

Brian Tolliver and Tim Roth banged out three hits each, and Ron Sterling and Dave Huff added two apiece.

In their finale the Hitmen overcame a 7-5 deficit on the strength of a five run 4<sup>th</sup>, then held on for a 13-9 win over the Backyard Boys. Pat Rarick's rbi single put his club ahead to stay at 8-7. Tim Roth followed with a two run double to cap off the inning. The Boys cut the lead to 10-9 with two runs in the bottom of the 4<sup>th</sup>, but Tim Marshall and Brian Tolliver each contributed an rbi single as the Hitmen answered with two runs of their own to regain their three run advantage. The Hitmen plated the final run of the game in the top of the 7<sup>th</sup> to close out the scoring.

Marshall, Tolliver and Greg Carson shared nine hits for the champions.

The title was the Hitmen's third of the season, coming despite the team's second straight slow start.

"The last two weeks we've been horrible in our first game," observed Carson. "We need to show up an hour before and play a practice game," he joked. "I don't know if we're asleep or what."

### **JB's Overpower Those Guys 30-16 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D-E" Finale At Expressway Park**

Milford, Oh.—JB's Softball rocked Those Guys 30-16 in the deciding game to capture first place in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D-E" State-National qualifier on Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup> at Expressway Park.

JB's rallied from a 12-5 setback to Mound Cafe in their middle contest to improve their record to 2-1 along with runner-up Dixon Softball and Mound Café, and was awarded the title based on run differential. The champions had routed Dixon 14-4 in their opener.

A berth to the Ohio USSSA Men's Class "E" State Tournament August 18-19 in Dayton, and to the U-Trip Great Lakes "E" National Tournament Labor Day Weekend back at Expressway Park passed down to the Mound Café.

Justin Dick turned in a blistering .833 day for the winners, followed by Brian Croley at .727. Dan Nichols Sr. and Dan Stenger chipped in with a .667 day, Anthony Hargett and John Drake batted .636, and Jim Hargett .625.

Player-manager Matt Hutchinson said Dick "obviously played very well offensively," but also shined on defense.

“During our loss to the Mound, Justin actually was able to assist in three putouts throwing out runners try to take an extra base,” noted Hutchinson of his right-centerfielder. “Then in our third game against Those Guys, he threw out a runner in the 7<sup>th</sup> inning to end the game.”

Third baseman Jason Bronner also stepped up on defense, said Hutchinson.

“He made two diving stops in key situations, including one against the Mound and the other against Those Guys. In the 1<sup>st</sup> inning he actually killed their rally by turning a double play, and we got out of the inning with only allowing eight runs. It could have been a lot more potentially if he hadn’t come up with that diving play in the 1<sup>st</sup> inning.”

JB’s used a five run 2<sup>nd</sup> to blow open a 2-1 contest against Dixon Softball in game one and never looked back. A two run Jimmy Hargett single capped off the inning. Dixon cut into the lead with three runs in the top of the 6<sup>th</sup>, but JB’s slammed the door on the rally by answering with seven runs of their own to invoke the mercy rule. Matt Hines doubled home three runs, Jimmy Hargett added an rbi double and Anthony Hargett plated Jimmy Hargett with the game winner.

Matt Hines, Anthony Hargett, Jason Bronner and Gene Conner combined for a dozen hits to pace the offense.

The Mound then set JB’s back on their heels with a 12-5 spanking in game two, but JB’s came to life big in the finals, never trailing after jumping out to an 11-0 lead against Those Guys in the top of the 1<sup>st</sup>. A three run double by Dan Nichols Sr., a two run single by Rick Massmann and a two run double by Justin Dick highlighted the inning. Those Guys answered with eight runs in the bottom of the 1<sup>st</sup>, but JB’s outscored Those Guys 19-7 over the final six innings to seal the 30-16 rout. Jason Bronner delivered a big two run double to spark a six run 7<sup>th</sup> and dash any hopes Those Guys had of rallying in their final at bat.

Ryan Croley pounded out five hits, John Drake added four, and Justin Dick, Jim Hargett, Dan Nichols Sr. and Ricky Massman shared twelve hits.

JB’s Matt Hutchinson was pleased that his was able to bounce back impressively after the setback to the Mound in game two.

“After that loss we rebounded and came alive, and obviously we were hitting when you score thirty runs,” observed Hutchinson. “So we were able to bounce back from the loss offensively and score thirty runs.”

### **Hot Ballers Battle Past Hangovers, Snap It Off For Expressway Sweep**

Milford, Oh.—The Hot Ballers survived a pair of one-run decisions against Hangovers and Snap It Off before routing Panama Red en route to a three game sweep of a four team round robin on Sunday, May 6<sup>th</sup> at Expressway Park.

The Hot Ballers clipped eventual runner-up Hangovers 10-9 in their opener, then escaped Snap It Off 16-15 in round two before drilling Panama Red 19-9 in their finale.

## **Franchise, River Rats, Down & Dirty Sweep Queen City Divisions**

West Chester, Oh.--Franchise, Cincinnati River Rats and Down & Dirty Softball each swept past three opponents to capture first place in their respective divisions in a twelve team, three division round robin on Sunday, May 6th at Queen City Sports Complex.

Franchise leveled their opposition in the "D" division, romping past Arsenal (1-2) 21-6, Rush Auto Canes (2-1) 17-3 and Lollygaggers (0-3) 19-6.

The Cincinnati River Rats used a staunch defense to claim one of two "E" titles, squeaking past eventual runner-up CMT 6-5 in a key opening round match-up before disposing of Caribbean Storm (1-2) 7-3 and RTFS (0-3) 13-6.

While in the other "E" division, Down & Dirty slugged their way past Mac Steele (2-1) 14-4, Pacific Bombers (0-3) 18-8 and Hound Dogs (1-2) 25-15.

## **R. E. Digital Escapes DHR Hound Dogs 3-2, Sweeps Armco Round Robin With 4-0 Mark**

Lebanon, Oh.--R. E. Digital escaped DHR Hound Dogs 3-2 in key second round match-up, then went on to sweep to a 4-0 record in a five team round robin May 5th at Armco Park.

R. E. Digital blanked 4 Corners 13-0 in their opener, then in back-to-back one-run games trimmed the Hound Dogs 3-2 and Oops Towing/12 Angry Batters 11-10 before polishing off Fayette Anesthesia 18-8.

The champions earned a berth to the USSSA Great Lakes National Tournament, while runner-up DHR Hound Dogs were awarded a state berth.

## **Fritz Powers Ty-1-On To Worth-Bud Light Classic USSSA Women's "B-C" NIT Title At Expressway**

Milford, Oh.—Celia Fritz hit .688 to power Ty-1-On to a first place finish in the Worth-Bud Light Classic USSSA Women's "B-C" National Invitational May 5<sup>th</sup> at Expressway Park.

Ty-1-On rallied from a second place finish in round robin play to mercy-rule two opponents in the tournament's elimination round en route to the title. The champions white-washed the Louisville Lakers 17-0 in five innings in the semi-finals, then avenged a 7-1 second round setback to Stage II by outslugging the St. Louis club 27-17 in six. Ty-1-On exploded for eight runs in the bottom of the 6<sup>th</sup> to blow open a 19-17 contest and invoke the mercy-rule.

Fritz led the winners with a .688 performance and was named Tournament MVP. M. J. Ranz (.667), Erin Engelkamp (.647), Karen Kron (.555) and Theresa Hirschauer (.500) were named to the All-Tournament team. Shelly Cummins chipped in with a .571 mark.

Ty-1-On manager Colleen Needham said Fritz "had at least one hit in every game and two or three hits in some of her games.

“She hit .688 and hit one over the fence,” commented Fritz. “She played in all five games and she didn’t play a game in which she didn’t have a hit.”

The key to winning the tournament, said Needham, was “we finally hit when we needed to against Stage II.

“They certainly gave us some good competition, which we needed to have,” remarked Needham. “We learned that we have to play both offense and defense. We played really good defense the game we lost 7-1, but we didn’t hit.

“We played ‘early season’ defense,” observed Needham. “We got by with a few things. I know we’ll get better if we play more.

“We didn’t hit totally as a team, but as the season goes on, I think we will,” she added.”

Nevertheless, Needham said the championship was a team effort.

“We had fifteen players, and everybody contributed in one way or another, whether playing in a game and getting a couple of hits, or playing good defense in the infield or the outfield.”

Ty-1-On used a four run 6<sup>th</sup> to shake off the Shooters 15-13 in game one. With the score deadlocked at 11-11, Ty-1-On’s M. J. Ranz delivered a two run single to put her club ahead to stay at 13-11 in the bottom of the 6<sup>th</sup>. Erin Engelkamp and Celia Fritz followed with rbi singles to increase the lead to four. The Shooters answered with two in the top of the 7<sup>th</sup> before pitcher M. J. Ranz induced the final batter of the game to fly out to Theresa Hirschauer in left-center.

Erin Engelkamp banged out four hits, and Fritz and Karen Kron each went 3-for-4 to lead the offense.

Stage II ambushed Ty-1-On 7-1 in game two, but a 13-3, five-inning rout of the Louisville Lakers got the Cincinnati club back on track. Ty-1-On broke the game open with six runs in the bottom of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to take a commanding 8-1 advantage. An rbi single by Brenda Ryan capped off the inning. Two innings later the lead ballooned to 13-1 on the strength of a five run Ty-1-On 5<sup>th</sup>. A pair of two run singles – one by M. J. Ranz and another by Jessica Wendeln – highlighted the inning.

Ranz and Celia Fritz collected three hits each, and Sharon Graham and Theresa Hirschauer went 2-for-3 to help pace the winners.

In the semi-finals Ty-1-On exploded for ten runs in the top of the 1<sup>st</sup> and never looked back in an eventual 17-0 spanking of the Louisville Lakers. Erin Engelkamp gave her club a 3-0 lead with a big two run double, and Karen Kron added a two run double to cap off the inning. Kron was perfect in three at bats, and M. J. Ranz, Jane Eltzroth, Theresa Hirschauer and Shelly Cummins combined for eight hits.

That lifted Ty-1-On into the championship game for a re-match with Stage II. Finally in the bottom of the 6<sup>th</sup>, Ty-1-On erupted for eight runs to blow open a 19-17 game and invoke the mercy-rule at 27-17. Theresa Hirschauer’s had a key two run single to make it 19-17, and Celia Fritz clubbed a three-run homer as the lead swelled to 25-17.

Shirley Cummins pounded our four hits, and Hirschauer, Shelly Cummins and Andrea Costa each went 3-for-4.

**WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA WOMEN'S MAY CLASSIC  
CLASS "B-C" NATIONAL INVITAT. FINAL STANDINGS**

1. Ty-1-On, Cincinnati, OH 4 1
2. Stage II, St. Louis, MO 3 2
3. Shooters, Dayton, OH 2 3
4. Lakers, Louisville, KY 1 4

**WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA WOMEN'S MAY  
CLASSIC "B-C" NIT ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM**

Amanda Brown Lakers  
Shorty Harris Shooters  
Trish Hudson Shooters  
Jackie Fischer Stage II  
Sarah Lange Stage II  
Sara Noland Stage II  
M. J. Ranz Ty-1-On  
Erin Engelkamp Ty-1-On  
Karen Kron Ty-1-On  
Theresa Hirschauer Ty-1-On  
Celia Fritz - MVP Ty-1-On

**Dented Bats Rally Past Worth-Bud Light Classic USSSA Women's "D" NIT Field At Expressway**

Milford, Oh.-Dented Bats rallied from a dismal 0-2 start in round robin play to mow down three straight opponents in the elimination round and capture a first place finish in the Worth-Bud Light Classic USSSA Women's "D" National Invitational May 5th at Expressway Park.

The Indianapolis team sent a message: "don't give us a second chance."

Normally, an 0-2 start would send a team home from a tournament with their tails between their legs.

But the combination round robin-elimination round format proved to the liking of the eventual champions.

The Milford Hit-Hers routed Dented Bats 9-4 in their opener, then Pelle's rocked the Hoosier club 14-4.

But, as Casey Stengel once said, "it ain't over til it's over."

Dented Bats rallied to outslug Yadda Yadda/Premium East 17-16, then disposed of Battin Bullets 10-6 before avenging their setback to Pelle's with a narrow 3-2 victory in the finale.

Dented Bats manager Donnie Brown said his team's resurgence after the 0-2 start didn't come as a surprise to him.

"We knew with the girls we had assembled we had a pretty good team," said Brown. "But this was the first time we had played together as a group. We knew once we got it going, we'd probably be solid."

Brown credited his team's championship to "all around good hitting.

"Obviously, our hitting wasn't that good in the position round," acknowledged Brown.

Tournament MVP Amy Cannon "was pretty much on fire all day," said Brown.

"She hit around .840 for the day and played pretty good defense in left centerfield as well."

All-Tournament selection Angie DalPozzo was the team's defensive standout, said Brown.

"She was pretty stellar at short. She didn't miss one ball that I can remember, and she hit about .700," said Brown.

Connie Birch also came up big, said Brown.

"She pitched a very good tournament. She only walked three people all day."

Birch also landed a spot on the All-Tournament team. Jodi Landreth was Dented Bats' other All-Tourney pick.

"She played a very good right-centerfield and hit well - about .640 for the tournament," said Brown.

The championship qualified Dented Bats for the USSSA Great Lakes National Tournament Labor Day Weekend in Ft. Knox, Ky., and for the U-Trip World September 20-23 in Kissimmee, Fl.

#### **WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA WOMEN'S MAY CLASSIC CLASS "D" NATIONAL INVITAT. FINAL STANDINGS**

1. Dented Bats, Mooresville, IN 3 2
2. Pelle's, Silver Grove, KY 4 1
3. Battin Bullets, Indianapolis, IN 3 1  
Underdogs, Indianapolis, IN 2 2
5. Yadda Club Premium East, Milford, OH 4 2  
Milford Hit Hers, Milford, OH 2 2
7. James Arnold, Cincinnati, OH 2 2  
Intimidators, Batavia, OH 1 4
9. Crosley's Sports Bar, Cincinnati, OH 0 4

#### **WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA WOMEN'S MAY**

## **CLASSIC “D” NIT ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM**

Jen Jennings Underdog  
Holli Streevall Battin Bullets  
Nita Brooks Battin Bullets  
Beth Fields Pelle's  
Tonya Feinauer Pelle's  
Mindy Sawyer Pelle's  
Connie Birch Dented Bats  
Angie Dalpozzo Dented Bats  
Jodi Landreth Dented Bats  
Amy Cannon - MVP Dented Bats

### **May 12-13 Stories...**

#### **Schiavone, Sellet Power Two-N-Out.com In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “C-D” Super Cash Qualifier At Riverstar**

Chris Schiavone hit a blistering .789 while Mike Sellet batted .684 with a team-high 13 rbi's to power Two-N-Out.com to a 6-0 sweep of an 18-team Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “C-D” Super Cash Qualifier May 12th at Riverstar Park.

Two-N-Out.com was awarded a 7-0 victory over Nu-Way Drywall in the finals to complete the sweep and earn a \$500 cash first place prize. Nu-Way took home a paid berth to the U-Trip Great Lakes Division “D” National Tournament Labor Day Weekend in Indianapolis.

Fifth place Team Chaos also qualified for Indianapolis. Seventh place Game Time Softball and 9th place Cooper Auto/Tanel 360 won berths to the Ohio USSSA “C” State Tournament August 18-19 in Milford and to the Great Lakes “C” Nationals September 1-3 in Ft. Knox, Ky.

Chris Schiavone went 15-for-19 (.789) to pace the offense. Shawn Donaghy followed with a .714 mark and three home runs. Doug Buford pitched in with a .687 day, while Mike Sellet batted .684 with a team-leading 13 rbi's.

“Chris set the table well,” commented player-manager Shawn Sproles. “He's our leadoff hitter and he had a good weekend. He placed the ball where it needed to be placed and that helped everybody play a little better by starting off each game with a hit and getting on base.”

Sproles called Sellet “the heart and soul of our team.

“He's been our leader forever. He bats behind Chris and gets on base when you need him to and can hit home runs when needed,” said Sproles. “Two of his home runs were crucial, including a three run home run against Chaos and a grand slam against the Trailblazers. He turned the momentum around in both games. We had just given up some runs a half inning before, and he turned the momentum back in our favor.”



The key to winning the tournament, said Sproles, was staying loose and playing fundamentally sound softball.

“We’ve been inconsistent all year after we won early in the year at Pastime,” remarked Sproles. “Going into this weekend, we just decided to go out and play ball and not to worry about anything. We seemed to hit a lot smarter fundamentally, especially hitting behind the runners.”

Defensively, Sproles commended the efforts of infielders Schiavone and Brett Harlow. “Chris played real well at short and Brett made three or four good plays at 3rd base,” said Sproles. “One of our inconsistencies this year has been defense, so it’s nice that our defense kind of carried us over the offense.”

Two-N-Out.com opened play with an impressive 12-2, five inning rout of A-1 Fabricators/Hot Boyz. A seven run 5th broke open a 5-2 game. James Evans and Jeff Lucas had back-to-back two-run doubles, and Mike Sellet followed with a two run single to invoke the mercy rule in the 5th.

Shawn Donaghy and Shane Bolin each cracked a home run and went 3-for-3 along with Evans and Doug Buford.

Next Two-N-Out.com used a five run 4th and a three run 5th to overcome an 8-3 deficit and grab an 11-8 lead over NKY Thunder. Kelly Davis singled home the go-ahead run in the 5th. Shawn Davis followed with a two run double to close out the scoring for Two-N-Out.com. Thunder answered with one in the 6th and one in the 7th to make the final 11-10.

Jeff Lucas drove in four runs and went 2-for-3 along with Steve Klei and Chris Schivone.

Two-N-Out.com survived another one-run game in a 7-6 victory over Dino’s/T & T Freightways in game three. The winners never trailed after taking a 3-0 lead in the bottom of the 1st. Shawn Donaghy clubbed his second home run of the day to put his club on the board at 2-0. Brett Harlow followed with an rbi double. Two-N-Out.com added lone runs in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th to take a 7-2 lead, then held on as Dino’s rallied for two in the 6th and two in the 7th. Dino’s put the tying run on 3rd with two outs in the 7th before pitcher Shawn Sproles knocked down a liner and threw to 1st to end the game.

Donaghy belted two home runs and shared six hits with Jeff Lucas and Sproles.

In game four Two-N-Out.com used a ten run 3rd to overcome a 7-2 deficit and went on to knock off Team Chaos 12-7. Mike Schanding’s two run double in the 3rd put his club ahead to stay at 8-7. Mike Selleck capped off the inning with a three run bomb. Pitcher Shawn Sproles limited Team Chaos to a single run over the last four innings to help preserve a 15-8 victory.

Sellet and Jeff Lucas pounded out four hits each, and James Evans homered and went 3-for-4 along with Steve Klei.

That lifted Two-N-Out.com into the semi-finals against the Trailblazers, where the eventual champions jumped out to a 9-2 lead after two and a half innings and never

looked back in a 16-9 victory. A two-run single by Brett Harlow capped off a four run 1st. Harlow also singled home the last run of the 2nd as the lead doubled to 8-0. The 'Blazers were within striking distance at 9-4 after four, but in the top of the 5th, Mike Sellet's slammer gave his club a commanding 13-4 lead. Sellet delivered another key blow in the 7th, accounting for two of Two-N-Out.com's three runs with a two run double.

Sellet collected seven rbi's in the game and combined with Chris Schiavone for ten hits. Shawn Donaghy chipped in with a 4-for-5 effort and Doug Buford added three safeties.

Two-N-Out.com's Shawn Sproles expressed his appreciation to his team's sponsors and tournament host Riverstar Park after the tournament.

"We want to thank our sponsors, Top Shelf and Sherco Trucking, and Bill Chard for running a good tournament," said Sproles. "Hopefully this will keep us on the right track and we will continue our winning ways the rest of the season."

The tournament victory was bittersweet for Two-N-Out.com, who lost their shortstop, James Evans, with a broken eye socket following a collision with the team's left fielder.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with Jimmy and his family," said Sproles.

#### **WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA "C-D" CASH QUALIFIER FINAL STANDINGS - MAY 12 - CINCINNATI, OHIO**

1. Two-N-Out.com, Florence, KY 6 0
2. Nu-Way Drywall, Newport, KY 7 2
3. Trailblazers, Cincinnati, OH 3 2
4. Beef O'Brady's/Bruster's Ice Cream, H. Hts., KY 6 2
5. M & S Drywall/Michelle's/Easton, Cinti., OH 2 2
- Team Chaos, Franklin, OH 2 2
7. A-1 Fabricators/Hot Boyz, Cincinnati, OH 3 2
- Game Time Softball, Cincinnati, OH 3 2
9. Black & Blue, Taylor Mill, KY 2 2
- Good Guys/GBI Cincinnati, Edgewood, KY 1 2
- Cooper Auto/Tanel 360, Huber Heights, KY 1 2
- Dino's/T & T Freightways, Richwood, KY 1 2
13. NKY/Cincinnati Bandits, Florence, KY 1 3
- B & B Production, Taylor Mill, KY 0 3
- JB's, Cincinnati, OH 0 3
- Black Hawks, Covington, KY 0 3
17. NKY Thunder, Burlington, KY 1 2
- East End Softball, Cincinnati, OH 0 3

#### **Late Rally Lifts Extreme/Turner To Third Straight Win In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D-E" Super-Duper At Expressway Park**

Milford, Oh.--Extreme/Turner Properties Services Group rallied from a 12-1 deficit to stun Best Way Frame/Nasty Boys 19-14 in the championship game of the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D-E" Super-Duper Cash Qualifier May 12th at Expressway Park.

Extreme/Turner outscored Best Way 18-2 over the final three innings to overcome the eleven run deficit and wrap up a 6-0 day in the 22-team affair.

The champions claimed a first place prize of \$1,000 cash plus a paid berth to the USSSA Great Lakes "D" National Tournament Labor Day Weekend in Indianapolis. The Nasty Boys were awarded \$200 in cash. Third place Tri-State Air Filter took home \$100 in cash and an unpaid berth to the U-Trip "D" Nationals, while Cincinnati Diamondbacks received a paid berth to the USSSA "E" World September 13-16 in Lake Buena Vista, FL., and \$100 in cash.

Timely hitting and a typically strong pitching effort by veteran Danny Cupp enabled Extreme/Turner to roll to their third title in as many weekends, said player-manager Chris Hilton.

"When we got our first couple guys on, we all caught the bug and the whole line-up started hitting the ball," observed Hilton. "We were determined not to let our shoddy defense let us down in this tournament. We didn't play well defensively but our sticks finally came alive."

Josh Zickgraf paced the offense with a .760 day and a dozen rbi's. Carlton Brock followed with a .739, three home run, sixteen rbi performance, Jeremy Williams batted .692 and led his team in rbi's with fifteen, Jason Black batted .682, and Matt Luegers hit .636 with a team high nineteen rbi's.

"Josh is definitely one of our team leaders," remarked Hilton. "He bats second in the order and is always setting the table for the middle of the order. He does that game in and game out. He also takes care of centerfield in our three-man outfield, which can be pretty tiring."

Hilton called Carlton Brock "just a pure hitter.

"He hits to all fields and hits with power when he needs to. He's our clean-up hitter for a reason...he doesn't choke in the clutch."

Hilton said that "anytime one of our players is on base" that Matt Luegers "thrives on that.

"He bats third in our line-up and is also a great hitter," commented Hilton. "He drives in a lot of runs every year. He'll definitely have over 100 rbi's a season."

Hilton added that "pitching is always a key" for his club.

"Danny Cupp walked only one guy in six games," noted Hilton.

Extreme/Turner bowled over two round robin opponents starting the tournament, routing The Hawks 12-1 in five behind four hits from Jeremy Williams and three each from Adam Harmon and Josh Zickgram, then spanking Clarion Express 18-6 as Williams, Zickgraf, Jason Black and Chris Hilton combined for sixteen hits. Matt Luegers chipped in with five rbi's.

The carnage continued in the first two games of the elimination round, as Extreme/Turner steamrolled the Renegades 16-5 in six and Dirty Birds 14-4 in five.

Extreme/Turner jumped on top of the Renegades 12-0 with three in the 1st and nine in the 3rd and never looked back. Carlton Brock's three run blast accounted for all of his club's runs in the 1st, and Josh Zickgraf's two run single capped off the 3rd. The two were also perfect in four at bats, with Brock driving in five runs.

Next Extreme/Turner erupted for eight runs in the bottom of the 4th to blow open a 5-3 contest with the Dirty Birds. Matt Leugers, who collected four hits and six rbi's in the game, and Aric Mills each contributed a two run double in the 4th. Brock and Zickgraf ran their two game hitting streaks to 7-for-7 with three hits apiece.

The walk through the park ended in the semi-finals and finals for Extreme/Turner, who was forced to rally from behind in both games.

First they used a six run 4th to overcome a 10-6 deficit against Tri-State Air Filter. Josh Zickgraf singled in the go-ahead run and Matt Leugers added a two run triple in the inning. Tri-State answered with four runs to knot the score at 10-10 after five and a half, but in the bottom of the 6th, Extreme/Turner erupted for five runs to seal a 15-10 win. Josh Zickgraf again put his team on top with an rbi triple, and Matt Leugers and Adam Harmon both doubled in a run to help push the lead to 14-10.

Jeremy Williams banged out four hits, Carlton Brock homered and shared six hits with Danny Cupp, and Matt Leugers drove in four runs to fuel the offense.

Extreme/Turner ran into a buzz saw for four innings in the finals, where Best Way Frame/Nasty Boys roared out to a 12-1 lead after four. But Extreme caught fire with eight runs in the 5th to cut the deficit to 12-9. Then, after Extreme knotted the game with three in the top of the 6th, the Nasty Boys reclaimed the lead with three in the bottom of the inning. Undaunted, Extreme answered with seven in the top of the 7th to pull out a 19-14 victory. An rbi single by Aric Mills put Extreme ahead for good at 15-14. An rbi single by Ryan Lindsey capped off the scoring.

Jason Black pounded out five hits, Chris Hilton homered and went 4-for-5 along with Adam Harmon, and Lindsey and Danny Cupp chipped in with three hits each for the champions.

"I hope we catch fire like this in September," said Extreme's Chris Hilton regarding his team's third consecutive tournament victory. "It's an unbelievable feeling. We've battled hard through all three tournaments and we just seem to have caught fire at the right time of the season."

Hilton concluded by thanking sponsor Turner Property Services Group and Expressway Park.

"Expressway ran a nice tournament, as always," said Hilton. "They're definitely a five star complex."

**Rib City Grill/TP Mechanical Wins Worth/Bud Light/USSSA "D" Qualifier At Queen City Sports Complex**

West Chester, Ohio - Rib City Grill/TP Mechanical won all three games they played to take top honors in the Worth/Bud Light/USSSA "D" Qualifier at Queen City Sports Complex on Saturday, May 12th. They outscored their competition by a total of 40-12, never allowing any one opponent to score more than six runs.

In game one against Master Batters, Rib City Grill/TP Mechanical wrapped up a 14-1 victory in only five innings. Rob Henry's three-run homer in the bottom of the 1st paved the way to a 6-0 lead. Seven more in the 4th pushed the lead to 14-1. Adam Lunzman drove in a couple of runs in the at bat with a two-RBI double. Jerry Bittner capped the inning with a single that plated the final two runs. Gary Byrd, Dan Schreifer, and Adam Lunzman were all 3-for-3 in the game. Lunzman was also the winning pitcher.

Game two between Rib City and Pitt Ohio was much tighter. After six innings of play, Pitt Ohio held a 5-3 lead. In the top of the 7th with the two runs already in, Gary Bird put his team on top with an RBI single. Larry Cooper soon followed with a two-run bomb that stretched the lead to 8-5. Adam Lunzman drove in two more with a run-scoring single. In all, Rib City tallied seven runs in the at bat to make it an 11-5 game. Pitt Ohio failed to answer in their last chance at the plate and that is how it ended. Lunzman again led the way at the dish with a 3-for-4 effort. Teammates Jamie Ashford and Doug Meister were also 3-for-4.

Rib City kept the bats hot to start their final game of the day versus State Farm. On the strength of 10 straight hits they opened a 9-0 lead after the first half-inning of play. Rob Henry got the scoring started with a double that drove in two. Jamie Ashford and Gary Byrd each had two hits in the at bat. Rib City added six more runs in the top of the final inning to stretch the lead to 15-0. State Farm made a run at it by scoring six in the bottom of the 7th, but it was too little, too late. Rib City Grill third baseman Jerry Bittner stabbed a one-hopper down the line and threw on to second for a force out that squashed the State Farm rally. Bittner also chipped in three hits for the game. Henry was a team-best 4-for-4; Scott Mueller's 3-for-4 effort was his best of the tournament.

Rib City was led at the plate for the day by the pair of Adam Lunzman and Jerry Bittner who each hit .727. "It was the first tournament they've hit well this year," noted team manager Doug Meister. "They came out of their slump and gave our team a big lift out of the bottom of the order." Jamie Ashford and Gary Byrd each came in at .667.

Meister also pointed to good pitching and defense as being the keys to his team's success in the event. He made special mention of Gary Byrd, the shortstop. "He did nothing spectacular, was just solid and made all the routine plays."

Rib City came into the event having already qualified for postseason play. As a result, runner-up State Farm was awarded berths to the USSSA "D" State Tournament and National Tournament. They will be played August 18-19 in Harrison and Labor Day Weekend in Indianapolis, respectively.

### **Heavy Hitting JB's Offsets Defensive Hole In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" Qualifier At Riverstar Park**

JB's Softball survived a pair of one run games and a nine-man line-up en route to a first place finish in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" State-National-World qualifier on Sunday, May 13th at Riverstar Park.

JB's rallied for two runs in the top of the 7th to escape Team Huston 11-10 in their opener, then held Western Hills Eagles at bay after scoring the go-ahead run in the bottom of the 5th in a 9-8 victory. Then in their finale JB's polished off the Little Leaguers 15-7.

Matt Hutchinson hit a sizzling .833 to pace the offense. Dan Nichols batted .750, Rick Massmann and Dawn Drake hit .636, Dan Stenger .583 and Jason Bronner .545.

"We had exceptional hitting from several members of the team throughout the day," remarked JB's player-manager Matt Hutchinson. "We had to play with nine guys all day, so we made an exceptional effort on defense. We've played with nine guys before, but this is the first time we've ever won a tournament with nine guys."

Hutchinson, who led his team in hitting, acknowledged that he was "obviously hitting the ball extremely well."

But, he insisted, "so were several other individuals as well. And that helped us with only having nine players present."

The pitching of Dan Stenger also played a big role in JB's victory, noted Hutchinson.

"He did an excellent job throughout the day and was able to get a lot of fly balls and ground balls, and that helped us turn some double plays.

"The outfield also did an excellent job," commented Hutchinson. "They ran their rear ends off."

JB's barely survived their first game. Trailing Team Huston 10-9 going into the top of the 7th, JB's Jason Bronner led the inning off with a single, then scored the tying run on a Dan Nichols Sr. double. Rick Massmann then singled in Nichols with what proved to be the winning run. Dan Stenger held Team Huston at bat in the bottom of the inning to preserve the win.

Hutchinson, Nichols and Massmann combined for nine hits.

Game two didn't get any easier. This time JB's scored the eventual winning run on a Rick Massmann double in the bottom of the 5th to nudge past the Western Hills Eagles 9-8. Once again pitcher Dan Stenger held his opponent scoreless - this time over the final two innings - to protect JB's one run lead.

Stenger, Jason Bronner and Matt Hutchinson each went 3-for-4 to fuel the offense.

Game three was all JB's. After taking a 1-0 lead on a Dan Nichols Sr. rbi single in the 1st, JB's erupted for nine runs in the top of the 2nd and the Little Leaguers never recovered. A two run single by Stenger and a two run triple by Shawn Drake highlighted the inning.

Nichols and Matt Hutchinson combined for eight hits, and Stenger, Drake and Rick Massman chipped in with three hits apiece to power the champions.

### **Boisel Tire Routs 4 Corners 17-6 In “D” Finals, Team Midnight Outlasts Moose #501 8-7 In “E” To Claim Ohio District XIII Titles At Armco Park**

Lebanon, Oh.--Boisel Tire spanked 4 Corners 17-6 to capture the “D” Division of the Ohio USSSA District IX Championship, while Team Midnight outlasted Moose Lodge #501 8-7 in the “E” finals on Saturday, May 12th at Armco Park.

Boisel and 4 Corners took first place in pool play with 4-0 records before advancing to the finals. Team Midnight and Moose #501 were the highest finishing “E” teams in their respective divisions.

Both Boisel and Team Midnight captured USSSA Great Lakes National berths as well as berths to the Ohio USSSA Super State Tournament. 4 Corners and Moose also qualified for their state tournament play.

### **Spicer Leads Wessel Romp In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Mixed “B-C-D” Field At Kolping Park**

Mt. Healthy, Oh.--Pitcher Shane Spicer hit .850 with three home runs and fourteen rbi’s, tossed a no-hitter and limited four opponents to single digit scoring to lead Wessel Sports to a four game sweep of the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Mixed “B-C-D” National Invitational Tournament May 12th at Kolping Park.

Wessel outscored their victims 77-23 en route to the title, as they romped past Speed Kills 25-9, Venom 19-7, Action Special T’s 18-7 and Lightningwear 15-0 on a Spicer no-hitter.

Berths to the USSSA “D” State August 25-26 in Cincinnati, the U-Trip “D” Nationals September 29-30, and the USSSA “D” World were awarded to runner-up Action Special T’s (3-1). Speed Kills (2-2), the highest finishing “C” team, also claimed state, national and world berths to the same sites on the same dates.

Wessel Sports, a USSSA “B” team, had already qualified.

Other participating teams include Venom (1-3) and Lightningwear (0-4).

An offense that averaged 19 runs per game was the key to winning the tournament, according to Wessel manager Bill Chard.

“We didn’t play real goo defense this weekend, so we won with timely hitting,” observed Chard. “All five of our guys batted over .700.”

Following Spicer’s team leading .750 mark were Chris Young at .790, Brad Tabler at .778, Todd Hayes at .765 with three home runs, Jimmy Gentry at .722 with two home runs and 14 rbi’s, Amy Schweinefus at .579, and Rose Chapman at .556. Kim Perreault hit .600 in limited at bats.

But it all hinged on Shane Spicer, said Chard.

“He does it all - he hits for average, hits for power, and he’s a clutch hitter. Defensively, you can’t get it past him. He takes control on the mound,” said Chard.

Jimmy Gentry also stepped up big, said Chard.

“He had fourteen rbi’s and came through in the clutch all day hitting with runners in scoring position.”

Chard also had high praise for Rose Chapman.

“She’s new to our team this year,” pointed out Chard. “She played excellent in right centerfield, making several nice plays. And she batted .556 for the weekend and her speed gives other teams fits. She can fly.”

In game one, Wessel erupted for eight runs in the top of the 3rd to blow open a 4-1 game with Speed Kills and never looked back. Todd Hayes connected on a three run blast to ignite the inning. Speed Kills stayed within reach at 15-9 through five, but in the top of the 6th, Wessel added eight more runs to take a commanding 23-9 lead. A two run triple by Liz Ulland capped off the inning.

Shane Spicer collected five hits and six rbi’s, Todd Hayes drove in five runs and went 4-for-5 along with Chris Young and Jimmy Gentry, and Brad Tabler, Liz Ulland, Rose Chapman and Amy Schweinefus combined for twelve hits.

Venom jumped out to a 4-0 lead in the top of the 1st in game two, but Wessel answered with six in the bottom of the inning and never trailed again. A two run triple by Brad Tabler put his club ahead to stay at 5-4. Todd Hayes launched a two run shot as the lead grew to 9-5 in the 2nd. Jimmy Gentry had a three run bomb in a five run 6th as Wessel’s advantage swelled to 19-7.

Chris Young and Shane Spicer pounded out five hits each, and Tablr, Hayes, Christy Craig and Kim Perrault each went 3-for-4.

After falling behind 2-1 in the bottom of the 1st to Action Special T’s in game three, Wessel exploded for seven runs in the top of the 2nd to forge an 8-2 advantage. A two run single by Tonya Woodruff put Wessel ahead for good at 4-2. Shane Spicer followed with a two run triple, and Todd Hayes capped off the inning with a two run swat. Hayes added a three run dinger to push the lead to 11-2 in the 4th. A two run double by Jimmy Gentry capped off the scoring in a five run 6th as the lead ballooned to 16-3.

Amy Schweinefus banged out five safeties, Spicer, Hayes and Brad Tabler went 4-for-5, and Chris Young chipped in three hits to pace the offense.

Shane Spicer was the only weapon Wessel would need in the finals, as he tossed a no-hitter and drove in his club’s first two runs with a triple in Wessel’s five run 1st. Jim Gentry’s two run single capped off the scoring in the 1st.

Spicer cracked a two run homer to make it 7-0 in the 2nd. The lead mushroomed to 15-0 after a four run 5th. Jimmy Gentry’s single invoked the mercy-rule.



Brad Tabler was perfect in four at bats, and Spicer, Gentry, Chris Young and Rose Chapman each went 3-for-4.

### **Allnet Trims Hoops/Logos 6-5, Diamond Cutters Blank Team Vengeance 7-0 For Queen City Division Crowns**

West Chester, Oh.--Allnet trimmed Hoops/Logos 6-5 in the class "C" finale, while Diamond Cutters blanked Team Vengeance 7-0 to in the "D" finals to claim first place in their respective divisions in a seven team, two division round robin on Saturday, May 12th at Queen City Sports Complex.

Allnet battled past FOP #69 (1-2) 11-8, then routed Champion Cleaning (0-3) 15-5 before polishing off Hoops/Logos (2-1) in the deciding contest.

The Diamond Cutters nipped Beaver Hunters (0-4) 7-6, then suffered an 11-0 shutout loss to Team Vengeance before spanking Beaver Hunters 19-8 and blanking Team Vengeance 7-0 in the finale.

### **Teamsters Awarded "D" Title, Woodland Romps Past "E" Division In Queen City Round Robins**

West Chester, Oh.--The Teamsters were awarded first place through a tie-breaker rule, while Woodland trampled three opponents en route to their respective division titles in a seven team, two division Sunday round robin May 13th at Queen City Sports Complex.

The Teamsters routed Camel Towing (0-2) 14-2, the split two contests with Lindenwald's Finest (2-1) in the "D" division, losing 6-3, then taking an 8-3 victory. The Teamsters were awarded first place based on run differential against Lindenwald's.

While in the "E" division, Woodland ran roughshod past Pacific Bombers (1-2) 16-0, 9N1 (2-1) 12-0 and RTFS (0-3) 25-6.

### **May 19-20 Stories...**

#### **Speakman, Horn Help Columbus Entry Earn World Berth...**

#### **HLS Bonding/Big Sonny's Rallies Past Loveless/Conveyor 12-11 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "B-C" NIT Finals At Expressway Park**

Milford, Oh.--HLS Bonding/Big Sonny's scored two runs in the bottom of the 7th to stun Loveless Hardwood/Conveyor Solutions 12-11 in the championship game of the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "B-C" National Invitational Tournament May 19-20 at Expressway Park.

The win over Loveless/Conveyor wrapped up 5-0 weekend for the champions. Both teams were awarded a paid berth to their respective USSSA World Tournaments September 20-23 in Lake Buena Vista, Fl. HLS/Sonny's qualified for U-Trip "C" World, and Loveless/Conveyor for the "B." Loveless, the highest finishing "B" team in the tournament, was also awarded \$600 in travel expense.

Loveless/Conveyor proved to be its own worst enemy in the bottom of the 7th in the finals. After giving up a leadoff single by Mark Johnson, Corey Hogle singled to left.

Instead of throwing to 2nd to hold the potential tying run at 1st, the left fielder attempted to throw out pinch-runner Justin Dameron at 3rd and the ball wound up in the dugout. Cameron was awarded home and Hogle 3rd. Loveless then issued a pair of intentional walks to load the bases, then proceeded to walk in the game winner.

HLS/Sonny's was anything but dominant in the 17-team event. Their average margin of victory was just over 3.0 runs per game, and their biggest win was only by six runs, coming in a 25-19 victory over Loveless in the winners' bracket finals. They won two games in their final at bat, another game in the 6th and two others in the 5th.

Manager Sammy Kirk called his team's win a "complete team effort.

"Our back-ups came in and got the job done," summed up Kirk. That proved to be a key in view of the fact that HLS/Sonny's pitcher - Roger Bias - was tossed out of a game.

"He's one of the best USSSA pitchers around," said Kirk.. "Especially in fielding the middle and in positioning the fielders where he wants them and pitching to them."

Johnny Horn (.727) was named tournament MVP.

"He played really good defense in left and led us in home runs and rbi's and had three home runs and fifteen rbi's," said Kirk.

T. J. Speakman, who led HLS/Sonny's in hitting with a .789 mark, was one of four team members named to the All-Tournament team.

"He's our spark plug," remarked Kirk. "He gets caught up in games. He's very emotional. He's our leader when it comes to getting us motivated and getting us going."

Other all-tourney picks included Brent Hiles (.667), Bobby Walker and George Parker. Chris Murdock pitched in with a .650 weekend, and Roger Bias batted .600.

Defensively, Kirk lauded the efforts of Horn in left field, and Murdock and Parker on the left side of HLS/Sonny's infield.

A two run 6th and a three run 7th enabled HLS/Sonny's to break a 7-7 tie and open up a 12-7 lead against Brock Restoration/Hotwings/Schmoe's in game one. Brock scored twice in the bottom of the 7th to make the final 12-9. Mark Johnson double in the go ahead run in the 6th, the scored on a T. J. Speakman sac fly. Johnny Horn connected on a big two run homer in the 7th. Johnson and Horn each went 3-for-4 in the win.

Horn added another big homer in game two, this time breaking an 8-8 tie against DO/Miken in the bottom of the 5th. The lead swelled to 13-8 on the strength of four consecutive hits in the bottom of the 6th, including a key rbi single from pinch-hitter Justin Dameron.

Chris Murdock, who cracked a grand slam home run in the 2nd to break a 3-3 tie, shared nine hits with Brent Hiles and T. J. Speakman.

HLS/Sonny's needed nine innings to shake off House Rules 19-15 in game three. Rick Edington singled in the go ahead run to give his club a 14-13 lead in the top of the 9th.

Brent Hiles followed with a two run double, then scored to make it 19-13 on a George Parker base hit. House Rules answered with a pair of runs in the bottom of the 9th to make the final 19-15.

Jim Conley and Bob Walker banded out five hits each, and Parker and T. J. Speakman chipped in with a 4-for-6 effort to pace the offense.

That lifted HLS/Sonny's into the winners' bracket against Loveless/Conveyor. The Cincinnati club held a 13-9 lead after four, but in the top of the 5th, the wheels fell off the wagon. HLS/Sonny's exploded for 13 runs, taking a 14-13 lead on a Jim Conley rbi single. Chris Murdock contributed another timely home run to push the lead to 21-13. Loveless answered with four to make it 22-13, but HLS/Sonny's slammed the door with three more runs in the top of the 6th to forge a 25-17 advantage. Corey Hogel, whose 6th inning rbi single closed out the scoring for HLS/Sonny's, combined with Brent Hiles, John Horn and T. J. Speakman for twenty hits.

Loveless quickly disposed of Dawg Pack/Wessel Sports 21-7 to earn a rematch with HLS/Sonny's, and was poised to force an "if" game as they entered the bottom of the 7th with a precarious 11-10 advantage. But singles by Mark Johnson and Corey Hogle leading off the inning, an errant throw, and three walks enabled HLS/Sonny's to pull out the title.

Brent Hiles and Johnny Horn pounded out four hits each for the champions.

Was HLS/Sonny's - a U-Trip "C" team - surprised to win a "B-C" NIT?

"Interestingly the 'B' teams didn't do so well," pointed out Kirk. "I thought Freeze and Team Insanity would be right there in the hunt with us, but Freeze got beat by a couple of Columbus teams. But yes, we were a little surprised.

"It was a well-run tournament," added Kirk. "We always enjoy coming to Expressway. They do a fine job and we like coming down there."

### **WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA MEN'S CLASS B-C NATIONAL INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT**

1. HLS Bonding/Big Sonny's, Columbus, OH 5 0
2. Loveless Hardwood/Conveyer Sols., Cinti, OH 4 2
3. Dawg Pack/Wessel/Fabricators, Cincinnati, OH 5 2
4. Mike Foulks Auto Body/Team Insanity, Cin., OH 4 2
5. House Rules, Cincinnati, OH 2 2
6. Pure Romance/Easton, Cincinnati, OH 2 2
7. BCP Assoc./Mr. Tint/TPE, Columbus, OH 2 2
8. Chico's/Fox Premier Hardwood, Cincinnati, OH 2 2
9. Community Cab, Cincinnati, OH 2 2
10. Brock Restoration/Hotwings/Schmoe's, Cin., OH 1 2
11. DO/Miken, MI 1 2
12. E Z Cash, Grove City, OH 1 2
13. Local #392 Blue, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
14. Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putters, Cincinnati, OH 0 2
15. Design Concepts, New Richmond, OH 0 2

- Paradise Sports, Cincinnati, OH 0 2  
17. Tigerfitness.com, Cincinnati, OH 0 2

**WORTH-BUD LIGHT-SPORTS-USSSA MEN'S  
CLASS B-C NATIONAL INV. ALL-TOURN. TEAM**

Roger Drake Mike Foulks/Team Insanity  
Shane Spicer Dawg Pack/Wessel/Fab  
Mike Cook Dawg Pack/Wessel/Fab  
Micah Gray Loveless/Conveyor  
Jason Roeder Loveless/Conveyor  
Jason Wood Loveless/Conveyor  
Brent Hiles HLS Bonding/Big Sonny's  
George Parker HLS Bonding/Big Sonny's  
TJ Speakman HLS Bonding/Big Sonny's  
Bobby Walker HLS Bonding/Big Sonny's  
Kevin Hall - HR Leader Dawg Pack/Wessel/Fab  
Billy Villines - MVP Loveless/Conveyor  
John Horn - MVP HLS Bonding/Big Sonny's

**Sentry Fire/Apex/LBYC Outlasts JLC/Legends/Countrywide 12-7 In Worth-Bud  
Light-USSSA "C-D" Finals At Pastime Park**

Harrison, Oh.--Sentry Fire/Apex/LBYC held off JLC/Legends/Countrywide 12-7 in the second championship game to capture first place in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "C-D" State-National Qualifier on Sunday, May 20th at Pastime Park.

JLC had outslugged Sentry 16-13 in the first finals to force an "if" game, and battled Sentry to a 5-5 stalemate through four and a half innings in the second finals. But Sentry struck for three runs in the bottom of the 5th, then added four in the 6th to pull out the 12-7 victory.

The championship qualified Sentry for the USSSA "C" National Tournament Labor Day Weekend in Ft. Knox, Ky.

Sentry manager Kevin Henn attributed his club's success to "timely hitting" and "solid defense.

"This is the first time we've hit this year," said Henn. "We've started off slowly, but since May it's like somebody hit a light switch. Everybody's hitting together now."

Henn said shortstop Jeremy Bach was his team's defensive standout.

"He was excellent," said Henn. "He took away the six hole all daylong. There were a lot of bad hops, but he kept the ball down in front of him and made the plays."

Back also paced the offense, leading Sentry with an .846 effort.

"He just stepped up and had a big tournament," said Henn. "If he hadn't been there, we obviously wouldn't have been where we were."

Bach almost didn't play due to an illness. He felt so badly in Sentry's second game he took himself out in the 2nd inning.

Craig Piper also played a big role in Sentry's offense, batting .800.

"When you have two guys batting .800 or better, that makes it easy for our pitcher, Brian Walker, to stay ahead and pitch from the lead," commented Henn.

Joey Ellis and Mark Knue also helped pace the offense, batting .714. Tim Barker pitched in with a .667 day and Danny Cahill batted .636.

Sentry Fire/Apex/LBYC looked indomitable in their first two games, as they mercy-ruled Shelton Construction/Hilltop Performance 17-4 in five and Max Softball 18-6 in six.

An eight run 1st and a six run 4th helped carry Sentry past Shelton in game one. Craig Piper's rbi double put his club on the board in the 1st. A sac fly by Danny Cahill capped off the inning. Then in the 4th Piper came through again with a two run double. Piper was 4-for-4, and Joey Ellis went 3-for-4 to fuel the offense.

Next Sentry jumped out to a 12-0 lead after three and a half innings as they romped past Max Softball. Jeremy Bach's rbi double highlighted a three run 1st. Craig Piper doubled home two runs, and Mike Clos had a two run single as the lead swelled to 8-0 in the 2nd. Then in a four run 4th Craig Piper launched a two run homer as Sentry's advantage improved to 12-0. Max cut the deficit in half at 12-6, but in the top of the 6th Sentry plated four more runs to close out the scoring and slam the door on the Max rally.

Jeremy Bach banged out four hits, and Joey Ellis, Timmy Barker, Brian Walker and Danny Cahill combined for a dozen hits for Sentry.

That lifted Sentry into the finals against JLC, who promptly slapped a 16-13 loss on their Northern Kentucky rival to force an "if" game. There the two finalists fought to a 5-5 tie through four and a half innings until Sentry grabbed an 8-5 lead with a three run outburst in the bottom of the 5th. Dan Cahill's two run double put his club on top for good. Brian Bushman then doubled home Cahill to make it 8-5. A three run Jeremy Bach blast helped Sentry take a 12-7 lead in the 6th. Pitcher Brian Walker limited JLC to only two runs after the 2nd inning.

Cahill and Bach shared six hits, and Tim Barner and Mark Knue each went 2-for-3 to power the champions.

Was Sentry worried that things were slipping away after falling 16-13 to JLC in the first finals?

"Going into the first championship game, I felt pretty confident against someone double dipping us," reflected Sentry's Kevin Henn. "But after that first loss, our left fielder had to leave and we had to go with Timmy Barker, who's 54, to run our three man outfield. So we didn't know what was going to happen. But he did fine and we ended up getting the win."

Henn concluded by saluting Pastime Park for a job well done.

“John and Dave (Herbert) ran a great tournament,” said Henn. “We always like going to Pastime. We appreciate their efforts.”

## **Win, Place, Show/Old Spice Get Two Wins In Last At Bat To Take Worth/Bud Light/USSSA “E” State-National Qualifier At Queen City**

**By Andy Zureick**

West Chester, Ohio - Two of the four victories for Win, Place, Show/Old Spice were decided in the bottom of the 7th inning. That lifted them to first place in the Worth/Bud Light/USSSA “E” State-National Qualifier played at Queen City Sports Complex on May 19th.

Win, Place, Show/Old Spice got their first win of the day over Maxed Out. Seven consecutive hits in the bottom of the 2nd led to six runs. Mike Harville and Ken Meyer each had RBI singles as their team broke open a game that had been tied 1-1. The final score was 11-4. Adam Tharman was 3-for-4 with two triples. Tim Schaepacher, Mike Riordan, Joe Fraley, Paul Nutley, and Jeff Hummel all chipped in two hits apiece.

Game two was the first of two straight nail-biters for Win, Place, Show/Old Spice. Facing the Bombers, they trailed 13-12 going into the bottom of the 7th. Joe Kelly led off with a free pass. Mike Riordan followed with a single. Doug Heckman then doubled in the tying run. Mike Harville was intentionally walked to load the bases with no outs. Joe “Clutch” Fraley then delivered the game-winning RBI with a single. He finished the game 2-for-3. Kelly was a perfect 2-for-2. Mike Rioran (2-for-4), Adam Thaman (2-for-4), and Mike Harville (2-for-3) all made solid contributions at the plate in the 14-13 victory.

The match-up between Win, Place, Show/Old Spice and ABP was defensive struggle. This one was again decided in the last at bat. With the game knotted at 5-5 and one out, Adam Thaman singled. Jim Staudengel then hit a line drive to leftfield. The fielder dove to make a catch but whiffed. That allowed Thaman to come around and score and win the game. Tim Schaepacher was 3-for-4 including two doubles. Adam Thaman, Doug Heckman, and Paul Nutley were each 2-for-3 in the 6-5 final.

In the last game of the day, Win, Place, Show/Old Spice made short work of Players. Ken Meyer capped off the three-run 1st with a two-run double. Jeff Hummel did the same in the 3rd as the lead increased to 10-2. They tacked on five more in the 4th and 4 in the 5th. Players did not score in the final two innings and the game ended via mercy rule, 20-7. Jeff Hummel led all hitters by going 4-for-4. Steve Burch and Joe Fraley were both 3-for-4. Tim Schaepacher was 3-for-, driving in three and scoring three. Adam Thaman also went 3-for-5.

Hummel at .777 was also the hitting leader for Win, Place, Show/Old Spice in the tournament. Adam Thaman and Tim Schaep batted .625 and .529, respectively.

“We didn't play that great,” confessed Win, Place, Show/Old Spice manager Paul Nutley. “It is nice to win the tournament without playing our best. The meat of our order hit inconsistently, however the top and bottom of the order pulled us through.”

“Both pitchers did a great job controlling the game. They only walked one guy all day and did a great job on the hitters.,” added Nutley.

Thaman was a standout in the field and at the plate. “He played a shutdown leftfield and stroked the ball. He hit the gaps - had three triples.”

“It was a well run tournament. We had the same umpire all four games and it was nice to have consistent umpiring,” Nutley concluded.

Win, Place, Show/Old Spice earned berths to the USSSA “E” State Tournament on August 18-19 in Dayton and the World Tournament in Milford, Ohio on Labor Day Weekend.

### **Skullbusters Outlast Worth/Bud Light/USSSA Men's “E” State-National-World Qualifier Field At Expressway Park**

**By Andy Zureick**

Milford, Ohio - The Skullbusters put together three wins with no defeats to take first place in the Worth/Bud Light/USSSA Men's “E” State-National-World Qualifier held May 19th at Expressway Park.

The day started with a Skullbuster victory over The Mound. The highlight of the game was back-to-back inside-the-park home runs in the bottom of the 5th inning. The first came off the bat of Steve Schott with two runners aboard. That tied the game at 6-6. Mike Cane followed that with another round-tripper, giving his team a one-run advantage. They would go on to win 10-6. Tony Estes, Ricky Lewis, and Mark Klingshire were all 3-for-3 at the plate for the game.

It took the Skullbusters only five innings to finish off the Renegades in game two. Nate Slusher's two-run double in the bottom of the 3rd led to six runs. They added eight more in the 4th. Mark Klingshire tripled in two runs to cap the at bat and make the score 14-6 in favor of the Skullbusters. The Renegades failed to score in the top of the 5th allowing the Skullbuster to finish it off with only two runs in the bottom of the frame. Klingshire was 3-for-3 for the second straight game. Teammate Ron Abeling also went 3-for-3. Tony Estes added three hits in four tries.

Game three between Skullbuster and OC Softball would decide the tournament title as both teams entered the contest at 2-0. The Skullbusters took control in the top of the 1st with 10 runs. Terry Dollenmeyer and Dennis Eppert each contributed two-run doubles to the cause. It would later get close, but they would never trail. With the lead having been cut to one run, Nate Slusher's two-run double capped of the 3rd inning and provided Skullbusters a little breathing room, 17-12. OC Softball came right back in the bottom of the inning and again cut the advantage to just one run. Then in the 4th, Skullbusters put up five runs to again stretch the lead. Mark Klingshire drove in two with a double. Tony Estes put the finishing touches on the rally with an RBI single. That made it a 22-16 game. OC Softball only managed one run the rest of the way for a 22-17 final. Ricky Lewis led the team with four hits. Ryan Meiers (3-for-3), Dennis Eppert (3-for-4), and Terry Dollenmeyer (3-for-5) had three hits apiece.

Mark Klingshire at .900 posted the top batting average in the tournament for Skullbusters. "Mark has come through every time. We needed a hit, he came up and got it," explained Skullbusters manager Mike Kane.

Tony Estes came in close behind Klingshire for top honors by hitting .889. Besides a strike out in his first at bat of the second game, he was perfect at the plate.

Other batting leaders included Steve Schott (.750), Ryan Meiers (.700), Ricky Lewis (.667), and Terry Dollenmeyer (.667).

Kane summarized his team's efforts in the field saying, "Our outfield - Steve Schott, centerfield; Dennis Eppert, rightfield; Ryan Meiers, leftfield - made all kinds of good catches up against the fence. Terry Dollenmeyer, our pitcher, kept people off base and only walked one guy all day. Everybody played solid on defense."

Skullbusters had already qualified for the USSSA World, National, and State Tournaments, so berths to those events were passed on to OC Softball. The world event is scheduled for September 13-16 in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. Nationals are Labor Day Weekend back at Expressway Park in Milford. The state tournament will be played in Dayton on August 18-19.

### **Community Cab, Macsteel, Master Blasters Take Queen City Division Titles**

West Chester, Oh.--Community Cab went 2-1 to claim the "D" title, while Macsteel and the Master Blasters each swept to a 3-0 record in the "E" divisions, to claim first place in their respective pools in a twelve team, three division Sunday morning round robin May 20th at Queen City Sports Complex.

Community Cab routed Team Havoc (2-1) 19-6 in a key first round match-up with the eventual runner-up, then suffered a 5-3 setback at the hands of Southwest Bombers (1-2) before rallying to drill Boot Hill (1-2) 17-7 in the finale.

Macsteel outscored their opponents 50-15, mowing down RTFS (1-2) 17-2, Plating Tech (2-1) 20-4 and J & H Concrete (0-3) 21-4.

While in division three, the Master Blasters trampled Good Fellows (1-2) 17-1, No Talent (0-3) 15-3 and Hound Dogs (2-1) 19-1 in the deciding contest.

### **Royals Awarded Queen City Title**

West Chester, Oh.--The Royals went 3-1 en route to a first place finish in a five team round robin May 19th at Queen City Sports Complex.

The champions used a staunch defense to hold their three victims to single digit scoring on their way to the title. The Royals knocked off Here For The Beer (1-3) 10-7 and Moose 501 (3-1) 17-8, then suffered a narrow 14-13 setback to American Tickets (3-1) before polishing off the Wolfpack (0-4) 9-4 in the finale.

The Royals tied with runner-up American Tickets and Moose 501 with a 3-1 record, but were awarded first place by virtue of run differential.



## May 26-27 Stories...

### Barth, Jamison Lead Champions To U-Trip World Tourney Berth... **Seven Run 6th Lifts Freeze/Arnold/JAC/Putters Past Good Fellows 13-9 In 27th Annual Dayton Memorial-USSSA "B-C" NIT At Kettering**

Dayton, Oh.--Freeze Concrete/James Arnold/JAC/Putters scored seven runs in the top of the 6th to overcome an 8-6 deficit and went on to dispose of Good Fellows 13-9 in the championship game of the 27th Annual Dayton Memorial USSSA "B-C" National Invitational May 26th at Kettering Fields.

Good Fellows had stunned Freeze/Arnold 18-3 in round robin play earlier in the day. But the eventual champions roared back to crush Oakley Blacktop 17-5 and the Vets 29-2 in round robin play, then mowed down Beef O'Brady's/Bruster's Ice Cream 13-4, Barille 16-10 and Good Fellows 13-9 to claim the title.

The championship gave Freeze/Arnold a berth to the USSSA "B" World Tournament September 21-23 in Lake Buena Vista, Fl.

Pitcher Trevor Barth, Jon Jamison and Jeff Click led Freeze/Arnold to the title, said manager Homer Matheny.

"Trevor did a great job pitching and held teams to an average of eight runs after our first game," observed Matheny."

Jamison hit .739 with several key home runs.

"It was a tough day (for hitters)," said Matheny. "Balls weren't flying out with any frequency. Marginal power hitters weren't going to hit any home runs this weekend. So we relied on Jon and it was very important that he did what he did. He and Richie Jones had two big clutch home runs in the 6th inning of the finals, and really that won it for us."

Jeff Click led Freeze/Arnold with a .767 performance.

"He's coming off back surgery, so each weekend he's feeling better and better. He's still not a hundred percent, but one thing he can do is swing the bat. It was good to see him have a good weekend."

Other hitting leaders for Freeze/Arnold were Richie Jones at .706 and Jim Freeze at .583. Defensively, Matheny cited the efforts of middle infielder Rob Menke and left fielder Donny Sikora.

After finishing second to the Good Fellows (3-0) in round robin play, Freeze/Arnold eased past Beef O'Brady's 13-4 behind four hits from Sikora and three each from Trevor Barth, Jon Jamison and Jayson Scott. An rbi single by Richie Jones in the bottom of the 2nd gave Freeze/Arnold the lead for good at 2-1. The lead swelled to 5-1 in the 3rd. Jayson Scott's rbi single capped off the inning. Finally in the 6th Freeze/Arnold erupted for five runs to blow open an 8-4 contest. Mike Canupp's two run double highlighted the inning.

In the semi-finals, Barille jumped out to an early 7-0 lead over Freeze/Arnold in the bottom of the 1st, but failed to score again until the 7th. Meanwhile Freeze/Arnold chipped away at the lead with two in the 2nd, then outscored Barille 14-0 over the final four innings to pull out an eventual 16-10 victory. The big inning came in the 4th, when Freeze/Arnold used an eight run outburst to grab a 10-7 lead. Back-to-back doubles by Richie Jones and Scott Stigers knotted the score at 7-7, then Trevor Barth doubled in the go ahead run. Jon Jamison followed with a two run shot to cap off the inning. Freeze/Arnold added two in the 5th, three in the 6th and one in the 7th on a Jamison solo shot.

Pat Phillips, Richie Jones and Mike Canupp combined for nine hits to pace the offense.

In a see-saw finals, Good Fellows drew first blood with a run in the bottom of the 3rd. Freeze/Arnold answered with four in the top of the 4th, only to have Good Fellows put up four runs of their own in the bottom of the inning to re-take the lead. Freeze went ahead again at 6-5 with two runs in the 5th, but Good Fellows refused to surrender, responding with three runs in the home half of the inning to take a two run lead at 8-6. Finally in the top of the 6th, Freeze/Arnold plated seven runs to take a 13-8 advantage, and Good Fellows never recovered. A pair of huge home runs, including a two run shot by Richie Jones to break an 8-8 tie, and a Jon Jamison three run shot to close out the scoring for Freeze, helped their team go ahead to stay at 13-8. Good Fellows mustered a lone run in the bottom of the 7th to make the final 13-9.

Jamison and Rob Menke banged out three hits each, and Jones, Donny Sikora and Jeff Click shared six hits.

Freeze/Arnold's Homer Matheny, whose team is off to an uncharacteristically slow start, wasn't satisfied with the win.

"We're just not there yet," said Matheny. "We're not playing well. But I believe it's coming. Hopefully we'll jell for the City Slam (USSSA City Slam June 2-3) and try to get everything together to get to next weekend."

**Archie's/Sportsco/AAA Forces "If" Game, Then Falls In Finals 14-6...**  
**McDonald Pitches Brock/Hot Wings/Schmoe's To Billy Backman-USSSA City Slam "C" Title At Eggleston Park**

Colerain Township, Oh. –Tournament MVP Tony McDonald pitched Brock Restoration/Hot Wings/Schmoe's to a first place finish in the class "C" division of the Billy Backman Memorial-6th Annual USSSA City Slam May 26-28 at Eggleston Park.

Brock/Hot Wings/Schmoe's held off Archie's/Sportsco/AAA Laminating 14-6 in the second championship game after Archie's had forced an "if" game with a 13-12 victory in the first finals.

The title netted Brock \$2,000 in cash.

The winners were paced offensively by Kyle Sullivan (.629), John Trimpe (.622), T. J. Kroth (.583), Todd Walpole (.571), and Tony McDonald (.571). Sullivan, Trimpe, Jim Korman and Adam and Todd Biggs were named to the All-Tournament team. McDonald was tabbed as tournament MVP.

“He controlled the games for us and shut teams down when we needed him to,” commented Brock spokesperson Todd Walpole. “And he hit well. He was one of our top four hitters in the tournament. He pitched a heckuva tournament.

“He knew where to position our players with the help of some good book work from T. J. Kroth,” added Walpole. “We played some teams multiple times.

“We had a lot of close games,” he continued. “When it came down to it if we needed to come from behind, we stuck in there and showed a lot of heart.”

Brock’s leading hitter, Kyle Sullivan scored ten runs and drove in eleven to go along with a 20-for-33 performance.

“He was hitting so well, that he started his way in the 8th spot and made his way into the four hole,” remarked Walpole. “He kept hitting so we had to keep pushing him up in the order.”

Defensively, Walpole said his team “came up with big plays in clutch situations,” especially 3rd baseman Todd Biggs, said Walpole.

“He made every play that came his way, and he actually had to pitch a game for us.”

Brock hardly looked like championship material in round robin play, where they suffered a 10-9 setback to USB in their opener, then mercy-ruled Pure Romance 13-3 in six before escaping with a 10-9, twelve inning victory over Franchise.

In the elimination round, Brock made an adventure out of every game. Against the Hurricanes in the opening round, it took Brock until the 5th inning to shake off their challenger. The Hurricanes led 10-8 after two and a half, but in the bottom of the 3rd Brock plated three runs to grab an 11-10 lead. Todd Biggs’ two run triple put his club ahead to stay. A two run shot by Donny Korman made it 13-10 in the 4th, then in the 5th the lead swelled to 17-10, with a two run swat by John Trimpe capping off the inning. Brock added two more runs to make the final 19-10. Pitcher Tony McDonald held the Hurricanes scoreless over the last four innings.

Trimpe, Adam Biggs and Kyle Sullivan combined for nine hits.

Next Brock waited until the top of the 7th to break an 8-8 tie with Cincys softball.com. Scott Evans singled home the go ahead run after a pair of walks to open the inning. A triple by Jim Korman made it 10-8, then Ryan Spille singled home Korman to close out the scoring.

Evans, Donny Korman and Ryan Spille each went 3-for-4 to fuel the offense.

The dramatics continued in game three, where Brock disposed of Archie’s/Sportsco/AAA Laminating 10-9 thanks to a solo shot by Donny Korman in the top of the 8th. Tony McDonald shut down Archie’s in the bottom of the inning to preserve the win. Todd Biggs contributed three hits.

That lifted Brock into the winners' bracket finals against Pure Romance. Pure Romance jumped out to an 8-2 lead after one, but in the top of the 2nd, a ten run outburst put Brock ahead to stay at 12-8. Donny Korman's two run single broke an 8-8 tie, then Jimmy Korman launched a two run homer to cap off the inning. Brock added two more runs in the 4th to forge a 14-8 lead with the help of an rbi double by Adam Biggs. Then the lead swelled to 16-9 after a two run Don Trimpe homer in the 6th. Pure Romance rallied for four runs before finally succumbing 16-13.

Trimpe, Jim Korman, T. J. Kroth and Tony McDonald combined for a dozen hits.

Archie's/Sportsco/AAA Laminating then ambushed Brock 13-12, but proved no match for the champions in the second finals. Brock never trailed after taking a 3-0 lead in the top of the 1st. A Scott Evans double accounted for the second and third runs. Brock added one in the 4th and two in the 5th on a Tony McDonald homer to take an 8-4 lead, then broke the game open with five runs in the top of the 6th. Adam Biggs' rbi double highlighted the inning.

Tony McDonald pounded out four hits, and Kyle Sullivan chipped in three for the champions.

Brock spokesman Todd Walpole said his team wasn't concerned after dropping the first finals to Archie's, for two reasons.

"We thought we should have won the game," said Walpole. "We were playing behind the whole time. We wanted to come out in the final game and get out on top and make them chase us, and we ended up scoring three runs in the 1st and they ended up chasing us the whole game. So it worked out pretty well."

Also, said Walpole, Archie's was just plain out of gas.

"I think they got worn down the last game. It was pretty hot and it started to show. It was their fifth game," pointed out Walpole.

## **Sub Smashers Best Worth/Bud Light/USSSA "D" Memorial Tournament At Queen City**

**By Andy Zureick**

West Chester, Ohio - Sub Smashers went 6-1, including a perfect 4-0 in double elimination play, to win the Worth/Bud Light/USSSA "D" Memorial Tournament May 26-27 at Queen City Sports Complex.

In round robin play the Sub Smashers were 2-1. They opened the tournament with a 10-3 victory over Upinya Sheep. That was followed by 10-0 blanking of Putters/Bargo's. In the final game of the opening round they suffered what would be their only setback of the weekend, an 8-5 decision to Teamsters. They would later get a chance to avenge that loss in the tournament semi-finals.

Sub Smashers faced Hard Knocks in the first game of double elimination play. John Treleven got his team on the board in the top of the 1st with a two-run triple. They would total four runs in the at bat. Five more in the next frame, including a three-run Johnson of

the bat of Treleven, increased the lead to 9-0. From there, Sub Smashers cruised to a 14-8 win. Treleven totaled three hits in the game. Bryan Laake was a perfect 3-for-3 and teammate Scott Byrnes went 3-for-4.

That set up a rematch between Sub Smashers and Teamsters, the only team to beat them in during the round robin. With the score knotted at 5-5 in the bottom of the 6th, Bryan Laake tripled with the bases loaded to put his team up 8-5. Teamsters failed to score in the top of the 7th and that is how it ended. Laake was 3-4 including the game-winning RBI. Tyler Tabler was a team-best 4-for-4.

Sub Smashers opponent in the first finals was Hammertime. Tony Cunningham picked up two RBI in the bottom of the second to make the score 2-1. Scott Byrnes capped the three-run 3rd with a double that plated two. That increased the lead to 5-1. The steady run production continued in the 4th as Sub Smashers pushed five more across. Tyler Tabler and John Treleven had a pair of two-run doubles in the inning. Hammertime failed to rally late in the 11-5 Sub Smasher victory. Tabler was 3-for-4 in the win. Cunningham and Brian Reisert were both 2-for-3.

Hammertime made it back for another go around with Sub Smashers in the final game of the tournament. This time it was John Treleven with a two-run single that staked the eventual champs to a 2-0 lead in the bottom of the 1st. He picked up another RBI in the 2nd with a solo homer. Five more runs in the 3rd increased the Sub Smashers lead to 9-3. Chris Reisert accounted for two of those scores with a run-producing double. Hammertime showed a little life and cut the lead to 11-10 going into the bottom of the 6th. Sub Smashers then broke it open with four runs in their at bat. Tony Cunningham singled in two of those runs to help put the game out of reach. 15-10 would be the final, as Hammertime could not rally in their last chance. Treleven finished the game 4-for-4. Bryan Laake was again among the team leaders in hitting, this time going 3-for-4.

Scott Byrnes led Sub Smashers in the tournament with a .650 batting average. "He carried us on the first day. Of his 13 hits, he had eight doubles and a home run," noted team manager Brian Reisert.

Just behind him was John Treleven at .625. "He was our clean-up hitter and drove in a lot of runs. He had 15 hits and at least 10 were for extra bases," said Reisert. Other offensive notables included Tyler Tabler (.600) and Bryan Laake (.545).

Mark Ripperger turned in a special defensive performance according to Reisert. "He pitched great all tournament with a bad back...he gutted it out."

Both the Sub Smashers and Hammertime qualified for the USSSA "D" Nationals in Indianapolis on Labor Day weekend. Those two teams along with third-place Teamsters earned berths to the "D" State Tournament on August 18-19 in Harrison.

### **Champions Roll To Fourth Straight Title...**

### **Extreme/Turner Blanks TPE/Backstabbers 7-0 In Billy Backman-USSSA City Slam "C" At Eggleston Park**

Colerain Township, Oh. – Extreme/Turner Properties Services shut out TPE/Backstabbers 7-0 in the second championship game to claim first place in the class "D" division of the Billy Backman Memorial-6th Annual USSSA City Slam May 26-28 at Eggleston Park.

The championship was Extreme/Turner's fourth straight since April 28-29.

TPE/Backstabbers forced an "if" game with an 8-6 victory in the first finals, but pitcher Extreme/Turner's Danny Cupp tossed goose eggs for seven innings in the second finals.

Extreme/Turner went 7-1 in the elimination round of the tournament after posting a 2-1 record in pool play. Ironically, it was TPE who saddled Extreme with their round robin setback in an 8-4 decision.

"Pitching and defense" were the keys to winning the tournament, according to Extreme/Turner manager Chris Hilton.

"That's how we win - plus timely hits. We have to get used to winning games only scoring ten runs a game," said Hilton. "Most of our games are pretty low scoring affairs. So we have to learn how to win with pitching and defense. That's the hardest part of softball...the defense. So if you can get that down, the hitting will shine. I'd take ten good gloves over ten good bats anytime. A lot more people can hit it well than catch it well in slow pitch softball."

Extreme/Turner allowed only one team - Angilo's Pizza Mt. Healthy - to score more than eight runs in their eleven contests. Seven opponents scored five runs or less.

Hilton acknowledged playing a key role in his club's defense over the three day weekend.

"I only made two or three errors at middle infield, and the infields were rough," said Hilton. "We turned several key double plays."

Offensively, Carlton Brock paced his team with a .707, 20 rbi performance. Tournament MVP Adam Harmon followed with a .667 weekend, Matt Leugers batted .622 with a team high 22 rbi's, Bryon Simpson hit .615 and Jason Black .606.

"Carlton's our cleanup hitter and knows his job and does his job game in and game out," said Hilton. "He earns his money in that clean-up spot."

Hilton said that Harmon earned MVP honors by virtue of his defensive performance in right field.

"He played outstanding defense. He made two of the best diving catches I've ever seen in my life. They were superman, body flying through the air, parallel to the ground catches that came in big situations," said Hilton.

"Also his hitting was solid. He's a 21 or 22-year old young kid who is in his second year of softball, and he's developing nicely. and he's definitely a key addition to the team. He brings a lot of energy to the team and we look forward to watching him grow."

Regarding Matt Leugers' 22 rbi's, Hilton said that "clutch hits come off his bat all the time.

“If he’s going to get a hit, he’s driving in runs,” said Hilton. “He places the ball as good as anybody. He stepped up big time and pitched Saturday and Sunday while Danny Cupp was out of town.”

Extreme/Turner rocked Ponder Apparel 27-2 in their round robin opener, but TPE/Backstabbers cooled Extreme quickly with an 8-4 win. Extreme then disposed of BMF 7-5 to finish pool play with a 2-1 mark.

Team defense carried Extreme past their next three opponents, as they mowed down Chili Company 18-6 in five, Team Chaos 8-4 and Lykins Contracting/Sunman Packaging 12-1 in five.

A ten run first proved to be all Extreme needed against Chili Company. A two run single by Chris Hilton and Jeremy Williams’ two run double highlighted the inning. Josh Zickgraf banged out four hits, and Carlton Brock, Eric Mills and Adam Harmon each went 3-for-4 for the winners.

Next Extreme used a four run 3rd and a four run 4th to deal Team Chaols an 8-4 loss. Carlton Brock’s two run double broke a 1-1 tie in the bottom of the 3rd and put his club ahead to stay. Bryon Simpson’s two run double capped off the scoring in the 4th.

Jeremy Williams and Adam Harmon shared six hits.

In game three Extreme broke a 1-1 tie with four runs in the bottom of the 3rd, then erupted for seven runs to blow the game open in the 4th. Carlton Brock’s three run double capped off the 3rd, while Josh Zickgraf delivered the big blow in the 4th with a two run triple. Brock was perfect in three at bats.

Angilo’s Pizza exploded for eleven runs in the bottom of the 1st to erase a 3-0 deficit, but Extreme limited their Angilo’s to one run over the next six innings, and rallied back to tie the score with nine runs in the top of the 3rd and one in the 6th. Finally in the top of the 7th, Extreme used a six run outburst to emerge with a 19-13 victory. Bryon Simpson’s two run double made it 15-13. Aric Mills’ rbi double capped off the scoring.

Simpson, Mills, Jeremy Williams, Carlton Brock, Matt Leugers and Mike Cooper each went 4-for-5 to fuel the offense.

The victory over Angilo’s seemed to pump new life into Extreme, who quickly mercy ruled their next two opponents.

First Extreme routed Community Cab 17-4 in five, blowing open a 7-4 game with ten runs in the bottom of the 4th. Extreme never trailed after taking a 5-1 lead in the bottom of the 1st. Mike Cooper’s two run double highlighted the inning. Matt Leugers had a pair of two run doubles in the 4th. Leugers collected four hits, and Aric Mills, Josh Zickgraf and Chris Hilton added three hits apiece.

Groundtexx fell next 13-3 in six in the winners’ bracket finals. Extreme went up 5-0 in the top of the 1st with a two run single by Mike Cooper capping off the inning. The eventual champions invoked the run rule with a four run 6th that featured a Bryon Simpson two run single.

Simpson pounded out four hits, and Carlton Brock, Matt Leugers and Josh Zickgraf combined for nine.

Extreme stumbled for the second time in the tournament against TPE/Backstabbers 8-6 in the first finals. But there would be no double-dip, as pitcher Danny Cupp took control in the second finals, blanking TPE 7-0. Rbi singles by Carlton Brock and Matt Leugers accounted for two of Extreme's three runs in the top of the 1st. Extreme added lone runs in the 2nd, 3rd, 6th and 7th while Cupp held the Backstabbers at bay. Matt Leugers, who went 3-for-3 along with Carlton Brock to pace the offense, delivered a big rbi triple in the 3rd. Danny Cupp's sac fly in the 7th proved to be a fitting way to close out the scoring.

"The tournament operators did a great job," commented Extreme manager Chris Hilton. "Every game we played was right on time. It was very well organized. They left time in between games to drag the fields. They did a first class job both at Rumpke and Eggleston.

"Also, we want to thank our sponsors, Turner Property Services Group, for their support, and our wives and girl friends that have come out and supported us," said Hilton. "They're like having a 12th man on the field."

### **Down-N-Dirty Takes Care Of Business In Worth/Bud Light/USSSA "E" Memorial Tournament At Queen City Sports Complex**

**By Andy Zureick**

West Chester, Ohio - Down-N-Dirty went 7-1 to win the Worth/Bud Light/USSSA "E" Memorial Tournament on May 26-27 at Queen City Sports Complex. They were undefeated in round robin play and nearly let a championship slip away when they lost in the first finals against Maxxed Out Mudcats. But they got their act together and eventually walked away with the tournament crown.

All three games for Down-N-Dirty in pool play were decided by one run. Win number one was a 4-3 squeaker over Whatever. They followed that with another defensive struggle, this one a 6-5 victory over The Racking Krew. They wrapped up round robin play with a 7-6 win against Maxxed Out Mudcats. It was the first of what would be four meetings between the two teams.

"We didn't hit the ball well in the round robin," noted Down-N-Dirty manager Dave Smith, "but we had timely hits when we need them and played solid defense."

Down-N-Dirty drew Darrly Delights in game one of the double elimination round. It would be their easiest game of the event. Ryan Holly's three-run single in the bottom of the 1st help stake his team to an 8-1 lead, and that was as close as it would ever be. Down-N-Dirty won 16-2 in five by way of the mercy rule. Keith Nagle and Brandon Wenning each had four hits. Nick Hampton was 3-for-5.

That brought Maxxed Out Mudcats up for the first of three games on the second day of play. Trailing 1-0 in the bottom of the 3rd, Ryan Holly drove in two runs to put his team ahead. They tacked on two more in each of the next two innings. In the 5th, Keith Nagle collected both of the RBI with an inside-the-park homerun. Down-N-Dirty claimed



a 6-3 victory in yet another tightly contested affair. Four of their five victories up to that point for Down-N-Dirty had come by a total of only six runs. Ryan Holly was a perfect 3-for-3 in the win. Nagle finished at 2-for-3.

Down-N-Dirty scored in only two of their six at bats against The Players. They got three in the 1st and three more in the 5th. B. G. Gross had an RBI double in the 5th and that would turn out to be the final score in the game for either team as Down-N-Dirty posted a 6-2 win. Brandon Wenning led the team at the plate, going 3-for-4. Nick Hampton, Ryan Holly, and Jason Hall each had two hits.

The finals brought the Maxxed Out Mudcats back for another try. This time they got the better of Down-N-Dirty, 14-9. The result would be one more game between the two, winner take all.

Nick Hampton and Dustin Novinger each had run-scoring base knocks in the top of the 1st to help Down-N-Dirty jump out to a 6-0 lead. Two more in the 4th made it a 9-3 lead. Maxxed Out Mudcats would not score again while, for good measure, Down-N-Dirty added three more in the top of the 7th. The final blow was delivered by Keith Nagle, a two-run inside-the-park round tripper. The final was 12-3 in favor of Down-N-Dirty. Nagle was 4-for-4 in the championship effort. Travis Mize and Jason Hall each went 3-for-4. Brandon Wenning finished 3-for-5.

Nagle at .667 also had the top batting average in the tournament for Down-N-Dirty. "He hits the ball well and makes great contact, and has great base running skills," added Dave Smith, the manager.

Ryan Holly went 16-25 for a .640 average. "Ryan is a solid hitter with a lot of power. He had to keep it in the park because no homeruns were allowed. He's a very good place hitter and hits the ball hard."

Pitcher Ernie Russell earned his way on base 14 times by way of walks. He also struck out five batters.

As for other defensive standouts, Smith gave credit to his whole team as a unit. "We worked together like and engine. We played solid, fundamental ball."

Down-N-Dirty and Maxxed Out Mudcats qualified for the USSSA State Tournament in Dayton on August 18-19 and the Nationals in Milford, Ohio on September 1-3. Chicken-On-The-Run also earned a berth to the state tournament.

### **1st Inning Outbursts Carry Riptide To Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D-E" Sweep At Expressway Park**

Milford, Oh.--Riptide jumped out to a 7-0 lead in the top of the 1st in three consecutive games and never looked back en route to a three game sweep of a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D-E" State-National Qualifier on Monday, May 28th at Expressway Park.

The champions mercy-ruled Clay's Auto 22-4, Those Guys 15-4 and Machine 17-2 - all in five inning fashion.

The victory earned Riptide a berth to the USSSA Great Lakes Division Men's "D" National Tournament September 1-3 in Indianapolis, In.

Runner-up Those Guys was awarded a berth to the Ohio USSSA "D" State August 18-19 in Harrison.

Defense and pitching were the keys to winning the tournament, said Riptide manager Mark Fecke.

"Our defense was excellent," said Fecke. "We only committed one error the entire tournament.

"Also pitching was extremely important. We only gave up ten runs.

"We jumped out to a big lead in each game, putting seven runs up in the first inning of every game," said Fecke.

Lee Dietz led Riptide with a .778 average.

"That's a stud right there," said Fecke. "He was also our defensive MVP. He made a couple fo diving catches in left field to kill some rallies."

Fecke also eclipsed the .700 mark with a .728 performance. Steve Sheets followed at .667, Ray Hopkins batted .625 and Bryan Cooley and Joe Gutzwiller each hit .600.

Fecke also noted the "stellar hitting performance" of Chris Gatti, who batted .200 (2-for-10). "He did hit it out of the infield twice," observed Fecke.

Joe Gutzwiller cracked a three run homer as Riptide jumped out to a 7-0 lead over Clay's Auto in the top of the 1st in game one. The winners put the game away with a fifteen run explosion in the top of the 4th to take a lopsided 21-2 lead. Mark Fecke and Bryan Cooley each contributed a two run double in the inning. Fecke had three doubles for the contest and shared a dozen hits with Gutzwiller, Lee Dietz and Ben Rettig.

Fecke and Cooley each added another two run double in their club's seven run 1st against Those Guys in game two. A four run 4th increased the lead to 13-2. Lee Dietz' rbi single capped off the inning. Fecke and Cooley were both perfect in three at bats.

Tom Heim's two run single highlighted Riptide's seven run 1st versus The Machine in the finale. Heim delivered another big blow with a two run double in the 2nd as the lead swelled to 11-0. Ray Hopkins and Joe Gutzwiller combined for six safeties.