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SSUSA Directors, Umpires, and Staff attend CPR/First Aid Training before 2023 Worlds. Photos by Clover Schultz.

**Rule Reversal for 75+ and 80+ Teams**

**Softball News Report**

LAS VEGAS -- The National Rules Committee met in a special session during the World Championships here and voted to roll back the 75 and 80 division roster rules.

The committee had voted in January to limit the number of underage players on both 75s and 80s rosters. This most recent vote reversed that decision. The roster rule will remain the same for both age divisions:

Men's 75s teams may draw up to five underage players, all age 74.

Men's 80s teams may draw up to seven underage players aged 78 or 79. No more than three of the seven players can be 78.

"This decision is in reaction to the overwhelming response from 75 and 80 division managers from throughout the country who cited special challenges the 75 and 80 teams face in recruiting players,"

**Louisville Slugger Warriors Win First Ever Celebrity Softball Game**

**By Donna McGuire  
Softball News Report**

Carlo Adame wore a big grin on his face after his Louisville Slugger Warriors team defeated a Las Vegas celebrity-filled team during a special softball game at the Senior Softball USA World Championships.



Photos by Clover Schultz.

**Sin City All-Stars and Louisville Slugger Warriors Together.**

"I like playing with all the older guys," said Adame, a U.S. Army veteran from Rolla, Missouri. "I'm 47. Playing with guys in their 50s and up is rewarding."

Maybe he should join a Senior Softball USA team.

For now, however, Adame plays with the Warriors, a team of military veterans, active duty personnel, wounded veterans and former collegiate baseball player amputees.

said Terry Hennessy, SSUSA chief executive officer.

## Mickey Mantle's Cousin and Former New York Giants Player Competes in 90s Game

By Donna McGuire  
Softball News Report

A large and energized crowd heartily cheered the 28 ball players who participated in Senior Softball USA's second annual 90s versus 90s game during the 2023 World Championships in Las Vegas.

The fans whooped and shouted for every base hit, nice catch and strong defensive play during the Sept. 18 game at Big League Dreams Sports Park. At times, they good-naturedly booed the umpire for yelling "foul ball" on close shots down the line. Mostly, though, they simply enjoyed watching the old guys play the game they have loved for decades.

The players had so much fun, they were like little kids who didn't want their parents calling them inside from a neighborhood sandlot game. So, they lobbied organizers to extend the game to seven innings from the originally-planned five-inning match. Naturally, SSUSA obliged.

The game featured three home runs, 22 runs scored, and one "Happy Birthday" serenade.

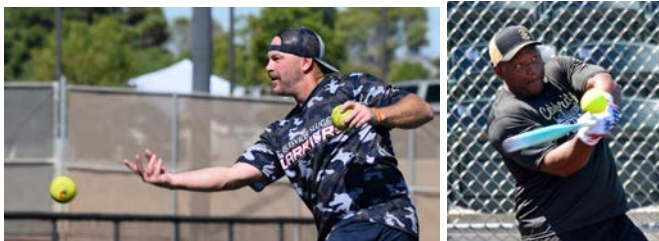
Oh, and the East All-Stars defeated the West All-Stars 15-7.



"That was fun," said West player Carroll Shook, 87, of Wenatchee, Wash., who ignited the scoring with a grand-slam inside-the-park homer over the right-center-fielder's head in the first inning. "It was a bunch of neat guys to play with, and the competition was good."

They travel the country playing ball — very successfully. They win roughly three of every four games, General Manager David Van Sleet said.

The Warriors have taken on SSUSA all-stars several times during the annual Tournament of Champions in Polk County, Florida. This time, their game provided one of the highlights of the opening session of the 2023 SSUSA World Championships, which began Sept. 14 at ballparks in and around Las Vegas.



The Warriors battled a team of celebrities that included former San Diego Padre Kevin Higgins, former MLB player with the San Diego Padres and UNLV Runnin' Rebel Eric Gray, former Canadian Football League wide receiver Jimmy Sandusky, and three-time gold medalist Team USA pitcher Lori Harriman-Mack.

After a rousing National Anthem, sang by Kasey Kons of the Marilynds (photo below), the teams trotted onto the turf at the Fenway Park field at Big League Dreams park on Sept. 16.



In the top of the first inning, the Warriors plated five runs on six hits. After two innings, they led 10-4 and looked to be pulling away.

Then Edarian Williams, a former four-year starter for the University of Nevada-Las Vegas baseball team, blasted a towering three-run home run that soared high above the Green Monster. That pulled the Las Vegas Stars to within a run at 10-9.

"I wasn't worried," said one of the opponents, Lonnie Gaudet, a U.S. Army veteran from Brookfield, Missouri. "We had one bad inning. We just needed to get back to bat."

In the top of the fifth, the Warriors did just that. Colton DeRocher, a college amputee player from Sioux City, Iowa, blasted a three-run home run to right-center field. An inning later, Gaudet launched his own three-run home run to centerfield.

By then, the Las Vegas Stars had too much ground to make up. They lost 22-11.

In this special game, the losers didn't seem to mind.

"That was awesome," said Higgins, who coached the Las Vegas Stars. "Playing with these guys? They've given everything for our country. It's an absolute honor to play alongside them."

Players ranged in age from 87 to 94. They came from as far as Florida, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Tennessee. Most had children or even grandchildren watching from the stands.

The Easterners generated the most consistent offense. They scored in each of the first five innings, sparked by a first-inning home run hit by Art Barnes, 87, of Littletown, Pennsylvania. Teammate Joe Sykes, 89, of Clarksville, Tennessee, followed with a second-inning home run.



Later in the game, a coach ran onto the field just as Jim Richardson of Oklahoma City walked toward the batter's box. Richardson, who grew up playing ball with his first cousin, Mickey Mantle, won a World Championship with the Texas Classics. A long time ago, back in 1953, the New York Giants signed him to play baseball. A hand injury and the Korean War interrupted his pro days. After returning to the states, he turned to fastpitch softball.

Now at the plate for a slowpitch at-bat, he hesitated to see what the coach wanted.

"We understand someone on the field has a birthday," the coach announced.

Wouldn't you know it. Richardson, who was coaxed out of retirement to play in the special game, was celebrating his 91st.

Led by home plate umpire David Lee, the fans sang him "Happy Birthday."

That was special. So was getting a base hit.

Yet like his famous cousin, Richardson owns a strong competitive spirit. Before the game, his top goal had been a victory. So how did he feel after the game?



## With 651 Teams, Worlds is the Largest Softball Tourney for 4th Year



Photos by Clover Schultz.

### By Donna McGuire Softball News Report

Senior Softball USA's 2023 World Championships kicked off Sept. 14 in Las Vegas with a bevy of close and spirited games played in the 55+ and 60+ age divisions.

More than 650 teams entered the tournament this year. The first of four sessions boasted a record 192 teams, which prompted a 628-game Session 1 schedule spread across 31 softball fields at eight ballparks in and around Las Vegas.

"We are very grateful for the Masters and Senior teams making the 31st Annual World Championships the largest softball tournament of any kind in the world for the fourth straight year," said Terry Hennessy, SSUSA's chief executive officer.

Five teams won USA Championship games during the session, but none of the five won their overall bracket. Four others entered with chances to win a Triple Grand Slam title. In a testament to the competitiveness of these age divisions, only one team, Legacy Sports USA of Arizona, succeeded.

Only two Session 1 teams notched undefeated records: Acme of California in the 55+ Major division and Avalanche of Ohio in the 60+ AAA division.

"We didn't win," he said curtly. Disappointment dripped from his voice.

OK. But did you have fun playing with those guys?

Well, yeah, he admitted.

On that, everyone could agree.



## 3 Maui Teams Receive Sportsmanship Award for 2023

### Softball News Report

Three Maui teams received the top team award for the year: the 2023 Steve Simmons Memorial Sportsmanship Award:

- Sandlot a 40s Major team managed by John Rivera.

- Shootz, a 60 AAA team managed by Nic Poree.

- Fresh Poke 65, a 65 AAA team managed by Mark Daniels.

"This award represents all that is best in sports: spirited competition played with camaraderie with other teams on and off the field," said Terry Hennessy, SSUSA chief executive officer. "These three Maui teams are an example not only to other teams, but for the people of Maui who will be rebuilding their lives."

Arizona Scorpion 70s manager, Michael Adair, presented Warriors 70s of Hawaii with a certificate showing the Scorpions donated to several charities to help Maui fire victims.



The largest Session 1 bracket drew 51 teams to the 55+ AAA division, which included four meetings between eventual champion D'Amore Law of Washington and runner-up Xtreme/New York Fitness of Pennsylvania.

Hot sunshine bathed the teams throughout the four days of play, which culminated in Sunday championship games played at Big League Dreams Sports Complex in Las Vegas and Arroyo Grande Softball Complex in Henderson, Nevada.

### Results:

**Men's 55+ AA:** Third-seeded So Cal Riptide (photo below) won a pair of close bracket games (20-19 and 15-13) before facing the Western and USA National champions, California Coast Plumbers, for the title. After losing the first championship game 20-14, So Cal secured the second 17-11. Lobos 55 of Texas finished third. Longshoremen 55 of Virginia, which lost 25-24 to California Coast Plumbers in the USA National Championship game, finished fourth in the five-team bracket.



**Men's 55+ AAA:** This division created a heckuva rivalry. D'Amore Law of Washington (photo below) entered bracket play as the top seed in the National pod of a 51-team bracket. Xtreme/NY Fitness of Pennsylvania entered bracket play as the top seed in the American pod after defeating D'Amore 23-17 for the USA National Championship during pool play. The teams met again as the final two unbeaten bracket teams. D'Amore won that game 17-16, which sent Xtreme to the elimination bracket. One game later, Xtreme returned to face D'Amore for the title. Xtreme forced an IF game by winning 20-13. In the finale, D'Amore never trailed and claimed a 22-16 World Championship victory. Lowe Legends 55 of Ohio placed third. Junkies/A-1 Pavement of California took fourth.



**Men's 55+ Major:** Fourth-seeded Acme of California (photo below) capped an 8-0 tournament with a 23-19 title game victory over Regeee's Rams of Ontario, Canada. Acme averaged 21 runs a game and outscored opponents by a combined 59 runs over the eight games. Vectra International/Big Biscuit of Kansas finished third in the 35-team bracket. Fourth went to .50 Core/Grit Hounds of Virginia. In the USA National Championship game, CANVAZ Softball defeated .50 Core 23-19.

"Our team and sponsor, Tom Petrizzio, donated 500 dollars to five foundations in the name of our first [Hawaiian] opponent, Warriors 70," said Mr. Adair.

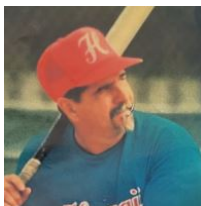
The 5 foundations, each receiving \$100, were the **Maui Mutual Aid Fund, Maui Rapid Response Support Fund, Maui Humane Society, Kako'o Maui Fund,** and the **Maui Food Bank.**



The certificate was presented during on September, 18 after their first seeding game against each other, during session two at Desert Breeze Softball Complex in Las Vegas.

## Obituaries: 2023 September

### Michael Fontes



Michael Irwin Fontes, 81, of Volcano, HI., died on July 25 due to pneumonia.

Loving baseball his whole life, Michael started with Senior Softball USA back in the mid- to late-1990s.

He was born and lived most of his life on the Big Island of Hawaii. "He loved baseball, working with his hands, and music," stated his obituary pamphlet. He operated heavy machinery for Volcano National Park.

"Mike was a very likeable guy who loved playing softball and playing in all of the tournaments we played in," said Dan Ayala, manager of Hawaiian Pride 80s. "He wanted



**Men's 55+ Major Plus:** Fourth-seeded J.K. Inc. 55 of California (photo below) finished 5-1 overall and defeated BPA/Rawlings 55 of Pennsylvania 26-9 for the championship of the seven-team division. Suncoast/Adidas 55 of Florida took third. Arizona Heat finished fourth.



**Men's 60+ AA:** The eighth-seeded Road Warriors of Arizona (photo below) started 0-2 in pool play but went 5-1 the rest of the way. After losing the first title game 10-5 to seventh-seeded Spin Tees of Washington, the Road Warriors took the lead for good in the second inning of the IF game and won 26-17. Top-seeded OKC Angels of Oklahoma finished third in the 11-team bracket. The Tri-City Legends/D-bats of Washington finished fourth.



**Men's 60+ AAA:** Avalanche of Ohio (photo below), which started bracket play as the second seed in the National pod of a 42-team division, never trailed in the championship game. It defeated Texas Threat, which had been seeded ninth in the American pod, 21-10 to cap an 8-0 tournament run. Crossfire of Texas won six elimination games to finish third. Diminished Skills of California finished fourth. In the USA National Championship game, Turn 2 Electric of North Carolina defeated Michael's Automotive of Washington 28-21.

to play one more time in the 2023 Worlds."

He'll be remembered as a long-time player of Hawaiian Pride 65s all the way to 80s, playing with them from 2008 to 2022.



**Men's 60+ Major:** Dirty Birds 60s of California emerged as the last unbeaten from the American pod and went on to win the championship 21-13 over Dudley Lightning of Missouri. Top Dawgs of Florida, which won the USA National Championship game 19-16 over California Energy 60s, finished third in the 36-team bracket. Sonoma County Crush of California took fourth.

**Men's 60+ Major Plus:** The top two seeds, Texas Crush Sixties and Legacy Sports USA of Arizona (photo below), faced off in the winner's bracket finale and two tense championship games before Legacy emerged victorious by double dipping Crush 29-23 and 29-28. In the finale, Legacy needed seven run to win and got all seven. CornerStone of Oregon finished third in the six-team bracket. Monster Softball of Mississippi took fourth.



## Heat Stroke, Sportsmanship, and Triple Grand Slams Define Session 2 of Worlds

**By Donna McGuire  
Softball News Report**

Sixteen teams in the 65+ to 85+ age divisions won titles, trophies and free World Championship rings during Session 2 off the SSUSA World Championships in Las Vegas this month.

Five of those teams also claimed Triple Grand Slam titles, a special honor that rewards teams for excellence over multiple tournaments.

The September 18-21 Worlds session also featured the second annual 90s versus 90s All-Star game, which the East won 15-7 at Big League Dreams Sports Park.

Overall, 164 teams worked their way through a 531-game schedule played over four days.



**Photos by Clover Schultz.**

**Center For Sight (FL - Left) and Top Gun Blue Angels 85 (CA - Right), Play in the Worlds' 85+ Major Division.**

"It is an honor and privilege to see so many players and fans from all over the country," said Fran Dowell, SSUSA's executive director and the session's tournament director. "The play on the field was exceptional and the spirit was so lively. Hooray to all. You are true champions."

Heat factored into the first couple days, with multiple players needing medical attention. At one point, three ambulances arrived within minutes of each other and parked in a row near the Dodger Stadium outfield wall at Big League Dreams.

"I've never seen that before," said Dave Dowell, SSUSA's master scheduler and one of its tournament directors. "The park looked like a M.A.S.H. unit."

Some of the medical issues even prompted the postponement of a USA Championship game from Monday until Tuesday.

Triple Grand Slam winners were Pastimers of Washington in the 65+ AA division, Trachsel Auto Body of Oregon in the 65+ AAA division, California Energy in the 65+ Major Plus division, Venom of Florida in the 75+ Major Plus division, and Gold Rush of California in the 80+ AAA division.

To be eligible, teams must first win their division at the Eastern or Western National Championships. Then the East and West champs play each other at Worlds to decide the USA title. USA game winners must win their World Championships bracket to capture the Triple Grand Slam title and a free pair of shoes for each player.

### **Session 2 results:**

**Men's 65+ Major Plus:** Top-seeded California Energy (photo below) went 5-0 winning the USA National Game and by defeating the Texas Crush Sixty Fives 17-3 in the title game. California Energy outscored its opponents 125-54 while averaging 25 runs a game. Demolition of California took third, and Samurai 65 of California finished fourth in the six-team bracket.



**Men's 65+ Major:** Top-seeded Prime Time of Illinois (photo below) won the USA game, the division bracket and the Triple Grand Slam while also going 7-0 overall. Prime Team defeated New Dawn Awning of California 7-6 in the USA game and pulled away from

Omega IT Services of Maryland for a 25-20 world title victory. Minnesota Masters took third in the 19-team bracket. Empire Monroe of New York nabbed fourth.



**Men's 65+ AAA:** Trachel Auto Body of Oregon ([photo below](#)) went 7-0, won the Triple Grand Slam and defeated fourth-seeded Tex/Ark Legends of Texas 23-19 in the title game. Peak/Scrap Iron of Colorado took third in the 30-team bracket, the largest of Session 2. Northern Virginia Force 65s, which lost the USA game 21-6 to Trachel, finished fourth.



**Men's 65+ AA:** Pastimers of Washington went 6-0, won the Triple Grand Slam and captured the division title with a 15-11 victory over the Texas Tornadoes. Region 65s of Indiana took third. Northwest Silver 65s of Washington placed fourth in the 14-team division.

**Men's 70+ Platinum:** Sixth-seeded Enviro-Vac Marauders of British Columbia ([photo below](#)) never trailed after a first-inning tie while winning a 19-9 championship victory over fourth-seeded Over The Edge of California. Top-seeded REI Nation of Tennessee finished third in the 17-team bracket. Ryan's Way of Utah took fourth.



**Men's 70+ AAA:** D&K Softball started as the 10th seed in an 18-team bracket but finished as a 6-1 champion by defeating Results Realty of Nevada 22-18 in the title game. W.E. Ruth Realty placed third. The Codgers of Idaho took fourth.

**Men's 70+ AA:** The sixth-seeded Top Gun Olde Dawgs ([photo below](#)) trailed the entire championship game until scoring eight runs in the open inning to grab a 23-22 victory over eighth-seeded Git-R-Done of California. The rally included two inside-the-park home runs, one of which came with the bases loaded. Second-seeded Spikes of Washington finished third in the 12-team bracket. The seventh-seeded Scrap Iron Diamonds nabbed fourth.





**Men's 75+ Major Plus:** Venom of Florida (photo below) continued a long tradition of winning championships by defeating Omen 17-6 in a lightning- and rain-shortened championship game that also earned Venom another Triple Grand Slam. Venom had beaten Omen 15-6 in the USA game. Third place in the four-team bracket went to AMR South of Florida. The Sidewinders 75s of Arizona finished fourth.



**Men's 75+ Major:** Eighth-seeded Scrap Iron Diamonds (photo below) won two one-run games earlier in the bracket before exploding for a 22-7 championship game victory over Valley Fog, the USA Champion from California. Northern Virginia Force 75 took third in the nine-team bracket. Tri-State Diamondbacks of New Mexico finished fourth. In the USA game, Valley Fog defeated Northern Virginia Force 28-19.



**Men's 75+ AAA:** The fourth-seeded KC Kids capped a 6-0 tournament with a 14-13 championship game victory over second-seeded Last Call of Nevada. The KC Kids scored two runs in the bottom of the open inning to nab the win. The third-seeded Minnesota Masters finished third, and the seventh-seeded So Cal Warriors took fourth in the nine-team bracket.



**Men's 75+ AA:** The fifth-seeded San Antonio Legends put a 0-2 pool play start behind them and won the five-team division with a 19-12 IF game victory over Git-R-Done of California. The Texas Knight Riders finished third. Top Gun Olde Dawgs took fourth.

**Men's 80+ Major Plus:** Florida Investment Properties ([photo below](#)) went 4-1 overall and never trailed in winning the championship 19-4 in five innings over the San Francisco Seals 80s. Ho'oikaika of Hawaii finished third in the three-team division. In the USA game, the Seals defeated Florida Investment Properties 14-8.



**Men's 80+ Major:** Second-seeded Scrap Iron 80s of Colorado ([photo below](#)) went 5-1 overall and won the title with a 14-13 victory over the fourth-seeded Sidewinders 80s of Arizona. Top-seeded Top Gun 80 Gold finished third, and Libby's of Wisconsin took fourth in the four-team bracket.



**Men's 80+ AAA:** Gold Rush of California ([photo below](#)) went 6-0, won the division and nabbed a Triple Grand Slam by defeating Bell Auto Upholstery 24-0 in the title game of the six-team division. Gold Rush outscored its competition 105-37 and won every game by at least six runs. IES 80s of Nevada placed third. Git-R-Done of California took fourth.



**Men's 85+ Major:** The Top Gun Blue Angels (photo below) lost the first title game 25-24 but nabbed the second 13-11 over Center For Sight of Florida. Scrap Iron Base Force finished third in the three-team division.



**Men's 85+ AAA:** The top-seeded Jaguars of California (photo below) lost their first bracket game but rebounded to double dip second-seeded Team Rehabilitation of Minnesota 14-13 and 21-10 for the title. The New York Statesmen, who defeated the Jaguars 18-8 in the USA Championship game, finished third in the four-team bracket. Midwest Driving School of Kansas took fourth.



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