

## BEST STATES TO RETIRE: PART 1

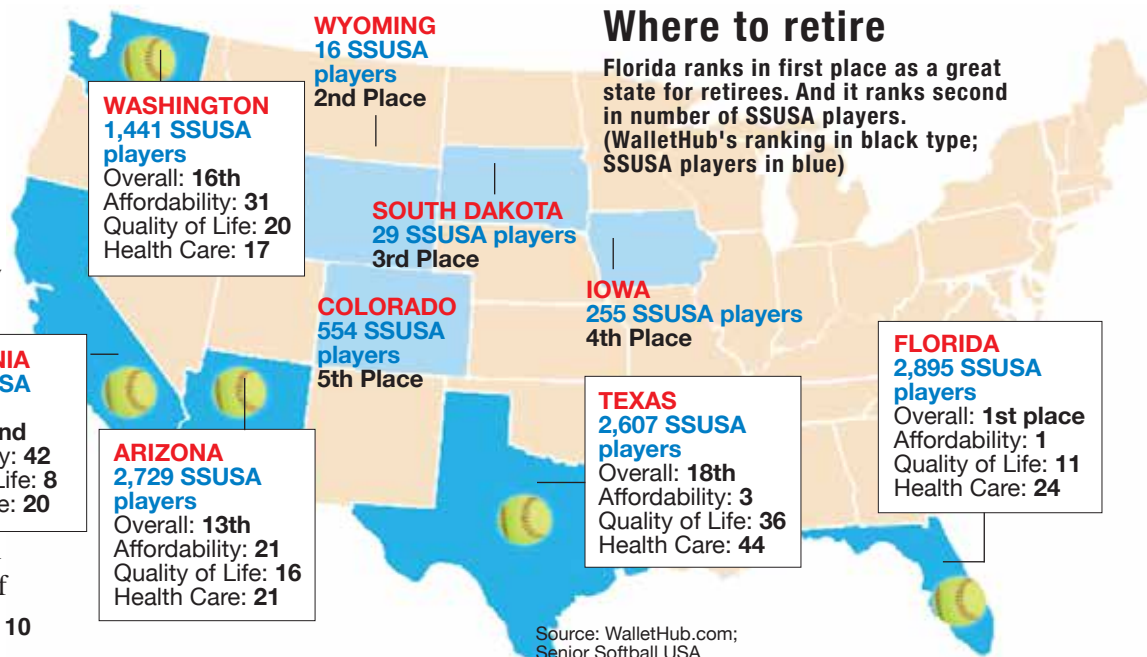
# Florida Tops List for Retirees

## California ranks 32nd; First for SSUSA Players

By Anthony Ramos  
Softball News Report

When it comes to havens for senior softball players, few can argue against the state of Florida. Ideal weather conditions for year-round play, along with top playing facilities, has propelled the Sunshine State head and shoulders above the rest of

Please See Page 10



## Where to retire

Florida ranks in first place as a great state for retirees. And it ranks second in number of SSUSA players. (WalletHub's ranking in black type; SSUSA players in blue)

**PART 1** Florida Tops List for Retirees

**PART 2** In depth look at SSUSA's top state, California

**PART 3** Remaining top SSUSA states: AZ, TX, WA

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# 29 Teams Crowned Champion of Champions at 11th Annual TOC

## Crown Jewel of Senior Softball Attracts Teams from 29 States and Canada



Photo by Jack Eberhard

Sara Payne from Kryptonite (FL), Women's 40 Major, ready to connect at the TOC.

## Softball News Report

POLK COUNTY, FL – The 11<sup>th</sup> annual Original Tournament of Champions brought 112 champions from across 29 states and Canada to the Sunshine State for the right to be called Champion of Champions.

This year's TOC was comprised of 22 divisions (seven mixed divisions).

The Men's 50 Major division saw KC Classics (MO) go from worst to first, as the team posted a perfect 4-0 record in bracket play, after going 0-2 in seeding.



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# News Briefing

## CARL'S CORNER

By Carl Gustafson

### It Can Happen in a Heartbeat

I woke up feeling powerful. I had bench pressed 315 pounds the day before. I weighed 230 pounds and could barely get my sleeves over my biceps. I was 63 at the time and as I put my bat bag in the trunk I could not have conceived that I would die that day.

An hour later I lay dead in the dugout at Sunset Little League Park.

I wasn't dead long because an old WWII medic named Larry Blankenship had called for an ambulance against my command. His last words to me were, "You can kick my ass when you get out of the hospital, but by God you are going."

The medics jump-started my heart in the ambulance and thereafter my life was never the same.

If Larry, who is now 93, hadn't made that decision I would have been dead now for over seven years.

I'd like to return the favor by saving some of your lives. In those seven years I've read many obituaries in this very newspaper of men in their 50s and 60s dying of heart attacks. Your name may be on that list in the next year or two.

So consider this:

1. Your arteries may have

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Peach Tree Restaurant's 55 team



Peach Tree Restaurant's 75 team

## Peach Tree Restaurant (PA) Celebrates Silver Anniversary

### Softball News Report

It is not often that you see a team show the longevity in sports that Peach Tree Restaurant (PA) has been able to demonstrate.

Beginning play 25 years ago, in the 55-age division in 1992 as a AAA team, and sponsored by Peach Tree Restaurant in Harrisburg, PA, the team was formed by player/manager, Bill Regan, who remains the current manager.

"Several of the original players are still on the team, although many have come and gone over the years with new players added," said Regan. "However, at least six or seven of the original players will play with the team this year as we enter the 80 AAA division."

Through the years Peach Tree Restaurant has played in numerous qualifying and major tournaments across all

the Senior Softball Associations, including the National Senior Games and the Huntsman Games.

The team has notched several championship victories in their belts, including earning Gold Medals at the Huntsman Games and winning the SPA World Championships in 2014 (75 AAA) and the SSUSA Original Tournament of Champions in 2016 (75 AAA).

## Expansion Program Announced for East Coast 40's Masters

### Softball News Report

Senior Softball USA is leading the way when it comes to building a national program for the 40 Masters division. With a strong program in the West, SSUSA is now focused on developing the East.

Tim McElroy of Maryland accepted the challenge. Capitalizing on his experience

as a tournament director, manager and player, he is already making progress in the Mid-Atlantic and Florida regions.

Here are a few of the things in the works:

### 40s Communication

SSUSA is upgrading its website and will include a page dedicated to the 40 Masters program, tournament

listings and other news. Recognizing the growth of social media platforms, we are also focused on increasing our presence there as well.

- Internet: [seniorsoftball.com](http://seniorsoftball.com)
- Facebook: [40softball](https://www.facebook.com/40softball)
- Instagram: [40softball](https://www.instagram.com/40softball)
- Twitter: [@40softball](https://twitter.com/40softball)

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# Helpful Financial Tips on What to Do With Your Refund Check

By Jack Sirad

There's only one good day when it comes to your taxes and that's Refund Day.

It's the one day a year that puts a little smile on your face and almost makes paying taxes all year long worthwhile.

The good news this year is that the Internal Revenue Service expects to be issuing average tax refund checks of about \$3,000 per tax filer. Any way you slice it, that's a nice chunk of change, particularly if you are getting back more than you had expected.

Amazingly enough, of the 150 million tax returns filed this year, more than 70 percent will be receiving a refund.

The IRS reports that it issues more than 90 percent of its refunds in 21 days or less. But if you're one of those whose return may require further review, it will take longer. To check on your refund status, the best thing to do is to go to IRS.gov and click on "Get Your Refund Status" and then "Where's My Refund?" It has the most timely information on your refund.

The IRS notes that taxpayers can use Where's My Refund? to start checking on the status of their returns within 24 hours after it has been received your e-filed return or four weeks after you mail a paper return. Where's My Refund? has a tracker that displays progress through 3 stages: (1) Return Received, (2) Refund Approved and (3) Refund Sent.

To speed up the process, the IRS recommends using e-file and direct deposit as they note it's the safest, fastest way to receive your refund and is also easy to use.

Once that tax refund check arrives directly in your bank account or by mail, you've got one BIG question to answer and that's what are you going to do with the money?

Remember, back at the first of the year when you promise yourself that this was THE year that you'd begin to really get your finances in order? Well, this is your big chance to get that ball rolling.

The question is: Do you spend or save that refund check?

If you have pressing bills like high-rate credit card tabs, no doubt you should put a bunch of the refund toward paying those bills

off completely or at least making a dent in the total. If you owe on more than one credit card, pay off the one with the highest interest rate charges first.

If you're debt free, you have a number of options. The first, I think, would be to ensure that you have an adequate cash reserve account. That means having enough money readily available to pay anywhere from three to six months of all your bills.

If your bills are up to date and you've got enough cash on hand, then you likely will want to think about fortifying your investments. Put some more money in your individual retirement account or add to your investment account.

Since the stock market is trading near or at record highs these days, you might be better off putting in some money now, some more in a few months and the rest in six months or more. That way you can dollar-cost average your way into the stock or mutual fund of your choice.

Another alternative, is to help beef up your child's or grandchild's college account. That's always money well spent and something that you can feel good about for years to come.

*Jack Sirard is a retired nationally syndicated financial columnist and a senior writer/editor of Senior Softball News.*

## Carl: Health Hints

Continued from Previous Page

a plaque build-up but function just fine. You can even have a good check-up at the doctor's office and impress him with your endurance on the treadmill. But certain emotional and/or physical events can break that plaque up and surge like a logjam, chased by platelets, to clog your artery 100 percent and it can happen suddenly.

2. If you eat greasy food, processed sugar, and carry too much weight, it doesn't matter if you can bench press a Volkswagen, outrun your dog, work all day and have energy leftover to chase your wife around at night, it can all end in a literal heartbeat.

3. You can hit four homers in a game, win the MVP and beat your chest like King Kong, but if you are of a volatile temperament, you may soon be lying on the ground feeling the horror of having no power at all, unable to even lift your arm.

So you might consider doing what I had to do after I died in order to recover, survive, and put myself into a position of long life.

Change to a heart-healthy diet; drop the excess weight, especially around the waist; exercise religiously doing cardio-vascular training, which softball is not; quit approaching every event in your life as a win/lose situation; replace rage with equanimity; get a heart specific physical.

Or not. Then you can kick my ass when you get out of the hospital, if you're alive that is.

### JOIN THE SSUSA LEAGUE FAMILY!

In 2016, Senior Softball-USA had over 138 leagues in 24 states.

SSUSA provides promotion of leagues on its website ([www.seniorsoftball.com](http://www.seniorsoftball.com)), which has provided players a way to identify local leagues in their area. It has been a very successful partnership.

SSUSA also provides the best deals on approved softballs with free delivery when ordering six dozen or more. This is a great program that can work for all leagues. Please call our office at 916-326-5303 and ask for Stephanie or Fran for a quote.







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## 'How Do I Know When I'm Fit?'

**By Stan Reents, PharmD,  
Certified Health Coach**

Having good aerobic fitness is obviously critical for sports performance, but it's also really important for your health. But what is fitness and how do you know when you're "fit?"

These are important questions because many Baby Boomers continue exercising and competing as if they were still in their 20s and this can lead to injuries that have been called boomeritis.

Fitness can be defined in several ways:

- **Muscular fitness:** This can be expressed as muscular strength or muscular endurance.

- **Aerobic fitness:** This is best represented by how far and how fast you can run. The exercise physiology parameter that describes your aerobic fitness is called maximum oxygen uptake, abbreviated "VO2max."

- **Flexibility:** Several years ago, the American College of Sports Medicine recognized flexibility as an aspect of physical fitness.

- **Balance:** Though it is often overlooked, I believe

balance also should be considered part of physical fitness. This is especially important as you get older.

So, how do you improve your aerobic fitness?

If you perform any aerobic activity that pushes your heart rate up and keeps it elevated, your aerobic fitness will improve. It's really that simple. This is true whether you are 17, 47 or 77 years old.

The key to determining how hard to exercise is how fast your heart is beating, not how fast your body is moving across the ground. So, for someone who is out of shape, brisk walking, if done regularly, will improve aerobic fitness. However, brisk walking won't be enough of a physiologic stimulus to improve the aerobic fitness for, say, an elite marathon runner.

This is where monitoring your heart rate comes in. Use the formula "220 - age", and then take 50 to 60 percent of that value. This range will be your target heart rate; i.e., the heart rate you want to attain when doing your aerobic exercise. (NOTE: Obtain clearance from your physician before beginning a new exer-

cise routine.) If you exercise at this intensity regularly, your aerobic fitness will improve.

Next, how is aerobic fitness (VO2max) measured? Ideally, VO2max is assessed in a lab. Your heart rate and your ventilation (oxygen/CO2 exchange) are carefully monitored while you run on a treadmill, or ride a stationary bike. However, it's an uncomfortable test. You have to push yourself really hard. Some gyms are now offering a modified version of this test.

Fortunately, there are ways to estimate your VO2max by doing a simple running test or walking test:

- For otherwise healthy adults, a 1.5-mile run can be used.

- For out-of-shape adults, the Rockport 1-mile walk is recommended.

- For older adults, a 6-minute walk test is recommended.

These tests require that you record how long it takes you to complete the distance, and, note your heart rate when you finish. Then, you plug these measurements and your age into an equation to determine your VO2max. You can

look up VO2max values for your age group in a table to see how you rank. One good resource for these equations and reference tables is the American College of Sports Medicine's "Complete Guide to Fitness & Health."

But, there's another way to monitor your aerobic fitness: simply check your pulse when you wake up in the morning...without an alarm clock or the dog jumping on you. Do not sit up. As long as you don't have a medical condition, are not on drugs that slow your heart rate, and you're not light-headed when you stand up, a resting heart rate of 70 or less is an indication of good aerobic fitness.

So, there you have it. In my next column, I'll discuss muscular fitness.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Stan Reents, PharmD, is a health care professional and certified health coach. He created the web site [www.AthleteInMe.com](http://www.AthleteInMe.com)®, a resource on the health benefits of exercise. He is also the author of the sports medicine text "Sport and Exercise Pharmacology."

# Opinions & Letters

## A Lesson for our Politicians

In these days of political turmoil, softball offers a rare opportunity to shed the angst created by the seemingly constant bombardment of opposing views.

It is indeed refreshing to step onto the field and join teammates in the pursuit of a simple common goal.

No matter how old, no matter the political beliefs, no matter our individual backgrounds, once we step on the fields we are simply ballplayers.

When played as intended, with sportsmanship, our sport offers a powerful lesson to those noisy voices that seem to have a hard time finding common ground.

For it is impossible to find common ground without giving each person the basic respect they deserve. This is the foundation of sportsmanship: respect of teammates – and of competitors.

As senior softball players we understand that while we strive to win, the greatest victory is playing the game with sportsmanship and mutual respect.

When that happens, we all win.

**Terry Hennessy - Editor**



Sue Ballenger

## The Warlike Words of Cancer

In everything from T-shirt slogans to presidential messages, everyday language often frames cancer as a feared enemy, according to researcher David Hauser from the University of Michigan. People fight, combat and wage war on cancer. And patients win, lose or survive their cancer battles.

These warlike metaphors are often used to rally sup-



### CAN-SIRS CORNER

By Pete Davignon

port in public health campaigns. But what effect do they have on

people's willingness to participate in health and exercise behaviors that can lower their risk of cancer? Hauser states that the use of these warlike metaphors might actually undermine cancer prevention efforts.

Researchers found that

those who read more warlike language showed less interest in preventive behaviors, such as avoiding sun, or limiting red meat, alcohol, high fat and high calorie foods.

The use of warlike words is so common in print and electronic media that they limit the intentions of cancer preventive action.

Those who read more neutral text showed more interest in cancer awareness and prevention. There are alterna-

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## Senior Softball News

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# Don't Miss Out on Two Upcoming May SSUSA TOC Qualifiers

## 11TH ANNUAL ATLANTIC COAST CHAMPIONSHIPS

### MAY 16-21

Entry deadline: April 27, 2017



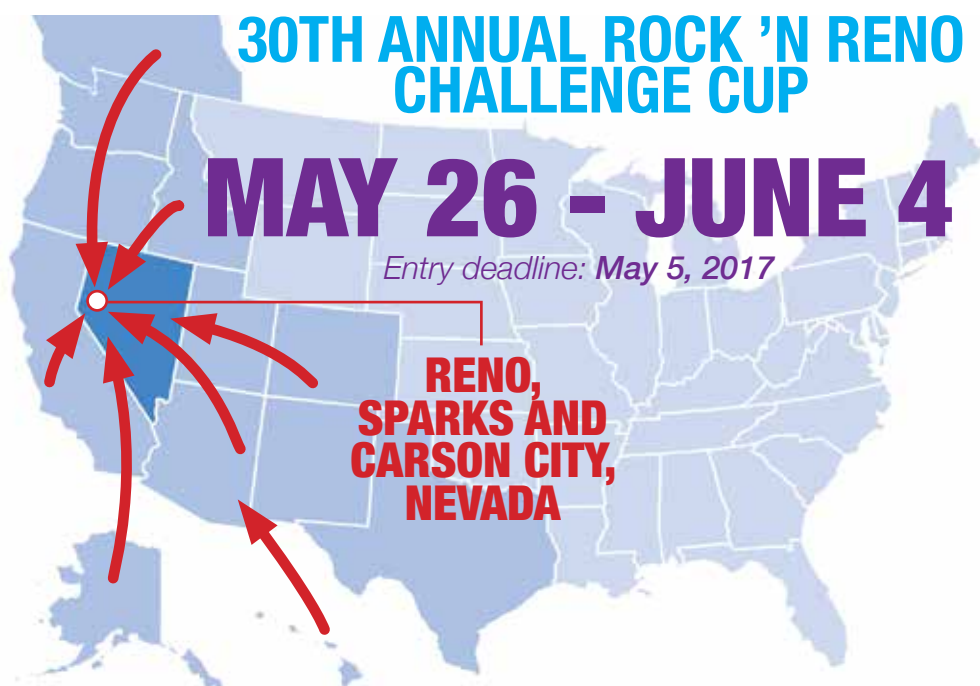
*Please Click on the Tournament Name for More Information  
on the [Atlantic Coast Championships](#) & the [Rock 'N Reno  
Challenge Cup](#).*



## 30TH ANNUAL ROCK 'N RENO CHALLENGE CUP

### MAY 26 - JUNE 4

Entry deadline: May 5, 2017



# Increased Bat Speed Key to Pulling the Ball

By Art Eversole

While running my daily batting practice sessions at our hitting club, I see this phenomena practically every day; just how many seniors can't pull the ball and how it frustrates them immensely. Being able to pull the ball allows the hitter to drive the ball with power.

Why is it that seniors have trouble pulling the ball? I believe the primary problem is that many seniors allow the pitch to travel too deep into their stance before swinging. These hitters find themselves fighting the ball off their chest and many times with ugly aligator arms.

Letting the ball get deep into the hitting zone is common amongst seniors and results in less effective hits to the off-field (unless you swing inside-out) or worse yet, handle-shots that go nowhere. Hitters who allow the ball to beat them deep into their stance generally make contact near the center of their body instead of out in front of the strike mat where they can get full extension.

"You need to go out after it," says Brett Kreuger from the 50's Major Plus Northwest DeMarini team, who volunteers as our resident on-site batting expert. By going out to get it means that you must start a bit earlier with your swing rotation to the pitch. Now doing what Kreugs recommends means possibly breaking a lifetime habit that is not easily done.

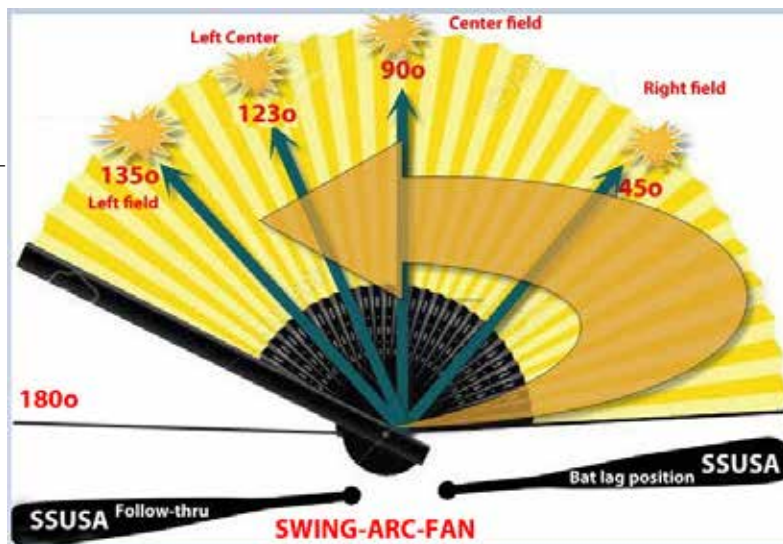
The ideal pitch to pull is the middle-in guy. The middle or middle-out pitch I believe should be hit to center

or the off-field while rotating your body to that direction to allow for a full swing. Not to say that really good pull hitters can't pull those middle-out pitches, but it's a very advance skill.

After witnessing hitter's frustration during practice, I decided to create a simple illustrative chart that I call the "Swing-Arc-Fan" that supports the concepts being discussed (see the graphic). Since a proper swing sweeps out area just like a hand-held fan, I thought it to be useful. The more area that is swept out by the hitter's swing, the greater the bat-speed that can be generated.

The purpose of the graphic is to act as a guide so hitters can visualize what I'm talking about here. It also provides players with a visual of some of the contact points along the bat-path starting at the lag position, and where the ball would go if struck in that location on the curve. This visual aid is not intended to be to actual scale in relation to the layout of the softball diamond. For you lefties, just use a mirror image of the "Swing-Arc-Fan" to visualize the concepts.

Now remembering from a previous article that there are two orders of bat-speed motion to a good hitter's swing. First, is the rotation of the hips and shoulders to the bat-lag position using strong rotational mechanics. Second, is the flipping or sling-shotting of the bat to the ball which is done with fast hands and rolling wrists which is where the graphic picks up in the swing sequence.



The "Swing-Arc-Fan" begins at the second order of this double-pendulum swing motion. The proper swing action should be executed by continuous pulling with the bottom hand on the bat allowing the bat to accelerate in a circular path until contact is made just like extending a hand fan. If you use the top hand too early in the swing, the bat will be pushed around reducing bat-speed and causing a short stunted follow through.

The "Swing-Arc-Fan" begins at 0° on the right hand side of the diagram for a right-handed hitter. This position zero is where bat-lag position has been attained from rotating your body (hips and shoulders) into the launch position. The proper launch position should have the hitter's bat barrel pointing back toward the catcher.

Looking at the graphic you'll see making contact early in the swing arc at the 45° marker will yield a hit to dead right field with subpar bat speed. At the 90° marker more bat-speed will be attained with a center field shot.

By allowing the bat to rotate around even more before contacting the ball a hit to left center will be the result at the 123° marker and with greater bat speed.

Ideally, if the hitter continues on the swing path accelerating the bat to the 135° marker on the graphic, he or she can reach a point where contact with the ball will be potentially at the greatest bat speed and pulling the ball. Make sure to always square the barrel up to the ball upon contact for the best trampoline effect. If you make contact beyond the 135° marker, you run the risk of hitting the ball into foul territory or off the end of the bat.

Thus, if you allow the pitched ball to travel too deep into your regular stance to the point where you are pushing the ball to the opposite side, you're not allowing yourself to be the best hitter you can be.

Happy Hitting.

Art Eversole can be reached at [Bashman01@earthlink.net](mailto:Bashman01@earthlink.net).



# SSUSA Moving to New Offices

By Terry Hennessy

After 15 years in Midtown Sacramento, Senior Softball-USA is moving to larger offices. The new office is more than three times as large as the current SSUSA office and will be much more efficient, with an attached large warehouse.

The new office space reflects the growth of SSUSA and our booming sport. Senior Softball has grown each year since its founding in 1988 and that growth has accelerated in recent years with the development of the 40 Masters program and the continued growth of the Senior Program.

SSUSA will be moving on April 1, but the phone numbers will remain the same. The new address is:

Senior Softball-USA  
9823 Old Winery Place, Suite 12  
Sacramento, CA, 95827



## Louisville Slugger Warriors

Many Senior Softball players are familiar with the Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Team (WWAST), which has been associated with Senior Softball-USA for the past six years. This past year, this group, made up of veterans who lost limbs in combat and have returned to the softball field in inspiring fashion, split into two groups.

David Van Sleet, who founded the original Wounded Warriors team, formed the Louisville Slugger Warriors to offer players an opportunity to play at a more competitive level.

The WWAST team still exists and



## SSUSA's New Office Building

allows other veterans who lost limbs in combat to play at an exhibition level. There are plans for the Louisville Slugger Warriors to compete in some SSUSA events this coming year in competitive divisions. The Warriors lost to the National All Star team in Polk County at the TOC by one run in extra innings... so they are obviously ready for some stiff competition!

## Anthony Ramos Named Managing Editor

Anthony Ramos has been named managing editor of Senior Softball News, the oldest and largest newspaper in the sport.



Ramos, 33, began working at SSUSA in November 2015 as a special administrative assistant and became editor of the popular Senior Softball

Newsletter in 2016, which is published online every three weeks.

Ramos, a New York native, who graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Sport Management from the University of Massachusetts (2006) and a Master's Degree in Sports Business Management from Manhattanville College (2009), worked in the Athletic Departments of Pace University and Brooklyn College, before joining SSUSA in California.

*Terry Hennessy is Chief Executive Officer of Senior Softball-USA and can be reached at [TerryH@seniorsoftball.com](mailto:TerryH@seniorsoftball.com).*

# CAN-Sirs: New Technology

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tive ways to think about cancer that may give us a better picture of what the disease is all about. Concentrate on learning more specifics, the correct (layperson) terminology used for diagnosis, staging, treatment options, risks and alternatives. Teach yourself about the signs of the different kinds of cancer.

Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of death in men. The problem is that many men with high PSA (prostate-specific antigen) have biopsies that are unnecessary. Few actually have prostate cancer. In some cases the cancer forms a discernable lump and in other cases the cancer cells infiltrate the entire gland.

Typically a urologist uses ultrasound to locate the prostate and not the tumor, so the biopsy is done blind. In a biopsy eight to 10 needles are inserted thru the rectum into the prostate.

However new technology with MRI allows the urologist to pinpoint the precise location of the tumor inside the prostate. This technology eliminates any invasive probing to try to find any cancer. Since millions of unnecessary biopsies are performed each year, this technique is more accurate and will find a tumor, if any, without a biopsy. This should be good news for those with a high PSA.

This year the CAN-Sirs Awareness and Prevention program added Hawaii to our list of tournament locations. Randy Faulkner, a former tournament director from Redding, Calif., relocated to Hawaii and is managing a CAN-Sir team there. CAN-Sirs originally focused on men's senior softball players, however we have also started working with women senior softball players. CAN-Sirs also participated in the SSUSA CalCup and the SSUSA Western Nationals in Sacramento.

You can reach us at [can-sirs@att.net](mailto:can-sirs@att.net) and visit the CAN-Sirs website at [www.can-sirs.org](http://www.can-sirs.org). Your financial support is welcome, you can donate through PayPal or 2485 Notre Dame Blvd. #370-180, Chico, CA 95928

# Florida: States Ranking Based on 31 Metrics

Continued from Page 1

the county.

"These are some of the nicest fields (Naples) in the county," said Carl Nocera, 66, who has played all over the country as a member of the New Jersey Hitmen, Long Island Jaguars and HermTech (MA), to name a few. Nocera, originally from New Jersey, recently retired from the IT industry as an engineer in January, before relocating to Naples.

Nocera got a taste of his new city while playing in the SSUSA Winter National Championships, held annually in November in the Ft. Myers, Cape Coral and Naples area.

"This a wonderful place to retire," continued Nocera. "You can play in January, February and March, something you can't do in New Jersey. I was also very impressed with the softball league here (Naples). It is well organized, players are rated, and a draft is held in December."

Pristine weather and playing conditions aren't the only reasons attracting senior softball players to Florida. Affordability (Florida is one of seven states with no income tax) and quality of life also become major factors later in life.

According to a study by Wallethub.com, [\*2017's Best & Worst States to Retire\*](#), Florida topped all 50 states (and the District of Columbia), as the best state to retire. Rounding out the top five were Wyoming, South Dakota, Iowa and Colorado.

It's interesting to note that a SSUSA survey in 2016 of tournament players showed that their top five states just for playing softball in order were: California (32), Florida (1), Arizona (13), Texas (18) and Washington state (16) (with Wallethub ranking in parenthesis.)

The bottom five for best states to retire included (in order from 47-51): Hawaii, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Alaska and Rhode Island. Hawaii, 16th among SSUSA players with 700, was the only state with a considerable number of tournament players.

In the Wallethub study, Florida posted a top score of 69.22, ranking first in affordability, No. 11 in quality of life and No. 24 in health care, the three main dimensions used in the study.

"Lower cost of living and low property taxes are big reasons for retiring to

Florida," said Pat Stephenson, 68, of Bradenton, who's played with Golden Girls and Fun Bunch, and moved to Florida in 2011 from Maryland to help care for her mother.

"It gets hot in the summer, but it is ideal in the winter," continued Stephenson, who plays on a traveling women's team to help keep her skills high. "There are also so many other different activities (golf, tennis, pickleball, kayaking, etc.) to stay active."

Within the three Wallethub main categories, 31 total metrics were used to score on a 100-point scale:

## **Affordability accounted for a total of 40 points and consisted of:**

adjusted cost of living / general tax-friendliness / tax-friendliness on pensions and Social Security income / annual cost of in-home services / annual cost of adult day health care.

## **Quality of Life accounted for a total of 30 points and consisted of:**

share of population aged 65 and older / elderly-friendly labor market / share of population aged 65 and older below poverty level / access to public transportation / mildness of weather / museums per capita / theaters per capita / golf courses per capita / access to adult volunteer activities / violent-crime rate / property-crime rate / quality of elder-abuse protections / air quality / drinking water quality.

## **Health Care accounted for 30 points and consisted of:**

family and general physicians per capita / dentists per capita / nurses per capita / health-care facilities per capita / quality of public hospitals / emotional health / share of population aged 65 and older with health insurance / share of population aged 65 and older with good or better health / share of population aged 65 and older with a disability / share of population aged 65 and older who are physically active / life expectancy / death rate for population aged 65 and older. With these findings, it is no surprise that Florida is home to the second most SSUSA players (2,895), as well as two of the marquee SSUSA events, the Winter Nationals and original Tournament of Champions, held in February in Polk County.

Florida is also a popular destination

for players seeking a snowbird exemption, with 31 of the 101 currently registered snowbirds listing Florida as their secondary state. There are also several "non-traditional" snowbirds (22) who have made Florida their primary residence, but still maintain a residency in the Northeast or Midwest.

Two of those snowbirds include William Ansell (Florida/Michigan) and Barry Cohen (Florida/New Jersey).

"Softball was my biggest reason," said Ansell, 70, on why he chose Florida. "It's the softball capital of the world (Venice). I used to travel in a motor home, going out to Arizona and Southern California, but by far the amount of ball playing and quality is better in Florida."

Ansell, who still plays with his team from Michigan, Doc Martens/Ropes Courses (65 Major), retired in 2004-2005, following a 20-year career in sales and coaching high school basketball. He made Florida his home in 2009.

With an average high of 75 in January, it is easy to see why weather, particularly in Southern Florida, was a big draw for Cohen, 68, who resides in Riviera Beach. "I can play softball in the morning in shorts."

Proving the abundance of opportunities to play the game, Cohen, who's played with Jersey Masters, Metro Hitmen, Southern State Services and Cash 4 College, to name a few competitive teams, points to the four leagues in his area that are all within driving distance.

Along with the ability to play softball year-round, Cohen, who spends April to October back in New Jersey, also lists other activities, such as riding his motorcycle year-round and playing bridge. There are downfalls, however; with overcrowding in the winter, but Cohen takes it all in stride stating, "it's like being on vacation for seven months."

It is easy to see why players entering the twilight of their professional careers and looking to extend their softball playing days flock to Florida in retirement and join the vibrant softball community.

*Our series will continue in the next edition of Senior Softball News, as we will look at the largest state, both in overall population and SSUSA tournament players, California (7,786 players).*





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11TH ANNUAL TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS: POLK COUNTY, FL





Photos by Jack Eberhard

Most Valuable Players from the 2017 Tournament of Champions

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Karen Hunger</b> – Kryptonite (FL) 40 Major Women                      | <b>Jeff Shondelmyer</b> – Building Innovation Group (NY) 55 AAA        | <b>Nando Lopez</b> – Dallas Spurs (TX) 65 AA                    |
| <b>Tracy Hudak</b> – Lew’s Crew/Exceeding Expectations (MD) 40 AAA Women  | <b>Danny Woodcum</b> – Silver Foxes (FL) 55 AA                         | <b>Clyde Smith</b> – Venom (FL) 70 Major Plus                   |
| <b>Kendra Constantine</b> – Kat’s Bats (Newfoundland, Canada) 40 AA Women | <b>Pat McLellan</b> – Hollis Appraisals (FL) 60 Major Plus             | <b>Ernie Holden</b> – Windsor Chiefs (Ontario, Canada) 70 Major |
| <b>Louise O’Donnell</b> – Arizona Dream Team 50 Women                     | <b>Dave Erdmann</b> – Clean Planet/A Special Taste (MI) 60 Major       | Boca’s 70’s (FL) – 70 AAA: No Team MVP selected                 |
| <b>Isaiah Lee</b> – NorthWest Legends (WA) 40 Major                       | <b>Bob Smith</b> – Northern Virginia Force 60 AAA                      | <b>Laurie Sianchuk</b> – Silver City Brewers (WA) 70 AA         |
| <b>Donny Burke</b> – Team 1 Sports/Miken (FL) 50 Major Plus               | <b>Bruce Walsh &amp; David Bessent</b> (co-MVP’s): No Stars (FL) 60 AA | <b>Wayne Yates</b> – Southeast Left-Overs (GA) 75 Major Plus    |
| <b>Doug Ewert</b> – KC Classics (MO) 50 Major                             | <b>Jack Lambert</b> – Hollis Appraisals (FL) 65 Major Plus             | <b>Ray Dye</b> – Pfeiffer/Doc Boys (MI) 75 Major                |
| <b>Mike Reysack</b> – Iowa Demons 50 AAA                                  | <b>Mike Walsh</b> – Southern State Services (FL) 65 Major              | <b>Norm Setnicker</b> – Minnesota Masters 75/Jimmy’s – 75 AAA   |
| <b>Doug Reska</b> – Jackson Merchants (MI) 50 AA                          | <b>John Maples</b> – Over the Edge (CA) 65 AAA                         | <b>Bill Yeager</b> – Florida Investment Properties 80 Major     |
| <b>Jeff Farney</b> – Florida Automated Shade 55 Major                     |  | <b>Henry Smith</b> – Pfeiffer Grey Sox (MI) – 80 AAA            |

TOC: 7 Games Down to Winner-Take-All

Continued from Page 1

Another team that went from the bottom to the top was Southern State Services (FL) / Men’s 65 Major, who also ran the table in bracket play after going winless in seeding.

Other teams that posted unblemished records in bracket play en route to their championship victories included Team 1 Sports/Miken (FL) (Men’s 40/50 Platinum), Jack-

son Merchants (MI) (Men’s 50 AA), Building Innovation Group (NY) (Men’s 55 AAA), Silver Foxes (FL) (Men’s 55 AA), Northern Virginia Force (Men’s 60 AAA), Over the Edge (CA) (Men’s 65 AAA), Dallas Spurs (TX) (Men’s 65 AA), Boca’s 70 (FL) (Men’s 70 AAA), Silver City Brewers (WA) (Men’s 70 AA), Pfeiffer/Doc’s Boys (MI) (Men’s 75 Major), Florida Investment

Properties (Men’s 80 Major), Kryptonite (FL) (Women’s 40 Major), and Lew’s Crew/Exceeding Expectations (Women’s Masters Silver).

There were seven “if” games, as Arizona Dream Team (Women’s 50), Iowa Demons (Men’s 50 AAA), Florida Automated Shade (Men’s 55 Major), Hollis Appraisals (Men’s 60 Major Plus), Clean Planet/A Special

Taste (MI) (Men’s 60 Major), No Stars (FL) (Men’s 60 AA), and Minnesota Masters 75/Jimmy’s (Men’s 75 AAA), were all triumphant in the winner take all game.

For a complete recap of each division, please [CLICK HERE](#).

For complete game-by-game scores, please [CLICK HERE](#).

TOC All-Stars Shine Alongside LS Warriors

**Senior Softball News Report**

The TOC All-Star Game, one of the marquee events held during the week leading up the Tournament of Champions, was held Feb. 8 at Auburndale Sports Complex.

Each of the participating teams at the TOC had the opportunity to select one player as their representative, with the players then being split

into the American and National teams.

The National team, managed by SSUSA chief executive officer Terry Hennessy, along with co-manager, Alan Gillespie (manager of Northern Virginia Force 60 & 65), defeated the American Team, managed by SSUSA President Bill Ruth along with co-manager, Randy Rowe (KC Kids

65), by a score of 25-9.

The National team scored early and often, plating 10 runs through the first four innings of play. The American team eventually got on the board in the bottom of the fourth inning, scoring four runs.

The National team would eventually put the game out of reach scoring 15 runs over the

span of the next four innings, en route to their 25-9 win.

As the winning team of the All-Star Game, the National team would have the opportunity to play against the Louisville Slugger Warriors, a team made up of US Military Veterans and Active Duty Personnel, who lost limbs or were injured in combat.

The Louisville Slugger

Please See Next Page



# LS Warriors Game: Three SSUSA Players Get Chance of Lifetime to Play on Louisville Slugger Warriors

Continued from Previous Page

Warriors and TOC All-Stars played on Feb. 11 at Auburndale Sports Complex.

The game finished in dramatic fashion, as the TOC All-Stars completed their comeback win in extra innings, 29-28.

Trailing 21-14 heading into the bottom of the open inning, the TOC All-Stars knotted up the game at 21 all, scoring seven runs to force the game into extra frames.

The Louisville Slugger Warriors seemed to take control of the game, putting up seven runs of their own to go ahead 28-21; however, the TOC All-Stars would answer again, this time scoring eight runs to gain the walk-off victory.

"It was a hell of a game to be a player in or as a spectator," stated Louisville Slugger Warriors General Manager David Van Sleet. "Simply remarkable how two evenly matched teams played to an extra inning 29-28 score featuring remarkable defensive plays and displaying an array

of offensive power. Thank you to Senior Softball-USA and Polk County for making this game one of the highlights of the SSUSA Tournament of Champions!"

As part of a raffle held the night before at the TOC Banquet, three SSUSA players won the opportunity to play alongside the Louisville Slugger Warriors.

"I was one of the fortunate three to win a spot to play as part of the Louisville Slugger Warriors team at this year's TOC," said Bill Dodge, manager of Horn Softball (CA). "It was an amazing experience. The game itself was an absolute blast. I enjoyed the interaction with the players, the high level of play and watching these incredible athletes play the game we all love. This is an experience I will always treasure as I can say I was part of a team of American Heroes, even if it was for only one game. The honor of playing with the Louisville Slugger War-



Players from left to right: Mike Miller, Bill Dodge, David Van Sleet, Emmanuel Blueford.

riors is definitely one of the highlights of my 30+ year slow pitch career."

"It was awesome," said Emmanuel Blueford, from Mixed Breed (TX), on his experience playing with the Louisville Slugger Warriors. "It was a privilege and an honor to be able to play with those young men, whom dedicated their lives to serve our country. I am so grateful to SSUSA for putting this event on. I am looking forward to future events."



Louisville Slugger Warriors with TOC National League All-Stars



Photos by Jack Eberhard





# Players Shine in TOC Speed, Pitching, Precision and Power Hitting Contests

## Senior Softball News Report

The skills contests (precision hitting, power hitting, speed and pitching), always fan favorites among the players, were held on Feb. 9, also at Auburndale Sports Complex.

The precision and power hitting contests were sponsored by Miken, with winners receiving a bat. The speed and pitching contests were both sponsored by SSUSA, with speed contest winners receiving Adidas shoes, and pitching contest winners receiving gloves.

In the precision hitting contest, each contestant hits balls off a batting tee, through a set of cones (LF line, LC gap, RC gap and RF line) that are placed 225 feet from home plate. For each ball that passes through the cones, the hitter is awarded points. Their fifth and final swing is a bonus ball, worth extra points.

"More than 100 players entered the precision hitting contest and only Jeffery Brian (AZ Legends) recorded a perfect score," said Tim McElroy, SSUSA tournament director who ran the contest. "The biggest crowds gathered when the elder statesmen took the stage. Darrell Laschen (age 80

### Contest Winners

#### Precision Hitting

Jeffery Brian  
Jeffrey Toburen  
Gary Gantz  
Darrell Laschen  
Michelle Carroll

#### Power Hitting

Perry Gallow  
Richard Ezell  
Don Cohron

#### Speed

Sara Payne  
Glenn Jordan  
Charlie Powell  
Gene Thompson  
Sara Payne

#### Pitching

Mark Haller  
Jeffrey Toburen  
Laurie Sianchuk  
Angie Ayala

from Jimmy's) scored on 80 percent of his targets, while defending champion Hugh Brotherton (age 86 from Center for Sight) hit 75 percent of his targets and finished in second place."

Jeffrey Brian (six points), won the 40's/50's division, Jeffrey Toburen (five points), won the 60's division, Gary Gantz (five points), won the 70's division, Darrell Laschen (five points), won the 80's division, and Michelle Carroll (four points), won the Women's division.

In the power hitting contest, where players bring in their own pitchers and get seven pitches, Perry Gallow won the 40's/50's division

in exciting fashion, holding off Henry Stewart and Jeff Shondelmyer in a hit-off. Richard Ezell (four) won the 60's division, Don Cohron (three) won the 70's division, and Sara Payne (four) won the Women's division. The younger divisions hit from home plate, while the older divisions and women hit from the pitcher's circle.

In the speed contest, which times runners going around the bases from home to home, the 40's/50's division was won by Glenn Jordan (13.15), while Charlie Powell (13.46) won the 60's division, Gene Thompson (14.03) won the 70's division, and Sara Payne (13.90) won the Women's division to mark her second skills contest victory on the day.

In the pitching contest, where participants get 10 throws to get the ball into a bucket placed at a 15-degree angle at home plate from 50 feet out, Mark Haller (two) won the 40's/50's division, Jeffrey Toburen (three) won the 60's division (his second skills contest win of the day), Laurie Sianchuk (two) won the 70's division, and Angie Ayala (three) won the Women's division.



**Don Cohron - Home Run**



**Richard Ezell - Home Run**



**Perry Gallow - Home Run**



**Darrell Laschen - Precision Hitting**



**Jeff Toburen - Pitching**



**Laurie Sianchuk - Pitching**



**Gene Thompson - Speed**



**Charlie Powell - Speed**



# TOC Banquet Closes Out 3-Day Showcase

## Senior Softball News Report

The highlight of the special events held during the week leading up to the original Tournament of Champions is the annual TOC Banquet.

This year's banquet was held at the Lakeland Center on Feb.10, and hosted nearly 1,500 players, along with their family and friends.

The event recognizes all the teams and managers participating in the tournament who have won a TOC qualifier during the season, the TOC All-Star teams (both the winners and runner-ups and managers), and the winners of the skills contests.

The Louisville Slugger Warriors were also in attendance, auctioning off two signed bats for \$3,000, while also holding a raffle to fill three roster spots on their team for the TOC All-Stars vs. Louisville Slugger Warriors game that was played the next evening.

The raffle brought in \$5,500. All proceeds from the auction and raffle go to help defray the travel expenses of the team.

SSUSA also honored Don Stratton, former chief executive officer of Independent Sports Association, with a special posthumous induction

into the SSUSA Hall of Fame. Don's wife, Mary, son, Michael, daughter, Kimberly, and granddaughter Makenzie, were all in attendance to accept his award.

In his more than 30 years with ISA, Stratton moved from area director, to Florida state director, to national director and in 2007, was named CEO.

"Don Stratton was one of the most unique, innovative, energetic, and caring individuals that I have ever met," said Bill Ruth, ISA and SSUSA president.

"Whenever a problem arose, whether it be in business, softball, or personal, Don provided and implemented the solution. Don always had your back. He was truly one of a kind and we all will miss him greatly," concluded Ruth.

SSUSA CEO Terry Hennessey on Stratton: "Don was an integral part of the planning process for the SSUSA Tournament of Champions – which has evolved into the jewel of the sport – as well as the SSUSA Winter Nation-



**Aerial view of the TOC Banquet inside the Lakeland Center**

als – one of the largest senior tournaments east of the Mississippi River – and several other major SSUSA tournaments."



**Terry Hennessey with Don Stratton's family, above, accepting his Hall of Fame plaque**



**Teams had a chance to socialize at the TOC Banquet**

**Photos by Jack Eberhard**



# 2017 TOC All-Tournament Teams

## Men's 40/50 Platinum

Team 1 Sports/Miken (FL) – 50 Major Plus: Kenny Smith, Juan Batista, Bob O'Brien, Tony Bassett, Junior Gutierrez. / Northwest Legends 40 (WA) – Major: Mike Wassemiller, Ron Ryan, Scott Gormaneous, Brent Haugen, Isaiah Lee. / Homer Lovers 40 (Ontario, Canada): Dave Boldt, Vik Tathe, Scott Watson.

## Men's 50 Major

KC Classics (MO): Alan Abrahamson, Craig Ewert, Sid Adamson, Scott Hubbard, Allen Neal. / Florida Automated Shade: Victor Aviles, Tim Garcia, Larry Goerhig, Allen Garmany. / Brickyard Classics (IN): Mark Harrison, Mark Thompson, Eric Fouce.

## Men's 50 AAA

Iowa Demons: Mike Reysack, Brian Holmes, Todd Petersen, Matt Baish, Tony Bergloff. / Pacific Coast Alliance (CA): Greg Fortin, Carlton Gallant, Richie Barretto, Kenny Levey. / Kamikaze (CA): Doug Champagne, Blane Curry, Jerry Lawrence.

## Men's 50 AA

Jackson Merchants (MI): Robert Leete, Jerry Cox, David Layne, Chris Rankin, Robert Dingee. / KSS (AZ): Bill McCord, Tim Pena, Roy Heisner, Mark Esquibel. / Manifest (TX): John Vaughn, Raymond Calderon, Pete Garcia.

## Men's 55 Major

Florida Automated Shade: Willard Shope, Jim Nelson, Joe Varacchi, Dave Doerbaum, Harry Seward. / High Street Bucs (MD): Anthony Allen, Geoff Meadows, Dan Barnes, Ron Baker. / Team Impact (FL): Leonard Simmons, Jeff Donnelly, Harold Smith.

## Men's 55 AAA

Building Innovation Group (NY): Rich Ezell, Steve Holmes, Bill Broedel, Bob Foley, Jim Monnat. / TNT Sports Club (PA): Roger Kummerer, Dale Hood, Ron King, Rick Barlow. / Windsor Chiefs (Ontario, Canada): Stu McPherson, Al Adams, Kirby Parent.

## Men's 55 AA

Silver Foxes (FL): Billy Oblaczynski, Danny Woodcum, Mike Canales, Chris Okolichany, Chris Nolan. / Tucson Buds (Los Buds) (AZ): Barry Jackson, Dean Scarsella, Dave Reece, Wayne Siros.

## Men's 60 Major Plus

Hollis Appraisals (FL): Steve Dorrell, Mike Monnier, Lawrence Reedus, Randy Parker, Horace Jefferson. / Minnesota Masters/White: Garry Morris, Jeff Handevitd, Don Tarasewicz, Gary Hamilton.

## Men's 60/65 Platinum

Clean Planet/A Special Taste (MI): Jay Schramm, Jim Hanna, Tony Gabriel, Johnny



Johnson, Gary Beale. / Promotion (NJ): Ross Barnett, Fred Sweeney, Gerard Stigliano, Mike Menzer. / Hollis Appraisals 65 (FL) – Major Plus: Tony Vodola, Norm Edwards, Hale Lee, Mike Gainer, Gary Nicolay.

## Men's 60 AAA

Northern Virginia Force: Tom Longo, Larry Lee, Joe Mizzoni, David Black, Steve Kopstein. / Slug-A-Bug (FL): Scott Sanford, Nick Nicometo, Chuck Wolf, Scott Ebling. / Florida Mustangs: David Shipley, David Shirer, Rad Pcholski.

## Men's 60 AA

No Stars (FL): Bruce Walsh, Marc Melnick, Paul Diperrri, David Bessent, Tom Baird. / Scrap Iron 60's Rockies (CO): Marce Leija, Don Casus, John Parisi. / Los Vatos Viejos (AZ): Bill Saunders, Manny Torres, Charlie Valencia.

## Men's 65/70 Platinum

Southern State Services (FL) - 65 Major: Syd Andrews, Bill Magley, Don Leshner, Gary McSweeney, Chuck Martin. / Venom (FL) - 70 Major Plus: Phil Biedronski, Tols Mihailof, Mike Marcum, Vince Melograno, Clyde Smith. / HermTech (MA): Ray LePage, Gene McCloskey, Ted Wess.

## Men's 65 AAA

Over the Edge (CA): Mark Simmons, Nick Basta, Jerry Smith, Richard Itritano, Dave Miller. / Florida Mustangs: Don Bobish, Don Held, Jose Rivera, Don Witmer. / Doc Martens – Ropes Courses (MI): Chris Collier, Gerry Lyster, Joe Orr.

## Men's 65 AA

Dallas Spurs (TX): Tom Parris, Ray Harty, Lee Blanton, Terry Cross, Jim Morgan. / Long Island Jaguars White (NY): Bob Ferante, Frank Gordon, Wayne Hillen, Guy Losito. / Texas Rattlers: Larry Parrack, Gary Kirk, Vince Avila.

## Men's 70 Gold

Boca 70's (FL) – 70 AAA: Bill Hans, Richard Mest, Robert Thornton, Patrick Zampella, Dennis Tierney. / Windsor Chiefs (Ontario,

Canada) – 70 Major: Ernie Holden, Bill Wilson, Terri Burney, Ed Gazarek, Nick Carosella. / Syracuse Cyclones (NY): Gary Contri, Joe Broun, Bob Wood, Dan Dillon.

## Men's 70 AA

Silver City Brewers (WA): Laurie Sianchuk, Connie Burnett, Dave Hare, Gary Gantz, Bill Edwardson. / Columbus Silver Sticks (IN): Jack Scott, Ron Callison, Bill Foist, Ron Cohron.

## Men's 75 Platinum

Pfeffer/Doc's Boys (MI) – 75 Major: Larry Martin, Al Genovese, Ray Dye, Bill Wolfe, Dick Fox. / Southeast Left-Overs (GA) – 75 Major Plus: Cecil McLeod, John Rampage, Mike Pickett, Ron Boyer, William Burger.

## Men's 75 AAA

Minnesota Masters 75-Jimmy's: Lowell Thompson, Bob Lenzmeier, Ken Koch, Ken Theisen, Earle Anderson. / Buffalo Wild Wings (FL): Doug McLellan, Bob Skidmore, Jim Scala, Bill Withrow. / Syracuse Cyclones (NY): Fred Light, Gene Signor, Ted Fendick.

## Men's 80 Gold

Florida Investment Properties: Bill Yeager, Dave Bush, Frank Murth, Bob Johnson, Norm Haltrich. / Jimmy's MN Legends: Bob D'Amadio, Steve Agard, Darrell Laschen, Norris Kruse. / ProHealth Care (WI): RC Brown, Russ Kraft, Willie Wood. / Pfeiffer Grey Sox (MI) – 80 AAA: James McCoy, Norm Ellis, Henry Smith, Al Mejorado, Danny Schrier.

## Women's 40 Major

Kryptonite (FL): April Blake, Sara Payne, Colleen Smith, Michelle Carroll, Carolyn Deeb. / Motown Magic Bachelors (MI): Yuka Wisneski, Sacretta Hopkins, Christine Treesh, Rene Graham.

## Women's 40 Silver

Lew's Crew/Exceeding Expectations (MD) – 40 AAA: Allison Flatley Cleary, Nancy Peterson, Kim Adams, Tracy Hudak, Alethea Bageant. / Kat's Bats (Newfoundland, Canada) – 40 AA: Ingrid Connors, Elizabeth Williams, Bonnie Poole, Pam Brown, Paula Snelgrove.

## Women's 50

Arizona Dream Team: Aqua Gordon, Terry Rhian, Cathy Nicodemus, Dixon Dalton, Sarah Scott. / Dreamgirlz (VA): Beverly Lovett, Cynthia Diane Mobley, Barbara Foxx, Kathy O'Meara, Angela Holloway.



# Final Results from 2017 TOC

## • MEN'S 40/50-PLATINUM

1. Team 1 Sports/Miken (FL) • 50-Major+ Champ
2. Northwest Legends 40 (WA) • 40-Major Champ
3. Homer Lovers 40 (ON)

## • MEN'S 50-MAJOR

1. KC Classics (MO)
2. Florida Automated Shade 50
3. Brickyard Classics (IN)

## • MEN'S 50-AAA

1. Iowa Demons
2. Pacific Coast Alliance (CA)
3. Kamikaze 50 (CA)

## • MEN'S 50-AA

1. Jackson Merchants (MI)
2. KSS (AZ)
3. Manifest 50's (TX)

## • MEN'S 55-MAJOR

1. Florida Automated Shade 55
2. High Street Bucs 55 (MD)
3. Team Impact (FL)

## • MEN'S 55-AAA

1. Building Innovation Group (NY)
2. TNT Sports Club (PA)
3. Windsor 55 Chiefs (ON)

## • MEN'S 55-AA

1. Silver Foxes (FL)
2. Tucson Buds/Los Buds (AZ)
3. Longshoremen 55 (VA)

## • MEN'S 60-MAJOR PLUS

1. Hollis Appraisals 60 (FL)
2. Minnesota Masters/White

## • MEN'S 60/65-PLATINUM

1. Clean Planet/A Special Taste (MI) • 60-Major Champ
2. Promotion (NJ)
3. Hollis Appraisals 65 (FL) • 65-Major+ Champ

## • MEN'S 60-AAA

1. Northern Virginia Force 60
2. Slug-A-Bug (FL)
3. Florida Mustangs 60

## • MEN'S 60-AA

1. No Stars (FL)
2. Scrap Iron 60 Rockies (CO)
3. Los Vatos Viejos 60 (AZ)

## • MEN'S 65/70-PLATINUM

1. Southern State Services (FL) • 65-Major Champ
2. Venom 70's (FL) • 70-Major+ Champ
3. Herm Tech (MA)

## • MEN'S 65-AAA

1. Over The Edge (CA)
2. Florida Mustangs 65
3. Doc Martens/Ropes Courses (MI)

## • MEN'S 65-AA

1. Dallas Spurs 65 (TX)
2. Long Island Jaguars White (NY)
3. Texas Rattlers

## • MEN'S 70-GOLD

1. Boca 70's/S. Levin Old School (FL) • 70-AAA Champ
2. Windsor Chiefs (ON) • 70-Major Champ
3. Syracuse Cyclones 70 (NY)

## • MEN'S 70-AA

1. Silver City Brewers (WA)
2. Columbus Silver Sticks (IN)

## • MEN'S 75-PLATINUM

1. Pfeiffer/Doc's Boys (MI) • 75-Major Champ
2. Southeast Left-Overs (GA) • 75-Major+ Champ

## • MEN'S 75-AAA

1. Minnesota Masters 75/Jimmy's
2. Buffalo Wild Wings (FL)
3. Syracuse Cyclones 75 (NY)

## • MEN'S 80-GOLD

1. Florida Investment Properties 80 • 80-Major Champ
2. Jimmy's Minnesota Legends 80
- 3t. ProHealth Care (WI)
- 3t. Gray Sox 80 (MI) • 80-AAA Champ

## • WOMEN'S 40-MASTERS MAJOR

1. Kryptonite (FL)
2. Motown Magic Bachelors (MI)
3. Team Works (VA)

## • WOMEN'S 40-MASTERS SILVER

1. Lew's Crew/Exceeding Expectations (MD) • 40-AAA Champ
2. Kat's Bats (NF) • 40-AA Champ

## • WOMEN'S 50+ MAJOR DIVISION

1. Arizona Dream Team
2. Dreamgirlz 50 (VA)



# Thank You TOC Hitting Instructors

The hitting clinic, held on Wednesday, February 8 began the special events at the TOC and gave players a chance to warm up and sharpen their skills before the start of the tournament with some of the best hitters in the sport.

A special thank you to our hitting instructors (Dave Reed, Allen Tanner, Lee Trotter and Bobby Davis) at the clinic.



Dave Reed passing on words of wisdom



Allen Tanner (18) speaking to a group of players



Lee Trotter (left) with Terry Hennessy



Bobby Davis going through a demonstration

# 2017 Tournament of Champions All-Stars



## NATIONAL LEAGUE

**Manager: Terry Hennessy**

**Assistant Manager: Alan Gillespie**

Tony Noto (Doug & Dons Auto)	Gary Bennett (Mulcahy/Ancell)
Tom Whitmore (Kamikaze)	Syd Andrews (Southern State Services)
Pat Spangenberg (Jimmy's/Ancell)	Jon LaBeau (Golden Vipers)
James "Jim" Roberts (Blue Grass 50's)	Bobby Davis (Hollis Appraisals)
John Kilcoyne (Elmwood Sports)	David Shipley (FL Mustangs 60's)
Chris Rankin (Jackson Merchants)	Hugh Brotherton (Center for Sight)
Greg Lansberry (Roadhouse Blues)	John McLaughlin (Windsor Chiefs)
Dave Maertens (High Street Bucs)	Mel Rathburn (Syracuse Cyclones)
Kevin Haarsma (The Mattress Store)	Bob Yeokum (Pro Health Care)
Elicio Rosales (The Core)	Yuka Wisneski (Motown Magic Bachelors)
Perry Gallow (Mixed Breed)	Angie Ayala (Arizona Dream Team)
Gary Walters (Northern VA Force)	Mickey Maddy (Clean Planet/A Special Taste)
Tom Longo (Northern VA Force)	Chuck Akerman (LI Jags White)
Frank Bargas (Los Vatos Viejos)	Dave Reece (Tucson Buds/Los Buds)
Richard Cluxton (LI Jags Red)	Keith Purdy (The Starboard/OTS)
Dennis Bartholomew (Min- nesota Masters)	Mike Wallin (Northwest Legends 40)
David Bessent (No Stars)	



## AMERICAN LEAGUE

**Manager: Bill Ruth**

**Assistant Manager: Randy Rowe**

Scott Porter (AZ Legends)	Greg Thompson (Cincinnati 60's)
Candido Perez (Romo's Old School)	Jim Cloud (Doc Martens/Ropes Courses)
Pete Garcia (Manifest)	Tom Tashea (HermTech)
Steve Holmes (Building Innovation)	John Martello (Spring Ford)
Tony Bergloff (Iowa Demons)	William "Billy" Hill (RedHawks)
Joe Hartman (Buddies Sampson)	Nick Basta (Over the Edge)
Mark McGahen (TNT)	Ray Le Page (Bostonians)
Kevin Lawrence (Team Illinois)	Fred Light (Syracuse Cyclones)
Ken Johnson (Sidewinders)	Ordell Gustafson (Silver City Brewers)
David Bogatz (Miami Power)	Ray Dye (Pfeiffer/Doc's Boys)
Felix Mendiola (Hawaii Five O)	David L. Drakulich (Florida Investment)
Alan Tanner (Team 1 Sports/Miken)	Jack Scott (Columbus Silver Sticks)
Lawson Williams (Pacific Coast Alliance)	Veronica Shaw (Kryptonite)
Mario Kuhn (Horn Softball)	Scott Sanford (Slug-A-Bug)
Gene Thompson (MN Masters/Ancell)	Debbie Toker (Dreamgirlz)
Larry Parrack (Texas Rattlers)	Dave Felty (Dallas Spurs)
Mark Merrell (Syracuse Cyclones)	
Bill Ward (No Guts, No Glory)	



# SASSL Celebrates 30 Years at Gala Banquet

By Dave Dowell

## Senior Softball News Report

SAN ANTONIO – The San Antonio Senior Softball League celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a gala banquet at Morgan's Wonderland Event Center here Jan. 14. The SASSL was founded in 1987 by Bill Altman following the first Senior Olympics competition in San Antonio.

Altman has continued to play, manage teams and operate the organization every year since then. The SASSL boasts an active membership of 900 players ranging in competitive age groups from 40+ through 75+ divisions. Today, there are still three players (Altman, Phil Watkins and Danny Florez) who remain active participants from the original 1987 season.

This year's event was the 14<sup>th</sup> annual SASSL banquet that attracted 600 members and included a softball and health related Vendor Faire



From left to right: Bill Altman and Fred Gonzalez

during the social hour before the awards program during the classic southern BBQ dinner.

Highlights included Altman's annual "State of the League" presentation, includ-

ing a trip down memory lane from the very first year through the 2016 season. In addition to honoring last year's league champions, the three original members still active received commemorative plaques marking their 30-year careers with the SASSL. Altman and Hall of Fame chairman Fred Gonzales inducted two individuals into the Texas Senior Softball Hall of Fame: Larry Kasper of San Antonio and Ken Weber of Kerrville.

Senior Softball USA was honored to be invited to address the attendees this year with Dave Dowell, one of SSUSA's national directors, offering congratulatory remarks to the league. He spoke on the importance of a strong league structure as it relates to the national competitive tourna-

ment environment. In addition, Dowell took questions from the audience, mostly involving the tournament site selection process.


Two San Antonio competitive teams achieved the highest honors last year, and Dowell re-enacted the award presentations for those accomplishments during his remarks.

The San Antonio Silver Streaks 65's, managed by Jack Orbin, received SSUSA's highest team honor when they were named as the 2016 recipient of the Steve Simmons Memorial Sportsmanship Award. This award goes to the team annually that best represents the ideals of good sportsmanship, respect for the game, and high accomplishment in tournament play.

The awards ceremony for earning a World Masters Championship in Las Vegas was re-enacted for the Texas Rattlers 65's, managed by Rick Hammock, for winning the 65-AA division in 2016. The Rattlers completed a rare unbeaten week, going 6-0 and running unscathed from the No. 1 seed to the championship in the 12-team bracket.

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# Field of Dreams for KC Metro Senior Softball League

By Tim Burkindine  
KCMSSL Extra Innings

The Kansas City Metro Senior Softball League (KCMSSL) has been working nearly three years now to develop a softball complex that can be used for league games and tournaments, and the city can rent out when our league does not need its services.

A league committee has had several meetings in recent weeks, including with U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt (who has given his endorsement and promised to help with funding), on the project to build a Blue River Veterans Athletic Complex, previously known as our Field of Dreams.

We have endorsements from U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill, and Missouri state Rep. Bill Kidd, who has supported our development of the softball fields and a veteran's support center at the complex. We also have received the support of Jackson County Legislator Dan Tarwater, who has helped us on our path through political red tape. All support our plans and have encouraged us to move forward.

One of our speed bumps has been the Kansas City Parks and Recreation's Department's desire to build a separate facility with two regulation softball fields and two all-abilities fields with financial support of the Cal Ripken Foundation. After our meeting with Tarwater and Kidd, that project has been put on hold.

Our supporters feel that the city would be better served if those energies were shifted to our project. For that we are extremely grateful.

However, our initial grant application, submitted in December, was turned down by the Economic Development Committee. We are resubmitting the grant to the veteran's committee of the EDC. The project is at a standstill until financing can be obtained. League member Gene Webb is going through training to write grant applications. We have a meeting scheduled with two companies to ask for their financial support. Tim

has sent our project and proposal to Jay Glazer (The Team – MVP). His preliminary comments were positive and he wants to hear more.

We also have contacted a sports agent to see if he can put us in touch with professionals who may be willing to support our project.



Proposed KCMSSL Complex

## East Coast: Inagural 40's Masters Megadraft Scheduled

Continued from Page 3  
**Registration Incentive**

Most new players don't understand the benefits of SSUSA's registration and classification system until they have actually participated. To help ease that transition, SSUSA is offering a registration incentive to 40s players in the eastern states this spring. If a team participates in an SSUSA qualifier before June 1, any new and renewing 40s players are eligible for a complimentary 2017 player card.

### Tournament Expansion

SSUSA has increased the number of 40 Masters tournaments offered in the Great Lakes (MI, OH), Northeast (NY, RI), Mid-Atlantic (MD, VA, NC) and Florida regions this year so that teams can play without incurring significant travel expenses.

In the Mid-Atlantic states, we are offering a tournament series where teams get a \$100 discount to the World Masters Championships if they participate in three of our select qualifiers. In Florida, our partners in Lee and Polk Counties

have opened their arms to welcome SSUSA Masters. Polk County will host a number of tournaments in central Florida. Lee County will serve as host to the Masters Megadraft in June.

### Megadraft

Open to anyone 40 years and up, the Masters Megadraft is a one-of-a-kind event that is designed to attract male and female

players for a weekend of entertainment, fun and softball. Players will register for the Masters Megadraft individually and pay a nominal fee. In return, they will get a Friday night welcome party that includes food, beverages, tournament jersey and a player draft.

Games will begin on Saturday at the Minnesota Twins training facility with each team starting the five-game guarantee tournament, and having access to Adidas sponsored skills challenges. The tournament and all festivities will wrap up on Sunday as we crown champions.

If you have any questions at the 40 Masters program in the east, please contact Tim McElroy ([tmcelroy@seniorsoftball.com](mailto:tmcelroy@seniorsoftball.com))



# *SSUSA International Tours presents:* The 5th Annual Pacific Rim Championships

*October 9th – 17th*

*(Extended Trip October 17th – 20th)*

**J**oin Senior Softball-USA International Tours as we head west to China for the 5th Annual Pacific Rim Championships. Experience the rich history and culture China offers through magnificent sight-seeing of some of the country's most famous landmarks, including the Great Wall and the Forbidden City.



Players will arrive in Beijing on Monday, October 9th (depart the United States on Sunday, October 8th and lose a day crossing the International Date Line). We will spend Tuesday adjusting to the time change and getting acquainted with each other on the diamond with a light practice/scrimmage.

While in Beijing we will visit one of the most recognizable structures on earth, the Great Wall. The Great Wall originally served as a barrier against invasion during the 7th century B.C. from nomadic invaders. Sections of the Wall have since been rebuilt and maintained over several centuries to now form what we know as one of the seven wonders of the modern world. Also, while in Beijing players will visit the famous Forbidden City.



The Forbidden City, originally the Imperial Palace for the Ming dynasty and many others after, is now home to the Palace Museum which holds many unique artifacts rich in Chinese culture.

Players will then take a domestic flight to Lanzhou (flight included in tour price) to participate in the Pacific Rim Championships. The Pacific Rim Championships will take place Saturday, October 14th and Sunday, October 15th and host teams, from the United States, Taiwan, Japan and China.

While in Lanzhou, we will continue the tour with a visit to the Kumbum Monastery, a testament to the wonder of Chinese temple architecture. The famous monastery boasts the 'eight Buddhist stupas' which were erected in 1776 and represent the eight stages of life according to Buddhist belief.



Players will have the option to take part in an additional tour to Yueyang, October 17th – 20th. Here, we will visit a remote location of China not frequented by Westerners to help grow the sport of softball through their local schools. Players will have the unique opportunity to interact with students and teach them the fundamentals of softball.

Players who do not wish to participate in the optional tour will fly directly from Lanzhou

to Beijing and then back to the United States on October 17th.



The price for the main tour will be \$1,950 per person and the optional tour will be \$650. All domestic flights are included in the price.

- A full itinerary will be available shortly
- Full more information on the tour please contact Ross McCulligan at [Ross@senior-softball.com](mailto:Ross@senior-softball.com) or call (916) 326-5303.







*Jason Kendrick*

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