

*March 9, 2026 - In This Issue:*

Southern California Hosts its First Qualifier of 2026 With Top Gun Winter Classic

New Turf Fields Save 2026 Music City

Larry Younger's Skills and Helpful Nature Will Be Remembered

Melvin Evans Leaves a Senior Softball Legacy Across the Mid-Atlantic

Obituaries: March 2026



West Covina Sportsplex was home to the 2026 Top Gun Winter Classic. A former Big League Dreams location, the complex has six fields, a soccer and rugby pavilion and two playgrounds.

**Obituaries: March 2026**

Stan Suichta



**Stanley D. Suichta, 80, of Evans, Colo., died peacefully on Feb. 20.**

Stan was a long-time player with Senior Softball USA, joining in the last 1990s. A resident of Colorado, he was very active in the Scrap Iron Senior Softball Association and was inducted into their Hall of Fame in 2008.

"Stan was an avid softball player whose passion for the sport defined much of his life," according to his online obituary. "His talent and dedication earned him induction into the National Senior Softball Hall of

**Southern California Hosts its First Qualifier of 2026 With Top Gun Winter Classic**

**By Nic Francois  
Softball News Report**

WEST COVINA, Calif. – 46 teams competed in Southern California's first 2026 qualifier, held Feb. 27 to March 1 at the West Covina Sportsplex.

All but two of the teams were from California, with Team SMS 55s and Family 70s crossing the border from Nevada to play.

"The weather was perfect all weekend long, around 85 degrees on average for the three days," said Tournament Director Jerry Smith.

"We had some close games in all of the divisions," he added. The Men's 55+ AAA division saw an elimination game between Top Gun Storm (CA) and Top Gun Legends reach the 8<sup>th</sup> inning after several ties; and the Men's 60+ AAA and Men's 60/65+ Platinum divisions needed IF games to decide the victor.

Overall, 16 teams earn first place awards and all 46 teams qualified for the 2026 annual SSUSA World Championships, Sept. 17 – Oct. 4 in Las Vegas.



Fame in 2018 and the Colorado USSSA Hall of Fame in 2001."

"Stan loved the game of softball," said Don Carpenter, who played with Stan for many years, responding on behalf of Scrap Iron Senior Softball Association. "His final thoughts about softball were, 'Keep playing as long as you're healthy.'" Don added.

Outside of senior softball, Stan served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam. After the Army, he operated his own concrete company before working 19 years with the city of Evans, Colo.

"Stan loved his dog Pepper and cat Spook, the Colorado Rockies, Denver Nuggets and Denver Broncos," according to his obituary.

He will best be remembered playing with Scrap Iron 60s and 65s, Scrap Iron/Phiten 65s, Scrap Iron 70 Legacy, Scrap Iron Legends 70s and 75s, Scrap Iron Diamonds 70s and Scrap Iron 80s, all from Colorado.

#### **Bruce S. Tiso**



#### **Bruce Steven Tiso, 72, of Fairfax, Va., died on Jan. 3.**

Bruce was a long-time player with Senior Softball USA, joining in 2008 and was a loyal player with Northern Virginia Force team in the 60s, 65s and 70s division.

"Bruce was an outstanding pitcher on many Force championship teams from 55 to 70's," according to an obituary written by the Northern Virginia Force Softball Association.

"Bruce was a perennial all-star and all-tournament selection," added the Association's obituary. "As a testament for his love for baseball, Bruce and his college buddies traveled to every Major League

Click here for more details and game scores on Who I Follow. Who I Follow provides live scoring updates for Senior Softball USA's premier qualifiers.

#### **Results:**

##### **Men's 40+ Major:**

1. No Mercy (CA)
2. AlwaysReppin (CA)

##### **Men's 40+ AAA:**

1. Wasted Talent/ TheLAEmpire
2. TWS (CA)

##### **Men's 50+ Major:**

1. Diamond Dogz (CA)
2. Diablos/El Bandido Tequila (CA)

##### **Men's 50+ AAA:**

1. Viejos So Cal
2. Rancid (CA)
3. G-Force/Epic Athletics (CA)

##### **Men's 55+ Major Plus:**

1. Redeemed (CA)
2. L.A.F. 55 (CA)

##### **Men's 55+ Major:**

1. CA Premier 55
2. Top Gun Diamonds (CA)

##### **Men's 55+ AAA:**

1. No Warning Shots (CA)
2. Team SMS (NV)
3. Top Gun Storm (CA)

##### **Men's 60+ AAA:**

1. Fossil Fuel 60 (CA)
2. Top Gun Fury/ Written in Red (CA)
3. Weakened Warriors 60 (CA)

##### **Men's 60+ AA:**

1. Jokers (CA)
2. California Coast Plumbers 60

##### **Men's 60/65+ Platinum:**

1. Top Gun Warriors (CA) - 60+ Major Champions
2. Samurai 65 (CA)
3. SoCal Kamikaze/BFAD 60s

##### **Men's 65+ Gold:**

1. So Cal Braves 65 - Major Champions
1. Top Gun Stars 65s (CA) - AAA Champions
3. Wongs 65 (CA)

##### **Men's 70+ Major:**

1. Samurai 70 (CA)
2. Wongs 70 (CA)

##### **Men's 70+ AA:**

1. Lights Out 70 (CA)
2. Family 70s (NV)

##### **Men's 70/75/80+ Gold:**

1. Top Gun Over The Edge (CA) - 75+ Major Champions
2. Top Gun 80 Gold/JSquared (CA)
3. Cut Loose 70s (CA)

Baseball stadium to watch a game and to countless minor league stadiums.”

Outside of senior softball, Bruce was a teacher of 35 years and was heavily involved in his local church. Known for his patience and kindness, he also bowled with a church group, and coached soccer and basketball.

Before playing with Northern Virginia Force 55-70s with SSUSA, he briefly played with Austin Insurance 50s and IMS Dogs 50s, both out of Virginia.

---

### **Fray Candelaria**



**Fray Candelaria, 61, of El Paso, Tex., died on Jan. 1.**

Fray began playing with Senior Softball USA in 2016, and will be remembered primarily for playing with Team Trucha in the 50s and 55s age divisions, and eventually managing the team. More recently, he played with TX-NM Spurs (TX) in the 2025 season for the Land of Enchantment Championships in Albuquerque.

---

### **Mark Daniels**



**Mark Daniels, 71, of Henderson, Nev., died on July 10, 2025.**

Mark began playing with Senior Softball USA in the early 2010s. He

### **Men's 75+ AAA:**

1. No Guts, No Glory (CA)
2. D & K 75 (CA)
3. Top Gun Olde Dawgs 75 (CA)

## **New Turf Fields Save 2026 Music City**

### **By Nic Francois Softball News Report**

NASHVILLE, TN. – Rain put a stop to the games in this year’s Music City Classic by mid-Saturday at Cane Ridge Park.

The complex’s new turf fields allowed for quick recovery and the teams were able to play all their games by the end of Sunday evening in the March 7-8 qualifier.



**Newly completed turf fields at Cane Ridge Park in Anitoch, TN., a suburb of Nashville.**

“We had some weather issues again this year but were able to get all games completed thanks to turf infields,” said Tim McElroy, the tournament director.

“If the fields were still dirt, we would have been sunk,” he added.

What the tournament lacked in number of teams, it made up for in representation, with teams from Tennessee, Missouri, Kansas and even as far as Georgia joining.

Manager Dan Sweat was inducted into the National Senior Softball Hall of Fame during the event Saturday morning. Tournament director and SSUSA Eastern Vice-President, Tim McElroy introduced Dan, who was inducted for “his knowledge of the game from his many years of playing,” according to the National Senior Softball Hall of Fame website.

eventually became manager of Fresh Poke, a Hawaiian team that he managed when the team was in the 60+ division.

Before retiring from senior softball in 2019, he played with and managed No Ka Oi 70s, also from Hawaii, which means 'the best' in native Hawaiian.

### **Richard B. Stone**



**Richard Bartley Stone, 52, of Fort Wayne, Ind., died on April 18, 2025.**

Richard joined Senior Softball USA in 2022 after a long history playing ball and other sports.

Upon moving to Fort Wayne at age 13, he "excelled in baseball and football; he was the varsity catcher and played defense/kicker for Wayne High School," according to his online obituary.

He continued to play ball after service in the U.S. Navy and had the chance to try out for the Tampa Bay Devil Rays and the Pittsburgh Pirates. He always wore No. 25 to honor his little brother, Brian, who is also a SSUSA player on Richard's last team, IronKlad, a 50+ Major team out of Indiana.

Outside of senior softball and MLB tryouts, his career took some interesting turns after the Navy. He was a rodeo clown on the rodeo circuits and enjoy competing in strongman contest.

Before playing with IronKlad, Richard will be remembered for playing with Red Boys 50s and Impact Softball 50s, both based in Kentucky.



**Dan Sweat with his wife, Janet, showcasing his National Senior Softball Hall of Fame award and plaque after the induction ceremony.**

"Dan's teams have won 675 games and lost 257 in the 932 games he has managed over his 28-year career," according to the NSSHOF website.

**Please click here for full results and details.**

### **Results:**

#### **Men's 40/50+ Platinum:**

1. MP/PrimeTime/MTS/Combat (TN) - 50+ Major Plus Champions
2. Classic Elite (GA)
3. Jelly 40s (MO)

#### **Men's 40+ AAA:**

1. Tennessee Select
2. Kansas City Spartan/Flat Creek Builders (MO)
3. ABC 40s (MO)

#### **Men's 50+ AAA:**

1. KC Kids 50s (MO)
2. ABC 50s (MO)

#### **Men's 65+ AAA:**

1. The Power (TN)
2. RBI (TN)

## **Larry Younger's Skills and Helpful Nature Will Be Remembered**



**Larry D. Younger last played with the Sacramento Islanders 70 team in the 2024 season, including in the World Championships in Las Vegas.**

**By Terry Hennessy  
Softball News Report**

SACRAMENTO – Larry Younger, 75, who died Jan. 26 here, had a rocket arm, gentle hands, swift legs and a graceful, powerful, swing.

He played baseball for the Cincinnati Reds until an injury took him out of the game, but continued playing the sport he loved until last year, switching from baseball to softball early on in his career.

Larry played tournament and league ball with literally scores of players in Northern California and was almost as well known for his excellent skills as he was for his advice.

Playing outfield and third base with Larry – who played Rover and shortstop -- for 4 years with the Sacramento Islanders, I learned to appreciate his tips to improve my game.

As outfielders, we even listened to Larry when he told us to move in or over – which shows ultimate respect from outfielders who generally hate to move in for anyone.

Larry's advice was always clear and to the point, probably skills he developed in the military and as a correctional officer for 20 years.

But the message that came through always was that Larry wanted to help others improve, never to put them down, but to help them become better for themselves and the team.

In his overflowing service in February, that point was driven home by his six children and 15 grandchildren. Most all of them portrayed Larry as exactly the same softball teacher/teammate we saw on the diamond.



**Larry Younger's memorial service, February 26, with players (far left) and family (center back) in attendance, as teammate and friend, Anthony Hinojosa speaking.**

More than 60 players wearing team jerseys could be seen nodding as the kids and grandkids told how Larry changed to a stern teacher of the importance of discipline the moment he stepped on the field.

They spoke of the love that inspired them in their lives; of a good man who taught them the important lessons of the sport – and life.

Larry, indeed, was an excellent player, but more important, he was a good man.

## **Melvin Evans Leaves a Senior Softball Legacy Across the Mid-Atlantic**

### **Melvin Roscoe Evans**



**Melvin “Blackie” Roscoe Evans, 75, of Norfolk, VA., died peacefully on Feb. 22.**

Melvin was a long-time Senior Softball USA player and manager, starting with SSUSA in 2008, playing primarily with Virginia teams.

“Melvin was a sports enthusiast and an avid softball and basketball player,” according to his online obituary. “He was particularly passionate about softball and dedicated much of his time to playing and coaching multiple softball teams.”

“Blackie was a very special friend to softball,” said Fran Dowell, SSUSA’s Executive Director. “Rosalee and Blackie were such a big part of our trips out east. Always smiling and also that little gleam in his eye. He will be greatly missed and we send prayers to his family.”

Melvin became manager of the Longshoremen 55s (VA) in 2015. Since his passing, Melvin’s nephew, Kenneth, has assumed the manager role.

Kenneth remembered his uncle with this beautiful poem:

**“Melvin (BLACKIE) Evans loved the sound of bat on ball,  
The dusty field, the cheers, the call.  
A glove in hand, a steady stride,  
With teammates always by his side.**

**The diamond was his second home,  
Where friendships grew and legends roam.  
Through every inning, win or loss,  
He played with heart—no matter the cost.**

**A Hall of Fame Melvin, earned with pride,  
But greater still the man inside.  
A smile, a laugh, a helping hand,  
The kind of soul who made a stand.**

**Though the final inning came too soon,  
His spirit still plays beneath the moon.  
On fields where memories forever stay,  
We know he’s still just one pitch away.**

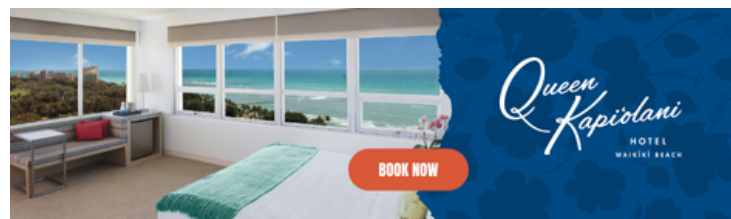
**So lift a bat and watch the sky,  
For champions never truly die.  
They live in stories, love, and fame—  
Forever part of the softball game.  
With Love Kenneth Evans”**

Melvin was inducted into the Tidewater Virginia Amateur Softball Association Hall of Fame in 2012 and the Old School Legends (Basketball) Hall of Fame in 2020.

In addition to playing with and managing the Longshoremen 55s, he’ll be remembered playing and co-managing with his wife, Rosalee, on IFA Fifty Plus, also out of Virginia.

---

## Stay At SSUSAs Official Hawaiian Resort Hotel



Contact Information:  
Senior Softball USA

9823 Old Winery Place, Suite 12  
916-326-5303  
[info@seniorsoftball.com](mailto:info@seniorsoftball.com)