

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

They've been to the last six USSSA Men's Class "B" World Tournaments, and captured two Great Lakes National Championships, four Ohio State titles, and nineteen National Invitational Tournaments in the last five years. And in the last four years, they've been ranked number one in the state, no worse than third in the Great Lakes Division, and no worse than sixth in the nation.

'The only question is: are they a "B" team?

"They" is Freeze Concrete/James S. Arnold/JAC/Putter's Tavern - arguably the most successful team in the nation to continue to play at the same level over an extended period of time.

Some called Freeze the consummate "B" team.

Others call them sandbaggers.

Which one of these long-standing positions is a myth?

In all likelihood, every team in the tri-state, and no doubt many across the country, have played the "Freeze" card when they've been moved up by state or national by-laws, or at the discretion of their director. "How come Freeze never has to move up," they whine, implying that USSSA has a double standard. The moaning is even further exacerbated when the team being moved up is a "C" team. "We can't compete with Freeze," they protest.

Consequently, the name "Freeze" leaves a bad taste in the mouth of many directors, who have probably had the team name thrown up in their faces on more than one occasion.

So just how has this team been able to dodge the "reclassification bullet" through the years?

In reality, they haven't - completely, that is. In 2000, Freeze finished tied for fifth in the USSSA "B" world, which at the time sentenced them to play "A" the following year - which they did. After failing dismally to compete at the "A" level, they returned to "B" in 2001, and finished ninth at the World. The next year they finished seventh, and were accused of throwing the fifth place game, which would have made them an "A" team the following year. One could argue they should have been an "A" team on paper after that episode, but an 0-2 record at the 2003 "B" World hardly indicted them as an "A" team on the field.

After going 1-2 in the 2004 World, Freeze placed fourth in 2005, and it is widely believed the team was on the brink of disbanding when, out of the blue, USSSA changed its by-laws two months later to only require the winner of the "B" World to move up the following year.

Of course this just added fuel to the fire among teams who were protesting their being reclassified for 2006, especially among those in the “C” and “D” programs. After all, they were being reclassified because they finished in the top ten percent at their respective world tournaments, which was the magic number in the men’s “B,” “C,” “D” and “E” programs in the 2005 USSSA by-laws. In their eyes, it was simple: they were being moved up, Freeze wasn’t. Naturally, they cried “foul.”

The Freeze “reign of terror” continued throughout the 2006 season. Despite solid local competition from teams like the Storm, Pure Romance, Graystone Mortgage and A & K Tile, Freeze was as dominant as ever in Greater Cincinnati, winning five NIT’s despite sitting out the first one and placing second to the Storm in the next. Adding insult to injury, they finished fifth in the 43-team U-Trip Major NIT in July, ahead of six “A” teams. Local clubs got a reprieve in August, when Freeze opted to play in the “A” World rather than notch its fifth state title. But Freeze went into a swoon in September, placing fifth in the Great Lakes Nationals and ninth in the World.

Ironically, area “B” teams - even those competing at that level for the first year in 2007 - don’t begrudge Freeze’s playing in the “B” program.

Tom Richmond, whose Loveless Hardwood/Conveyor Solutions/Minges Drywall/A Total Tan/Easton/Noe’s Plumbing Supply team voluntarily moved up the “B” level this year, points out a very important consideration. “They’ve been playing together for awhile, and that makes a big difference.”

Indeed. When Freeze has been dominant, it’s been largely at the local level, and always when established “B” teams are nowhere to be found. When Lucke Homes and EMR stayed together for more than one season, which seems to be the lifetime of the average “B” team in the area, they gave Freeze fits. Back in the Lucke-EMR era of 2002 and 2003, Freeze only won a total of three NIT’s, and failed to win the state tournament either season. This should be a lesson to any team: if you have a rough season your first year at a new level, suck it up. You’ll get better, but not if you throw in the towel after only one year.

Mike Foulks, whose Mike Foulks Auto Body/Team Insanity/Easton team also played “C” last year but has been reclassified to “B” by the USSSA national by-laws, says he used to question Freeze’s “B” rating, but not any more.

“In the past few seasons, I have grown to realize Freeze is just a solid ‘B’ team,” says Foulks. “There is always going to be someone at the top to try to beat, whether they are a local team or an out of town team.”

Robert “Red” Moore, whose teams competed almost exclusively in the ASA and NSA programs over the past several years, and last year at the “A” level, has thrown his hat into the ring to compete locally at the U-Trip “B” level this year with his

Boombah/TPS/Classic Car Wash/Red's club. Moore says that he not only doesn't mind playing Freeze, he wants to model his team after them.

"They've got the chemistry and the base hitting and they just play smart," says Moore. "I want my team to do what they do.

"They're right where they should be," he continues. "I don't think they're an 'A' team by any means."

"Why are they the only team that seems to be scrutinized," asks Tom Nicolaus, whose Community Cab team joined the USSSA "B" program last year. "They have put themselves into a position that they are the standard that everybody else has to beat. They're a good team. If you want to play at that level, get ready to beat them. Last year was the first time we ever beat them. Maybe they had a bad game, and we had a good game."

Like Community Cab, Blitz/Watanabe/TTP/Wessel/A & K/Easton also joined the USSSA "B" circuit in 2006.

"Freeze plays the 'B' game very well, and more teams should aspire to play like that," says Blitz manager Terry Walton. "I have no problem with their playing 'B' because at the 'B' level, you should expect to see teams the caliber of Freeze.

"There is no doubt that Freeze has been the best 'B' team in the city for many years now," adds Walton. "But if you're going to say that they're an 'A' team, it goes beyond what is happening in our city. First of all, if a team is going to play at the 'A' level, they have to have the means and ability and the sponsorship to be able to travel. There aren't many 'A' teams, so (to play "A") it would require an awful lot of travel. This is still a hobby and that's a big commitment for guys to travel to play every weekend."

While USSSA can't classify teams based on their budgets, but must instead look at their ability, Walton has touched on an important point by using the word "ability." Does Freeze have the "ability" to play "A?"

In many parts of the country, including Greater Cincinnati, USSSA has been utilizing "player lists" to aid in classifying teams. Locally, for example, if a team has more than four "D" players, the team would be required to play "D." If there are more than four "C" players, it would be required to play "C," and if more than four "B" players, it would be required to play "B."

Applying this formula to Freeze, we can ask: do they have enough "A" players to play "A?"

The answer? Hardly.

At best, one could argue that returning slugger Jon Jamison, who was class “B” Player of the Year with Freeze in 2005 before leaving for PRI last season, is an “A” player. That being said, bear in mind Jamison failed to make even the “B” All-City team last year. Of the Freeze players who made the 2006 “Open” All-City team, only Bob Noeth and George Farris return. Both are fine ball players, but if either Noeth or Farris - or Jamison - is an “A” player, why would they be playing “B,” when “A” teams are generally believed to pay their players? The career histories of all three players have been at the “B” level. These are veteran players. If they’re capable of playing regularly at the “A” level, why haven’t “A” teams grabbed these guys up?

Freeze manager Homer Matheny says there is a virtual chasm between “A” and “B” teams, not just in budgets but in personnel.

“We played a lot of ‘A’ teams last year,” says Matheny. “We played in two Major NIT’s and the ‘A’ World, and we’re playing against teams that have budgets of over \$100,000 and paying their players. And there is a total gap between ‘A’ teams and ‘B’ teams. There are only fifteen or sixteen ‘A’ teams in the country, and it’s hard for me to consider our team as one of the best in the country. I’m not saying we’re not good, but we don’t have anyone personnel-wise to be lumped in that group of elite teams. Can we play with them and beat them once in awhile? Yes. But as far as talent and payroll, it’s night and day. We’re just a good local ‘B’ team.

“Jon Jamison is definitely an elite player, but that’s really about it,” argues Matheny regarding the strength of his roster. “We don’t try to go out and pick up ‘A’ players from other teams. We really look for a well-rounded, solid ‘B’ player who can play defense and hit for power and be a team player. We’re not into picking up superstars and all-stars who are used to getting paid. For budget and chemistry reasons, those are not the people we’re out there trying to pick up. And because of that, we have stayed a pretty solid, low-budget ‘B’ team.

“A lot of it comes down to intangibles,” adds Matheny. “It’s not necessarily how many home runs you hit, or whether you make the all-city team, or who starts and who doesn’t. It comes down to building a couple of years of experience and the intangibles and chemistry take over and you become successful once you get a taste of what’s expected of you to win. We’ve built a nucleus of players and have tried to mix and match good people who have added good chemistry to a good team, and some years it works, and some years it hasn’t.”

Matheny is right. There is no comparison between the transition from “B” to “A” versus the transition from “E” to “D,” “D” to “C,” or “C” to “B.” “A” teams are permitted five USSSA “Major Players.” “B” teams are limited to one. Freeze has none. And regionally and nationally, Freeze is already competing against teams with several “A” players. Freeze has one - at best.

So the long-standing myth that Freeze is an “A” team?

Busted.

### **The USSSA “B” World: All Local Teams Will Qualify, But Do They Have What It Takes To Win?**

There are no fewer than seven “B” NIT’s slated for Greater Cincinnati in 2007, and another two less than an hour away in Dayton. The top ranked team in Ohio and Kentucky win a berth, as does every team that earns 1,000 points. Another berth is available in the Ohio USSSA “B” State, two at the “B” Nationals and one in the USSSA “Major” NIT in July. So without ever leaving town and without accumulating 1,000 points, there are still a minimum of eleven world berths available for the eight “B” teams in Greater Cincinnati

So the question going into the 2007 season for area “B” teams isn’t whether they will qualify for the World, but rather, will they be able to compete once they get there? And just what does it take to be competitive at the “B” World?

Certainly Greater Cincinnati teams have shown their ability to compete at the “B” World. Over the last five years the twenty-five teams that have made the trip have compiled a respectable 44-50 record.

And perhaps no team in the nation has been there more often than Freeze/James Arnold/JAC/Putter’s Tavern, a participant in an approximately ten U-Trip “B” Worlds. They’ve been 5-2 each of the last two Septembers after suffering through a 1-2 record in 2004 and going 0-2 in 2003.

So team manager Homer Matheny can speak with some authority on what it takes to be competitive once a team gets to Disney’s Wide World of Sports in Lake Buena Vista, FL - the site of this year’s event.

“You have to have a consistent line-up,” states Matheny. “You can’t have any weaknesses in your line-up. We’ve had decent years there but have had a few weaknesses in the line-up in the World and you can’t afford to have any. You need to have a strong top-to-bottom line-up offensively.

“Pitching, defense and team players” are also vital, says Matheny.

“You need to have unselfish players when it comes to using your home runs wisely and knowing the right time to hit one of your four home runs.”

Matheny says teams also need to catch some breaks.

“It’s always important to have the ball bounce your way a few times, and to win the tough games and stay in the winners’ bracket.”

Being “mentally and physically prepared” is another key, says Matheny.

“The ‘B’ World strains teams physically,” he says. “Teams aren’t used to playing late Saturday games and early Sunday games in ‘B’ NIT’s. But with the number of teams and the heat in Florida, plus the quick turnaround time, it can be difficult to contend with if you’re not prepared. This is an especially big factor on championship Sunday at the ‘B’ World.”

“Consistency is the name of the game in any World Tournament,” agrees Terry Walton, manager of Blitz/Watanabe/TTP/Wessel/A & K/Easton.

“With the low home run totals, it puts more emphasis on defense and how you manufacture runs without hitting home runs. That’s very important.”

Competing in their first USSSA “B” World, the Blitz went 0-2, which Walton attributes to a lack of “focus.

“I felt last year we lost our focus by the time we got to the end of the season,” says Walton. “You have to maintain focus and drive throughout the season.

“With seven new players and fourteen on the team, I’m going to have to do my job to put this team in a position to win by putting the best eleven out there offensively and defensively,” Walton continues. “A lot of time with a new team it takes a while to find that right combination where guys play defensively and where they bat. And hopefully by the end of the season, we’ll have those players in the best position to help our team win. That’s a manager’s job.

“And on the players side,” adds Walton, “they have to learn to maintain that drive and keep themselves motivated because it’s a long season. They have to realize they’re not going there for a vacation, but to try to win a World title.”

Community Cab/Marty’s Pub/Easton, another team that played in its first U-Trip “B” World last season, only went 1-2. But they could have done better, insists manager Tom Nicolaus.

“We’re going to have to use our home runs more wisely since you’re only allowed four. And we’ll have to have the consistent hitting to back that up, and don’t make errors in the field. It’s as simple as that,” says Nicolaus.

“That was our problem. We didn’t hit consistently in our second loss, and if we hadn’t hit solo home runs, we would have had a better chance to win in our first loss,” says Nicolaus. “We only lost by one run and we still scored seventeen runs and had four solo home runs. It’s all about execution and timely hitting and we didn’t do that last year when we lost. But when we won, we did.

“We weren’t outclassed,” says Nicolaus. “We definitely have a team that can compete in that type of tournament. We had tournaments in which we beat teams that were better than us, but in other tournaments we didn’t.

“You can’t hit solo home runs when other teams are hitting three run home runs,” he continues. “You have to execute, hit back side and hit the gaps, and you can’t waste opportunities. When we lost in big games, we did that often.”

Experience is also a big factor, explains Nicolaus.

“For almost everybody on our team, it was the first world tournament we had ever been to. You have to learn what it takes to win. And that’s what we’re trying to do.”

Tom Richmond, manager of Loveless Hardwood/Conveyer Solutions/Minges Drywall/A Total Tan/Easton/Noel’s Plumbing Supply, has taken his teams to the last two USSSA World Tournaments - but not at the “B” level.

Two years ago in the “C” World, Loveless went 6-2 and finished 13th. Last year they were 1-2 and 65th. In spite of their poor showing last September, the team has voluntarily elected to play “B” in 2007.

“You really have to have a solid team,” says Richmond. “I’ve found that when you go the World, other areas let teams play down a lot. I found that in the ‘C’ World, you have to have a good, solid, powerful team to make a showing at the ‘B’ level.

“We’ll have to hit and basically make the routine plays in the field to win our games,” says Richmond. “But the main thing is the hitting aspect. If you can’t score fifteen to twenty runs a game, you’re probably going to be in trouble. I also think pitching plays a big part in the success of your team. You have to be solid and be on your game.”

Robert “Red” Moore of Boombah/TPS/Classic Car Wash/Red’s of Northern Kentucky hopes to take a team to his first USSSA World this year. He believes primarily that “teamwork and chemistry,” will bring success.

“If you’re only allowed four home runs, you’re not going to be winning with home runs,” predicts Moore. “We’re just looking forward to the competition. We don’t mind playing the big boys - it’s the only way to get better. If they’re athletes, they’re going to find a way to win.”

Mike Foulks Auto Body/Team Insanity/Easton/Boombah softball team of Northern Kentucky finished 9th in the USSSA “C” World in Michigan last year, and is being forced up to “B.”

But while playing “B” teams won’t be anything new for Team Insanity, sponsor-manager Mike Foulks just doesn’t feel like his team is ready for a steady diet of it.

“We try to play in all the upper level tournaments available to us in this local area,” said Foulks. “And we have had some success. But I believe there is a difference mentally when playing higher caliber teams. When we go out and play teams like Freeze, Blitz, Graystone and the former Storm team, to name a few, players play with built up emotion and the mental grind of wanting to play mistake-free softball to beat the more talented teams.

“You play that type of ball for one, maybe two games,” notes Foulks. “But no team can go out and play like that for several games back to back. I believe we would spend lots of money to go 0-2 or 1-2 at ‘B’ World.”

**Willie DeLuca Selected For “Special Award”...**  
**Rick Linz Elected To Hamilton County Sports Hall Of Fame**

Rick Linz, considered to be the finest shortstop to ever play softball in Greater Cincinnati, has been elected to the Hamilton County Sports Hall of Fame.

And in an unprecedented achievement for softball, sponsor Willie DeLuca, who is deceased, will receive the Hamilton County Sports Hall of Fame’s 2007 “Special Award.”

The two will be honored at the 46th Anniversary Program of the Hamilton County Sports Hall of Fame on Saturday, May 12th, at the St. Patrick’s Knights of Columbus Hall at 7500 Fairpark Avenue in Carthage.

Tickets are \$20 per person, and include a catered dinner. For tickets or any other information call Tom Taylor at 513-831-1153.

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

Taylor, who has been President of the Hamilton County Sports Hall of Fame since 2005, told the Softball News that Linz earned the honor as one of the top two vote recipients among thirteen finalists.

“Any member of the public or any of our committee members can nominate someone,” explained Taylor. “We just need to receive a bio.”

Taylor said the Hall’s Executive Committee then narrows the nominees down to thirteen individuals. For the first time ever, the names of the finalists were printed in the Cincinnati Enquirer and the election of two individuals was conducted by email.

“In the past, all living members of the Hall of Fame plus all members of the Executive Committee elected individuals to the Hall of Fame,” said Taylor. “But for the first time this year, the ballot was also open to the public along with our traditional voters.”



DeLuca, on the other hand, was nominated by Taylor and approved by the Hall of Fame's Executive Committee.

"Willie deserves it, not only for all he did for softball, but for all he did for sports in Hamilton County," said Taylor.

Like Taylor, Richard Anthony Robert Linz was a first team All-Century selection at shortstop in 2000. And like Taylor, who was named "Player of the Decade" for the seventies, Linz was so honored for the eighties. He was also a first team All-Decade selection at short during both the seventies and eighties, an accomplishment no other softball player has ever achieved.

Linz had the rare distinction of earning All-American honors with the Amateur Softball Association (ASA), All-World honors with the United States Slo-Pitch Softball Association (USSSA), and All-Pro honors with the American Professional Slow Pitch League. He made his first USSSA World Series appearance at the age of 22 with Savannah Cafe, and returned the Series in 1978 and 1979 with Greater Cincinnati Sports. He was selected to the All-World teams in both '78 and '79.

In ASA play, Linz' teams captured Major Metro titles in 1979 and '80, and the Mid-West Regional Championship in 1983. That same year he earned All-American honors at the ASA Men's Major National Tournament with Bushelman Construction.

In professional softball, Linz was named All-Pro in both 1977 and 1981 with the Cincinnati Suds. In 1981 the Suds posted the best record in the league, and finished second in the World Series.

Linz was named All-City nine times, and Greater Cincinnati "Player of the Year" in 1979. He was inducted into the Norwood Sorrento's Greater Cincinnati Softball Hall of Fame in 1991.

Linz told the Softball News he was "ecstatic" to learn of his selection to the Hamilton County Sports Hall of Fame.

"I saw some of the names on that ballot and I thought people might think they were more qualified because of their involvement with other sports," said Linz. "I just can't believe out of all those people that I was one of the top two vote recipients. I'm very pleased and surprised that enough people saw the article and would vote for me."

Linz, who is also in the Roger Bacon Sports Hall of Fame, said that his induction into that and the softball hall of fame "were real honors.

"But to be recognized out of all these great athletes from all over the county who were on the ballot is such a great honor," said Linz.

Linz will be joining some elite company. Other members of the Hall of Fame include World Heavyweight Champion Ezzard Charles, baseball's all-time hit leader Pete Rose, Olympic Archer Gold Medalist Darrel Pace, professional football Hall of Famer Roger Staubach, and former Cincinnati Reds owner Marge Schott.

"It's great to be in the same hall of fame with all of those people," acknowledged Linz.

Linz also said his election would be "good for softball.

"Softball usually takes a back seat to a lot of other sports like golf and baseball," said Linz. "I was hoping a lot of softball people would email their vote in to have one of their own elected to the Hamilton County Sports Hall of Fame.

"I want to thank everyone who voted for me," said Linz. "It seems like it would have been all that much harder to be voted in by email vs. through their committee."

Willie DeLuca, whose name was synonymous with Cincinnati softball, died last fall of an apparent heart attack at University Hospital.

The 58-year old manager of the family restaurant - Sorrento's Pizza and Restaurant on Montgomery Road in Norwood - was only weeks away from reopening the popular sports bar and home of the Greater Cincinnati Softball Hall of Fame.

In April 2005, the building had been gutted by a fire that claimed the life of Enrico DeLuca, Willie's father and the 82-year old founder of the restaurant.

DeLuca, who is credited with pioneering the sports bar concept, filled the walls of his restaurant with sports memorabilia. Sorrento's was frequented by many area sports celebrities, and DeLuca often entertained customers by balancing chairs, swords, bats and other objects on his nose. He donated to, and helped raise money for, a multitude of charities, and supported recreation programs and sponsored teams.

But his fondness for softball may have been his favorite avocation.

DeLuca sponsored competitive men's and women's teams in the mid-seventies. His 1974-'75 men's teams won back-to-back ASA Major Metro Championships and boasted several future Hall of Fame players. In 1976 his women's team achieved softball's ultimate prize, capturing an ASA Women's Major National Championship under manager Merle Williams. It was Sorrento's finest hour.

DeLuca accumulated countless softball trophies from sponsoring league and tournament teams, many of which were displayed in the back of his restaurant until he ultimately ran out of space to store them.

In the mid-eighties DeLuca operated an annual Sno-Softball Tournament, which was a fundraiser for the March of Dimes that attracted over a hundred teams each year and raised tens of thousands of dollars.

During the nineties, after then Softball Hall of Fame sponsor Hudepohl Brewing Company closed its offices in Queensate, DeLuca invited the Hall of Fame to move to Sorrento's, and it's been there ever since. And when Hudepohl went out of business a few years later, DeLuca picked up the sponsorship of the Hall of Fame.

The DeLuca family is proceeding with the reopening of the family restaurant, which will feature a large bar and dining areas, a game room and a Softball Hall of Fame room.

The grand reopening is expected to take place sometime in the spring of 2007.

**Last Call For Spring Season; Openings Still Available At Some Sites...**  
**Register Now! CRC Leagues Are Best Deal In Town With Three Seasons, No Gate Fees, Central Location**

With a three season format, early registration, no gate fee, centrally located fields and optional sites, a cancellation number for each field, and all balls, bases and umpires included in league entry fees, the Cincinnati Recreation Commission Softball Program is the best deal in town for 2007!

Lighted Leagues and Sunday afternoon leagues will begin play on Sunday April 1st. These leagues will play at Oskamp, Oakley, Salway, and Schmidt fields and will use an eight game season format. The fee for all lighted leagues is \$350 (eight games). The fee for Sunday afternoon (unlighted) games is \$285 (eight games).

Twilight leagues (unlighted) will begin on Sunday April 15th. These leagues will play at Airport, Oskamp, Oakley, Salway, Schmidt, and Withrow fields and will use a ten game season format. The fee for twilight leagues is \$345 (ten games).

### **DOWN PAYMENTS**

This year the CRC Athletic Division will allow teams to hold a spot with a \$100.00 down payment. The remainder of the registration fee is due by Thursday March 1st to allow time to get schedules out in a timely manner. Down payments are non-refundable. If full payment has not received by March 1st. your spot can be replaced by a full payment registration and without refund of down payment.

### **THREE SEASONS**

Our three season (spring, summer, and fall) leagues at Schmidt worked out so well again in 2006 the CRC Athletic Division will continue that program in 2007. Also, all CRC Softball field locations will again offer the one fee covers everything (registration fee, umpire fee, balls, and bases).

## **FIELD UPDATES**

The Athletic Division will also be offering field and weather condition updates at all field locations for the 2007 season. Each field will have its own individual rainout program cancellation number for the teams. This will provide better game day communication and help to prevent unnecessary trips to the fields by the teams.

## **ALL LEAGUES**

All leagues (lighted and unlighted) include ASA and USSSA registration, scorebook, rulebook, and Cincinnati Softball News subscription for each manager.

## **UMPIRES**

Umpires will be assigned by the Cincinnati Recreation Commission. The CRC Athletic Division will be holding umpire training on Sunday January 14th from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. The CRC is looking for ex players and current umpires who are on time, KNOW the rules, hustle, are professional, and believe in great customer service. Contact Ron Odenbeck at 352-1627 for further information.

## **USSSA News**

### **Over 300 Attend Expressway Park League Meeting**

Batavia, Oh.--Over 300 managers, coaches and team representatives attended the 2007 Expressway Park League Meeting March 14th at the Holiday Inn Eastgate.

The meeting started with an observance of the passing of Wayne Rust, the Expressway Park umpire-in-chief for the last ten years and an umpire for over 25 years.

The meeting continued with Park Manager Bob Owens reviewing rule changes, league managers' responsibilities and park policies for 2007. Mark Linnemann, USSSA Great Lakes Division Vice-President and Editor & Publisher of the CINCINNATI SOFTBALL NEWS, reviewed information about the USSSA program and the CINCINNATI SOFTBALL NEWS.

The 2006 umpire awards for the Buckeye Umpire Association that services Expressway Park were also announced. Among the umpires honored were Ken Neace, who was selected as the Buckeye Umpire Association's "Rookie of the Year;" Rick Vanover, Scott Pyles, T. J. Carty and George Preston, who each received the "Umpire-In-Chief Service Award;" Joe Bucalo, who was presented the "Hustle Award;" and Lonnie Grizzell, who was picked the "Buckeye Association Umpire Of The Year" for the third straight season. Bob Lipsky received the Buckeye Umpire Association "Umpire-In-Chief's Award."

The top door prize winner was Jason Howard, who won a Worth "Mutant" Bat. Team sponsorship raffle winners included Richard Arnold (Dell Pentium IV Computer), Rhonda Hensley (LCD TV), Ken Jones (DVD Player), Dan Booso (Holiday Inn Weekend Getaway) and Rob Ballou (Boom Box).

Over 25 additional manager and player door prizes were awarded, including the Worth "Mutant" bat, DeMarini Double Wall bat, Worth fielder's glove, six pairs of Worth and Miken batting gloves, Nascar-Budweiser bar mirror, Worth equipment bag, four Quaker Steak and Lube \$25 gift certificates, a free kickball league entry fee, \$100 Expressway Park tournament credits, and numerous other softball related merchandise.

Expressway Park league play begins on Tuesday, April 3rd. Monday leagues begin on April 9th. Limited league openings are still available for both mixed rec and men's C, D and E leagues. Interested teams should call the park as soon as possible to secure a spot for the 2007 season.

For information on Expressway Park softball leagues, or to receive a 2007 tournament calendar, contact Expressway Park at 831-BASE.

### **Expressway Park Announces Return Of "Grand Salami" Mini Round Robin Program For 2007**

Batavia, Oh.--Expressway Park has announced the return of its exciting "mini" (three game) round robin program enhancements for the 2007 season.

The fourth year program boasts a bold pricing structure for round robins and an cutting edge awards program.

"We were trying to encourage more teams to play in more round robins, so we offered discounts to our repeat customers," explains Owens. "It proved to be very popular."

Owens says that teams participating in their first round robin pay the regular price for a three game mini round robin of \$99.00. The second round robin will only be \$89.00, the third only \$79.00, and thereafter, teams can play in mini round robins for the rest of the season for only \$69.00.

"We looked at our round robin participation, and only a handful of teams were playing in more than one or two events," says Owens. "We're hoping this will make it attractive enough for them to come back to the park several times during a season, just as they did last year."

The park's awards program for round robins will again feature "Expressway Bucks," which can be cashed in for "t-shirts, trophies, jackets, team t-shirts, caps or pro shop merchandise including bats," says Owens.

“The winner of each round robin will receive \$75.00 in Expressway Bucks, and the runner-up \$25.00,” he says. “This will give our round robin teams more choices and also enable them to accumulate ‘Bucks’ to use towards a variety of awards that were not available to them before. It will also encourage teams to come back to Expressway to try to accumulate Expressway Bucks to use towards more expensive awards like jackets and bats.”

Owens adds that the top sixteen teams accumulating points in Expressway Park’s round robins will be invited back for the park’s annual “Round Robin Jacket Appreciation Tournament” on September 22nd.

“We feel like these enhancements have made Expressway Park’s round robins more enjoyable and more rewarding than ever,” says Owens. “And, like last year, we hope this will not only attract more teams to the park, but also encourage them to play more often.”

### **Leep, Shields Power Boombah/TPS/Classic Car Wash/Red’s To Pre-Season Title At Riverstar**

John Leep batted .900 and Steve Shields .818 to power Boombah/TPS/Classic Car Wash/Red’s to a first place finish in a pre-season round robin March 11th at Riverstar Park.

After outslugging PBSI 24-21 in their opener, Boombah/TPS/Classic Car Wash/Red’s battled past Best Way Frame/Nasty Boys 24-21 and Dawg Pack/Wessel Sports/A-1 Fabricators 9-7 to complete a three game sweep.

Following Leep and Shields .900 and .818 averages were Kevin Rassman at .769 and Matt Reynolds at .700.

Boombah/TPS/Classic Car Wash/Red’s manager Robert “Red” Moore said that Leep has worked hard on his hitting in the off-season.

“In the USSSA Major NIT in Cincinnati last year, he went 3-for-13. But he’s worked all winter long and I was might surprised and proud for him to come out and go 9-for-10,” said Moore.

The key to winning the tournament, said Moore, was “timely hitting.

“We had some timely hitting for it being early in the season. But we played no defense whatsoever,” said Moore.

Moore did make one exception to that comment.

“Matt Reynolds played a good shortstop for us and was playing out of position.”

Kevin Rassman went 5-for-5 with a slammer, a two run homer and nine rbi's, and Scott Beverly clubbed a grand slam and collected six rbi's as Boombah/TPS/Classic Car Wash/Red's outslugged PBSI 24-21 in game one.

Rassman and Lance Fossitt then combined for eight hits, and Steve Shields chipped in three in a 12-9 victory over the Nasty Boys.

In the finale Fossitt cracked two home runs and went 3-for-4 along with Rassman and Shields.

"We were a little patchwork for our first weekend out, but we had a good day and enjoyed it," summed up Moore. "It's nice to be back out among friends. We're all family."

### **Travelodge 55-Over Squeaks Past Ruth Realty 12-11 For Senior Softball USA "Tournament Of Champions" Crown**

Winter Haven, Fl.--The Travelodge 55-Over Softball Team, comprised of players from Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois, scored a run in the bottom of the 7th to edge Ruth Realty of Washington State 12-11 in the championship game of the inaugural Senior Softball USA "Tournament of Champions" February 23-25 in Winter Haven, Fl.

Two local players - Bill Brown of Independence, Ky., and Bill Willis of Bright, In. - are members of the team.

Senior Softball USA launched the "Tournament of Champions" as a way to bring national champions of various associations together in order to crown a "Champion of Champions. Travelodge won the 55-over division with a 5-2 mark.

The title was the fifth national championship in a row captured by the Travelodge team. In the last four years the team has won ten national championships.

Travelodge also fielded a 50-over team in the tournament. Brown and Willis are also members of that team along with Timmy Barker of Hebron, Ky.

The Travelodge 50-over team won three national championships at the major level, including the ISA Nationals in St. Louis, Mo. in August, the ASA Nationals in Burlington, NC in September, and the Las Vegas Senior Softball Association Nationals in Las Vegas in October.

In St. Louis, Travelodge 50-over went 7-1, tripping up Kittrell's (FL) by rallying for two runs in the bottom of the 7th for a dramatic 12-11 victory in the second finals. Bill Brown and Tim Barker were selected to the All-Tournament team.

At the ASA Nationals in Burlington, NC, Travelodge swept to a 5-0 record, rallying all the way back from a 29-19 deficit with eleven runs in the bottom of the 7th in the championship game to win 30-29. Tim Barker was named to the All-American team.

In Las Vegas, Travelodge double-dipped DeClaire Insurance for an 8-1 mark, spanking DeClaire 30-13 in the finals. The winners played five games in a row without a break on the final day of the tournament. Bill Brown and Bill Willis were named to the All-Tournament team.

In November the Travelodge 55-over team was formed, and promptly recorded its maiden tournament victory at the winter nationals in Ft. Myers, Fl. with a 7-1 mark. Travelodge upended Spicers (MD) twice in the finals, including a 24-23 victory in the second championship game. Travelodge scored five runs in the bottom of the 7th to pull out win. Bill Brown made the all-tournament team.

### **Martin, Reising Power Big Boy Plumbing To 6th Annual Bash For Cash ASA A/B Title At Riverstar**

Doug Martin hit .852 and clubbed eight home runs, and Joe Reising batted .667 with ten homers to power Big Boy Plumbing to a first place finish in the ASA Class A/B Division of the 6th Annual Bash For Cash March 17-18 at Riverstar Sportsplex.

Big Boy Plumbing took first place in pool play on Saturday with a 2-1 mark, rallying from a first round 30-26 setback to Loveless Hardwood/Conveyor Solutions/Minges Drywall/A Total Tan/Easton/Noel's Plumbing to outlast North Carolina Softball Sales 33-32 before routing Iowa Impact 27-14.

Then on Sunday, the Elizabethtown, Ky. club used a staunch defense to erase Smashmouth 16-2 and Iowa Impact 21-9 before avenging their loss to Loveless 28-11 in the finals.

Doug Martin turned in a red-hot .852 (23-for-27), eight home run weekend, Troy Autry batted .815 with three home runs, Andy Wilson cracked five home runs and hit .769, Richard Price and Ty Porter each hit .704 and belted seven home runs, and Joe Reising batted .667 with a tournament leading ten homers.

Martin was named tournament MVP.

"He's the ultimate team player and he'll do whatever he has to to win," commented Big Boy manager Garrien Martin. "He plays the game harder than anybody I've played with or against. He gives it all on every play. It doesn't matter if he's playing co-ed rec or men's competitive."

Despite the high batting averages his team compiled in the tournament, Martin pointed to his team's defense as the key to winning the title.



“It was our ability to field the routine ground balls,” said Martin. “Generally when we play the bases are sixty to sixty-five feet, and with the bases being back at eighty feet, that throws a huge emphasis on fielding ground balls. And if you have an opportunity to turn a double play, you’d better do it. You might not get a chance to make another out with the way the bats and the balls are nowadays.”

Martin his shortstop, Chad Akers, and middle infielder Kiley Vaughn combined to turn eight double plays in the tournament.

“They were unbelievable,” said Martin.

Sunday morning in the elimination round, Big Boy’s defense, which had allowed 76 runs in three games on Saturday, tightened up.

First they smothered Smashmouth 16-2, jumping out to a 12-0 lead in the bottom of the 2nd and never looking back. Andy Wilson put his club on the board with a two run shot in the 2nd. Joey Reising and Doug Martin added three run blasts, and Chad Akers and Chad Emerton went solo.

Reising went yard twice in the contest, and shared six hits with Martin.

Next Big Boy Plumbing used an eight run 4th to break a 9-9 stalemate with Iowa Impact and went on to post a 21-9 victory. Richard Price’s rbi single put his team ahead to stay at 10-9 in the 4th. Andy Wilson connected for a slammer later in the inning to push the lead to 15-9.

Doug Martin homered twice and went 4-for-4, and Elton “Porky” Caffee belted a pair of home runs and combined with Price, Wilson, Troy Autry, Chad Emerton and Andy Wilson for fifteen safeties.

That set up a re-match with Loveless, and revenge was sweet. Big Boy broke open an 8-2 game with seven runs in the top of the 4th with Ty Porter delivering the big blow, a three run swat. Big Boy landed the knockout punch with an eight run 6th to extend their lead to 28-9. Joe Mitchell’s slammer and a two run Richard Price double highlighted the inning.

Troy Autry pounded out five hits, Doug Martin homered and had four hits along with Joey Reising and Chad Akers, and Kiley Vaughn chipped in with three hits.

Big Boy Plumbing manager Garrien Martin said he his team expected to do well in the tournament.

“We knew there was a chance it was going to be a very competitive field,” said Martin. “And we didn’t come to finish second. We planned on winning, although it doesn’t always turn out that way.”

Did Martin expect to meet Loveless in the finals?

“I figured it would come down to between them and Blitz,” he said. “They were the two most complete teams offensively and defensively. And you have to have a little bit of both.”

**6TH ANNUAL BASH FOR CASH ASA “A/B”  
DIVISION FINAL TOURNAMENT STANDINGS**

1. Big Boy Plumbing 3 0
2. Loveless/Conveyer/Minges/Tot. Tan/Easton/Noel 3 1
3. Iowa Impact 2 1  
Blitz/Watanabe/TTP/A & K Tile 1 1
5. Classic Car Wash/Red’s/TPS/Boohbah 1 1  
Smashmouth Softball 1 1  
Community Cab 0 1  
DO/Miken 0 1
9. Arsenal 0 1  
NC Softball Sales 0 1  
Sports Machine/Win-Place-Show 0 1  
Team Mojo 0 1

**6TH ANNUAL BASH FOR CASH CLASS “A/B”  
DIVISION ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM**

Danny Herbera Iowa Impact  
Andy Schultz Iowa Impact  
Steve Bosch Blitz/Watanabe/TTP/A & K Tile  
Jason Roesch Blitz/Watanabe/TTP/A & K Tile  
Mike Dillion Loveless/Con./Minges/ATT/Easton/Noel  
Steve Walton Loveless/Con./Minges/ATT/Easton/Noel  
Justin Minges Loveless/Con./Minges/ATT/Easton/Noel  
Tylor Minges Loveless/Con./Minges/ATT/Easton/Noel  
Joey Rising Big Boy Plumbing  
Ty Porter Big Boy Plumbing  
Troy Autry Big Boy Plumbing  
Richard Price Big Boy Plumbing  
Andy Wilson Big Boy Plumbing  
Joey Rising - HR Leader (10) Big Boy Plumbing  
Jason Roeder - ODP Loveless/Con./Minges/ATT/Easton  
Doug Martin - MVP Big Boy Plumbing

**Friday Night “Wake Up Call” Sparks Champions...**  
**Mike Foulks/Team Insanity/Easton Mercies Bash For Cash-ASA “C” Field At  
Northern Kentucky Sports Park**

Taylor Mill, Ky.--Most tournament wake-up calls come early in the event.

But in the ASA "C" division of the Bash For Cash, eventual tournament champion Mike Foulks Auto Body/Team Insanity/Easton got there's on Friday night.

"We played in a round robin on and Elk & Elk run-ruled us," explained Foulks. "So we had a different attitude coming out Saturday morning. We felt like we were embarrassed by the way we played Friday night, and we made a decision to play great fundamentals as a team, with nobody trying to make standout plays. Just do their jobs and play the basics the way the game is supposed to be played."

The strategy definitely worked. Mike Foulks/Team Insanity/Easton mercy-ruled six of their seven opponents, and turned the tables on Elk & Elk in the championship game with a 27-6 spanking March 17-18 at Northern Kentucky Sports Park.

Only one team, Dawg Pack/Wessel/A-1, took Team Insanity past five innings. But even that was a no contest, as the winners drilled Dawg Pack 25-14 in the first round of the elimination tournament.

Roger Boles and Chuck Wagner paced the offense, each batting a sizzling .900 for the tournament. Wagner's performance came off the bench, as he went 9-for-10. Tournament MVP Seth Tracy turned in an .833 weekend, and Brandon Johnson was right behind at .827.

Mike Foulks batted .681 as a team.

"Roger was 18-for-20 in the five hole and was making excellent hitting decisions to both sides of the field to move the base runners," observed sponsor-manager Mike Foulks. "And Seth batted .833 and played an excellent 1st base. His defense was excellent the whole weekend."

Foulks also had kudos for substitute pitcher Eddie Weinberg. "He pitched for us Saturday and only walked one guy in three games and fielded the middle and got us into the championship bracket," said Foulks.

Team Insanity trampled their three round robin opponents Saturday, romping past Tilton Trucking 22-11, Oakley Blacktop 16-4 and No Limit 20-6. All three games ended after five innings.

Craig Johnson banged out four hits, and Jason Murphy and Andrew McGowan shared six in the opener against Tilton.

Johnson, Roger Boles and Roger Drake were each perfect in three at bats versus Oakley.

Then Johnson, Eddie Weinberg and Seth Tracy each went 3-for-4 against No Limit.

Mike Foulks used a nine run 5th to break open a 20-11 stalemate with Dawg Pack/Wessel/A-1 in the first round of the elimination tournament. Andrew McGowan put his club ahead to stay at 12-11 with an rbi double. Eddie Weinberg followed with a two run double to make it 14-11 and Mike Foulks never looked back. Brandon Johnson pounded out five hits, Seth Tracy and Jimmy Burt added four each and Trent Thompson went 3-for-3.

An eleven run 1st sealed a 22-9, five inning pasting of Buffalo Joe's in game two. Craig Johnson collected five hits, and Seth Tracy, who launched a key three run homer in the 1st, had four hits along with Brandon Johnson. Jim Burt chipped in with a 3-for-3 effort.

Team Insanity used a seven run 1st and a seven run 3rd to dispose of EAP/Western Hills Windows/Cooper Sports in the semi-finals 23-12. Mike Foulks jumped on top 7-0 in the 1st on the strength of eight doubles, including a two run double by Roger Boles to put his club on the board. Brad Louallen added a two run double in the inning as the lead swelled to 5-0. Seth Tracy contributed a two runs single and Andrew McGowan a two run double in the 3rd to help their team take a commanding 15-3 advantage. EAP cut the deficit to 18-12 after four, but a five run 5th capped off by a three run Brad Louallen blast brought the curtain down. Roger Boles continued to spearhead the offense with four hits, and Louallen, Eddie Weinberg and Jason Murphy combined for nine hits.

Team Insanity erupted for nine runs in the top of the 2nd to break open a 2-0 game with Elk & Elk in the finals. A two run Trent Thompson single and a two run double by Roger Boles highlighted the inning. The lead snowballed to 18-6 after four, but Foulks exploded for nine more runs to dim any hope of a rally from Elk & Elk in the top of the 5th. Craig Johnson cracked a three run homer in the inning, and Jason Murphy plated two runs with a double.

Andrew McGowan lashed out five hits, Boles and Seth Tracy shared eight, and Murphy added four to power the champions.

Team Insanity's Mike Foulks credited his club's championship to "team chemistry.

"We have a bunch of guys who do not stand out as individuals, but who play very well as a team," remarked Foulks. "They play within themselves and don't try to play outside the realm of their capabilities.

"I want to thank Wessel Sports and Northern Kentucky Sports Park for getting the fields ready in view of the weather conditions we had," summed up Foulks. "We enjoyed the opportunity to play out of town teams, which is excellent for our first big tournament of the year."

## **6TH ANNUAL BASH FOR CASH ASA "C" DIVISION FINAL TOURNAMENT STANDINGS**

1. Mike Foulks Auto Body/Team Insanity/Easton 4 0

2.	Elk & Elk	3	1
3.	EAP/Western Hills Window/Cooper	2	1
	All Ohio	1	1
5.	Oakley Blacktop	1	1
	Buffalo Joe's	0	1
	Tiger Fitness	0	1
	Walker 5/5	0	1
9.	DMB/Worth	0	1
	DP/Wessel/A-1	0	1
	J. Dean Masonry	0	1
	Street Kids	0	1

### **Outscores Five Opponents 111-22 At Pastime Park...**

#### **Brock Restoration/Hot Wings/Schmoe's Collision Tramples Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Spring Swing "C" National Qualifier Field**

Harrison, Oh.--Brock Restoration/Hot Wings/Schmoe's Collision romped past five opponents en route to a first place finish in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Spring Swing "C" National Qualifier March 3-4 at Pastime Park.

Brock/Hot Wings/Schmoe's outscored their victims by a combined 111-22 margin on their way to the title, sweeping past Oakley Blacktop 16-6 in the finals for their fifth straight mercy-rule win. The ten run difference was as close as any team got to the champions, who never allowed more than seven runs while averaging 22 runs per game on offense.

The victory gave Brock a paid berth to the Ohio USSSA Men's Class "C" State Tournament August 18-19 in Milford. Oakley also qualified for the state tournament. Brock earned a berth to the U-Trip "C" Nationals Labor Day Weekend in Ft. Knox, Ky. as well.

Leading the onslaught for Brock were Ryan Spille (.917), John Trimpe (.857, 15 rbi's), Todd Walpole (.813, 14 runs), Jimmy Korman (.800, 3 HR's) and Adam Biggs (.750).

Jumping out to early leads, the pitching of Tony McDonald and defense were the keys to winning the title, said Brock manager Todd Walpole.

"We hit together," pointed out Walpole. "We had a couple of innings when we didn't score, but when we hit, we hit together. We got ahead on a couple of teams big early. Against M & S we scored thirteen runs in the first and that really put the damper on things for them.

"Also Tony Mac's pitching was big," added Walpole. "He held the other teams to 22 runs in 22 innings. That was pretty impressive. He pitched a heckuva tournament.

“We played solid defense too,” noted Walpole. “Especially considering the conditions. It was cold and muddy and slick.”

Walpole said that Ryan Spille (11-for-12) and Adam Biggs (12-for-16) “were both key.

“Ryan was consistent and helped carry us through to get back to the top of the order,” said Walpole. “His average was pretty impressive considering he batted sixth or seventh in the order.

“And Adam Biggs batted .750 from the nine hole and helped turn the order over. Also John Trimpe’s fifteen rbi’s was huge.”

Walpole called Jimmy Korman “the player of the tournament.

“Everything he did came in a key situation and got us started.”

Brock/Hot Wings/Schmoe’s waltzed through round robin play, overpowering Oakley Blacktop 18-7 in five innings, M & S Drywall 19-1 in four, and the Young Guns 18-3 in four.

A ten run 5th blew open an 8-5 contest against Oakley. Jim Korman’s two run shot made it 15-5. Kyle Sullivan followed with a three run blast to cap off the inning. Korman, John Trimpe, Ryan Spille, Todd Walpole and Mike Bedel combined for fifteen hits.

A thirteen run 1st sealed Brock’s rout of M & S. Jimmy Korman clubbed a pair of home runs and collected five rbi’s in the inning. Kyle Sullivan and Adam Biggs each contributed a two run double. Korman, Todd Walpole, Ryan Spille and Donny Korman shared twelve hits.

Brock rocked the Young Guns for eight runs in the 1st and nine in the 2nd en route to an eventual 18-3 spanking in their round robin finale. Kyle Sullivan’s two run homer followed a two run double by Donny Korman to account for four runs in the 1st. Tony McDonald singled home two runs in the 2nd.

Jimmy Korman and Scotty Evans banged out three hits each for the winners.

Brock unleashed a forty run barrage against All-Season’s Reload in the elimination round semi’s, crushing their opponent 40-5 in only three innings. Brock followed a 19-run 2nd with a 17-run third to break open a 4-3 game. Steve Atkinson launched a three-run bomb in the 3rd, and John Trimpe added a three run dinger in the 4th.

Jimmy Korman swatted out five hits, Trimpe, Mike Bedel, Adam Biggs and Scotty Evans chipped in with four apiece, and Todd Biggs went 2-for-2 with four rbi’s.

Oakley Blacktop drew first blood in the finals, jumping out to a 4-0 lead after two and a half innings. But in the bottom of the 3rd Brock plated seven runs to grab a 7-4 lead,

then padded their advantage to 13-4 on the strength of a six run 5th. John Trimpe connected for a three run blast to put his club ahead to stay in the 3rd at 6-4. Donny Korman's two run shot highlighted the 5th.

Todd Walpole, Kyle Sullivan, and Todd and Adam Biggs combined for a dozen safeties for the champions.

Brock manager Todd Walpole said his team was "very surprised to walk through the tournament with such ease.

"We weren't sure what kind of competition would be out there early in the season considering it was so cold," said Walpole.

"We just stayed loose. We all hang out together and have known each other for a while. Not being pressured and hitting is really what won it for us. We got ahead early and didn't allow teams to catch up.

"One game we were behind in the 4th, but we didn't feel any pressure," continued Walpole. "We knew we had been hitting the whole tournament and it was just a matter of time."

#### **PASTIME PARK-SPRING OPEN USSSA MEN'S CLASS "C" TOURNAMENT FINAL STANDINGS**

1. Brock Restor/Hot Wings/Schmoe's, Cinti., OH 5 0
2. Oakley Blacktop/Trophy Sports, Dayton, OH 2 3
3. All Seasons Reload, Hamilton, OH 2 3
- M & S Drywall/Easton, Cincinnati, OH 2 2
5. Young Guns, Cleves, OH 1 3

#### **Seven Run 7th Lifts Champions At Pastime Park...**

#### **Two-N-Out.com Outlasts TPE/Backstabbers 21-20 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Spring Swing "D" National Qualifier Finals**

Harrison, Oh.--Two-N-Out.com fended off TPE/Backstabbers 21-20 in the championship game to best a 21-team field in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Spring Swing "D" National Qualifier March 3-4 at Pastime Park.

Two-N-Out.com rallied for seven runs in the top of the 7th to overcome a 17-14 deficit, then held off TPE/Backstabbers in the bottom of the 7th to preserve a 7-0 weekend. The champions went 3-0 in round robin play, then averaged 20 runs per game in the elimination round to nail down the title in Greater Cincinnati's first tournament of the 2007 season.

The victory gave Two-N-Out.com a paid berth into the USSSA "D" National Tournament Labor Day Weekend in Indianapolis, In. TPE also qualified for Indy and

earned a berth to the Ohio USSSA Men's "D" State Tournament back at Pastime on August 18-19. Third place DeHaan & Back/Trailblazers and Miller Lawn Care also locked up a state tournament berth.

"It was a good outing despite the cold," summed up Two-N-Out.com sponsor-manager Shawn Sproles. "We added six new faces for the upcoming year and we seemed to jell well and play as a team."

Brett Harlow (.846), Mike Sellet (.828) and Chas. Webber (.815) paced the offense.

"Mike carried us with some keys hits at some key times," remarked Sproles. "He's been a leader for us the last five years. Brett is only 21-years old. This will be his first opportunity to play every day and it's good to see he has the ability.

"We picked up Chas. half way through the year last year and he hit well, and it carried over to the first tournament this year," added Sproles. "We're looking for a lot out of him."

The defense was also solid, noted Sproles.

"We had some good infield play by Jeff Lucas at 2nd base and Chas. Webber in the middle and Chris Schiavoine at short and Jimmy Evans at 3rd and Doug Bufford at 1st," said Sproles.

"I also want to mention our three outfielders because they played all seven game with no rest and no substitutions in thirty degree weather in the first tournament out," said Sproles. "They were Mike Sellet (lf), Kelly Davis (cf) and Shawn Donaghy."

Two-N-Out.com never worked up a sweat in pool play, as they romped past Dino's/Young Guns 16-5 (Brett Harlow 4-4, Shawn Donaghy and James Evans 3-4), the Cardinals 14-8 (Mike Sellet 4-4, Bret Harlow 3-3, Chris Schiavoine 3-4) and Getcha Some (Shawn Sproles 4-4, Doug Bufford and Jeff Lucas 3-4).

Two-N-Out.com used a seven run 5th to blow open a 10-8 contest withi Dwyer Concrete and seal a 20-12 victory in the first round of elimination play. Two run singles by Steve Klei and Kelly Davis highlighted the inning. Klei collected three hits and five rbi's, and Mike Sellet, Brett Harlow and Chris Schiavoine combined for a dozen hits.

A nine run first helped assure a 20-7 rout of M & M Connection/Saints in game two. Brett Harlow delivered a big two run double made it 5-0, and Doug Buford's (3-for-4) two run single capped off the inning. Mike Sellet and Shawn Sproles shared eight hits.

That pitted Two-N-Out.com against DeHaan & Bach/Trailblazers in the semi-finals, and the 'Blazers took an early 6-4 lead after two and a half innings. But in the bottom of the 3rd, Two-N-Out.com exploded for ten runs and never looked back in a 21-11 victory. Chas. Webber's rbi single put his club ahead to stay at 7-6 in the 3rd. Shawn Sproles



followed with a two run double to make it 9-6, then Doug Buford's bases clearing double capped off the scoring at 14-6. Webber, Chris Schiavoine and Brett Harlow banded out four hits each, and Kelly Davis went 3-for-4 with five rbi's.

In the finals, TPE/Backstabbers carried a 17-14 lead into the top of the 7th, but Two-N-Out.com was not to be denied, as they rallied for seven runs to grasp a 21-17 advantage. Mike Sellet's two run triple put Two-N-Out.com ahead to stay at 18-17. An rbi single by Shawn Sproles capped off the inning.

The Backstabbers rallied for three runs in the bottom of the inning to cut the deficit to one at 21-20. But with the bases loaded and two outs, pitcher Shawn Sproles induced the next batter to fly out to centerfielder Kelly Davis to wrap up the championship.

Mike Sellet pounded out five hits, Chas. Webber added four and James Evans chapped in three hits for the winners.

Was Two-N-Out.com manager Shawn Sproles nervous entering the 7th trailing by three runs against TPE?

"It was a good test for us," said Sproles. "We were coming off a big 6th and they put up some runs.

"Being the first tournament of the year, I was curious how this team would respond, and it was good to see there was no quit and no lack of confidence," said Sproles.

"Hopefully this will carry us on to having a successful 2007 season and we can finally wrap up an NIT win or state title. We've been so close. And after all, we're just a website."

Sproles said the win was especially "gratifying" due to the "pre-season hype on the message boards.

"People said we were not up to the caliber of last year's team, that we took a step backward, and they took a step up," said Sproles.

Sproles said that host Pastime Park "did a good job getting the tournament in despite the cold weather and all the rain the area received on Thursday.

"John (park owner John Herbert) does a good job out there," said Sproles.

Sproles concluded by thanking his sponsors, Sherco Trucking and Top Shelf.

## **PASTIME PARK-SPRING OPEN USSSA MEN'S CLASS "D" TOURNAMENT FINAL STANDINGS**

1. Two-N-Out.com, Florence, KY 70

- 2. TPE/Backstabbers, Cincinnati, OH 6 1
- 3. DeHaan & Bach/Trailblazers, Cincinnati, OH 5 1  
Miller Lawn Care, Hamilton, OH 5 1
- 5. Extreme/Turner Property, Hamilton, OH 3 2  
M & M Connection/Saints, Newport, KY 3 2  
Pistol City, Austin, IN 3 2  
The Cardinals, Cincinnati, OH 3 2
- 9. NKY Thunder, Burlington, KY 3 1  
Dino's/Young Guns, Florence, KY 2 2  
Morris Painting, Cincinnati, OH 2 2  
D's Restoration, Harrison, OH 2 3  
Dwyer Concrete, Aurora, IN 2 3  
Good Fellas Sports Bar, Cincinnati, OH 2 3  
Renegades, Erlanger, KY 2 3
- 16. Elite Softball, Cincinnati, OH 1 3  
TB Sports, Cincinnati, OH 1 3  
B & B Productions, Taylor Mill, KY 0 4  
Getcha Some, West Harrison, IN 0 4  
Fat Batz/ETP, KY 0 4  
Hangovers, Winchester, OH 0 4

### **Missouri Hits Mercy 6th Annual Bash For Cash-USSSA "C" NIT Field Behind Bridges, Bathon At Riverstar**

Pitcher Jason Bridges held five of six teams to ten runs or less, and Jim "Flip" Bathon batted a sizzling .875 to lead Missouri Hits on a 6-0 romp past a 22-team Bash for Cash-USSSA "C" National Invitational field March 17-18 at Riverstar Park.

The Hits averaged 22 runs per game and mercy-ruled four of six opponents en route to the title, spanking Brock Restoration 27-14 in the finals. The victory gave the Hits a berth to the USSSA "D" World September 20-23 in Sterling Heights, Mi., along with \$600 travel expense money.

The Hits also qualified for their division's national tournament. A Great Lakes Division National berth passed down to third place Pioneer Financial.

Tournament MVP Jim Bathon went 21-for-24 to lead his team in hitting with a .875 mark. He was followed by Tom Wilkerson at .833, Brandon Hubbard at .808 and Cory Limpert at .773.

Wilkerson, the team's player-manager, said that Bathon contributed big on both sides of the chalk.

"He led our team in rbi's and at one point in the tournament was 17-for-19. He only made two outs the entire day," commented Wilkerson. "He also had seven doubles and a

home run, so he had eight extra base hits out of his twenty one. And he played short and was real solid.”

The pitching of Jason Bridges was also a key, said Wilkerson.

“He takes pride in keeping guys off-balance and gets a lot of easy outs. Everything revolves around him. When he’s on, the defense is solid. There’s no doubt in my mind we would not have have the tournament without his pitching as well as he did,” said Wilkerson.

Wilkerson said his team batted .702 (177-for-252).

“As a team, that’s by far the best hitting tournament we’ve ever had. Hitting .702 is not something we expect to do every weekend. But we are loaded with a bunch of hitters who know how to play the game right and can hit the ball all over,” said Wilkerson.

“We also have an unselfish team that’s willing to sacrifice themselves to move runners, and everything came together this weekend,” he added. “And we were real happy to be scoring the runs we did against some good pitchers.”

Jumping out on top early aided the Hits in four of their six victories, including a 26-10, five-inning rout of Taylor/Max in game one. The Hits erupted for ten runs in the bottom of the 1st with the help of a three run Scott Hubbard blast. Brandon Hubbard added a three run, inside-the-parker in a nine run 4th to seal the deal.

Brandon Hubbard, Jim Baton, Cory Limpert, Tom Wilkerson and Joe Dorlac each went 4-for-4 for the winners.

In game two Missouri scored their last thirteen runs over the final two innings to nail down a 24-4 pounding of H2 Eng./Mi. Bucks. Levi Wright’s slammer capped off a seven run 5th. Jim Bathon and Kevin Gallmeier pounded out five hits each, and Travis Gibson added four.

A nine run 1st and a twelve run 4th accounted for 21 of the Hits’ 25 runs as they leveled Pure Romance 25-10 in five innings in game three. Mike Latorre’s two run double highlighted the 1st, and a grand slam by Levi Wright - his second in two games - capped off the 4th. Cory Limpert, Tom Wilkerson and Scott Hubbard were each perfect in four at bats.

The Hits used a bases clearing, 6th inning double by Travis Gibson to help break open a 5-4 game on their way to a 10-5 victory over Brock Restoration in what proved to be their closest game. Wilkerson collected four more hits to pace the offense.

Missouri then steamrolled Pioneer Financial 19-1 in five innings after jumping out to an 8-0 lead in the bottom of the 1st in the winners’ bracket finals. Levi Wright cracked his

third home run in three games - a three run shot - to make it 4-0. The lead swelled to 15-0 after a seven run 2nd highlighted by a Cory Limpert slammer.

Kevin Gallmeier banged out four hits, and Brandon Hubbard chipped in three.

The Hits took a 5-0 lead in the 1st and never looked back as they romped past Brock Restoration 27-14 in the finals. A three run Mike Latorre blast capped off the 1st. Brock hung around until the 6th, when the Hits exploded for nine runs to break open an 18-12 game. Jim Bathon delivered a key two run double in the inning.

Levi Wright and Cory Limpert combined for eight hits to power the champions.

### **6TH ANNUAL BASH FOR CASH USSSA "C" NATIONAL INVITATIONAL FINAL STANDINGS**

1. Missouri Hits, St. Louis, MO 6 0
2. Brock Restor./Hot Wings/Schmoe's, Cinti., OH 5 2
3. Pioneer Financial/Pinnacle Chiro, Canton, OH 3 2
4. HLS Bonding, Big Sonny's, Columbus, OH 4 2
5. House Rules/TJ Williams/Crosley's, Cinti., OH 3 2
- Sydni's All-Stars, Calumet City, IL 3 2
7. JLC/Legends/Countrywide, Edgewood, KY 3 2
- PRI, Cincinnati, OH 3 2
9. ABP, Independence, KY 2 2
- H2 Engineering/Michigan Bucks, Detroit, MI 2 2
- Sentry Fire/Apex/LBYC, Erlanger, KY 2 2
- Xtreme Moose/Shirtworks/Fents, Springfield, OH 2 2
13. Badgers/A-One Exteriors, Indianapolis, IN 1 2
- Taylor Flooring/Max Softball, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
- Cincinnati Hurricanes, Cincinnati, OH 0 2
- Team Quality, Cincinnati, OH 0 2
17. Chico's/Premier Hardwood, Cincinnati, OH 0 2
- Emanon, Cincinnati, OH 0 2
- Middle's Open, Cincinnati, OH 0 2
- NKY/Cincy Bandits, Walton, KY 0 2
- Putter's Tavern & Grill, Cincinnati, OH 0 2
- Team Bring It/Mad Max, Cincinnati, OH 0 2

### **Rocky, Tolbert Power Taylor Flooring/Max Softball Romp In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Spring Tune-Up "C" At Pastime Park**

Harrison, Oh.--After battling past two round robin opponents on Saturday, Taylor Flooring/Max Softball mercy-ruled their next three victims to capture first place in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Spring Tune-Up "C" National Qualifier March 10-11 at Pastime Park.

Taylor/Max fended off Michelle's 15-12 and Sentry Fire/Apex 6-5 before polishing off Franchise Softball in round robin play on Saturday, then routed Team Bring It 24-7 in four innings and Franchise 19-5 in five to wrap up the title.

The championship gave Taylor/Max a berth to the USSSA Great Lakes "C" National Tournament Labor Day Weekend in Ft. Knox, Ky., and to the Ohio USSSA "C" State Tournament August 18-19 in Milford along with runner-up Franchise. Taylor/Max also earned \$175 in USSSA travel money.

Rob Rocky (.937) and Dan Tolbert (.642, 4 HR's, 18 rbi's) powered the winners. They were aided by Chad Trammel (.750), Fred Tippitt (.667), Dave Hoover (.667) and Kevin Hutson (.632).

"Rob was amazing," said Taylor/Max manager Clay Tolbert of his leading hitter. "I've never seen anybody so ready to play at the beginning of the year and so enthusiastic about the game. He hit all winter long and has been waiting for this. He was on fire."

Dan Tolbert led the team in home runs and rbi's.

"He's young - just 19 years old," said Tolbert. "I haven't seen anybody come along in a long time to just pick up softball like he has. He has a knack for the game...he loves it. He's a competitor."

"Defense and pitching kept us in there on Saturday," said Tolbert. "Shannon Loudon (p) held four of our five opponents under double digits. Defensively Johnny Cox played well at shortstop, as did Kevin Hutson in left field, Dan Tolbert at middle infield, and Shannon Loudon on the mound. I don't think they hit anything past him. He had a great weekend.

"On Sunday, I believe we could have beaten anybody the way we were hitting the ball," added Tolbert.

Taylor/Max was untouchable on Sunday, outscoring TBI and Franchise by a combined 43-12 margin in the elimination round.

Louden held Michelle's scoreless in the 5th and 6th innings in game one as Taylor/Max overcame a 9-7 deficit with three unanswered runs in the 4th and 5th to grab a 13-9 lead. They added two in the bottom of the 6th before a three run Michelle's rally came up short in the top of the 7th. Dan Tolbert's two run, two-out double put his club on top to stay at 10-9 in the 4th.

Tolbert and Dave Hoover combined for six runs, and Rob Rocky went 2-for-2, including a 3rd inning slammer that accounted for four of his five rbi's.

Louden's pitching was key again in game two. With his team trailing 5-3 after three, Loudon held Sentry Fire/APEX/LBYC scoreless over the next four innings while Taylor/Max chipped away at the lead. A solo shot by Dave Hoover cut the deficit to 5-4

in the top of the 4th, then Kevin Hutson's two run blast gave Taylor an eventual 6-5 victory.

Chad Trammell banged out four hits, and Hutson added three for the winners.

Taylor/Max jumped out to a 10-0 lead in the top of the 2nd and never looked back in a 12-2, five inning rout of Franchise in the round robin finale. A Dan Tolbert two run swat, a solo by Rob Rocky and a bases clearing triple by Chad Trammell highlighted the 2nd. Rock and Steve Tolbert shared six hits to pace the offense.

Sunday Taylor fell behind early in both contests, but stormed back on the strength of a ten run 2nd against Team Bring It and a seven run 2nd versus Franchise to ultimately mercy-rule both clubs.

Trailing TBI 5-2 after one, Taylor erupted for ten runs in the top of the 2nd, then tacked on twelve more in the 3rd to seal an eventual 24-7 rout. Chad Trammell's two run double put Taylor ahead to stay at 6-5. Johnny Cox contributed a big three run triple later in the inning as the lead swelled to 11-5, and Kevin Hutson put an exclamation point on the inning with a solo shot to cap off the scoring. Fred Tippitt and Rob Rocky pounded out four hits each, and Denver Taylor chipped in three.

Trammell struck again with the key hit in the finals, delivering a two run single to put his club ahead for good at 5-3. Taylor added four more runs in the inning to forge a 9-3 advantage. Then in the top of the 3rd they delivered the knockout punch with eight more runs to take a 17-5 lead. Dan Tolbert's grand slam highlighted the inning.

Trammell, Rob Rocky and Fred Tippitt combined for twelve hits, and Ronnie Gambrell went 3-for-3 to power the champions.

Taylor/Max manager Clay Tolbert said his team was "surprised" to walk through the elimination tournament with such ease.

"We won on Saturday, so we expected to play a fourth or fifth place team, but that turned out to be Team Bring It," said Tolbert. "And with our pick-ups this year - Fred Tippitt, Shannon Louden and John Cox - and the chemistry working out well, it was like I said earlier: we could have beaten anybody on Sunday."

Tolbert said it was "slow going" for his team in the first two games.

"Our defense and our pitching really kept us in there. But we never panicked. Everybody just felt like we were going to win. Our defense was flawless and Shannon's pitching was awesome," said Tolbert.

"I'd like to say this is the third year in a row I put together a team, and I think I might have hit on it this time," concluded Tolbert. "We have a good mix with the right leadership and right young guys to listen to them."

## **PASTIME PARK-SPRING TUNE-UP USSSA MEN'S CLASS "C" TOURNAMENT FINAL STANDINGS**

1. Taylor Flooring/Max Softball, Cincinnati, OH 5 0
2. Franchise Softball, Hamilton, OH 2 4
3. Michelle's, Cincinnati, OH 2 2
4. Team Bring It/Mad Max, Harrison, OH 2 3
5. Sentry Fire/Apex/LBYC, Erlanger, KY 2 2
6. EAP/Western Hills Window, Cincinnati, OH 1 3

### **Williams Single Lifts M & M Connection/Saints Past Accurate Masonry 10-9 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Spring Tune-Up "D-E" Finals At Pastime Park**

Harrison, Oh.--Ron Williams' rbi single in the top of the 6th lifted M & M Connection/Saints to an eventual 10-9 victory over Accurate Masonry in the championship game of the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Spring Tune-Up "D-E" National Qualifier March 10-11 at Pastime Park.

Pitcher Mike Lamb held Accurate scoreless over the final two frames to preserve the win and give M & M a 6-1 mark for the weekend. M & M looked like anything but tournament champions when they opened on the wrong end of a 24-5 laugher at the hands of Guido's. But they bounced back to best their next two round robin opponents, then disposed of four straight teams on Sunday for the title.

Both M & M and Accurate qualified for the USSSA Great Lakes Division National Tournament Labor Day Weekend in Indianapolis. M & M also took home \$500 in cash.

Ohio USSSA State berths were awarded to Accurate, Guido's, Adis Place, Dwyer Concrete, GFY Softball and Big Hogz.

Mike Barone (.786), Ron Williams (.728), Brian McDonald (.667), John Erdman (.616), Mike Lamb (.616), and Mike Ditmer led the Saints offensively.

Barone, who didn't play Saturday, was a classic case of "a stitch in time saves nine."

"He was sick and couldn't play on Saturday," said M & M/Saints manager John Tomlinson. "He's usually there every game. When he found out we lost the first game, he said 'I'll be there tomorrow,' and he toughed it out."

"Timely hitting" proved to be the key, said Tomlinson.

"Our hitting leaders hit in clutch situations. When we had to have a hit, everybody on the team got a hit," said Tomlinson.

M & M had survived despite having several players out of position.

“Mike Ditmer played centerfield and he’s usually an infielder,” said Tomlinson. “He did a great job. And Darrin Block just came off knee surgery. We had him in right field and he did really well also.”

After a gut-check 24-5 spanking by Guido’s, the Saints roared back to best the Cardinals 15-10 behind four hits by Mike Lamb and three each from John Tomlinson, Tim Duffey and Brian McDonald. Then Duffey, Justin Charlton and Ron Williams combined for a dozen hits, and John Erdman, Darren Block and Mike Ditmer chipped in with three apiece as M & M mercy-ruled Northern Kentucky Thunder 21-7 in five.

In the first game of the elimination round, the Saints broke open a 3-0 contest with a fifteen run explosion in the top of the 3rd and never looked back in a five inning 19-5 rout of John’s Army. Tim Duffey and John Erdman each contributed a two run double in the 3rd, Erdman’s to cap off the inning. Darren Block pounded out four hits, and Duffey and Mike Lamb added two apiece.

M & M used a three run 5th to break free from Adis place and take a 10-7 lead in game two. Ron Williams’ singled home two runs to break the tie, then rode home on Greg Riddle’s rbi double.

Williams, Justin Charlton, Mike Barone and Tony McDonald each went 3-for-4 for the winners.

M & M found themselves locked in another 7-7 stalemate with Northern Kentucky Thunder after three innings in the semi-finals, but finally went ahead to stay on Mike Ditmer’s rbi single in the top of the 4th. Justin Charlton doubled home a pair of insurance runs in the 6th, and the Saints added a run in the 7th before allowing Thunder to two runs in the bottom of the inning to make the final 11-9.

Brian McDonald collected four hits, and Ditmer, Brian Duncan, Mike Barone and Ron Williams pitched in with three hits each.

M & M didn’t didn’t take the lead for good in the finals against Accurate Masonry until Ron Williams’ rbi single broke a 9-9 tie in the top of the 6th. Mike Lamb held Accurate at bay in the 6th and 7th.

Mike Barone went 3-for-3, and Williams and Tim Duffey each chipped in with a pair of hits to pace the offense.

Clutch hitting in the late innings in the final two games and the pitching of Mike Lamb proved to be the difference in the end, said the Saints’ John Tomlinson.

“The guys just really came through in the clutch when we needed them to,” said Tomlinson. “We have a few young guys - a couple of guys who have moved up from the



'E' level - and some veterans who help those guys along and show them what they've got to do."

Tomlinson said that Lamb took advantage of the new 56' pitching distance to keep the other teams "off balance.

"He did a great job and with the new pitching depth, he's got a little more time to react on the ball," said Tomlinson. "He had them off-balance and their timing was off because he was pitching from so far back."

Qualifying early "takes a lot of stress off the guys and now we can just go out and have fun," noted Tomlinson.

Tomlinson concluded by saluting Pastime Park's efforts.

"John Herbert (park manager) did a great job getting the fields ready and keeping them going," said Tomlinson. "They were in good shape and he always runs a good tournament."

#### **PASTIME PARK-SPRING TUNE-UP USSSA MEN'S CLASS "D" TOURNAMENT FINAL STANDINGS**

1. M & M Connection/Saints, Newport, KY 6 1
2. Accurate Masonry, Cincinnati, OH 6 1
3. Guido's, Cincinnati, OH 4 2  
NKY Thunder, Burlington, KY 4 2
5. Adis Place, Cincinnati, OH 4 1  
Dwyer Concrete, Aurora, IN 4 1  
GFY Softball, Dayton, OH 4 1  
Big Hogz, Inc., Columbus, OH 3 2
9. Team Chaos, Franklin, OH 2 2  
Joe Klosterman Plumbing, Harrison, OH 1 3  
John's Army, Cincinnati, OH 1 3  
J. Taps Sports Bar, Cincinnati, OH 1 3  
Hard Knock Softball, Cincinnati, OH 0 4  
M & S Drywall/Best Damn Sports Bar, Cin., OH 0 4  
Off Again, Harrison, OH 0 4  
The Cardinals, Cincinnati, OH 0 4

#### **Softball Fans/Miken/Tanel 360 Trips Up DeHaan & Bach/Trailblazers, 15-14, 25-7 In 6th Annual "Bash For Cash" USSSA "D" NIT At RiverShore**

Hebron, Ky.--Softball Fans/Miken/Tanel 360 double-dipped DeHaan & Bach/Trailblazers, 15-14 and 25-7, to claim first place in the 6th Annual "Bash for Cash" USSSA "D" National Invitational March 17-18 at RiverShore Sports Complex.

DeHaan & Bach had spanked Softball Fans 15-7 in the winners' bracket, and held a one run lead going into the bottom of the 7th in the first championship game.

But pinch-hitter Bryan Knoll singled in two runs with two outs and the bases loaded in the bottom of the 7th to force an "if" game, where Softball Fans romped to a 25-7 victory in six innings.

The victory gave Softball Fans/Miken/Tanel 360 a berth to the USSSA "D" World Tournament on September 21-23 in Sterling Heights, Mi. Both Softball Fans and the Trailblazers qualified for the Great Lakes "D" National Tournament. The Trailblazers were awarded a paid berth.

Cory Hunt led Softball Fans offensively with an .859 mark. Jeff Filkins followed with a .631 weekend, Ken Kononchuk hit .617, Matty McGovern batted .628 and Mike Nagel .586.

Softball Fans manager Kevin Mann said Hunt came off the bench to fill in for an injured player and "stepped up.

"One of our players got hurt and Cory stepped into his role and hit pretty good," understated Mann. "He started in our last three games and went 2-for-2, 2-for-3 and 5-for-5. We made an adjustment and Cory stepped up."

Pitcher Mike Nagel was named tournament MVP.

"He played very good defense and helped control the games," said Mann. "He's a big key to our team. He shows a lot of veteran leadership."

Mann credited his team's defense for winning the title.

"We've got a lot of speed in our outfield with three guys who can cover a lot of ground," said Mann. "We play a five man infield and it really helps."

Mann said his club knew they had to "step up" after losing in the winners' bracket finals.

"We didn't play all that bad but made some key mistakes. We knew what we did and knew what we had to do to make it better," said Mann.

An eight run 1st helped carry Softball Fans to a 16-1 victory over COF Gonzaga in game one. Craig Lomason's two run single broke a 1-1 tie in the 1st, and a two run double by Ken Kononchuk capped off the inning. Kononchuk collected four hits in the game, and Matty McGovern and Nate Talken shared six.

A five run 5th helped break open a 4-2 contest and lifted Softball Fans to an eventual 13-2 rout of Shirts & Logos in game two. Ken Kononchuk, whose two run single ignited his club's rally in the 5th, went 3-for-4 along with Jeff Filkins and Bryan Knoll.

After falling behind Best Way Frame/Nasty Boys 4-3 after two, Softball Fans grabbed a 7-4 lead in the top of the 3rd, then scored in every inning to outlast the Nasty Boys 17-12 in game three. Bryan Knoll's rbi single in the 3rd put Softball Fans ahead for good at 5-4. Matty McGovern's rbi single and a sac fly by Nate Talken accounted for two more runs as the lead grew to 7-4. The Nasty Boys cut the deficit to 13-12 in the bottom of the 6th, but Softball Fans used a four run outburst in the top of the 7th to seal the win. Ken Kononchuk's three run double closed out the scoring.

Kononchuk continued to wield the hot bat for his team, going 5-for-5. Jason Barber and Jeff Filkins combined for eight hits.

Sunday morning Softball Fans outslugged Sherman Tile 25-17, scoring in every inning en route the victory. After easing out to a 7-6 lead after two, Softball Fans plated five in the 3rd, five in the 4th and five in the 5th to take a commanding 22-11 lead and held on for win number four. Ken Kononchuk's two run double in the 1st helped Softball Fans jump out to a 4-0 lead that they would never relinquish.

Craig Lomason and Jeff Filkins banged out five hits each, and Bryan Knoll added four to pace the offense.

Next Softball Fans eased past the Midnitters 13-7, building a 10-3 lead with the help of a four run 4th, then holding on for the victory. Bryan Knoll's two run single put Softball Fans on the board in the top of the 1st. A two run single by Jeff Filkins capped off the four run 4th, giving Softball Fans a 10-3 cushion.

Chris Boling, Ken Kononchuk and Craig Lomason each went 3-for-4.

After stumbling against the Trailblazers 15-7 in the winners' bracket finals, Softball Fans bounced back to dispose of the Merchants 11-7. After a scoreless 1st, Softball Fans erupted for five in the 2nd, then scored six runs over the next four innings to take an 11-5 lead. The Merchants came to life with three runs in the bottom of the 7th, but it was too little, too late.

Brock Snyder's two run single and a two run triple by Jason Barber highlighted the 1st. Roy Herpin and Matty McGovern each went 3-for-4 to fuel the offense.

That gave Softball Fans another shot at the Trailblazers in the championship game. The Blazers held a precarious 14-13 advantage going into the bottom of the 7th, but it wouldn't hold up. Matty McGovern singled and Craig Lomason walked to put runners on first and second. Cory Hunt then singled to load the bases, setting the stage for Bryan Knoll's two run, game-winning hit.

Craig Lomason had four hits and Drew Nichols added three for the winners.

Softball Fans exploded for seven runs in the top of the 1st, five in the 2nd, then six in the 3rd to seal a 25-7, six inning rout of the Trailblazers in the second finals. Matty McGovern, whose three run triple highlighted the 1st, went 5-for-5 to power the offense. Jake Drenth and Jeff Filkins chipped in with four hits each.

Softball Fans manager Kevin Mann said his team's confidence never wavered against the Trailblazers in the first finals, a hard fought 15-14 contest.

"We had jumped out on top of them in that game, but they battled back," said Mann. "We dropped a fly ball in the outfield and that gave them the go-ahead run in the 7th. It built their momentum and confidence and they started scoring some runs.

"But we thought we could win the game," said Mann. "We had the right players in the right position in our batting order with Matty (McGovern) and Craig (Lomason) and the big key hit by Cory (Hunt) to load the bases with one out. And then Bryan (Knoll) came up and got the game winning single.

"It was a very good tournament," continued Mann. "We found the competition we were looking for. We're not a U-Trip team, but playing USSSA makes your team better because of the better competition.

#### **6TH ANNUAL BASH FOR CASH USSSA "D" NATIONAL INVITATIONAL FINAL STANDINGS**

1.	Softball Fans/Miken/Tanel 360, Battle Creek, MI	8 1
2.	DeHaan & Bach/Trailblazers, Cincinnati, OH	5 2
3.	Merchants, Massillon, OH	8 2
4.	Adis Place, Cincinnati, OH	4 2
5.	TeleCommunity/CU, Akron, OH	5 2
	Midnighters/Anderson Bats/WKRD, Louisville, KY	3 2
7.	Extreme/Turner Property Service, Hamilton, OH	5 2
	Good Guys, Edgewood, KY	4 2
9.	Dirty Birds, Mt. Orab, OH	3 2
	NKY Thunder, Independence, KY	2 2
	Sherman Title, Lakewood, OH	2 2
	TPE/Backstabbers, Cincinnati, OH	2 2
13.	Dino's/T & T Freightways, Burlington, KY	3 2
	Best Way Frame/Nasty Boys, Alexandria, KY	2 2
	CJ's Roofing, Cincinnati, OH	2 2
	ShirtsAndLogos.com, Milwaukee, WI	2 2
17.	COF Gonzaga, Cincinnati, OH	2 2
	Pharmacy Solutions, Florence, KY	2 2
	Riptide Softball, Alexandria, KY	2 2
	Four Star Machine, Mentor, OH	1 2
	M & M Connection/Saints, Newport, KY	1 2
	Money, Orland Park, IL	1 2

- |     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
|     | Morris Painting/Ante Up, Cincinnati, OH | 1 2 |
|     | Schmoe's Collision, Cincinnati, OH      | 1 2 |
| 25. | B & B Productions, Taylor Mill, KY      | 1 2 |
|     | Brogan Oilers, Cincinnati, OH           | 1 2 |
|     | Dino's/Young Guns, Florence, KY         | 1 2 |
|     | J & M Softball, Dayton, OH              | 1 2 |
|     | Re/Max TBR, Hamilton, OH                | 1 2 |
|     | CCI, Akron, OH                          | 0 2 |
|     | Maxed Out Softball, Franklin, OH        | 0 2 |
|     | Titans Softball, Wyoming, MI            | 0 2 |
| 33. | Two-N-Out.com, Florence, KY             | 1 2 |
|     | Beer Hawks, Loveland, OH                | 0 2 |
|     | Dizzy Roosters, Louisville, KY          | 0 2 |
|     | GFY Softball, Dayton, OH                | 0 2 |
|     | Hitmen Softball, Hillsboro, OH          | 0 2 |
|     | Rated R Superstars, Cincinnati, OH      | 0 2 |
|     | Specialty Softball, Howell, MI          | 0 2 |

**6TH ANNUAL BASH FOR CASH USSSA "D"  
NATIONAL INVITATIONAL ALL-TOURN. TEAM**

Dan Merkel Adis Place  
 Brian Brandenburg Adis Place  
 Shawn Wright Merchants  
 Craig Bader Merchants  
 Tony Fiscus DeHaan & Bach/Trailblazers  
 Steve Boone DeHaan & Bach/Trailblazers  
 Bran Harlon DeHaan & Bach/Trailblazers  
 Toby Gilliam DeHaan & Bach/Trailblazers  
 Mike Nagel Softball Fans/Miken/Tanel 360  
 Ken Kononchuk Softball Fans/Miken/Tanel 360  
 Jason Barber Softball Fans/Miken/Tanel 360  
 Chris Boling Softball Fans/Miken/Tanel 360  
 Craig Lomason Softball Fans/Miken/Tanel 360  
 Steve Boone - ODP DeHaan & Bach/Trailblazers  
 Mike Nagel - MVP Softball Fans/Miken/Tanel 360

**Late Rallies Lift Halloween Express To 6th Annual Bash For Cash ASA D/E Title  
At Eggleston**

Colerain Township, Oh.--Halloween Express rallied to win four games in the bottom of the 7th - including thee of five in the elimination round - to capture first place in the ASA D/E division of the 6th Annual Bash for Cash March 17-18 at Eggleston and Rumpke Parks.

Halloween Express stunned 2006 runner-up Formost/Ski Town 28-27 with four runs in the bottom of the 7th in the championship game to nail down the title. Marcus Anderson burned a drawn in outfield with a two run single to plate the tying and winning runs.

An errant throw by Formost's 2nd baseman and a bases loaded walk helped set the stage for Anderson's big hit.

Craig Boling hit .719 with seven home runs to power the offense. Bruce Nix and Shannon Cook followed at .714, Jeff Wilhoite batted .688 and Jerald Adkins .680.

Nix, Halloween Express' manager, said Boling bounced back from a rough first game to spearhead the offense.

"If you saw him the first game, you would not have had much confidence in him," laughed Nix. "But after that he was on fire."

Nix was named tournament MVP "mainly for my hitting and I played shortstop," said Nix. "It seemed like every game we won was in the bottom of the 7th and I had a hand in that."

Winning the coin toss and a "never say die attitude" were the keys to winning the tournament, said Nix.

"We were home team six times and won four games in the bottom of the 7th, so the coin toss was big for us.

"Also our will to win," added Nix. "We didn't want to go home. This was our third year in the Bash and it's always one of our big tournaments. We like to go to it and for some reason this year, we didn't want to go home. We kept fighting and in each game we gave ourselves a chance to win, and that's all you can ask for."

Halloween Express charged into the elimination round hitting all cylinders, as they exploded for a dozen runs in the top of the 1st and went on to dispose of Green Dot 20-4 in four innings. A two run shot by Craig Boling highlighted the 1st. Billy Duncan, Jerry Smith, Shannon Cook and Bruce Nix combined for twelve hits.

Next Halloween Express used a two run rally in the bottom of the 7th to send the Shockerz packing 6-5. With two outs and the bases empty and two strikes on batter Jerald Adkins, Adkins stroked a base hit to keep his team's hopes alive. Consecutive singles by Shannon Cook and Bruce Nix brought Adkins around to score the tying run, then Eric Sherrow singled in Cook with the game winner.

Cook banged out three singles to pace the offense.

Express stood on the brink of elimination once more in game three, as they entered the bottom of the 7th staring at a 15-12 deficit. After a single by Darrell Woodard and a

double by Craig Boling, Marcus Anderson doubled in both runners to cut the lead down to one. Adkins then singled home Anderson to knot the score. After Shannon Cook hit into a fielder's choice for the second out of the inning, Bruce Nix calmly doubled into the gap to plate Cook with the game winner.

Nix collected four hits, and Adkins, Billy Duncan, Jeff Wilhoite and Craig Boling chipped in three apiece.

Halloween Express erupted for six runs in the 1st and eight in the 2nd to forge a 14-2 lead and went on to roll past Team Evansville 20-6 in four innings in the semi-finals. Craig Boling launched a home run to account for three of his club's six runs in the 1st. Shannon Cook, whose rbi single capped off the 2nd, went 4-for-4 along with Boling and Danny Nix, and Jeff Wilhoite added three hits.

The Express saved their best rally for last, and got plenty of help from finalist Formost, as they rallied from a three run hole to pull out a dramatic 28-27 come-from-behind win.

Bruce Nix sparked the rally with a double, went to 3rd on Eric Sherrow's single, then rode home on Billy Duncan's base hit to make it 27-25. Jeff Wilhoite hit into a fielder's choice to put runners on 1st and 3rd, then Darrell Woodard grounded to 2nd for what appeared would be the second out of the inning, but the 2nd baseman threw the ball out of play to allow another run to score and put runners at 2nd and 3rd. After an intentional walk to Craig Boling to load the bases, Formost issued another pass to Kevin Fox to force in the tying run. Marcus Anderson followed with a shot over the right fielder's head to score Woodard with the game winner.

Anderson pounded out six hits to lead the winners. Cook, Bruce Nix and Billy Duncan each went 5-for-6.

### **D & S Mercy Rules 6th Annual Bash For Cash-USSSA Women's Field At Riverstar**

Generally when two teams merge, it takes a few tournaments for everyone to jell and the chemistry to start working.

Not with D & S Engineering.

D & S mercy-ruled four straight opponents before polishing off Battin' Bullets 16-10 in the championship game to capture first place in the USSSA women's division of the "6th Annual Bash for Cash" March 17-18 at Riverstar Park.

The Bullets were the only team to come closer than ten runs of the champions, who averaged nineteen runs per game on the way to the title.

D & S is a combination of Franklin Financial and D & S Engineering from 2006, said player-manager Kiim Wilson.

Wilson actually paced the offense for the champions with a .789 weekend, followed by Tonia Thompson at .765, Sharon Singleton at .737, Emily Cannady at .722, and Amy Schweinefus at .682.

Schweinefus was named tournament MVP “for her hitting and for the spectacular defensive plays she made at shortstop,” said Wilson. “She turned quite a few double plays and diving catches. She was automatic.”

Wilson also lauded the play of Christa Brinkley.

“She pitched a great tournament,” said Wilson. “She struggled the first game but came back and held most of the opponents to ten runs or less. She pitched great.”

Two out hitting also proved big for D & S, noted Wilson.

“We never quit. We scored half our runs with two outs and that was a key. We just never gave up,” said Wilson.

D & S used a thirteen run 4th to blow open an 11-8 contest with Wilson Concrete and seal an eventual 27-14 victory in game one. Wilson and Sharon Singleton banded out five hits each, and Tonya Thompson added four.

Next D & S exploded for eight runs in the top of the 1st and never looked back in a 13-1, five inning rout of Crosley’s Sports Bar in game two. A two run double by Christy Craig highlighted the inning.

Theresa Hickey and Kim Wilson were both 3-for-3, and Amy Schweinefus contributed a pair of doubles for the winners.

The Battin’ Bullets drew first blood with two runs in the top of the 1st in game three, but D & S answered with six and went on to roll to a 13-3 victory in six. Liz Ullman doubled home two runs to put her club ahead to stay at 3-2 in the 1st. Amy Schweinefus tripled and scored the game winner on Theresa Hickey’s bingle in the bottom of the 6th.

Schweinefus collected four hits, including a double and two triples, to lead the offense. Ulland, Tonia Thompson and Emily Cannady combined for nine hits.

An eleven run 2nd and a nine run 4th helped D & S overpower the Intimidators 26-13 in the winners’ bracket finals. D & S erased an early 6-1 deficit in the 2nd, breaking a 6-6 tie and taking the lead for good at 8-6 on Liz Ulland’s two run double. The Intimidators hung close until the 4th at 16-11, but D & S’ nine run 4th sealed the deal.

Emily Cannady sprayed out five hits, Tonya Woodruff added four and Tony Thompson three, including a pair of doubles.



That pitted D & S against the Battin' Bullets again in the finals, and the Indianapolis club held a narrow 3-2 lead after two. But D & S plated five runs to go up 7-3 and never relinquished the lead. Liz Ulland's two run double put D & S on top for good at 4-3. The Bullets cut the lead to 8-7 in the 5th, but D & S answered with three in the 6th and five in the 7th to nail down an eventual 16-10 victory. Amy Schweinefus delivered a big two run triple in the 6th, and Rose Chapman added one in the 7th.

Chapman and Theresa Hickey each went 4-for-5, and Tonia Thompson and Kim Wilson 3-for-4 to power the champions.

Wilson said she was more than a little surprised that her team mercy-ruled four of their opponents.

"We were just trying to enjoy the tournament and we just weren't uptight about anything," she said.

"Everything just fell into place with our chemistry. There were no hiccups or issues. But it's early," cautioned Wilson. "We're not going to count our chickens yet."

#### **6TH ANNUAL BASH FOR CASH USSSA WOMEN'S "C-D" DIVISION FINAL STANDINGS**

1. D & S Engineering, Milford, Oh 5 0
2. Battin Bullets, Indianapolis, IN 4 2
3. Intimidators, Batavia, OH 2 2
4. Playin' Dirty, Cincinnati, OH 3 2
5. Pelle's/BW3, Silver Grove, KY 2 2
6. Crosley's Sports Bar, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
7. Milford Hit-Hers, Batavia, OH 2 2
8. Wilson Concrete, North Vernon, IN 1 2
9. Mad Max, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
10. Yadda/Premiums East/PRI, Milford, OH 1 2

#### **6TH ANNUAL BASH FOR CASH USSSA WOMEN'S DIVISION ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM**

Laura Arstingstall Playin' Dirty  
Kelly Throckmorton Playin' Dirty  
Keysha Nicodemus Intimidators  
Ruthie Holden Intimidators  
Nita Brooks Battin' Bullets  
Holli Steeval Battin' Bullets  
Heather Farmer Battin' Bullets  
Michelle McCorkle Battin' Bullets  
Kim Wilson D & S Engineering  
Theresa Hickey D & S Engineering

Emily Cannady	D & S Engineering
Christa Brinker	D & S Engineering
Becky Rahe - ODP	Battin' Bullets
Amy Schweinefus	D & S Engineering

## Men's B Team Previews

### BLITZ/WATANABE/TTP/WESSEL/A & K/EASTON (44-36)

**π 2006 Team Name:** A & K Tile/Wessel Sports/Blitz.

**π Manager:** Terry Walton.

**π Key Personnel:** Jeff Edington (.703, 80 HR's, 251 rbi's, USSSA A All-World, All-City), Jason Roesch (.711, 69 HR's, 322 rbi's, All-City), Brad Tabler (.602, 59 HR's, 201 rbi's), Kevin Birkofer (.704, 10 HR's, 78 rbi's, All-City), Steve Bosch (.660, 103 rbi's, 264 rbi's, All-City).

**π Additions:** Jeff "Rock" Edington, Jason Roesch, Kevin Birkofer, Larry Wert - Watanabe/TTP; Steve Bosch - Storm; Brian Alexander - PRI (B); Nick Mazur - PRI (C).

**π Losses:** Tony Engel - Loveless; Rick Selonke - Community Cab; Don Rohrer, Kevin Williams, Lee Pierson.

**π Final Ranking:** USSSA Ohio 2nd, Great Lakes 4th, National 19th.

**π League Highlights:** 8-5 Thursday Eggleston.

**π Tourney Highlights:** 2nd USSSA A-B NIT, Harrison; USSSA B-C NIT, Milford; USSSA B State, Milford; 3rd ASA A-B, Cincinnati; USSSA B-C NIT, Cincinnati; USSSA B-C, Cincinnati; 5th ASA Major Metro, Crosby Township;

**π Outlook:** For a first year U-Trip "B" team, A & K Tile/Wessel/Blitz stepped up big. While falling short of winning any tournaments, they were, nonetheless, breathing down the necks of Freeze/Arnold/BW3/Easton all season long. The Blitz finished second or third in no fewer than four NIT's, and came within one run of winning the Ohio USSSA "B" State. For their efforts, they finished the year ranked 2nd in the state, 4th in the Great Lakes Division and 19th in the nation. But falling short doesn't appear to be on the agenda for the 2007 Blitz club. With the addition of four Watanabe/TPS all-city performers, Jeff Edington, Jason Roesch, Kevin Birkofer and Larry Wert, along with the Storm's all-city slugger Steve Bosch, plus Brian Alexander, another all-city selection from PRI, the Blitz will be taking no prisoners this season. If they can stay healthy and jell as a team, there's nothing this club can't accomplish at the "B" level.

**π Manager's Comments:** "This year we added seven new players, all of whom bring different things to the table. The big additions were Jeff Edington, Kevin Birkofer, Jason Roesch and Larry Wert, all of whom have been competing at a high level for many years. These guys have won a lot of games in the past and expect to continue to do so. It is nice to be able to add that kind of veteran leadership to your team. Roesch and Wert will comprise two thirds of our outfield. Wert will give us a great glove in left field and Roesch will hold things down in right field with a great arm. Brian Alexander comes back to us after a year's hiatus with the PRI B squad. This will be his first year roaming centerfield full time. It will be fun watching him do his thing out there. Brian adds a lot of speed to the line-up as well. Rock and Birkofer add a couple of great sticks to the infield with obviously different styles. Steve Bosch comes over from the Storm. He will

give us another potent bat in the middle of our lineup as well as compete for laying time in the outfield and at first base. Nick Masur was also added from the PRI C team. Nick has a great glove and will be a nice addition to our infield this year. In his 8th season with the Blitz, Frank Gruber will handle pitching duties once again this year. Last year was his first full year pitching USSSA. He learned a lot last year and will continue to get better. Kelley Haiber will handle the back up duties on the mound as well as play the infield. Kelley was one of our leading hitters last year and we expect more of the same out of this veteran player in '07. Jeff Haiber will be back for his second season with us. Jeff was one of our most consistent infielders last year and is a great teammate. Brad Tabler has been one of our leading hitters for the last three seasons and will be back for another tour. Brad loves to hit and will also be used in the infield primarily at the corners. Bobby Abbott will be back for his eighth season with the Blitz. He has been a mainstay at first base for us for a long time. Bobby will notch his 500th home run for the Blitz this season. Chris Ashley, Todd Whitson and Nick Mentrup are all long time Blitz players. Ashley and Whitson have been with the team since our start in 2000 and Nick joined us in '02. These guys will be utility players as they can play infield or outfield whenever the situation calls for it. They will do whatever it takes for the team to be successful and they have proven that in the past. These guys would be starting for most teams in the city. We are lucky to have such dedicated guys that are willing to sacrifice for the better of the team. However, with that being said there will be competition for playing time. I think its always good for a team when players push each other to do better. If someone can't get the job done or isn't willing to put forth the required effort there is always someone else who will. With fourteen guys on the roster you never know how the starting lineup will look in August. This year as well as adding quality players we have added a few great sponsors and coaches in Dave Watanabe and Kevin Bullock. It will be nice to have these guys in our corner this year. These guys have been through it all and have a lot of experience. I am looking forward to working with these guys this season and hope to continue to learn a lot from them and continue to grow as a manager. Our main goal as a team this year is to win a B World title at Disney. We also would like to win the ASA B National and earn a trip to Oklahoma City. We think we have the right guys in place to do so. However, nothing is given to you so you have to go out and earn it. There will be a lot of good teams out there trying to do the same thing. Many of them are right in our back yard. We would like to wish all teams good luck for the upcoming season."

## **BOOMBAH/TPS/CLASSIC CAR WASH/RED'S**

**π 2006 Team Name:** New team.

**π Manager:** Red Moore.

**π Key Personnel:** Lance Fossit, Shane King, John Leep, Jim Perry, Kevin Rassman, Jim Ray, Matt Reynolds, Jim Roberts, Rusty Scott (.656, 64 HR's, 130 rbi's, 1st Team All-City Open, 2nd Team Open Rookie of the Year), Steve Shields, John Steele, Tom Stevens (.669, 67 HR's, 209 rbi's, 1st Team All-City Open), Casey Stewart .

**π Additions:** NA - new team.

**π Losses:** NA - new team.

**π Final Ranking:** NA - new team.

**π League Highlights:** NA - new team.

**π Tourney Highlights:** NA - new team.

**π Outlook:** After a hiatus from local softball, initially pursuing an ASA-NSA schedule, then last year helping to field regional power Team Illinois/Red's/Tanel 360/TPS, sponsor-manager Red Moore's team will focus primarily on USSSA "B" ball in 2007. At the same time, they'll be attempting to take care of some unfinished business - winning the NSA "B" Super World in which his club finished second a few years ago. The new team will be a welcome addition to a roster of area U-Trip "B" teams, actually giving little Northern Kentucky a staggering three teams at that level for the first time in recent memory. Moore has reassembled several of his former players, including Lance Fossitt, Kevin Rassman, Jim Ray, Jim Roberts, Steve Shields, and Casey Stewart, all of whom sat out the the 2006 season. Team members John Leep, Jim Perry and John Steele played with Moore's Team Illinois Reds/Tanel 360/TPS club last year. First team "Open" All-City selections Rusty Scott (.656, 64 HR's, 130 rbi's), another former team member, and Tom Stevens (.669, 67 HR's, 209 rbi's) come to the team from nationally ranked Watanabe/TTP/Superior/CHL/B & A/TPS. Scott will capably anchor the defense at short and provide solid leadership along with Stevens. Newcomers Shane King and Matt Reynolds, two "C" prospects stepping up the next level, round out the line-up. Their ability to contribute may ultimately determine the team's success in 2007.

**π Manager's Comments:** "We should have good - not great speed. Our defense is going to hinge on a couple of C players moving up in the outfield. Our infield will be good. We have one of the better USSSA pitchers in Jim Perry. We'll have plenty of power. We'll be working on base hitting most of the spring. Of course, we would like to win our league, but we have a work problem that will keep us from being too strong there. But our goal is to get to Disney and win the USSSA B World and also get back to Muncie and win the NSA B Super World which we got second in a few years ago. It will take a while to get chemistry going, then we feel like we should be in the top five in Greater Cincinnati. We have a good nucleus; if our C players step up we could be a real good team."

### **FREEZE/JAMES ARNOLD/JAC/PUTTERS TAVERN (60-25))**

**π 2006 Team Name:** Freeze Concrete/James Arnold/BW3/Easton.

**π Manager:** Homer Matheny.

**π Key Personnel:** George Farris (.649, 50 HR's, All-City, 3 All-Tourns.), Rob Menke (.614, 19 HR's, All-City, 2 All-Tourns.), Mike Canupp (.611, 48 HR's, All-City, 5 All-Tourns.), Trevor Barth (.607, 10 HR's, All-City, 3 All-Tourns., 1 Tourn., MVP), Jayson Scott (.601, 22 HR's, 3 All-Tourns.), Homer Matheny (.580, 13 HR's), Jeff Click (.567, 2 All-Tourns.), Bobby Noeth (.559, 30 HR's, 1 Tourn. MVP, 1 Tourn. ODP, 4 All-Tourns.).

**π Additions:** Jon Jamison, Scott Stigers - PRI; Pat Phillips - Monster/Journeyman; Donny Sikora - NW Pipe; Ritchie Jones; EAP.

**π Losses:** None.

**π Final Ranking:** USSSA Ohio 1st, Great Lakes 2nd, National 5th.

**π League Highlights:** NA.

**π Tourney Highlights:** 1st USSSA B NIT, Milford (4); USSSA B NIT, Colerain Township; USSSA B NIT, Indianapolis; B NIT, Sterling Heights, Mi.; USSSA A Qualifier, Dayton; 5th USSSA Major NIT, Colerain Township; USSSA Great Lakes B National, Sterling Heights, Mi.; 7th USSSA Major NIT, Sterling Heights, Mi.; 9th USSSA B World, Lake Buena Vista, Fl; USSSA A World, Lake Buena Vista, Fl.

**π Outlook:** Despite a 5th place finish in the USSSA Great Lakes “B” Nationals and a 9th place finish in the “B” World, the 2006 softball season was nothing short of remarkable for Freeze/Arnold/BW3/Easton. Greater Cincinnati’s perennial “B” power captured six NIT titles, a 5th place finish in the Cincinnati Major NIT, and a 9th place finish in the U-Trip “A” World, and claimed over 300 additional national ranking points - 1995 than they did in 2005 (1640). Still, one could argue that while they improved in their domination of the local “B” program, the team’s regional and national standing slipped. Freeze/Easton fell from 1st to 2nd in the Great Lakes division rankings, and from 2nd to 5th nationally. They finished two spots lower in the “B” nationals, falling from from 3rd to 5th, and five spots in the “B” World, as they regressed from a 4th place finish to 9th. And now, with the departure of 2006 “Player of the Year” Mike Malesko and slugger Tony Sharkins, who led the team in home runs last year (78 and 60, respectively), one has to question whether Freeze’s seemingly unending reign as the nation’s most enduring “B” power isn’t about to come to an end. But not to worry. Arriving to stop the bleeding are Jon Jamison (PRI), the 2005 “B” Player of the Year, whose power helped carry Freeze through the ‘05 season, and Donny Sikora, a member of the USSSA “A” World Champion Northwest Pipe team. Sikora is expected to help shore up what was a suspect outfield last season along with newcomer Ritchie Jones (EAP), a young speedster. Former team standouts Pat Phillips and Scott Stigers will also be back in a Freeze uniform once again in 2007. A sense of urgency seems to exist on this year’s team - especially among the veterans - that it’s time to finally nail down that elusive “B” World title. And hopefully the veteran leadership of George Farris, Trevor Barth, Homer Matheny, Jeff Click and Bobby Noeth, can help bring that title home.

**π Manager's Comments:** “Our strengths continue to be defense and chemistry. Pitchers Bobby Noeth and Trevor Barth are the key components to the defense along with middle infielder and rising star Rob Menke. We did lose some power from the ‘06 team, but in today’s game that should not be an issue. With all the power we had last year, we still only hit two home runs in our first loss at the B World. It should make us more versatile. It will allow Jon Jamison to swing away more and give others the opportunity to fill in with power where needed. Our defense will be improved in the outfield with Donny Sikora and Ritchie Jones. Our goals haven’t changed from years past. We want to compete locally, regionally and nationally. Our state titles, national titles and top ten World finishes show our progress. We are coming off two top five finishes in the Cincinnati Major NIT and want to continue to play higher competition to ready ourselves for the tough USSSA B World. Freeze 2007 will be most of the same characters with the addition of new and old talent. Pat Phillips, Jon Jamison and Scott Stigers all make returns from past rosters. Stigers played with Freeze in 1999, Pat Phillips in 2004 and 2005, and Jon in 2005, when he was named ‘Player of the Year’ and a member of the 2005 All-World Team. Donny Sikora comes to us from N. W. Pipe, fresh off an A World crown. He will add to a veteran line-up with experience and competitive fire. Ritchie Jones will add speed and youth to an outfield that struggled last year. It is

obvious that some of us are not getting any younger. It is important that the older guys realize the importance of this year. Younger guys like Rob Menke, Jayson Scott and Mike Canupp all did a great job last year. George Farris had the best year of the 34 and older guys. Jeff Click and I will be counted on heavily this year to return to the form of years past. I am confident we will be there in the end. It is a long year. Our goals are not so much to win every NIT, or to pack the stat sheets for post-season honors, but to perform and flourish down the stretch when the competition is the greatest. In the past, we have played better than expected at times and worse than expected at times. Our outlook in 2007 is to stay solid without the peaks and the valleys and when the 'money' is on the line, MAKE IT COUNT."

## **LOVELESS/CONVEYOR/MINGES/TT/EASTON/NOEL (60-24)**

**π 2006 Team Name:** Loveless Hardwood/Conveyor Solutions/A Total Tan/Tri-Serve/Easton.

**π Manager:** Tom Richmond.

**π Key Personnel:** Mike Dillon (.594, 14 HR's, 68 rbi's), Joey Vandever (.577, 45 HR's, 182 rbis), Jason Wood (.565, 28 HR's, 127 rbi's), Billy Villines (.527, 84 rbi's), Jud McMillien (.522, 58 rbi's).

**π Additions:** Ryan Minges, Justin Minges, Tyler Minges, Steve Walton, Tony Engel, Micah Gray.

**π Losses:** Ryan Richmond - EAP, Tony Huston - na.

**π Final Ranking: USSSA:** Cincinnati 3rd, Great Lakes 16th, National 58th.

**π League Highlights:** 12-2 Thursday.

**π Tourney Highlights:** 1st USSSA D NIT, Cincinnati; USSSA C Qualifier, Harrison; USSSA C Qualifier, Cincinnati; USSSA C State, Milford; 2nd Cincinnati A Metro; 7th USSSA Major NIT, Columbus, In.

**π Outlook:** The 2006 Loveless Hardwood/Conveyor Solutions/A Total Tan/Tri-Serve/Easton team improved across the board over their 2005 season, except in national and world tournament play. They improved their Great Lakes Division ranking from 19th to 16th, and national ranking from 95th to 58th. They won the Ohio USSSA State Tournament after finishing 3rd in 2005. They captured four events overall compared to one in '05, and amassed 1115 national ranking points compared to 940 in '05. Unfortunately, a late season relocation by the team's pitcher doomed them to a lackluster 17th place finish at the Great Lakes National and 6th at the World, compared to 2nd and 13th the previous season. Loveless will be heading into the season minus Ryan Richmond (EAP) and Tony Huston as well, but has bolstered its roster with newcomers Ryan, Justin and Tyler Minges, Steve Walton, Tony Engel and Micah Gray. Buoyed by these additions and their overall play in 2006, Loveless will compete at the "B" level this year, and promises to give their opponents fits on the strength of their exceptional defense and speed. It may take a few weeks for the team to jell with so many new faces, but they'll be more than ready for post-season play and a run at both a state and national title. It may take another year, however, before they can make a serious challenge at the U-Trip World.

**π Manager's Comments:** "The 2007 Loveless team will play USSSA B this year. We will have good speed at all positions, the defense will be very good and our power will be

strong for playing at the B level. The coaching will be done by Billy Villines until Tom Richmond - last year's manager - can get back on the field due to illness. Our goals for 2007 are to qualify for the USSSA B Nationals and World. We will play league play at Eggleston on Thursday and should do well. We will also be playing in the Cincinnati Major Metro. We have a great group of players with a lot of talent. I expect the team to do well in every tournament we play in. We will play in two Major NIT's this year and I think this will give us more experience against higher level teams, which will help us when we play at the Nationals and World. We would like to thank our sponsors, Loveless Hardwood, Easton, A Total Tan, Conveyor Solutions, Noel's Plumbing Supply and Minges Drywall."

## **MIKE FOULKS AUTO BODY/TEAM INSANITY/EASTON**

**π 2006 Team Name:** Mike Foulks Auto Body/Team Insanity.

**π Manager:** Mike Foulks.

**π Key Personnel:** Craig Johnson (.656, 18 HR, USSSA Great Lakes National All-Tourn.), Andrew McGowan (.615, USSSA Great Lakes National All-Tourn.), Jason Murphy (.650, USSSA Great Lakes National All-Tourn.), Seth Tracy (.690, 46 HR's, ODP and HR Leader USSSA Great Lakes National), Eddie Weinberg (.690, Kentucky USSSA All-State), T. J. Thompson (Kentucky USSSA All-State), B. J. Johnson (.680, 37 HR's), Chuck Wagner (.680, Kentucky USSSA All-State), Tim Burt (.500).

**π Additions:** Brad Louallen - Max Softball, Roger Boles - TPE.

**π Losses:** Brian Parrish, Jerry Norris, Brad Kelch - NA; Tony Bauereis - Sentry Fire.

**π Final Ranking: USSSA:** Kentucky 1st, Great Lakes 3rd, National 20th.

**π League Highlights:** 12-7 Riverstar B, 18-2 Riverstar C.

**π Tourney Highlights:** 1st USSSA C NIT, Cincinnati; Kentucky USSSA C State, Taylor Mill; ASA A Metro, Crosby Township; 2nd USSSA B-C NIT, Milford (2); USSSA Great Lakes C Nationals; 3rd USSSA C NIT, Milford; 9th USSSA C World, Sterling Heights, Mi.

**π Outlook:** In 2005 Mike Foulks Auto Body started strong and petered out, then last year overcame a slow start with a strong finish. Ironically, the team had a better overall season in 2005, winning a total of six events vs. two in 2006. But it was their 9th place finish in the last year's U-Trip "C" World that will be driving them up to class "B" for 2007. And the timing couldn't be worse. Team MVP Brian Parrish has left the team, and two other players - Andrew McGowan and Brandon Johnson - are rehabbing. But while they might be down, don't count them out yet. Recruits Brad Louallen and Roger Boles will help sure up a line-up boasting team stalwarts Craig Johnson (.656), Jason Murphy (.650), Seth Tracy (.690, 46 HR's), Eddie Weinberg (.690, 48 HR's), and Chuck Wagner (.680). Pitcher T. J. Thompson has enjoyed plenty of success facing "B" competition the last two years and will keep his team in most games. And, as always, intensity and chemistry will also help Mike Foulks carry their game to the next level. If Brandon Johnson and Andrew McGowan can return full strength, Mike Foulks should have no problem making the jump to USSSA "B."

**π Manager's Comments:** "Our team chemistry is our biggest asset. We have a core of guys who have played several years together. No one on the team tries to stand out on an individual basis. Our strength is playing as a team, doing all the fundamentals, and

playing with 110%. We lost a few great ball players this year in Brian Parrish, Tony Bauereis and Jerry Norris. Two of our starting outfielders have had medical issues in the off-season. Brandon Johnson has had rotary surgery, and Andrew McGowan has been rehabbing a shoulder injury with the possibility of surgery. We would like to play as much as possible, try to be competitive and win every tournament we enter. We are looking forward to making the trip to Disney.”

## **Northern Kentucky Men's C Team Previews**

### **BEEF O'BRADY'S/BRUSTER'S ICE CREAM (33-23)**

**π 2006 Team Name:** GZG Construction/Beef O'Brady's/Bruster's Real Ice Cream.

**π Manager:** Mark Daniel.

**π Key Personnel:** Brian Huston (.667, 28 HR's, 85 rbi's), Jeff Begley (.615, 41 HR's, 103 rbi's), Chad McKibben (.611, 13 HR's, 54 rbi's), Mark Daniel (.598, 24 HR's, 78 rbi's), Doug McFarland (.618, 26 HR's, 76 rbi's).

**π Additions:** Shane Ogden - Hill & Griffith, Aaron Haslam - Fitzgerald's Pharmacy, Steve Tatum, DeClaire Insurance, Luke Ogden - na, Bill Byrne - A. P. T.

**π Losses:** Zack Garrison, Andy Dalton, Jerry McGonegle - Design Concepts; Kyle King - retired; Ryan Cunningham - GBC.

**π Final Ranking:** USSSA: Kentucky 3rd, Great Lakes 32nd, National 157th.

**π League Highlights:** 4-4 Expressway Tuesday B1 (5th); 5-3 Expressway Tuesday B2 (4th).

**π Tourney Highlights:** 5th USSSA B-C NIT, Milford, Oh.; 5th Kentucky USSSA C State, Taylor Mill, Ky.

**π Outlook:** Probably through attrition, Beef O'Brady's/Bruster's Real Ice Cream improved their 2006 Great Lakes Division ranking (from 44th to 32nd) and National ranking (from 222nd to 15th), but fell from 65th to 97th in World Tournament play. Easily their best tournament of the year was a 5th place finish in a 19-team B-C NIT in Milford, where they showed their potential against some of the best teams in the tri-state. A strong nucleus of Brian Huston (.667, 28 HR's), Doug McFarland (.618, 26 HR's), Jeff Begley (.615, 41 HR's), Chad McKibben (.611, 13 HR's) and Mark Daniel (.598, 24 HR's) will be buoyed by newcomers Shane Ogden and Bill Byrne, who starred on mixed couples teams last year, and Aaron Haslam of Fitzgerald's Pharmacy, Steve Tatum of DeClaire Insurance and Luke Ogden. Fast, young legs in the outfield, an improved infield defense, solid power throughout the line-up and some key personnel additions could make this team a sleeper in 2007.

**π Manager's Comments:** “Our team strengths will be speed and youth in the outfield and improved defense in the infield. We have always had a great combination of team power and aggressive base running. Our weakness could be the maturation process for some of our younger team members. Our team plays the season in order to qualify for the USSSA World Tournament. We hope to accomplish this by either winning an NIT or playing well enough to accumulate the necessary points needed through various tournaments. Our first priority has always been to play with the same individuals. We have done well to accomplish this over the years and hope to continue on after this



season. We feel that our team will be extremely competitive and look forward to a successful year.”

### **JLC/LEGEND’S/COUNTRYWIDE (69-21: 2005)**

**π 2005 Team Name:** JLC Softball.

**π Manager:** Billy Scott.

**π Key Personnel:** Harold Babb, David Gulley, Steve Hunt (.700, 3 HR’s, All-No. Ky.), Will Keller, Paul Laible, Chris Malay (.700, 33 rbi’s, All-No. Ky.), Brian Maley, Scottie Moree, Lee Palmer (.550, 96 HR’s) Jim Romito (.700, 11 HR’s, All-No. Ky.), Billy Scott (.650, 72 HR’s, All-No. Ky.), .

**π Additions:** NA - new team.

**π Losses:** NA - new team.

**π Final Ranking:** NA.

**π League Highlights:** NA - new team.

**π Tourney Highlights (from 2005):** 1st USSSA D NIT, Hebron; NSA D NIT, Lexington; 2nd USSSA D NIT, Milford; 4th Kentucky USSSA D State, USSSA D NIT, Dayton; 9th USSSA D World, Kissimmee, Fl.

**π Outlook:** A reunion - of sorts - of the 2005 JLC Softball team, JLC/Legend’s/Countrywide features four members of the 2005 JLC club and an assortment of other teams, including the Storm (Scott Moree), Comegets’em (David Gulley, Brian Maley and Will Keller), Sentry Fire (Harold Babb), Good Guys (Paul Laible and Lee Palmer) and Two-N-Out.com (Chris Malay). Manager Billy Scott is counting on team defense and high batting averages to offset a lack of power. JLC fell one short of the five players they would need to force them to C for 2007 based on a 2005 USSSA NIT win and top ten finish in the U-Trip “D” World, but will be required to play “C” regardless due to the 2007 Northern Kentucky Player list. They’ve accepted this without a whimper, and with the ever-declining lack of “C” teams in the area, should easily earn their berth to the World in Kissimmee. It may take a few months for the team to jell, but if they can stick it out for a year, the experience could help them evolve into a serious contender at the U-Trip “C” level in time for the 2008 season.

**π Manager's Comments:** “Our team speed and team batting average should carry us through any deficiencies that we may have. Lacking in overall power, we will need to hit and take extra bases. Our defense may be our strongest attribute. I think we are above average at every defensive position. Our goals are to compete every weekend, regardless of whom we play, and to try hard and have fun. Hopefully that will get us back to Orlando for USSSA and Las Vegas for NSA. When we get there, our goal will be to win those tournaments, just as we expect to do in every tournament we enter. After taking a break in 2006, we are very excited to get back together. According to the Northern Kentucky Committee players’ list for 2007, we have seven players on the C list so we decided to play C. We have very high expectations this year. We have a great group of guys who have fun together on and off the field. If our team is still in the tournament or not, we will be some of the last ones to leave the park. Softball is about having fun and competing and we intend on doing both to the best of our abilities.

### **SENTRY FIRE/APEX/LBYC (53-28)**

**π Manager:** Kevin Henn.

**π Key Personnel:** Mike Scuglik (.672, 43 HR's, 139 rbi's, All-No. Ky. 1st Team), Kraig Piper (.671, 24 HR's, 105 rbi's, All-No. Ky. 2nd Team), Chris Daggy (.646, 10 HR's, 81 rbi's), Mike Clos (.591, 36 HR's 135 rbi's), Tim Barker (.609, 56 rbi's, All No. Ky. 1st Team).

**π Additions:** Tony Bauereis - Team Insanity/Mike Foulks.

**π Losses:** None.

**π Final Ranking:** USSSA Kentucky 2nd, Great Lakes 20th, National 74th.

**π League Highlights:** 10-6 Men's B, 14-4 Men's C.

**π Tourney Highlights:** 2nd Two-N-Out Classic; 3rd USSSA C NIT, Cincinnati; 5th USSSA C NIT, Milford; 7th USSSA C NIT, Harrison; 7th USSSA Great Lakes C Nationals, Indianapolis; 9th ASA Cincinnati B Metro, Crosby Township.

**π Outlook:** Sentry Fire/Apex/LBYC is a rare commodity by today's softball standards. After all, how many teams retain the same exact sponsor, manager and line-up from one year to the next, and don't try to move down in class after being forced up for a year by the USSSA by-laws? The team's only roster change will be the addition of Tony Bauereis, whose solid play and versatility will aid Sentry on weekends when they struggle to field their starting line-up. The bump up to "C" last year took a toll on Sentry's tournament successes. After capturing four titles in 2005, their best finish last year was 2nd. But considering the competition, four top five finishes wasn't bad, and their rankings - 3rd in Kentucky, 20th in the Great Lakes Division, and 74th in the nation - out of some 2,000 registered "C" teams - were commendable at any level, but especially for a newcomer to that division. Centerfielder Mike Scuglik (.672, 43 HR's) anchors the offense and defense for Sentry, but gets strong support from 1st baseman Kraig Piper (.671, 24 HR's), and Sentry's other All-Northern Kentucky selection: ageless veteran Tim Barker (.609). Chris Daggy (.646, 81 rbi's) and Mike Clos (.591, 36 HR's) are also big producers offensively. With Mike Foulks/Team Insanity moving up to "B" for '07, Sentry will be the team to beat at the "C" level in the state of Kentucky. Look for them to nail down that elusive title this season as well. In fact, maybe several.

**π Manager's Comments:** "Our strengths will be defense and team chemistry. The core guys on this team have been playing together for several years, so they know each other's playing style and personality. Our defense starts with a great pitcher in Brian Walker. Behind him is Adam Yisnik, a newcomer at 3rd base, who has excellent hands and a great glove. Our glaring weakness will be our players' schedules. We will struggle getting our key starters there, but when everyone is there, we are a tough out. Obviously a short term goal is to try and win an NIT, and use that experience to help us do well at Nationals and World. I think the C division here locally is going to be stronger this year than we have seen in quite sometime. I feel like our team can compete with these teams, however, we will need to find a way to compete when we are missing key talent. We will have to hit much more consistently to stay in the hunt."

## **2007 Women's B-C Team Previews**

### **PELLE'S/BW3 (59-33)**

**π 2006 Team Name:** Pelle's.

**π Manager:** Butch McDaniel.

**π Key Personnel:** Stacy Moree (.602, 2 All-Tourns., 1 Tourn. MVP), Laura Schuster (.587, 2 All-Tourns.), Heather Dickerson (.578, 1 All-Tourn.), Tony Feinauer (.503, 1 All-Tourn., 1 Tourn. MVP), Freedom Fogt (.552, 1 All-Tourn.).

**π Additions:** Beth Fields, Kassie Brock - injured.

**π Losses:** NA.

**π Final Ranking: USSSA:** Kentucky 1st, Great Lakes 4th, National 32nd.

**π League Highlights:** 13-5 Riverstar, 10-10 Expressway.

**π Tourney Highlights:** 1st USSSA D NIT, Milford (2); ASA Women's C Metro, Crosby Township; Riverstar Appreciation Tournament, Cincinnati; 2nd Ohio USSSA D State, West Chester; USSSA D NIT, Cincinnati.

**π Outlook:** Aside from fizzling out in the national and world tournaments last year, 2006 was a tremendous season for Pelle's. They improved their state ranking from 4th to 1st, Great Lakes division ranking from 7th to 4th and vaulted all the way from 57th to 32 nationally from the previous year. They collected 210 more points (850) than the previous season, and notched four first place finishes and three seconds compared to a lone second place finish in 2006. Speed and team defense were suspect in Pelle's September swoon, so manager Butch Holloway has added Beth Fields and Kassie Brock to his line-up to help improve those areas. With veteran sluggers Stacy Moree (.602), Laura Schuster (.587), Heather Dickerson (.578), Tony Feinauer (.503) and Freedom Fogt (.552) back for another season, Pelle's/BW3 is poised to finally capture that elusive post-season championship.

**π Manager's Comments:** "Our main weakness has been team speed and defense. We think we took care of both with our two pick-ups. We hit .502 as a team last year, led by Stacy Moree at .602. Laura Schuster, who will be out until mid-June, and Heather Dickerson were close behind at .587 and .578 respectively. Our main power hitters - Freedom Fogt, Missy Sawyer and Liz Werrmann - also return. First year players Beth Fields (ss) and Kassie Brock (of) will fit in nicely. Our top defensive players - Tonya Feinauer, Devana Gulley - also return. Missy Holloway, Kelly Young, Abby Voelkers, Lisa Garlich and Chrissy Young could also make an impact. Once again Rich Freeman and Steve Hunt will be the coaches. Our goal this year is to play at a high level all year. Last year we started very good but leveled off towards the end of the year. We want to bring home the state, national and world trophies this year. Our expectations are very high. There are a lot of excellent women's teams in this area, but if we stay focused, we will be tough to beat."

## **PLAYIN' DIRTY (34-23)**

**π 2006 Team Name:** James S. Arnold/Beaches.

**π Manager:** Rodney Wolfe.

**π Key Personnel:** Tracy Davis (.433, 44 rbi's), Nicole Dean (.550, 21 rbi's), Jessica Hardy (.460, 34 rbi's), Samantha Hardy (.510, 47 rbi's), Lauri McCulley (.590, 40 rbi's), Jessie Smith (.580, 32 rbi's), Kelly Throckmorton (.640, 64 rbi's).

**π Additions:** Laura Arstingstall, Vicky - Franklin Financial; Amber Greene - na.

**π Losses:** Lora Strong - na.

**π Final Ranking:** USSSA Ohio 1st, Great Lakes 1st, National 13th.

**π League Highlights:** 7-3 Expressway, 1st; 6-4 Expressway, 3rd.

**π Tourney Highlights:** 1st USSSA Memorial, White Oak; 2nd USSSA NIT, Cincinnati; USSSA NIT, Milford; USSSA NIT, Harrison; 3rd, USSSA NIT, Milford.

**π Outlook:** The 2006 season was, in a sense, one of contradictory accomplishments for the James S. Arnold/Beaches softball team. On the one hand, the team improved their Great Lakes Division (from 2nd to 1st) and National (24th to 13th) ranking, and their national ranking points (from 900 to 1075) from the previous year. But they slipped in state tournament finish, failing to defend their 2005 championship while placing 5th. And they fell five notches at the Great Lakes National Tournament (from 4th to 9th). Additionally, they won only one tournament, compared to three in 2005. Still, a number one state and Great Lakes National ranking are nothing to balk at, and with regard to tournament finishes, James S. Arnold can take great pride in recording three runner-up finishes in NIT's. Competing under the Playin' Dirty banner in 2007, the team will lose a strong performer in Lora Strong, but has picked up three blue chip recruits in Laura Arstingstall and Vicky Gilbert of Franklin Financial and Amber Greene. They should play a big role in helping Playin' Dirty turn a couple of those second place finishes into tournament titles in 2007, and making it a long year for the opposition.

**π Manager's Comments:** "Defense has always been our strength. With the loss of Lora Strong, we should still be pretty strong defensively with the addition of our new players. Our goal is to play well and win. Like every team, we want to win it all. We hope to stay healthy this year as we had some key injuries last year.

### **TEAM KENTUCKY (24-3)**

**π 2006 Team Name:** Team Kentucky.

**π Manager:** Dale McMillen.

**π Roster:** Heather Krebs, Christian Lee, Kayla Brinkman, Jordan Mize, Savannah Sims, Maria Pabst, Jessica Wimsaat, Desiree Zink, Stephanie Reckers, Kay Lantry, Kristie Graham, Nikki Gorman, Macy Holsinger.

**π Additions:** NA.

**π Losses:** NA.

**π Final Adult Ranking - USSSA:** Ohio 17th, Great Lakes 72; **Final Youth Ranking - USSSA:** Kentucky 1st, Great Lakes Division 1st, National 2nd.

**π League Highlights:** NA.

**π Adult Tourney Highlights:** 8th USSSA D NIT, Milford; Youth Tourney Highlights: 1st USSSA Qualifier; 1st USSSA NIT, Smyrna, Tn.; 1st Kentucky USSSA 19-Under State; 3rd USSSA World, Kissimmee, Florida.

**π Outlook:** It would be hard to improve on Team Kentucky's 2006 season. Among their accomplishments was a number one national ranking (prior to the 19-under slow pitch World), Kentucky State Championship, NIT Championship and third place finish in the USSSA World in Kissimmee, Fl. Team Kentucky recorded victories over the the number one, number three, number five, number six, number seven and number eight ranked teams in the nation. They averaged eleven runs per game on offense, and allowed only

four per game on defense. So solid was Team Kentucky's defense that not once did they allow double digit scoring during the 2006 season. In addition to the team's success on the field, off the field they are even more remarkable, says manager Dale McMillen. "Their average GPA is 3.3, they work as volunteers with various organizations and spend time giving back to the community. They are a very strong Christian based group with extremely high value systems. Each player puts the other players ahead of themselves and this unselfish approach is what has driven these kids to be the best they can be. They truly have fun helping each other. This is a tribute to their parents and to each of them." Now that Team Kentucky has another year under their belts, and with every player but one returning for 2007, expectations are sky high that the team will take care of some unfinished business from last year - winning the USSSA World Tournament.

**π Manager's Comments:** "Our overall team speed is excellent. We're exceptionally fast in the outfield. Our kids won two out of three base running competitions. We have power hitters to go along with our speed. Our team captured home run hitting contests in two out of three home run contests. Our goals are the same every year: to win a national championship, to give all we can, to enjoy the game, our opponents and each other, and to give something back to younger kids. At one point or another last year, every one of our kids earned some kind of honor - All-Tournament, All-World, All-State, Home Run hitting contests, base running contests or throwing contests. We're a year older with another year's experience. Our kids have such a work ethic that it's so incredible and hard to describe. You hear so much negative garbage about young people or kids in general, but let me tell you, there's a lot of good kids out there and we've been blessed with twelve of them. With one exception, every one is back from 2006."

## **TY-1-ON**

**π 2006 Team Name:** Ty-1-On.

**π Manager:** Colleen Needham.

**π Key Personnel:** Karen Kron (USSSA B All-World), Rhonda Klette (USSSA B All-World), Erin Engelkamp (USSSA B All-World), Theresa Hirschauer, Lori Wilp, Brenda Ryan, M. J. Ranz, Celia Fritz, Andrea Costa, Lisa Richter, Jane Eltzroth, Pat Barnhorst, Shirley Cummins, Barb Bleser.

**π Additions:** NA.

**π Losses:** NA.

**π Final Ranking:** USSSA Ohio 1st, Great Lakes 1st, National 9th.

**π League Highlights:** 1st Expressway Spring; 1st Expressway Summer.

**π Tourney Highlights:** 1st USSSA NIT, Cincinnati; USSSA Qualifier, White Oak; USSSA NIT, Milford; USSSA B-C State, West Chester; 2nd USSSA Qualifier, Springdale; 3rd USSSA B World, Kissimmee, Fl.

**π Outlook:** Illness and conflicts may have denied the Ty-1-On team of a USSSA "B" World title last September at the Walt Disney Wide World of Sports Complex in Lake Buena Vista, Fl. Ty-1-On went to the tournament without Shelly Cummins and Lisa Tyler, who were unable to make the trip due to illnesses, and without Jane Eltzroth, Pat Bornhorst and Shirley Cummins due to conflicts. With those five missing, it was a small miracle that Ty-1-On finished as high as they did, and a huge tribute to their depth. The hope here is that they can attend this year's event full strength and bring home a world

title before the age of the players takes any further toll. Nonetheless, Ty-1-On's 2006 season - which included two league and four tournament titles - was nothing to apologize for.

**π Manager's Comments:** "Our biggest plus for 2007 will be having our players healthy again. We went to the B World without two starters losing them to illness,, one just days before we left for Florida. We expect that Shelly Cummins will be full strenght at the start of the season and Lisa 'LT' Tyler will be able to join the line-up in mid-to-late July. Karen Kron, Rhonda Klette and Erin Englekamp are all coming off All-World seasons at the USSSA B level. Over the coures of the 2006 season, Theresa Hirschauer, Lori Wilp, Brenda Ryan, M. J. Ranz, Celia Fritz, Andrea Costa and Lisa Richter all played key roles for us. Jane Eltzroth, Pat Barnhorst and Shirley Cummins played with us in 2006 but were not able to attend the B world due to another commitment. We hope that they will be able to join us for all tournaments in 2007. Our team has a great deal of speed especailly when we have Jane and Shelly and Shirley with us. We have a great deal of depth with a number of players being able to lay outfield and infield. With Barbie Bleser on our roster, we have three pitchers. I believe our defense is what will lead us to cointinued success in tournaments. Our goal is to finish better than 3rd at the B world. I think if we stay healthy throughout the season and into September, we have an excellent chance of improving our 3rd place finish at the B world. I was also unable to be in Florida for the B world, so I am basing my thoguhts on what my players have expressed to me."