

NEW PARTS

NEW PARTS



New body parts helped senior players achieve renewed life on the ballfield for many years - and recently major advancements in procedures have led to better and safer surgeries, quicker recoveries and better implants. In this first of our Four-Part series, we examine some of the most promising advancements in knee replacements.



The Number of Knee Replacements Is Soaring

2023 790,000
Knee Replacements

2030* 3,480,000
Knee Replacements

Sources: American College of Rheumatology; Mayo Clinic
* Predicted

Part 1:
KNEES
PAGE 14



Part 2:
HIPS



Part 3:
SHOULDERS



Part 4:
REVIEW



THE 90s PAGES 16-17

SSUSA is proud to highlight senior softball players in their ninth decade of life as part of the new 90s feature. This edition focuses on Norman Blackwell.



ALOHA BOWL
PAGES 6-8
Hawaiian Island
TOC qualifier
almost doubles
in size.



TOC RECAP

PAGES 18-19

24 states, Guam and
Canada represented in
the 18th Annual TOC





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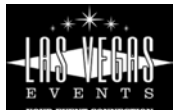
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New Parts, New Life

Quality of life is likely one of the most important concerns as we age. Rightly so.

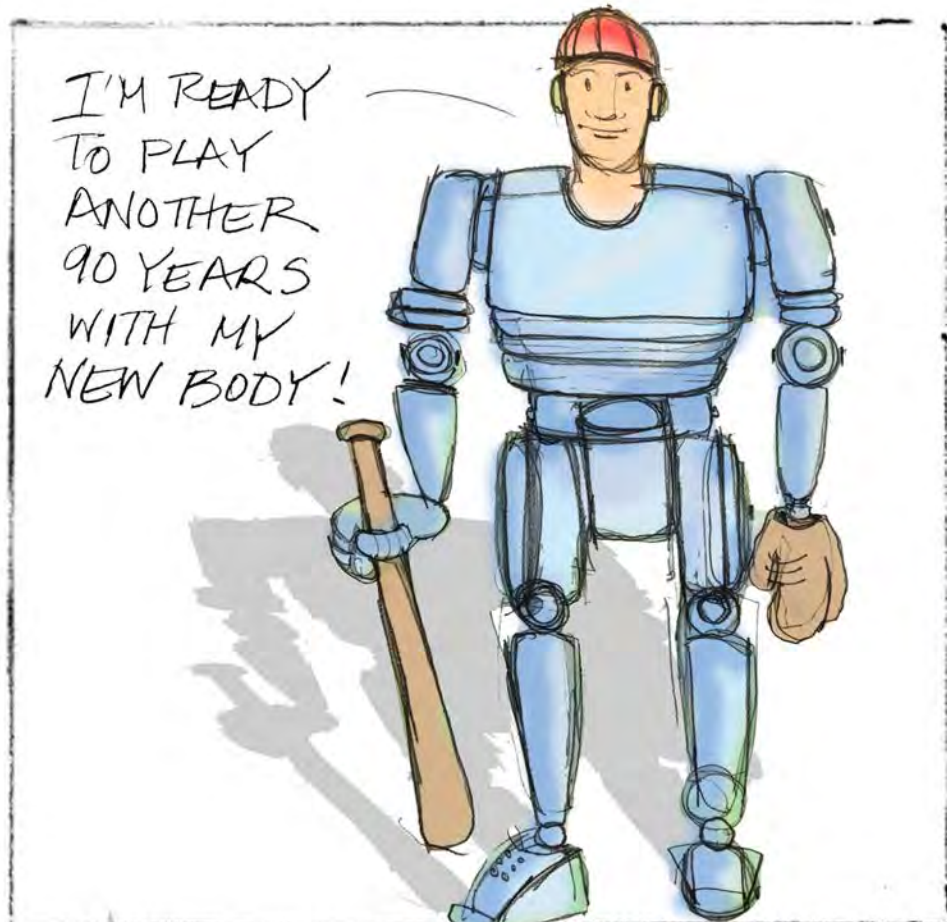
Our ability to move without debilitating pain is crucial for playing ball – and living life to the fullest. Often in Senior Softball, that translates to being able to run, throw and hit without pain.

For many of us, as the years go by, our knees, shoulders or hips –among other parts -- start to wear out. Science has swooped in to help with ever-improving parts. We begin a series that looks at some of the most promising advancements in

Editorial

body replacement parts in this edition.

Not only do these new parts help many of us on the ballfield, they allow us to continue to play with our friends in our Senior Softball community – and enjoy life more fully with our family and friends outside the sport.



By Sue Ballenger



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17.4 END WEIGHT

27.0 OZ TOTAL WEIGHT

9.6 HANDLE WEIGHT

Swing Weight Is Key To Being a Better Hitter

Bat speed is a key factor for hitting the ball with greater force and distance, but don't overlook the mass or weight of the bat. You can swing a whiffle ball bat really fast, but try hitting the ball any distance with it. It has little or no mass.

The importance of the weighting of a softball bat should not go unnoticed. By using the optimal swing weight, a hitter can maximize the effectiveness of their swing. Usually, an on-base type of hitter will prefer a balanced bat whereas, a player that drives the ball to the fence or out of the park will select an end-weighted bat.

Here's a common question posed to a hitter: "Is your bat balanced or is it end-loaded?" In theory, a balanced bat will have more weight toward the handle and less weight toward the end, for an end-loaded bat it's the reverse.

Hitting Column By Art Eversole

As a general rule, the end-loaded bat will have a low handle weight of typically 10 ounces or less and the remainder is considered end-weight.

Every bat has a balance point (center of mass) that can be found by placing your index finger under the bat centering it until the bat has equal weight on each side and balances. When the center of mass is nearer to your hands it is likely a balanced bat that feels lighter and is easier to swing for more controlled hitting.

The farther away the center of mass is from your hands, the harder it will be to swing and will feel heavier, but you will have more force when striking the softball (end-loaded). So, a bat can have the same absolute weight

but feel heavier of lighter depending on where the center of mass resides.

To continue the distinction between a light or a heavy swing weight it basically comes down to where the location of the balance point resides on the bat. The nearer the bat's balance point is to the handle, the easier it is to swing.

Therefore, an end-loaded bat will be harder to speed up through the hitting zone than a balanced bat but has more kinetic force behind it.

Kinetic energy: $KE = .5 \times \text{Mass} \times (\text{Swing Speed})^2$

Balanced Bat: Bat has no weight added to the barrel during manufacturing and the center of mass is closer to the handle,

Small end-load: half-ounce weight is added to the barrel's end-cap internally to make it slightly end-loaded,

Full end-load: Weight added to the end of the bat that is between 1 and 2

ounces.

If a bat is marked as 27.0 ounces for its total weight, then using a small weight scale and some simple arithmetic we can find the swing weight:

- Total weight is 27.0 ounces...

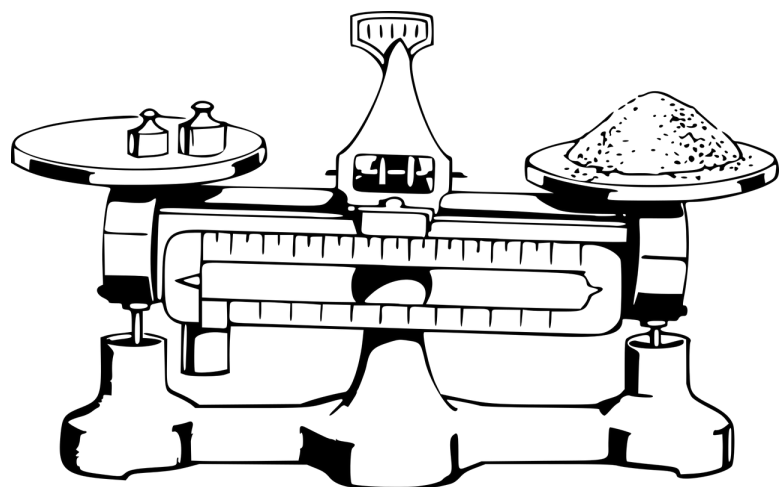
- Handle weight is 9.6 ounces...

- Swing weight is the remainder 17.4 ounces.

It's Important to experiment with both balanced and end-loaded bats to find your best swing for feel, power and overall performance.

Happy hitting,

Art Eversole has played on Major and Major Plus teams in the Northwest. Eversole can be reached via email at: rtmyboy01@gmail.com.



Seniors On The Move

More than 338,000 older Americans retired to a new home in 2023, a quarter of them settling in a different state, according to U.S. Census Bureau data analyzed by online moving services company Hire A Helper.

Not surprisingly, Florida and Texas drew lots of retirees, seeing 11% and

6% moving in respectively. But so did New Jersey with 6%. People left California (18%) and New York (11%) - but also Virginia (7%) and Ohio (5%). Retirees also left Pennsylvania and moved to South Carolina and Washington.

Reprinted from the AARP Bulletin, March 2024, Page 4.

Hawaiian Teams Defend Turf at Aloha Bowl

By Donna McGuire
Softball News Report

HOHOLULU - Twelve mainland teams that flew more than 2,000 miles across the Pacific Ocean to compete in the 2024 Aloha Bowl found the Hawaiians to be very tough competition.

Hawaiian teams nabbed nine of the tournament's 12 division championships in the 42-team event played at parks in Mililani and Waipahu on the island of Oahu. Each champion also earned a berth to the 2025 Tournament of Champions in Polk County, Florida.

The tournament produced three undefeated teams, one wedding proposal, and a bevy of close games in the five-team women's bracket. On Friday alone, four of the women's five pool games needed extra innings to determine a winner. Then on Sunday, it took two championship games to



Unloaded of California (red, white and blue jerseys) won the Men's 40+ AAA division after Hawaiians 40s fail to double dip.

decide the women's title.

Add one marriage proposal to the women's bracket excitement. After the third-place game ended

Sunday afternoon, fan Desmond Keohuhu proposed marriage to Shut D player Vannessa Lono. She said yes.

Tournament results:

Women's 40+

Masters/50+ Seniors: Top-seeded Touch Em All of Hawaii lost its first bracket game by one run then won three elimination games to

reach the finals, where it double-dipped LOL-Legit OI' Ladies of California 17-8 and 13-10. Shut D of Hawaii finished third in the five-team division.

Men's 40+ Masters

Major: Top-seeded Getnutz of Hawaii capped a 6-0 tournament with a 27-17 title game victory over

Continued on page 8



Desmond Keohuhu (left) proposed to Shut D player Vannessa Lono (right) after the team's third-place game.



Touch Em All (HI), won the Aloha Bowl's only women's division.



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Aloha Bowl: 11 Teams Earn TOC Berths, Eight from Hawaii

Continued from page 7

seventh-seeded Shut-D of Hawaii. Sixth-seeded HMR/No Excuses of California placed third in the 10-team bracket, the tournament's largest.

Men's 40+ Masters AAA: Top-seeded Unloaded of California went 5-1 overall, including a 29-22 victory over the Hawaiians 40s for the title. Hawaii Heat took third in the four-team division.

Men's 50+ Gold: Second-seeded Hawaiian Force went 5-1 and won the 50+ Major TOC berth by edging top-seeded Whatever of Arizona 23-22 in the title game of the four-team bracket. As the top-finishing AAA team, Whatever also won a title and TOC berth. KIA'I of Hawaii placed third.

Men's 55/60+ Gold: Hawaii Five-0, a 60+ Major team, went 5-0 and won the title with a 27-17 victory over second-seeded Homeboys, a 55+ AAA team from Hawaii. Shut D 55s of Hawaii finished third in the five-team division.

Men's 60+ AAA: Third-seeded Hawaiians 60 Blue lost the first title game 17-13 before winning a thrilling second title game 17-16 over top-seeded The 60s Desperados of California. Second-seeded Hawaiians 60 Red finished third in the five-team division.

Men's 65+ AA: Playing a best-of-three format, Warriors-Imua of Hawaii defeated 808 Hawaii 22-21 and 7-0 for the title.

Men's 65/70+ Gold: Hawaii Five-0 65s went 6-0 overall and captured the 65+ Major championship and TOC berth by defeating the Warriors 70s 15-14 in the finale. The Warriors earned the 70+ Major title and TOC berth. The Hawaiians finished third in the three-team division.

Men's 70+ AAA: In a best-of-three format, the Sacramento Islanders of California swept the Hawaii Warriors 28-14 and 15-10.

Men's 75+ Gold: Also playing in a best-of-three format, the 75 Ho'oikaika of Hawaii swept the Warriors 75 of Hawaii with identical 20-5 scores.



Getnutz (HI) 40+ Major.



Unloaded (CA) 40+ AAA.



Hawaii Five-0 60+ Major.



Hawaiian Force 50+ Major.



Whatever (AZ) 50+ AAA.



Warriors-Imua (HI) 65+ AA.



Hawaii Five-0 65+ Major..



Sacramento Islanders 70 (CA) 70+ AAA.



Warriors 70 (HI) 70+ Major.



75 Ho'oikaika (HI) 75+ Major.

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Rain Challenges Teams at Southern Champs

By Donna McGuire
Softball News Report

Teams from Alabama, Georgia, Virginia and Kentucky won titles during the Senior Softball-USA Southern Championships that concluded March 3 in Dalton, Georgia.

Three of the six championship teams finished undefeated. All six earned berths to the 2025 Tournament of Champions to be played in Polk County, Florida.

After rain washed out Friday games, the tournament was shortened to two days of play at the fully turfed, four-field Riverbend Park complex.

"The complex is a beautiful place to play, even with the weather being uncooperative with clouds, mist and fog," Tournament Director Mike Hula said.

Results:

Men's 50+ Major: Top-seeded United Softball of Alabama went undefeated and captured the title with a 7-0 victory over OTC Elite of Pennsylvania. Impact Softball of Kentucky finished third in the three-team bracket.



**United Softball (AL)
50+ Major Champions.**

Men's 50-55+ Gold: Walker Brothers, a 55+ Major team from Georgia, capped a 5-0 tournament with a 22-9 championship game victory over the 50+ AAA Dayton Legends/22Softball/Hudson Automotive team from Ohio. Third place in the four-team field went to BACKSIDE of Virginia.

Men's 55+ AAA: BACKSIDE of Virginia recovered from a 0-2 record in pool play to sweep all three bracket



Mist and fog rolled into Riverbend Park during play.



**Walker Brothers (GA)
55+ Major Champions.**

games it played, including a 21-5 championship victory over Volusia Top Gun of Florida. COTTON EYED JOE of Tennessee finished third in the four-team bracket.



**BACKSIDE (VA)
55+ AAA Champions.**

Men's 60+ Major: In a best-of-three format, Suncoast Midwest/Isabel of Kentucky swept Diamondblade of Maryland 22-12 and 29-23 to finish 4-0 overall.



**Suncoast Midwest/Isabel (KY)
60+ Major Champions.**

Men's 60-65+ Gold: In a best-of-three format, the 65+ Major team DT Express of Georgia lost the first game 18-14 to the 60+ AAA team Holy City Hitmen II of South Carolina before sweeping the next two games 26-20 and 26-8 for the title.



**DT Express (GA)
65+ Major Champions.**

Continued on next page

Southerns: 6 Teams Earn TOC Berths

Continued from previous page

Men's 65-70+ Gold: Also playing a best-of-three format, the 70+ Major team RPR Softball of Alabama swept 65+ AAA The Power of Tennessee 24-23 and 25-10 for the title.



RPR Softball (AL)
70+ Major Champions.



Riverbend Park is a beautiful athletic complex in the southern part of Whitfield County and home to Crossen Community Center. The Center has meeting rooms, basketball gyms, volleyball courts and pickleball courts along with a walking track above the gym. This facility has all turf baseball, softball, soccer and football fields and can host many activities for both youth and adults. Riverbend Park first opened in 2022 .



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Resistance Exercise Is Good for Brain Health

**By Stan Reents, PharmD,
Health Coach
Senior Softball Report**

In the Spring 2019 issue, I explained that regular exercise can reduce the risk of developing dementia. That review focused on aerobic exercise. But what about resistance exercise (weight-lifting, push-ups and squats, working out with stretch bands)?

Dozens of studies document that aerobic exercise and aerobic fitness are definitely beneficial for brain health, but there's less research on resistance exercise. Nevertheless, several studies provide helpful guidance:

Researchers at Rush University are conducting a long-term evaluation of retirees in Chicago. They have discovered some important details regarding how diet and exercise influence the risk of dementia. They report that physical frailty is commonly associated with a decline in cognition, and maintaining muscle strength appears to provide very good protection against that decline. Better muscle strength reduced the risk of cognitive decline by 33% during 3.6 years of

observation. That's pretty impressive.

Another very interesting study was done by researchers at Kings College in London. They evaluated leg power in 324 female twins (average age 55). Leg power was assessed by having subjects extend their lower leg as hard and fast as they could while seated (imagine a kicking motion). The twin who was stronger at the beginning of the study had less deterioration in cognition during the following 10 years compared to her sister. But, in addition, an improvement in leg power during that period was associated with a modest improvement in cognition.

These studies show that maintaining muscle strength can not only reduce the decline in cognition in old age, but also may improve it.

How often and how hard should you perform resistance exercise to get these benefits?

- **Frequency:** Researchers at the University of British Columbia have conducted several studies analyzing the effect of exercise on cognition. In one, elderly women performed resistance exercise once or twice per week for 12 months. Both were effective.

- **Intensity:** Researchers

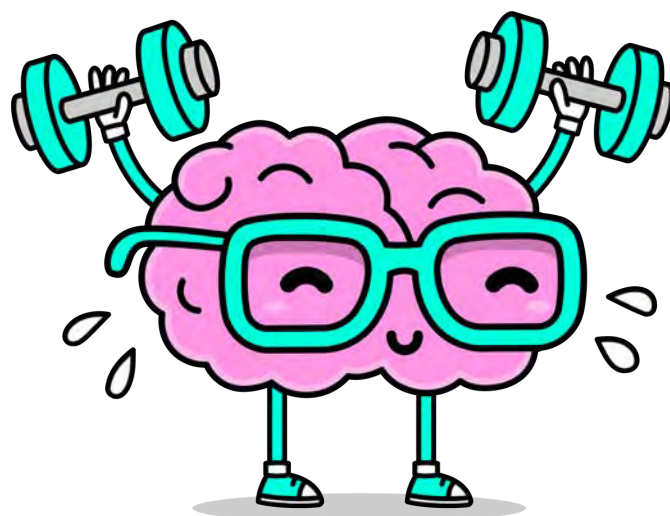
in Brazil had elderly subjects perform a variety of exercises (chest press, leg press, leg curl, crunches) at 50% or 80% of maximum effort three days per week for 24 weeks. Both intensity levels were beneficial.

So, which is more effective for reducing the risk of dementia: aerobic exercise or resistance exercise?

Research shows that both types can be protective. If you only want to do one type, choose aerobic exercise because of the numerous additional health benefits it provides. However, it's

been determined that doing both types is more effective for preventing a decline in cognition than aerobic exercise by itself. In addition, resistance exercise will help maintain muscle mass, which also contributes to good health.

Stan Reents, PharmD, is a healthcare professional and health/fitness coach. He created the website 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."



New Parts: New Knees Is the Bee's Knees

By Nic Francois
Managing Editor

Like so many senior softball players, Rick Seifman knows a thing or two about knee pain. For two full years he'd been suffering through that agonizing bone-on-bone pain in his knee joints.

Seifman, vice president of umpires for Senior Softball USA as well as an avid player, says he had hit the pain wall head-on.

"I couldn't run, swing a bat or a golf club," Seifman said.

So, despite having a good orthopedic surgeon lined up to perform the industry standard knee replacement surgery, he took a fellow player's recommendation of a newer procedure - the Jiffey Knee.

The Jiffey Knee, which is practiced by a handful of orthopedic surgeons across the country, inserts the implant from the side of the knee. This means the muscles and tendons do not need to be

cut, improving recovery for patients.

"I was golfing and walking farther in three weeks, and how nice it was having the surgery on the inside of the knee instead of the traditional above the knee surgery," added Seifman.

Knee replacements have become common in the United



States, with an estimated 790,000 total knee replacements performed last year – and more than one million joint replacement surgeries (knees, hips,

shoulders) overall, according to the American College of Rheumatology. Rheumatology is the management of inflammation in bones, organs and joints.

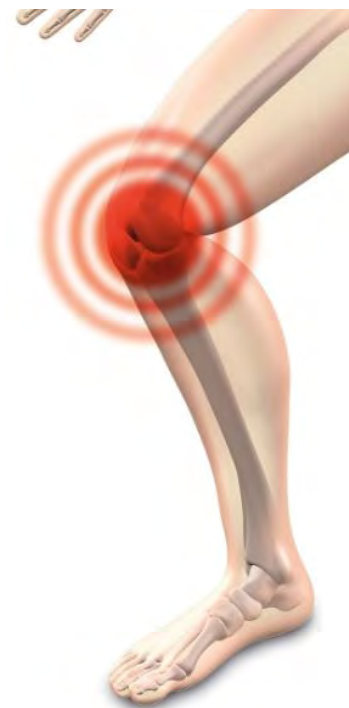
This is a yearly increase of 168,956 knee replacements from 2008. Overall, iData Research predicts 2.16 million

knee and hip replacements will be done in 2024, with the Mayo Clinic projecting a 673% growth in the need for knee replacements alone, totaling approximately 3.48 million knee procedures by 2030.

Most of these surgeries are the traditional knee surgery, inserting the implant from the top of the knee, which usually entails cutting or removing the muscles.

Darryl Watson, a player from Elk Grove, Calif., had the traditional surgery in November. He said he thought the traditional surgery is more popular with surgeons and is often quicker and allows for more joint flexibility in the long run, despite a longer recovery period.

An unloader knee brace helped him play senior softball without pain for a couple years. "I felt my knees affecting my everyday life when not wearing the brace and affecting travel with my wife," Watson remembers.



"The recovery has been good and I'm happy I did it, although I wish I did more research about different types of surgeries. But it's hard with different hospitals using different implant brands and different tools. It's hard to compare knee surgeries with friends to truly know what's best," he added.

Watson said he wasn't as fortunate as Seifman was to learn about the Jiffey Knee Replacement from a fellow senior player. In so many cases, it all depends on whom you talk with and what they know. It can be as simple as a chance meet-up on the softball diamond.

Watson has since returned to batting, but doesn't want to risk sprinting in the field just yet. He's thinking that will come in time.

Seifman's experience mirrors why joint replacements are increasing substantially each year. Knee replacement procedures are



Robots do not replace the surgeons, but assist for a smoother operation.

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New Parts: New Tech Leads to Better Recoveries

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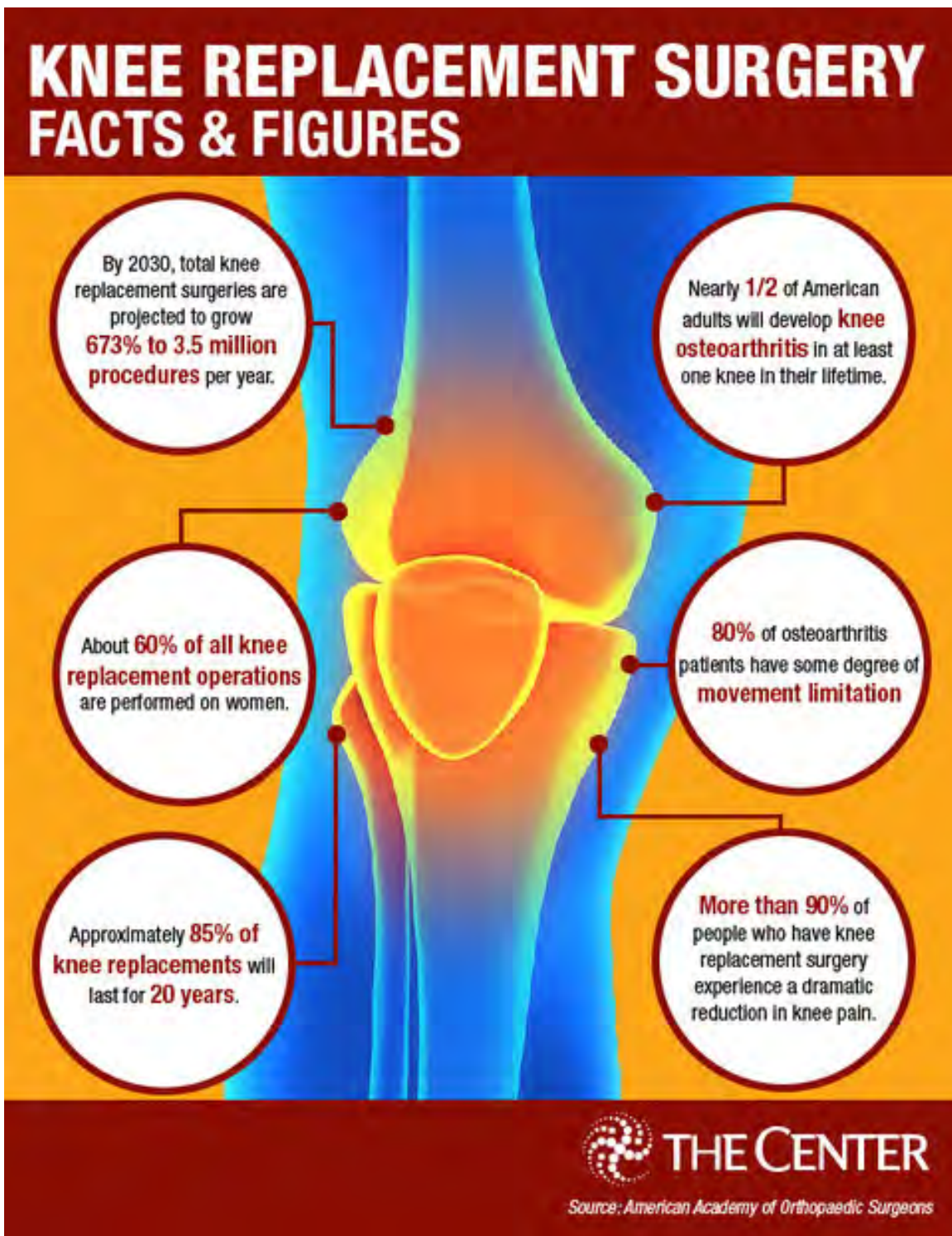
becoming easier, quicker, less painful and recovery time is generally decreasing due to new techniques and new technology.

Robots can provide surgeons with multidimensional images of the knee, allow the surgeons to cut and place implants with precision and provide faster recovery times for patients than joint replacements of the past, according to a report quoting Dr. Charles Hannon, a Mayo Clinic orthopedic surgeon. He said robotic surgery even helps predict issues with recovery to better improve the implants outcome.

Orthopedic surgeon Robert Mayle, in a Sutter Health Group article, said it is possible for patients to be walking around 3-4 hours after the surgery thanks to medical assisting robots, better instruments and better implant materials.

As the demand for more customized replacement parts increases, the medical field is seeing more high-tech start-ups, according to Dr. Mayle. This leads to the innovation and creation of custom implants based on the patient's CT scans, which can then be produced on a 3-D printer to place inside the patient, making each implant unique and better suited for the person's knee.

Other high-tech innovations from implant companies include disposable sensors called Verasenses that provide surgeons with



real-time data during and after the knee procedure. A cutting block can also be created to help the surgeons cut and shape the knee for the implant, based from the patient's CT or MRI scans.

According to medical researchers, most of these high-tech medical innovations were first introduced after 2015.

Technology in the operating room makes for a better technique and surgery. While it's worth noting that both Seifman's Jiffey Knee replacement and Watson's traditional knee replacement both involved robotic assistance, the difference in surgical techniques was the key to recovery time.

And in the months ahead,

Senior Softball News will be taking a hard look at what's changed in the world of body part replacements as we relook at a series we first took on 13 years ago.

Next edition, prepare to be hip again with a new hip as we explore what's new with hip replacements.



Norman's home museum of trophies, awards, medals, newspapers and apparel he's earned through his 75+ years of playing ball.

Norm Blackwell Is Serious About Fun

Long ago, someone told Norman Blackwell that he should play baseball with a more serious attitude.

"I am taking it seriously," Blackwell replied. "But I am having fun doing it."

That mantra remains true today for Blackwell, a spry 90-year-old who still plays slow-pitch softball twice a week in 75-and-older leagues in Sacramento, the city he has called home nearly all his life.

It's where he met his wife, raised 11 children, taught Little League youth to play hard but fair, carried the 1996 Olympic Relay Torch, fed the hungry, challenged racism, and had a youth baseball field named partly in his honor.

It's also where he and his late wife, Peaches, built a very special backyard museum.

Trophies, plaques, medals, hats, ball gloves, photographs, uniform shirts, news articles and other memorabilia plaster the walls and fill the shelves. Some of the museum's weathered baseball gloves are older than Blackwell himself, which is saying a lot. But most of the museum's artifacts exist because of Blackwell.

The 90s Column

By Donna McGuire

They represent baseball or softball games he played, championships he won, or titles the teams he coached captured.

One red-and-white ballcap sitting on a shelf says, "90s." Blackwell wore it last September, when he played in Senior Softball-USA's Second Annual 90s game during the SSUSA World Championships at Big League Dreams in Las Vegas. Shortly before the game started, Blackwell walked to the backstop to chat with fans sitting on the other side of the fence. He gleefully showed them he still could pull off high leg kicks. He danced a little, too.

"I want to see your ID," someone yelled from the crowd.

No, Blackwell does not look or act like he will turn

91 this year.

Yet he was born in Santa Monica, Calif., in 1933, the year construction began on the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. He started playing baseball at age 6 on concrete slabs in Los Angeles. Before he turned 9 years old, his mother had moved the family to Sacramento, where he and his brother joined the city youth league. They used to walk to games together.

As a youth, Blackwell also played football. Later, at McClatchy High School, he played basketball and baseball. After his mother married and the family moved, Blackwell went to visit the baseball coach at his new school, Elk Grove High. As Blackwell remembers it,

Coach Robinson said, "Yes, young man, can I help you?"

"I want to play baseball. This is my last year," Blackwell said.

"Well, young man, we have our baseball team already."

Fortunately, Coach Robinson asked Blackwell where he had played the previous year. Upon hearing "McClatchy High," the coach responded, "You come down to the gym on Monday."

Apparently, Coach Robinson checked up on this new player and liked what he heard. On Monday, he offered Blackwell the opportunity to beat out his starting shortstop. Blackwell did – and broke the color barrier in the process. He became the team's first Black player as well as the league's first Black player.

After seeing Blackwell practice and play, his teammates warmed up to him, Blackwell said. But the opponents were a different matter. Parents and players sometimes called him names. More than once, Blackwell charged into the stands to challenge someone. "Everybody got quiet and put their heads down," Blackwell recalled. "The umpire and coach didn't know what to do. They had never experienced anything like that. They said, 'Come on, Norm, play ball.' I never got



Continued on next page

The 90s: City Names Park After Blackwell

Continued from previous page

kicked out of a game... I got through that.”

Shortly after finishing high school, he moved back to the Oak Park area of Sacramento. He kept playing baseball, including with traveling semi-pro teams. Before long, a scout for St. Louis Cardinals offered him a contract to play with their Savannah, Ga., affiliate. After a friend warned him how mean folks in the south could be to Black people – it was the 1950s, after all -- Blackwell turned down the offer. A few years later, the Cardinals tried again. By then, Blackwell was married with young kids and working a civilian mechanic job at McClellan Air Force Base. He chose to stay put. He possessed a rocket arm, speed, and the ability to play every position, including catcher and pitcher. He never hit less than .300 and once topped .420 for a season. A team player, he would move runners whenever needed. He played summers and winters, including against some major leaguers during their off seasons. He played every chance he got.

“I didn’t know how good I was,” he recalled. “I was having fun.”

Meanwhile, he coached Little League for about 15 years. He had such a big impact on youngsters and the league that officials named McClatchy Park’s baseball fields the Crump-Blackwell Fields. He also officiated basketball and baseball. And



Crump-Blackwell Fields, in McClatchy Park, honors Norman's legacy and commitment to his Sacramento neighborhood.

he danced well enough that he once got recruited to turn professional in that sport, too.

Meanwhile, he raised his children to be honorable adults. Two of the boys played minor league baseball. And he and his wife started a food pantry out of their home – something Blackwell continues to do twice a week even now. He figures he helps about 150 folks each time. Separately, he survived a major scare with pernicious anemia, which he had been told would be fatal. Staying active helped him beat it, Blackwell said, though it left him with neuropathy and caused him to retire from his job in 1987, earlier than planned. But it could not keep him away from the game he loved.

As Blackwell aged as a player, he transitioned from baseball to fast-pitch softball. He never batted over .300 in those years, he admits. “That was a tough game.”

Next up, starting at about age 50, came senior slow-pitch softball. Blackwell

found he could hit for a .700 average or even higher. He rekindled friendships with former baseball friends. He met new friends. He played league and tournament ball. Years of senior slow-pitch stretched into decades. He often coached the teams he played on, including the Sacramento Gold 80s, which won the 2018 SSUSA National Championship.

Naturally, he plans to play in the 90s game again this year in Vegas. His children encourage that, he says with a chuckle. He is blessed with more than 100 grand and great-grandchildren, he says. He misses the two daughters he lost to Covid, plus the one to suicide and another to murder. He misses his wife, too. They were married 65 years.

“Everybody would say they had a good woman, but I knew I had a good woman,” Blackwell said. “We got married young, with me still playing ball while I was working and taking care of

my family. I was gone quite a few times. We had a big family. She managed. She knew I loved playing ball. Good woman. God dog it. I miss her, too.”

Blackwell paused to reflect. As the memories flooded back, he realized how many people he should thank. He started to name former team sponsors who meant so much, including Dale Millie, Al Simis, Joe Smith. He thought of the Sacramento senior players who got him a replica of the Olympic torch he carried in 1996 – the very torch Mohammad Ali used to light the Olympic flame that year. He pictured all the Little League players he mentored over the years. And the neighborhood folks who like to call him “Community Dad.” Then he has his lovely family, and his church community.

Yes, he is thankful.

“I am a blessed man to be 90-some years old,” he said.

And still having fun, too.

The Original TOC Shines Again for 18th Time



Photos by Clover Schultz
From the top: FIGO Islanders from Guam compete in the TOC. **Middle:** Suncoast/Adidas brought 3 teams (40s, 50s & 55s) to the TOC. **Bottom:** Team SMS of Nevada plays in the 50+ AAA division.

By Donna McGuire
Softball News Report

Sunshine, softball games and spirited skills competitions highlighted the 18th annual Original Tournament of Champions played in late January in Polk County, Florida.

Only winners of Senior Softball-USA TOC qualifiers get invited, making this tournament one of the most special among all senior softball competitions.

This year, 103 teams from as far as Guam and Canada and Washington state competed in three days of ball. In addition, players participated in hitting clinics, an all-star game, skills competitions, and a massive reception attended by hundreds of players, managers and guests.

In a special note, this marked the final tournament for the Kryptonite women's 50+ team of Florida, which had played together for 13 years. It won 10 of the 12 SSUSA Tournament of Champions it entered, including the 2024 event.

"It is the end of an era," Kryptonite Manager Colleen Smith said afterward. "It was getting harder and harder to field a team."

Players on all 28 tournament championship teams earned free, individualized, quality rings from Jostens. In addition, the MVP of team received an Axe senior bat.

As usual, the annual all-star game drew a crowd, lots of cheers and a good bit of fun on the field. Fans watched five home runs, several sterling defensive plays and a spirited final rally as the National All-Star team defeated the American All-Star team 21-13 at the Diamondplex Softball Complex in Winter Haven.

Each participating TOC team was allowed to send one representative. Starting with the women and oldest male players, managers

rotated the lineup roughly every three innings during the nine-inning affair. The game ended with the "youngsters" on the field – half trying to protect a large lead while the other half rallied.

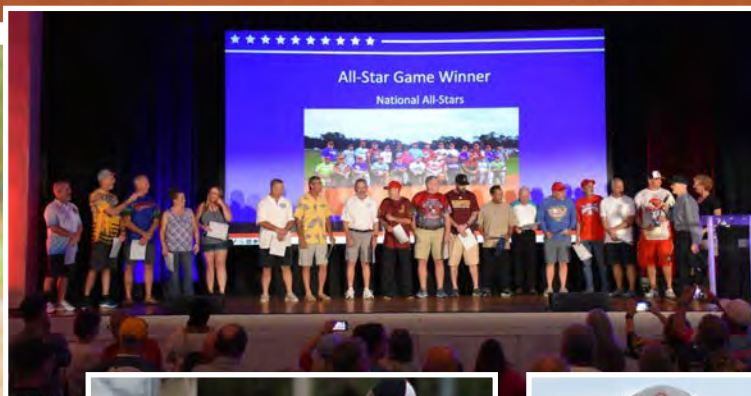
"We came together as a solid team," said winning co-manager Val Smith, who represented the Women's 40+ Fireballs of Massachusetts and the Women's 55+ Arizona Dream Team.

Smoking hot from the start, her Nationals team laced hits into the outfield gaps in each of the first three innings. They led 4-0 after the first, 9-2 after the second and 14-2 after the third. That early outburst included a two-run, inside-the-park home run by Mike Davis of the Prime 65+ team from Illinois. Davis finished a triple short of hitting for the cycle.

National All-Star teammates Brad Bell of Heroes 50+ AAA of Nebraska and Gerald Stigliano of Team Mars 60+ AAA of Florida also hit home runs. David Rodriguez from Top Gun Stealth 65+ AAA of California added three doubles.

On the American side, Doug Wesselink of Alliance Scrap Iron 60+ AAA team from Colorado led off the sixth inning with a home run. Teammate Gerald "Bear" Borawski of Avalanche 60+ AAA of Michigan belted a three-run home run in the top of the ninth. His hit was the third in a row for the Americans, who entered the top of the ninth trailing 21-9. They laced two more doubles to draw within 21-13 with no one out. The next three batters, however, flew out to left, grounded out to shortstop, and flew out to left.

Each participant received an All-Star certificate and the opportunity to purchase an All-Star ring. SSUSA honored both teams during the Thursday night TOC reception.



Photos by Clover Schultz
Top row: American and National All-Star teams.
Second row: Bat prize for skill contest winners; National All-Stars win All-Star Game; TM Force (FL) against Lady Panthers (ON). **Third row:** Damage NV against Finance of America (NJ); TOC Umpires. **Bottom:** FIGO Islanders (GUAM); Team Mars (FL); Free TOC Champion Jostens ring; OC Gigantes (CA).



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Mythical Rules, the Umpire Bible and Facts

Normally, I like to cite an unusual play or umpire call from a Senior Softball-USA game to start a column about rules. But this time of year, with few tournaments going on, finding such a play has been a challenge.

So, I turned to a favorite outside source on rules discussions: the Umpire Bible, an online website dedicated to discussing correct rule interpretations for baseball. Sure, some of their rules do not apply to slow-pitch softball or the senior game. But you might be surprised how many baseball rules cross over to our wonderful game.

While perusing their website, I came across a document listing common baseball rule myths versus actual rules. And sure enough, many of the “myth” situations also fit SSUSA play.

Below are a few myths and truths, with some SSUSA wording added. At one time or another, I’ve seen every one of these “myths” argued as true by a senior softball player.

MYTH: If the fielder's feet are in fair territory when he touches a batted ball, it is a fair ball. **FACT:** Fair/foul is determined by where the ball is located when touched. (This isn't football or basketball.)

MYTH: When over-running first base, the batter-runner must turn or veer right into foul territory or he can be tagged out before returning to the base. **FACT:** The batter-runner may veer or turn any direction after crossing first base if he makes no attempt

Umpires Corner

By Donna McGuire

(not even feigning one) to advance to second base.

MYTH: If a batted ball hits home plate (in our case, the strike mat), it's a foul ball. **FACT:** A batted ball hitting the strike mat is like any other batted ball. It is fair or foul depending on where it is touched or rolls to a stop. In SSUSA play, the entire strike mat is considered fair territory.

MYTH: The batter cannot be called out for interference if he remains in the batter's box. **FACT:** The batter's box is not a sanctuary. If the umpire believes the batter impeded, hindered, or confused the defense, the batter shall be called out for interference.

MYTH: A batter who bats out of order is called out when properly appealed. **FACT:** Actually, it is the batter who should have batted (the “proper” batter) who is called out for failing to bat. All outs made on the play stand; other runners must return to the base

occupied at the time of the pitch. The improper batter returns to the dugout. The next batter is the person in the batting order who follows the proper batter (who was just called out).

MYTH: Tie goes to the runner. **FACT:** Not true. The runner must beat the ball to the base. (Umpires like to say there is no such thing as a tie! If you really think about it, the defense benefits from a tie, not the runner.)

MYTH: It is a force out when a runner is called out for not tagging up on a fly ball. **FACT:** There cannot be a force out once the batter-runner has been retired. This is an appeal play, and the timing rule comes into effect.

MYTH: A runner is out if he runs out of the baseline to avoid a fielder who is fielding a batted ball. **FACT:** A base runner must avoid a defender who is fielding a batted ball. The runner may veer several feet, if needed, to avoid the defender. Players sometimes confuse this rule with the rule that a runner may not go out of the baseline to avoid a tag. Until a play is being made on the runner, he creates his own

basepath.

MYTH: If a fielder holds a caught fly ball for 2 seconds it's a catch. **FACT:** There is no time element involved. The are two components to the definition of a catch: secure possession in the defender's hand or glove, and a voluntary release of the ball.

MYTH: On a force out or appeal, you must tag the base with your foot. **FACT:** If you have secure possession in your hand or glove, you may tag the base with the glove or any body part. (Note: I once had a player argue this nonstop in a league game. He then went to the field supervisor and argued some more. The debate became so heated that field supervisor ejected him from the park!)

As I mentioned earlier, not all the myths highlighted by the Umpire Bible apply to slow-pitch softball. Here is one fun example: In baseball, a batter may hit a pitched ball after it strikes the dirt. Yes, that is true. But in slow-pitch, the ball is dead as soon as it hits the ground or plate or strike mat. Hopefully, all senior players know that rule.



2024 Best of the Best Earn All-Tourney Selections

Softball News Report

Congratulations to the All-Tournament selections from the 2024 Tournament of Champions! First place teams earn five all-tournament selections, second place gets four and third place earns three. Managers, if your All-Tournament selections are missing; please email in your honorees to nic@seniorsoftball.com.

Women's 40+ AAA:

Dynasty Sisters Mood Swings (CA): Keri Sulonen, Mande Pyle Brown, Deeanna Noonan, Andrea D'Amico.

TM Force (FL): Roxanne Garcia, Kacee Crumpacker, Corie Burnett.

Women's 50+ AAA:

Shots Fired (RI): Nancy Santopadre, Brenda Morrison, Nellie Gray, Cathy Noversa, Gina Boyajian.

Women's 50/55+ Major:

Kryptonite W 50s (FL): Karen Hunger, Sara Payne, Tina

Guzman, Veronica Shaw, Dee Williams, (MVP: Joyce Hongell).

Men's 40+ Platinum:

BT Bombers/Six Pac (CA): Brett Pierce, TJ McPherson, David Stafford, Craig , Jacob Deesing.

Certified Ground Breakers (MD): Marcus Mingo, Shawn Smith, Elton Banks.

Men's 40+ AAA:

Gigantes O.C. 40s (MD): Brandon Braxton Sr., Tim Mason, Alan Koch, Jason Herndon.

Men's 50+ AAA:

Volusia Top Gun (FL): Scott Venable, Richard Bowrosen, Tony Robinson.

Men's 50+ AA:

Lobos 50 (TX): Toby Dominguez, Isaac Garcia, Daniel Ferguson.

Men's 55+ Platinum:

Damage NV: Casey Hann, Case Leloux, Greg Thygesen, Tommy Winneth.

Vectra International/Big Biscuit (KS): Deron Burger,



Photos by Clover Schultz
Lady Panthers (ON) double dip Dynasty Sisters Mood Swings (CA) in the Women's 40+ AAA division.

Tim Hubert, Steve Zahn.

Men's 55+ AA:

So Cal Riptide 55/RMK Trucking: Ed Campbell, Jesse Ruano, Ed Rice, Glenn Mitchell, Pat Harris, (MVP: Juan Gonzales).

Buddies, Sampson's, Mid-Michigan Merchants: Jeff

Bowerman, Gary Roloff, D.J. Barr.

Men's 60+ Major:

Team Florida/Phoenix Tube 60: Tony Adamo, Don Harper, John Livingston, Hugh Planitz, Clayton Stutzman, (MVP: John Miles).

Men's 60+ AAA:

Team Mars (FL): Tom Head, Gerard Stigliano, Ernie Colon, Rody Carballo, Tim Workman.

Men's 60+ AA:

Road Warriors (AZ): Wes Wilson, Tim Rud, Patrick Kohls, Maurice Parobec, Tom Fridgen, (MVP: Steve Baker).

Men's 65+ AA:

Shannon Fence/CPOA (OH): Don Armstrong, Mark Vidmar, Jim Kolenc, Charlie Sumer, Paul Washlock.

Men's 65/70+ Gold:

Top Gun Stealth (CA): David Bradford, Dan Tsuruta, Dave "D-Rod" Rodriguez, Fred "Woody" Calloway, Brian Lamb, (MVP: Tom "Killer Eyes" Mendez).

Steve Levin Ameriprise (FL): John Collins, Terry Narrow, Bob Brausieker, (MVP: Alan Lazarow).

Continued on page 24



Shots Fired (RI) and Takin' Chances (CA) went the best 2 out of 3 games in the Women's 50+ AAA division. Shot Fired took the championship.

Lower Your Risk of Alzheimer's and Dementia

A surprising and mysterious trend has arisen in recent years that may help point us toward a cure for dementia: Rates of Alzheimer's disease in the U.S. are actually dropping. Indeed, your risk may be lower than that of your parents or grandparents.

The percent of American age 65-plus with dementia, including Alzheimer's fell 30 percent from 200 to 2016, a 2022 Rand Corp. study found. "I think what it means is that a diagnosis of dementia is not cast in iron," says Albert Hofman, M.D., chair of the Department of Epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. "We can influence this."

In a 2019 study, Hofman found rates had fallen 13

percent per decade over the previous 25 years in North America and Europe – a stretch of time when there were no drugs on the market to treat or prevent changes in the brain due to Alzheimer's.

Since about 75 percent of people with Alzheimer's also have problems with the blood vessels in their brain – leaks, narrowing and damage to tiny arteries can kill off brain cells and cause dementia – Hofman suspects "all the things we've done in the last 50 years to prevent heart disease and stroke may be related to lower risk for dementia and Alzheimer's." In addition to not smoking, those include:

Keeping blood pressure and blood sugar levels healthy. High blood pressure and diabetes increase risk for thinking and memory

problems that may precede dementia or Alzheimer's by 41 percent or more. They can harm brain cells by damaging blood vessels in the brain, boosting inflammation and encouraging the growth of Alzheimer's plaques and tangles.

Getting regular exercise. Staying active can reduce risk for all types of dementia by 28 percent and for Alzheimer's disease by 45 percent. Exercise increases blood flow to the brain, reduces inflammation, helps control blood sugar and blood pressure and helps brain cells become more resilient.

Eating more fruits and vegetables. A produce packed diet with limited amounts of red meat, saturated fat and added sugar lowered risk for Alzheimer's disease and

dementia by up to 48 percent in a 2020 study of 921 older adults. Berries and spinach may help protect brain cells from damage caused by inflammation and destructive oxygen molecules called free radicals.

Taking care of your ears and eyes. Hearing and/or vision loss increased risk for cognitive problems by 20 to 50 percent in a 2022 University of Toronto study of 5.4 million older Americans. Recent studies suggest hearing aids and taking care of vision problems such as cataracts could be protective.

Reprinted from the AARP Bulletin, March 2024, Pg. 15. By Sari Harrar.

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All-Tourneys: Past Tournament Selections Include Winter Worlds & Nationals

Continued from page 22

Men's 70+ AA:

Doc Martens/Ropes Courses (MI): Joe Orr, Larry Vitale, Tom Beranek.

Men's 75+ Platinum:

75 Scrap Iron Diamonds (CO): Ken Armbruster, Ken Hiatt, Ron Hefner, Don Carpenter, Pat McGuigan – MVP.

Midwest Fossils (NE): Dennis Christ, Tarry Cory, Harry Rakers, Ed Rastovski.

Men's 85+ Gold:

Center For Sight (FL): (MVP: Ron Boyer), Everett Sims, Fred Cronin, John Fournier, Bill Brotherton, Tom Sides.

Past Tourneys



2023 Winter Nationals - Lee County, FL

Men's 70+ Silver:

Syracuse Cyclones (NY): Dave Fleming, Joe Vancho, Mark Merrell, Ken Day.

Men's 80+ Gold:

Chicago Gray Sox: Roy Iverson, Wayne Markett, Gary Heifner.



Damage NV finished as finalists in the Men's 55+ Platinum division.

Photos by Clover Schultz



2023 Winter Worlds - Phoenix, AZ

Men's 70+ Major:

Arizona Scorpions: Mark "Barney" Barnes, Steve Schmidt, Dick Reader, Mark "Webbie" Weber, Doug Royse.

Men's 75+ Major:

SoCal Gusto: Donnie Bonderson, Bobby Herera, Wayne Arendt, Lou Bratcher.

Managers, if your All-Tournament Selections are missing, please email in your honorees to: nic@seniorsoftball.com.



All-Tourneys: Aloha State to Georgia Peaches

Congratulations to the All-Tournament selections from the Second Annual 2024 Aloha Bowl and 2024 Southern Championships! First place teams earn five all-tournament selections, second place gets four, while third place earns three. Managers, if your All-Tournament selections are missing; please email in your honorees to info@seniorsoftball.com.

Aloha Bowl

Men's 40+ Major:

Getnutz (HI): Jacob Alicuben, Ashley Vidinha, William Clifton, Brandon Hookala, Donald Blackwelder.

Men's 40+ AAA:

Unloaded (CA): Ernie Parrish, Chris Carper, Ricky Harder, Max Ivey, Alex Campbell.

Hawaiians 40s: Charlie Bright, Statlin Ganeau, Chad Baldini, Brett Cadiente.

Men's 50+ Gold:

Whatever (AZ): Tim Keller, Sergio Canastillo, Lito Munoz, Alvaro Yanez.

KIA'I (HI): Louie Hoopai, Johanson Hoopai, Jeff Murray.

Men's 55/60+ Gold:

Hawaii Five-O: Paul Supat, Chris Vierra, Chris Acoba, Joe Arakaki, Eric Austrung.

Shut D 55s (HI): Chad Cunningham, Gadi Pulgudos, Rolland Alcoran.

Men's 60+ AAA:

The 60s Desperados (CA): Ismael Ramirez, Craig Sorensen, Theodore Balocan, Frank Garza.

Hawaiians 60 Red: Steve Ogoso, Brian Walker, Scott Freitas.

Men's 65/70+ Gold:

Hawaii Five-O: Tagipo



Photos by Linda Weber

Salaus, Fabe Loo, Ricky Ishimaru, Thad Reece, Steve Robello.

Warriors 70 (HI):

Tony Fernandes, Willie R. McMillan, Bernie J. Herodies, Gerald Lau Hee.

Men's 70+ AAA:

Sacramento Islanders 70 (CA): Craig Nakahara, Bill Eppinga, Marty Leong, Ernie Boston, John Kramer.



Hawaiians 40s finish as finalists in the Men's 40+ AAA division of the 2024 Aloha Bowl.

Continued on page 35

A Quest to Establish On-Field Bat Testing

In Senior Softball USA's quest to establish an on-field bat test for our sport, more than 600 bats were tested at the Tournament of Champions in Florida in January.

NTS, the Official Bat Testing lab for Senior Softball USA, conducted the tests as the first step in establishing the Senior on-field Bat Standard.

The next step is the meeting of a committee made up of senior bat manufacturers, NTS and SSUSA to arrive at an on-field test standard. The Committee was formed under

Covering the Bases

By Terry Hennessy

the auspices of the Sports and Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) Baseball/Softball Committee.

The purpose is to keep the playing field fair by identifying bats that have been altered to improve performance beyond manufacturing standards.

The first committee meeting was March 18, and we hope to establish an on-field bat test level before the end of the year.



Two NTS bat lab experts/engineers, Marty Bindel & Jason Kelsch, performed compression testing on bats to gather data for a field test standard at the 2024 TOC.

Photos by Clover Schultz

Curveball Documentary Inspires Hope

By Nic Francois
Managing Editor

The highly anticipated Curveball documentary, following the stories of softball-playing military veterans who lost limbs in combat and other amputees, started filming in Florida in January.

Curveballs: Secrets of the Game highlights the players of the Louisville Slugger Wounded Warriors baseball/softball team, focusing on how the players overcame their injuries. Their injuries may have thrown them a curveball in life, but it didn't stop them from playing the sport they love.

With a mission to capture hope and inspiration for amputees and sport fans alike, the filming broke ground at Swanson Stadium at Florida Gulf Coast University in January.

David Van Sleet, the organization's founder and general manager, is a native to FGCU's Ft. Myers suburb, Estero. After the Army and 30 years with the Department of Veterans, Van Sleet went into prosthetics. It wasn't long before he combined his work with his passion of baseball and softball to help veterans get back into the sport. The team soon expanded to include non-veteran amputees with a yearly national tryout to make the team.

Filming will continue with director John Biffar at the helm. John hopes the film will be encouraging to a wide range of people going through physical and mental struggles.

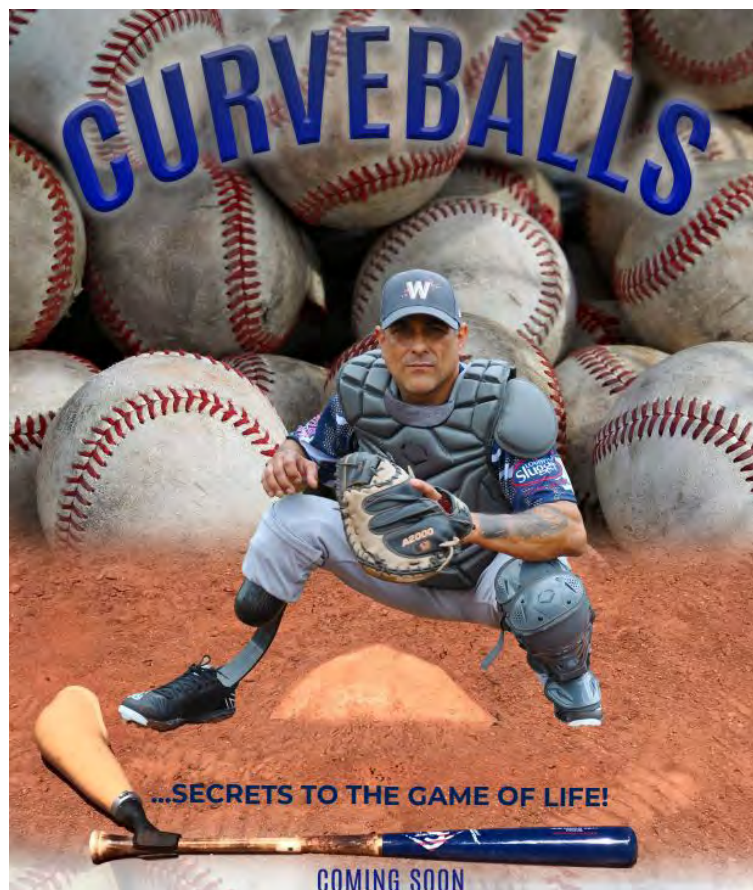
The Warriors travel across the country to compete at



Warriors runner plays at the 2023 World Championships in Vegas.

tournaments. Last September, the Warriors played against Las Vegas celebrities and a lucky few SSUSA players during the 2023 World Championships in Las Vegas.

For updates on the documentary, please visit the Warrior's website at: <https://lswarriorsteam.org/>.



Warriors players defy struggles as they compete against teams around the US.

Caribbean Classic IV: Rise of the Dominicans

By Jim Goff
Tournament Co-Director

The first three editions of the Caribbean Classic International Goodwill tournament included seven Dominican team entries compared with six for Team USA, yet no Dominican team had ever captured the first place plaque.

In 2023 for example, Dominican teams beat the first two American teams they faced, only to have the three TeamUSAs reel off seven straight victories against the host country squads to claim both the gold and silver.

Every year, the older but crafty Americans rode their superior pitching and high-arc hitting abilities to come out on top of Dominican lineups



A Master Higuey runner (DR) tries to avoid being tagged by Joe Cusenza (MI) while teammate John Nicolich (AZ) moves toward 2nd base to force a runner coming from 1st. Cusenza and Nicolich completed the double play.

Photos by Teri Bowers

skilled at playing modified fast pitch but inexperienced in slow pitch.

"I wonder if our Dominican friends have been practicing

slow pitch to prepare for the tournament this year," mused Tournament Co-Director Tulio Ontiveros from Venezuela. "They have always been gracious in defeat here in Punta Cana, but they do have their pride."

The first two games of the 2024 event did not provide a clear answer, as Dominican team Master Higuey cruised to a 16-6 win over TeamUSA-Blue, only to be followed by TeamUSA-White dominating Master Punta Cana – Grey 17-4 (Note: In Latin American softball, the term "Master" has the same meaning as "Senior" does in the USA.) In that 17-4 decision, pitching was key, as Iowan Ken Miller combined an excellent high arc with control to strike out four.

That game would prove to be the high water mark for the Americans, however, as the three Dominican teams would go 4-0 against the two TeamUSAs the rest of the way, culminating in a dramatic walk-off homer by Master

Higuey against TeamUSA-Blue to propel Higuey to an undefeated performance and the gold plaque. Master Punta Cana – White took the silver, their only loss coming to countrymen Higuey, while returning player/manager Oklahoman Frank Mamola's TeamUSA-White squad finished at .500 for the tournament for the third place bronze that prevented a Dominican sweep of the medals.

"I want to thank our great Dominican friend and player/manager Anthony Acevedo for once again getting the local teams to come and play," said tournament founder and Co-Director Jim Goff. "I do think these Dominican players have figured out slow pitch!"

Returning player shortstop Joe Cusenza of Michigan was named Best Defense on TeamUSA-White, while Jeff Lakes of Ohio took home the Best Offense medallion. The team MVP award was an easy choice, as Stanley Walton from Louisiana went a perfect 22-for-22 at the plate while playing outstanding defense in left-center field.



Returning player Katherine Catanzarite (left front) brought ball playing equipment from California to donate to local Dominican kids. She is assisted by Cathy Miller (back left) from Iowa. Equipment donations are an important part of this tournament.

Continued on next page

Caribbean: 4th Caribbean Classic Hosts Oldest Player Thus Far at 87

Continued from previous page

This team also featured the most senior player in the history of the tournament, 87-year-young Floridian Herb Grommeck, who held his own on this bronze-winning squad.

After a one-year hiatus, SSUSA Northwest Regional Director Butch Jones returned to the Caribbean Classic, this time not just to play but also to coach TeamUSA-Blue. This team featured no less than five players from the same family, the Dorages of Washington state. Patriarch Joe Dorage's son-in-law Michael Torrey (who moved recently from Washington to Florida) was named Best Defense, while son Jett Dorage was team MVP. But the most impressive member of the clan might have been

daughter Jami "Cupcake" Kai, who showed why she's rated 40-Major and earned a recent TOC championship as she hit hard line drives when she wasn't hitting it to the fence, while also playing a solid right field. Non-Dorage family member Jim Goff snuck in as the Best Offense honoree.

Tentative dates for the 5th edition of the Caribbean Classic are Feb. 19-24, 2025, and the venue will once again be the all-inclusive Barcelo Bavaro Palace Grand Resort in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, where it's just steps to the beach and steps to the ball field. For more information, contact Nic Francois at the SSUSA headquarters in California at: nic@seniorsoftball.com or call at 916-326-5303.

Jim Goff has played with SSUSA since 2016 and successfully hosted four Caribbean Classic International Tournaments. He will be inducted into the SSUSA Hall of Fame in 2024.



Photo by Tulio Ontiveros
Caribbean Classic Co-Director Jim Goff of Iowa (center) was honored by Dominican teams, Tournament Co-Director Tulio Ontiveros (left) and local contact Anthony Acevedo (right) for Goff's hard work, founding of the Caribbean Classic trips and 2024 induction to the SSUSA Hall of Fame.



Photo by Tulio Ontiveros
One of the many local Dominican teams at the resort fields, holding the flag of the Dominican Republic.



Photo by Teri Bowers
Three Dominican teams participate in the fourth annual Caribbean Classic, as one of the players bats to the left.



Photo by Teri Bowers
Stan Walton of Louisiana was a perfect 22-for-22 at the plate.

Hawaii Hosts 8th Pacific Rim Championships

Softball News Report

The Pacific Rim Championships is emerging after a four-year hiatus in the same place the last tournament was played – Hawaii.

Teams from Japan, China, Taiwan, Canada, Guam, Hong Kong, Macau and the United States are expected to compete in the international friendship games on Nov. 7-8 in Oahu.

The worldwide COVID epidemic shut international competition down from 2020 to 2022 and the 2023 tournament, scheduled for Hong Kong, was cancelled because of unexpected facility difficulties.

“The Pacific Rim Slow-pitch Softball Federation Board selected Hawaii for the 2024 Championships because of its central location,” said Terry Hennessy, the Federation president and U.S. delegate. “The purpose of the Pacific Rim Federation is to establish international friendship through sports.”

The international players also are invited to join U.S. players on a cruise and games on Maui, the Big Island and Kauai after the tournament,

from Nov. 9-16.

Each country or region is limited to two teams. Any SSUSA player is eligible to play on a first-come, first served basis. For more information, email nic@seniorsoftball.com, or call 916-326-5303.



Players and guests of the 2022 Hawaiian Islands tournament and cruise line up in front of Pride of America ship.



Norwegian Cruise Lines' Pride of America island hops the Hawaiian Islands.



Players line up holding the flag of the country they are representing at the 2019 Pacific Rim in Hawaii.



8th Pacific Rim Championships

NOV 5-9, 2024 | LOCATION: HONOLULU, HI

More Information Contact:
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Waikiki Beach in Honolulu, Hawaii. The trip's host hotel is just blocks away from this beach.



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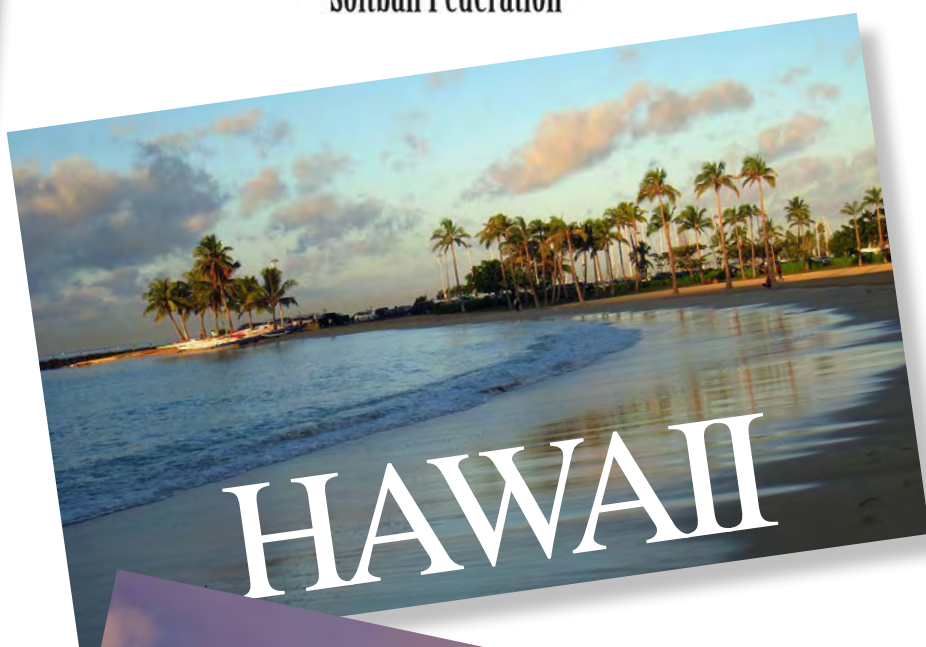
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Tournament
heads to Hawaii.

■ **Tournament: November 5-8;**
Cruise: November 9-16



For Details on these Adventures: <https://seniorsoftball.com/?page=35>

For more information: email Nic@seniorsoftball.com

Baseball Legends Share Their Stories

"The Glory of Their Times" is a collection of interviews with early 20th century baseball players (1895-1930 primarily). The interviews were done by Lawrence Ritter in the 1960s, and hearing their stories takes the reader back to another time.

It's a common misperception that ballplayers in those days were uneducated alcoholics. Based on the stories of these players, this was completely false.

Certainly there were a few drunks, but they were the exception. There were quite a few college educated major leaguers in an era when a high school diploma was a substantial thing.

There were also a lot of extremely naïve farm boys, of course, and a lot of characters.

Outfielder Fred Snodgrass told of how rarely John McGraw, fabled manager of the NY Giants, would give signs to his players. The players were all expected to know when to bunt, steal or hit and run, and they would signal one another without involving the manager.

The Giants had a deaf pitcher named "Dummy" Taylor (deaf people were often nicknamed Dummy in those days). So, the players all learned sign language.

Ty Cobb stole home 54 times in his career. One Cobb base-stealing staple, was when he was on third base with less than two out and a batter walked. He'd give a signal to that batter, who as soon as he reached first would suddenly bolt for second base. If they made a play on him, Cobb would then sprint for home.

They would often play the entire game with just a couple

Senior Moments By Dave Weinman

of balls, which very quickly became dirty. The spitball – generally thrown with a generous portion of spit mixed with tobacco juice - was not illegal until 1920, and by the end of a game these balls were even softer than they started and were quite black and hard to see late in the day.

Players used heavy bats and almost all of them choked up substantially. There were no coaches other than the manager; players had to take responsibility for learning the game on their own.

In "The Soul of Baseball" by Joe Posnanski, a legend about the great power hitting catcher Josh Gibson from the Homestead Grays of the

Negro Leagues got re-told. Many said he was a more powerful hitter than Babe Ruth. This is one of my favorite stories from the era:

In a game in Pittsburgh between Gibson's Homestead Grays and the Philadelphia Stars, Gibson launched a ball into the sky so high that no one saw it come down. After a while, the umpire said, "Well, if it never comes down it must be a home run."

The next day, the same two teams played again, but in Philadelphia this time. In the middle of the contest, suddenly a ball falls out of the sky and is caught by the Philadelphia centerfielder. The umpire calls out, "Gibson! You're out! Yesterday! In Pittsburgh!"

And then there are the legends about Cool Papa Bell,

who many said was faster than anyone before or since. They also said one day he hit a line drive up the middle and the ball hit him as he was sliding into second.

Another story and this one is true: Hall of Fame pitcher Richard "Rube" Marquard played professional baseball against his father's wishes. Baseball was not necessarily considered a respectable profession in those days. He told his son if he went into baseball he was going to ruin his life and he would have nothing to do with it or him.

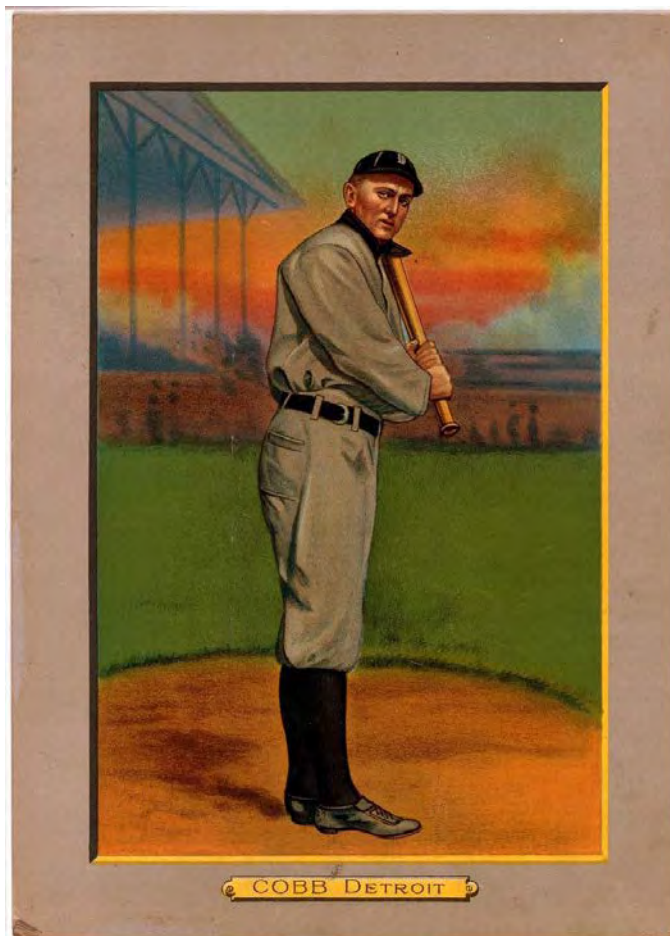
His dad was the chief engineer for the city of Cleveland. For years they didn't talk.

One day well into his 18-year MLB career he was told by the clubhouse attendant after a game in Boston that a man claiming to be his father wanted to see him. Rube said that was impossible but he'd give the guy an autograph.

Turns out it was his dad. He said he watched the game - his first ever - and was sitting halfway between where the guy with that thing on his face was and the "number one" - you know that place where they all run to. They had a warm reunion and stayed patched up from then on.

In fact, when the newspapers heard about their reunion they sent a reporter to Cleveland to interview his dad. They asked him if he was proud of his son, and he answered, "I certainly am. Why shouldn't I be? He's a great baseball player."

Dave Weinman is a long time Senior Softball player and Senior News Contributor who travels and helps coordinate most of SSUSA's international tours and trips.



Ty Cobb, MLB Player, 1905-1928, known for playing 21 years with the Detroit Tigers.

Wall Street, Dividend Kings and Reliability

Softball News Report

It looks like Wall Street has rediscovered the value of dividend investing – and it couldn't come at a better time.

With most of the major stock market indices near or at record highs, it seems to me that investors would be wise to bank on dividend-paying stocks to give some added downside protection to their portfolios.

And many major corporations seem to sense this as several big-time companies have either initiated dividends or boosted their quarterly payouts in recent weeks.

Two of the better-known companies to take action are retail giants Wal-Mart and Home Depot. Wal-Mart has made a habit of continually raising its dividend, although it tends to be a bit conservative about it. This time however, it decided to up the ante a bit more, raising the dividend by 9 percent.

On the very same day that Wal-Mart enhanced its payouts, Home-Depot chimed in with an 8 percent increase of its own.

Investors must remember that dividends are not guaranteed payments by any stretch of the imagination. Many will remember that Boeing once paid a very nice dividend before slashing it when it ran into serious problems. In fact, the aerospace giant's quarterly dividend reached as high as \$2.05 ½ a share in 2020. Today it is ZERO.

Those new to the

dividend-investment strategy can find thousands of companies offering payouts. But where's the best place to look?

Some turn the reliable Dow Jones Industrial Average, those 30 top-drawer companies that represent much of Corporate America. And indeed there are some top-notch stocks there to whet any investor's appetite.

I recently saw a listing of the top five dividend yield stocks in the Dow 30. Here they are:

1. Verizon Communications (VZ) was recently showing a current yield of 6.6 percent.
2. 3M Company (MMM), recently showing a yield of about 6.5 percent.
3. Dow Inc. (DOW) yield of 5.2 percent.
4. Chevron (CVX) yield of 3.9 percent.
5. International Business Machines (IBM) yield of 3.6 percent.



Money Matters

By Jack Sirard

No doubt those are all formidable companies, but an even better list is what is being called the Dividend Kings.

Dividend Kings are stocks listed in the United States that have increased their dividends each year for at least the last 50 years. As you might imagine, there are not many stocks that make the list. In fact, of the 6,000 or so on the NYSE and NASDAQ, only 44 qualify. Quick math will tell you that that's less than 1 percent of listed companies.

Obviously, the Dividend Kings are long-term money makers as they have had to survive stock market crashes, wars on all fronts, inflation and recessions. Just think of all we've seen since the 1970s: the Gulf War, the fall of the Soviet Union, 9/11 in

2001, the dot-com bust and the COVID-19 pandemic.

No matter what has happened, the Dividend Kings have consistently raised their dividends even if their profits and revenues have taken a hit along the way.

In checking out the latest list on the internet, you'll see that the current average dividend yield is about 2.8 percent with a trailing 10-year dividend growth rate of about 6.8 percent.

The Dividend King with the highest yield is Altria (MO) at about 9.6 percent.

Financial experts like to point out that over the past 50 years, dividend-paying stocks have topped the average return of stocks in the S&P 500, with dividend growers leading the way.

Heard From The Dugout

"A nickel ain't worth a dime anymore."

Yogi Berra

All-Tourneys: Aloha Bowl Grew From 25 Teams Last Year to 42 This Year

Continued from page 25

Men's 75+ Gold:

Warriors 75 (HI): Sonny Miller, Melvin Aoki, Joe Manuma, Frank Lohman.

Southern Champs

Men's 50-55+ Gold:

BACKSIDE (VA): Keith Doxey, Curtis Hines, Lamont Jenkins.

Men's 55+ AAA:

BACKSIDE (VA): Jeff Crowe, Sherman Holloway, Chris Alexander, Chris Mitchell, Willie Turner.

Volusia Top Gun (FL):



Riverbend Park in Dalton, Georgia is Southeast of town near the Conasauga River.

Richard Bowrosen, Scott Gilloz, Tony Robinson, Joseph Speroni.

COTTON EYED JOE (TN): Mike Morris, Lee Vandiver, Toby Deaton.

Men's 60-65+ Gold:

DT Express (GA): Art Pendergrass, Rusty Hoad, Bobby Adams, Richard Bozarth, Weldon Hughes, Marty Dockins.

Managers, if your All-Tournament Selections are missing, please email in your honorees to info@seniorsoftball.com.

AARP: Tech Centers for Seniors Open

Becoming digitally literate is increasingly necessary for older Americans. To address this need, AARP, in affiliation with Older Adults Technology Services (OATS), has opened its fourth technology-themed Senior Planet community center, this one in Miami.

The goal is to give older adults a place to hone their digital and technological skills. "Between 20 to 40 percent of older adults in America are still not fully online," says Tom Kamber, OATS executive director. "Senior Planet fills that gap; we make it a social mission to provide digital equity and help older adults thrive online."

The Miami center,

which joins facilities in Denver, New York City, and Plattsburgh, New York, will be more than a tech hub; it is also intended to serve as a gathering space for people to trade ideas and find others with similar interests.

"Older adults can be credited for a lot of innovation in tech and art," Kamber says. "This is a space for them to learn, pursue their projects and shape their community."

The facility will host weekly multilingual classes in technology, health, finance, community and the arts. One-on-one tech tutoring sessions and tech discussion groups will also be held at the center. There's additional good news: More programs are planned for 2024, Kamber says.

OATS has other goals for

the year, including expanding Senior Planet disaster preparedness programs to educate older adults on the digital tools they can use to communicate and stay safe during a storm. And the group will expand its free licensing program, which allows local organizations to teach Senior Planet classes to older adults in rural communities.

For those unable to make it to a facility, Senior Planet offers free online classes every week, ranging from tai chi and Spanish to courses on techwear and online banking. Find classes at seniorplanet.org/classes.

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