

*April 4, 2024 - In This Issue:*

- Team Wins Every Game in 2024 Spring Worlds to Honor Late Manager
- Teams Enjoyed New Turf Fields at 2024 Music City
- Sportsmanship Blossoms at 2024 Spring Nationals
- SSUSA's Texas UIC, Ron Perkins, Inducted in Texas Hall of Fame
- Obituaries: November 2023 - March 2024



Minnesota Masters 80s win every game to honor their manager, Richard Root, who died during seeding play. An empty chair sits center in the photo with the championship trophy and jersey to remember Richard.

### SSUSA's Texas UIC, Ron Perkins, Inducted in Texas Hall of Fame

By Nic Francois  
Softball News Report



Ron Perkins, 70, of Katy, Texas, Senior Softball USA's new Texas Umpire In Chief, was inducted into the Texas Senior Softball Hall of Fame on March 22, as part of the 2024 class, (photo right).

Ron was inducted as an umpire, but has worked as a well-known director and player with SSUSA, playing since 2007. "My player credentials were acknowledged, I have enough points to be inducted as a player but I was officially inducted in the umpire category," said Ron.

"Such a small percentage of people play softball and there is an even smaller percentage of people who play Senior Softball, and I am proud to be a member of the softball world," stated Ron during his acceptance speech.

### Team Wins Every Game in 2024 Spring Worlds to Honor Late Manager

By Donna McGuire  
Softball News Report

Seventeen teams punched tickets to the 2025 Tournament of Champions by winning titles during the Senior Softball USA Spring World Championships played in mid-March in Utah and Arizona.

Seven of those teams did not lose a game the entire tournament. They finished a combined 39-0.

Overall, 117 teams participated. Eight played in the men's 40+ Masters division March 16-17 in Bullhead, Az. All other teams played in one of the two sessions that spanned March 19-24 at parks in Saint George, Utah.



Men's 40+ teams play at Bullhead City's Rotary Park, located between the Colorado River and scenic mountains.

Beautiful springtime days basked Utah all six days.

"This is a dream come true, and I am very grateful to the Hall of Fame Committee for selecting me," added Ron about that night.

Along with Ron, the following individuals were inducted in the Texas Senior Softball Hall of Fame: Michael Beard of Montgomery – Woody Benson of Huston – Butch Scattergood of Sugar Land.



**Ron at the induction ceremony hosted by Harris County Senior Softball League.**

## **Obituaries: November 2023 - March 2024**

### **Joe Wayne Hanzelka**



Joe Hanzelka, 63, of Rosenberg, Tex., died on Nov. 2023.

Joe began playing with Senior Softball USA in 2014, the same year he helped create the well-established Crossfire 50, 55 and 60s teams of Texas.

"Joe was a beloved teammate and a loyal friend who was at the heart of the Crossfire teams' success for nearly a decade," said fellow Crossfire player Paul Towne, in a tribute post on Joe's online obituary.

"Joe was a quiet leader who was highly respected for his tenacity, gritty play and endurance, but more importantly for his generosity, camaraderie and commitment the team spirit," added Paul.

In addition to softball, Joe enjoyed the outdoors, hunting,

"What a difference a year makes." Tournament Director Dave Dowell said. "In 2023, we lost one of the sessions due to heavy rains, but St. George more than made up for it this time around. Bright sunshine and blue skies resulted in perfect playing conditions and scenic views that looked like Chamber of Commerce postcards from every field."

Unfortunately, tragedy struck one team on its first day of play.

Minnesota Masters 80s General Manager Richard Root (photo below), who would have turned 79 this year, collapsed during the seventh inning of his team's second pool game at The Fields at Little Valley in St. George.

At the time, the Scrap Iron 85 Legends were preparing to bat in the bottom of the seventh trailing 19-12. Though a tournament director and umpire quickly began resuscitation measures, Root did not revive. Scrap Iron ceded the game to Minnesota at that point.

"I took a vote of the team, and everyone voted to finish the tournament," said John Remington, the Minnesota Masters' then field manager and now manager. From then on, the Masters played every game in honor of Root, he said.

They won every game.



**Richard Root, 78, former manager of Minnesota Masters 80s (June 16, 1945 - March 19, 2024**

### **Results:**

**Men's 40+ Masters Gold:** Granddaddy Softball/GS of Nevada (photo below), which started bracket play seeded sixth among eight teams, went 6-2 overall and double dipped the fifth-seeded So Cal Misfits of California 32-22 and 23-20 for the title. Avalon Meat Candy of Nevada finished third.



**Men's 50+ Major:** Second-seeded 4 Him Factory/Proton 50s of Arizona (photo below) edged fourth-seeded Never Forget of California 20-19 in the championship game. Top-seeded Top Gun Diamonds of California finished third in the four-team division.



travelling and listening to country music.

Joe played with Crossfire 50, 55 and 60s teams from 2014 to his passing, and briefly with Houston Fire 55s for a few tournaments in 2014.

---

### Leonard J. M. Suess



Lenny "Len" Suess, 83, of Troy, Ill., died on March 15.

He has a long past with Senior Softball USA, starting in the mid-1990s.

He's remembered most for managing Prairie Inn Senior Red Birds (formerly Senior Red Birds 75s and 80s).

"Len was an avid supporter and fan of Triad High School and the sports programs," according to his online Softball Players Association obituary. "He was actively involved in senior softball both as a player and a manager."

He was recently inducted into the St. Louis Softball Hall of Fame and earned Softball Players Association's National Award.

Before playing with and managing Senior Red Birds 75s and 80s, Lenny played with US Pallet 55s (IL) and Chicago Classics 60s and 65s.

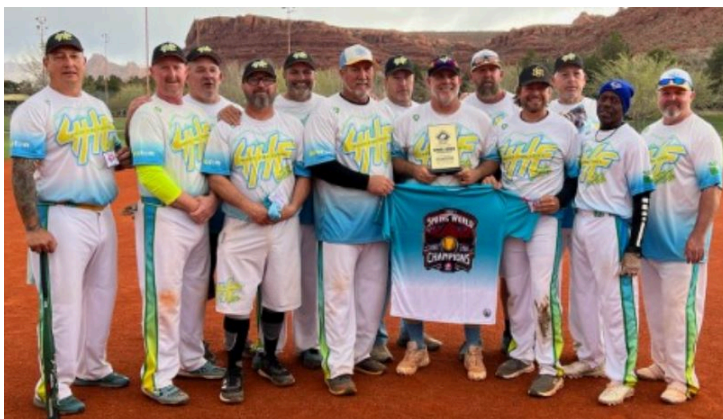
---

### Richard Root



Richard Root, 78, of St. Paul, Minn., died on March 19 during the 2024 Spring World Championships.

Richard passed away doing what he loved, playing senior softball and managing the Minnesota Masters 80s. He collapsed and was



**Men's 50+ AAA:** Second-seeded Arizona Thunder/Powered by 4himco.com capped a 6-0 weekend with three close games in a row, including a 24-22 championship victory over Team SMS of Nevada, which won three elimination games to reach the finals. Top-seeded Viejos So Cal finished third in the eight-team bracket.

**Men's 50/55+ Silver:** The second-seeded Minnesota Lumberjacks 55s lost the first title game 19-16 then won the second 22-20 over the sixth-seeded Bootleggers of Colorado. Minnesota finished 6-1 overall. The Bootleggers had won four elimination games in a row before coming up two runs short in the finale. All-Quip/SOWC-55 of Oregon placed third in the nine-team bracket.

**Men's 55/60+ Platinum:** Top-seeded Sommerville Softball (photo below), a 60+ Major Plus team, edged second-seeded L.A.F. 55 of California 19-18 for the title and a 5-0 overall tournament record. Sixth-seeded Scrap Iron Thunder of Colorado finished third in the seven-team division.



**Men's 60+ Major:** Fourth-seeded Express 60s of California (photo below) finished a 5-1 tournament with a 29-23 title game victory over the seventh-seeded Enforcers of California. D'Amore Law Group of Washington took third in the 11-team division.



**Men's 60+ Silver:** The top-seeded Road Warriors, a 60+ AAA team from Arizona, double dipped fourth-seeded KSS/Taco Bell of Arizona 23-13 and 19-18 for the title and an

pronounced dead at The Fields at Little Valley in St. George, Utah, despite immediate resuscitation attempts by the director and umpire.

Rich started to play with Senior Softball USA in 2015 and has played with teams from numerous states in his 10-year SSUSA history.

“Throughout his life, Rich was very active in sports. He was an avid runner, cyclist, and softball player,” according to his online obituary. “From bicycling awards, golf tournaments, and Senior Olympics... to organizing and playing for senior competitive softball teams.”

After a career working in civil engineering and asphalt, he and his wife Carol were able to settle down and build their dream homes in Scottsdale, Az. and then Lake Minnetonka in Mn. to be closer to kids and grandkids.

Rich played with Scrap Iron Legends 70s and 75s (CO) and Minnesota Lumberjacks 70s, then joined the Minnesota Masters organization when he was eligible to play 75+. Rich assumed the role of manager of the Minnesota Masters 75s when the former manager moved to the Masters 80s. After a few years, Rich then moved to the 80s and continued as the manager.

8-1 tournament record. Third-seeded Weekend Warriors of California placed third in the 12-team bracket.

**Men's 65+ Major:** Third-seeded Scorpion 65s of Arizona double dipped top-seeded Scrap Iron/Rocky Mountain Thunder of Colorado 22-17 and 23-19 for the title. Second-seeded Peak Softball/Scrap Iron finished third in the four-team division.

**Men's 65+ AAA:** Top-seeded So Cal Braves won the tournament's largest bracket the difficult way, by defeating 10<sup>th</sup>-seeded Scrap Iron Heavy Metal 20-8 in the “if needed” title game after losing the first title game 20-14. Bat Attitude of Utah placed third in the 15-team bracket.

**Men's 65+ AA:** Top-seeded New Beginnings Softball of California (photo below) capped a 6-0 tournament with a 20-16 championship victory over second-seeded Scrap Iron 65s Rockies of Colorado. Classics 65 of Utah finished third in the four-team bracket.



**Men's 70+ AAA:** Top-seeded Bucky's Casino of Arizona avenged an earlier bracket loss by double dipping third-seeded Scrap Iron 5280' 32-24 and 18-17 for the title and a 7-1 tournament record. Top Gun Olde Dawgs of California finished third in the eight-team bracket.

**Men's 70+ AA:** Playing a best-of-three format, Scrap Iron Diamonds of Colorado swept the Las Vegas Desert Heat 25-21 and 20-16.

**Men's 70/75+ Platinum:** Top-seeded Scrap Iron High Octane, a 70+ Major team from Colorado, capped a 5-0 tournament with a 21-6 triumph over second-seeded Ranalls Realty 70 of Arizona. Steel Etc. of Montana took third in the six-team bracket.

**Men's 75/80+ Platinum:** Top-seeded R&R 75s of California won all five games it played, including a 24-16 title game against the second-seeded Sidewinders 75s of Arizona. Third-seeded Tharaldson's of Nevada finished third in the five-team bracket.

**Men's 75/80+ Gold:** Second-seeded So Cal Warriors 75s (photo below) capped a 6-0 tournament with a 19-14 title game victory over fifth-seeded St. George Gold of Utah. Third-seeded Sidewinders 80s of Arizona won three elimination games and finished third in the seven-team bracket.



**Men's 75/80+ Silver:** Top-seeded Minnesota Masters 80s (photo top of newsletter) honored their general manager, who died at the ballpark during the first day of play, by going 6-0 overall and winning the championship 17-5 over fourth-seeded Git-R-Done of



California. Third-seeded Top Gun Olde Dawgs 75 of California finished third in the four-team bracket.

**Men's 85+ Major:** Playing a best-of-three format, Scrap Iron 85 Legends of Colorado ([photo below](#)) swept the Top Gun Blue Angels 85 of California 17-13 and 15-13.



## Teams Enjoyed New Turf Fields at 2024 Music City



**New turf infields at Cane Ridge Park in Antioch, Tennessee, completed February 2024.**

### **By Donna McGuire Softball News Report**

Three teams compiled undefeated records while capturing titles at Senior Softball USA's Music City Classic in Antioch, Tenn.

Teams from Missouri, Georgia, Tennessee, Texas and Illinois earned first-place awards during the March 16-17 event at the newly renovated Cane Ridge Park softball fields in suburban Nashville.

"After consecutive years of bad weather, teams playing in the Music City Classic finally caught a break," Tournament Director Tim McElroy said. "No precipitation and newly installed field turf led to great ballgames and stellar defense."

Four teams that entered bracket play as the top seed went on to win their brackets. Two of them needed two championship games to make that happen.

### **Results:**

**Men's 40+ Gold:** The top-seeded 40+ Major team Missouri Horsemen ([photo below](#)) capped a 5-0 tournament by defeating the second-seeded 40+ AAA team Southern Illinois 7-0 for the championship of the five-team division. ABC 40s of Missouri finished third.



**Men's 50+ Platinum:** Top-seeded MP/Primetime/Agent 23 of Georgia finished 5-0 and nabbed the 50+ Major Plus title by defeating Texas Steel/California Bat Co, which also earned a title as the top finishing 50+ Major team. Third place in the five-team division went to 615 Honored of Tennessee.

**Men's 50/55+ AAA:** Second-seeded Tennessee Select 50/LP Sports (photo below) capped a 5-0 tournament with a 14-10 championship victory over fifth-seeded Our Dirt of Kentucky. Third-seeded Allnet Legacy of Ohio placed third in the six-team bracket.



**Men's 55/60+ Platinum:** Top-seeded Walker Brothers, (photo below), a 55+ Major team from Georgia, lost the first title game 25-10 but won the second in a 34-33 nailbiter against second-seeded Montgomery Swarm 60 of Georgia. Monster Softball of Mississippi finished third in the three-team division.



**Men's 60/65+ AAA:** Top-seeded Team Illinois, (photo below), a 60+ AAA team, double dipped third-seeded The Power of Tennessee 25-17 and 16-10 for the title. Second-seeded Team OG 60 of Michigan placed third in the four-team division.



## Sportsmanship Blossoms at 2024 Spring Nationals

**By Donna McGuire  
Softball News Report**

Teams from Florida, Ohio, Michigan and Pennsylvania captured crowns at the 2024 Spring National Championships/Horton & Wood Classic that concluded on St. Patrick's Day in Polk County, Florida.

The Spring Nationals are honoring long-time Detroit Tigers players, Willie Horton and Jake Wood. Lakeland, Florida is home to the Tiger's off-season training location.

Thirty-three teams from six states participated in the March 15-17 event at the Loyce Harp Sports Complex and Walker Road Softball Complex. They enjoyed sunshine, mild temperatures, and no rain interruptions.

"It was absolutely beautiful tournament weather for both the teams and the umpires," Tournament Director Linda Weber said.



**Lazy dog enjoys the great weather at the 2024 Spring Nationals in Polk County, Florida.**

Eleven champions earned first-place prizes and berths to the 2025 Tournament of Champions scheduled for Polk County, Florida.

One run decided nip-and-tuck title games in three of the divisions. Meanwhile, only two teams compiled undefeated records: Dayton Legends/22Softball/Hudson Automotive of Ohio in the men's 50+ AAA division, and Mitchells 55 of Florida in the men's 55+ Major division.



**Florida Titans double-dip to win the Men's 55+ AAA division.**

Weber reporting seeing lots of supportive teammate interactions during games played at the Walker Road complex.



"The best games are the ones when every player replaces the word 'me' for 'we,' she said.

**Results:**

**Men's 40+ Masters Major Plus:** Playing a best-of-three format, HEADBANGER SPORTS/SWBC of Florida (photo below) defeated Suncoast Adidas 40s of Florida 21-13, 33-36, 23-22 for the title.



**Men's 40+ Masters Major:** RTT/Hysteria of Florida (photo below) swept OSS Apparel of Rhode Island 19-17 and 23-22 in a best-of-three format.



**Men's 50+ Major:** In another best-of-three bracket, Showtime Elite of Michigan (photo below) went 4-1 overall while sweeping Yeager's/Max Batz of Florida 20-12 and 22-16.



**Men's 50+ AAA:** Top-seeded Dayton Legends/22Softball/Hudson Automotive of Ohio (photo below) capped a 5-0 tournament with a 20-16 championship victory over second-seeded Woodlawn Hitting Club 50 of Florida. That 50s Show of Pennsylvania finished third in the six-team division.





**Men's 50/55+ Major Plus:** Suncoast/Adidas 50 of Florida lost the first championship game 36-24 but won the second 29-14 for the title and the 50+ Major Plus TOC berth. As the top finishing 55+ Major Plus team, BPA/Miken/Worth of Pennsylvania also earned a TOC berth. Suncoast/Adidas 55 of Florida finished third in the three-team division.

**Men's 55+ Major:** Top-seeded Mitchells 55 of Florida capped a 6-0 tournament with a 26-22 title game victory over Skid Daddy/C3 Skids of Florida. HOTT Softball of Florida finished third in the four-team division.

**Men's 55+ AAA:** The second-seeded Florida Titans (photo below) double-dipped McPhail Auto Sales of Florida 25-12 and 25-10 for the title. Detroit Pride of Michigan took third in the three-team division.



**Men's 60/65+ Major:** Fourth-seeded Team Florida/Phoenix Tube 60s (photo below) lost the first title game 25-24 but won the second 15-11 to capture the six-team division. Third-seeded Ohio Elite 60s won four elimination games to finish second. Southwest Florida placed third.



**Men's 65/70+ AAA:** Top-seeded Steve Levin Ameriprise (photo below), a 65+ team from Florida, capped a 5-1 tournament with a 20-19 title thriller over VAYA SPACE of Florida. Steven Levin Ameriprise 70s of Florida finished third in the three-team division.



**Men's 70/75+ Major Plus:** In a best-of-three format, Venom 75s of Florida ([photo below](#)) defeated Hollis Appraisals 70s/Ted Todd 70s of Florida 14-15, 19-7, 18-14 to nab the title.



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