

## Major Updates Announced for Remainder of 2020 Senior Softball Season

### All Qualifier, 2020 TOC Winners Earn 2021 TOC Berth

#### Softball News Report

**S**ACRAMENTO – The surging COVID-19 pandemic continues to force changes in the senior softball season. After tournaments and leagues were cancelled in March, April and May, the sport has started – sporadically in June and July.

As of the middle of July, a few tournaments throughout the nation have been played and several have been cancelled.

“We are planning to hold several tournaments in August and throughout the rest of 2020,” said Terry Hennessy, Senior Softball USA’s chief executive officer. “However, we are at the mercy of state and local health officials – who are making decisions based on the spread of the pandemic

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■ Western National Championships Move to St. George/Mesquite

■ All Winners of Qualifiers in 2020 Earn 2021 TOC Berth

■ 2020 International Co-Ed Division Cancelled



Photos by Jack Eberhard  
Action shots from the 2019 Eastern National Championships. Winners of the Eastern and Western National Champions take the first step towards the Triple Grand Slam.

## NSSHOF Inducts 24 in 2019-2020 Class

### Dave Dowell Inducted in Director Category



Photo by Jack Eberhard  
Dave Dowell at the 2019 Tournament of Champions

#### Softball News Report

**M**USTANG, Okla. – Following a hiatus last year, 24 members of the Senior Softball community recently received the call of a lifetime, enshrinement into the National Senior Softball Hall of Fame (NSSHOF).

The joint 2019-2020 NSSHOF Class includes two pioneer managers, two managers, eight pioneer players,

11 players and one director.

One of the managers is from Canada, another had a .700 winning percentage, the pioneer players had more than 160 years of superb experience and the players inducted have won scores of All World, All American and All-Tournament honors.

The lone director is no stranger to Senior Softball-

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Women's World Cup Series Update

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# Updates: Hardship Requests for World Masters

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in their areas.

“The situation is fast-changing and fluid, but we believe that the measures we have instituted – and the nature of our sport – will help get teams back on the field in the safest possible way.”

Hennessy said that the dates for divisions competing in the World Masters Championships (WMC) will remain the same.

Among the major changes are:

Moving the Western National Championships to St. George, Utah, Aug. 11-16; inviting winners of all 2020 SSUSA qualifiers and 2020 TOC winners to the 2021 Tournament of Champions in Florida; providing hardship exemptions for teams that cannot get to a qualifier for the World Masters Championships in Las Vegas, and adjusting the requirements for the Women's World Cup in Valdosta, Georgia in October (See story below).

## Hardship Requests for WMC

Teams that have difficulty qualifying all of their players for their World Masters Championships roster – or have significant difficulties playing in a Qualifier – may be granted exemptions, according to SSUSA.

The exemptions will be granted on an individual basis depending on the hardship. The exemptions must be requested in writing and include the entire roster of players expected to attend the WMC.

For a list of expanded roster exemptions during the pandemic, see Covering the Bases on next page.

## All Qualifier Winners Invited to TOC

Because of the loss of so many TOC Qualifiers, winners of all SSUSA Qualifiers will be invited to the Tournament of Champions in Florida from Jan. 20-24, 2021, according to SSUSA officials.

Winners will be notified and invited after the World Masters Championships (WMC) in Las Vegas, which marks the official end of the 2020 season. Tournaments af-

ter the 2020 WMC are qualifiers for the 2021 season and teams are allowed to add players of age for 2021 season.

The 2021 Tournament of Champions was moved from its traditional February dates to Jan. 20-24 because the Super Bowl will be played in Tampa, Fla., in February 2021.

## Westerns Move to St. George

The Western National Championships, originally scheduled to be played in Sacramento and Placer counties in California from July 28-Aug. 2 is being moved to St. George, Utah on Aug. 11-16.

The move comes after California experienced a spike in COVID-19 cases and pulled back opening several sports.

St. George was the site of the Spring Worlds, which was moved from March to August after the initial COVID-19 shutdown. The winners of divisions in the August tournament will represent the West in the US National Championship games against the Eastern

Champions.

The Eastern National Championships remain as scheduled in Loudoun County, Virginia, on the original dates: July 28 – Aug. 2.

Winners of the Eastern or Western Championships, the US National Championship Game and the World Masters Championships (WMC) win the Triple Grand Slam.

The US National games will be played during the World Masters Championships in Las Vegas from Sept. 17- Oct. 4, 2020.

## International Co-Ed Division Cancelled

The International Co-Ed Division of the World Masters Championships has been cancelled because of international travel restrictions.

The Third Annual International Co-Ed Division was scheduled to be played Oct. 3-4, 2020 at the World Masters Championships.

“We plan to add the International Co-Ed Division back to the WMC schedule in 2021,” said Hennessy.

# 2020 Women's World Cup Series Update

## Softball News Report

Women's teams entering the Women's World Cup Championships in Valdosta, Ga., will receive \$200 off their entry if they play in any two Senior Softball USA Qualifiers this season, SSUSA announced this week.

It was announced earlier that women's teams would receive free entry if they played in three or more SSUSA qualifiers. The free-entry incen-

tive still applies, according to SSUSA, and the tournament is open to all women's teams in the 40-75 age divisions.

“Women's teams now have an additional incentive to celebrate Halloween and play in Valdosta,” said Fran Dowell, SSUSA's executive director. “We made this adjustment because several qualifiers have been cancelled this year because of the pandemic.”

The Women's World Cup

is scheduled over Halloween, Oct. 31-Nov. 1, 2020 – and all the teams are invited to a Halloween Party and Costume Contest on Saturday evening sponsored by the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks and Recreation Authority.

Women's teams playing in fewer than two SSUSA Qualifiers can still compete by paying the \$500 entry fee.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information.



**Freedom Park, the 2018 SSUSA Complex of the Year, in Valdosta, GA, is set to host the inaugural Women's World Cup Championship, Oct. 31 - Nov. 1, 2020.**



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# Roster Exemptions in Place to Help Teams

This year teams are struggling to find a place to play and players are struggling with the decision of whether or not to play.

To make it a bit easier, Senior Softball USA is easing some roster restrictions and allowing some hardship requests for the 2020 World Masters Championships.

There are three major roster changes:

1. Major, AAA and AA Teams that are down to a minimum number of players are allowed to add up to two (2) players from the same age group and skill level

## Covering the Bases By Terry Hennessy

outside their region (but from the same side of the Mississippi River). Teams using 10 defensive players can add up to two (2) out-of-region players to get to 14 total players or fewer, and teams using 11 defensive players can add up to two (2) out-of-region players to get to 15 total players or fewer.

2. Teams are allowed to pick up players from teams in the same age group, skill level and appropriate region for a

single tournament without a player release. Players would still need a release if they decided to permanently leave their original team.

3. The wait period for players requesting performance or medical waivers to play one skill level lower would be reduced to 45 days (from 90 days) during the pandemic.

In addition, teams can request to add regular players who could not make a qualifier, to their World Masters Championships rosters.

And, in extreme situations, when teams do not have

the opportunity to play in a SSUSA Qualifier, they may still be invited to the World Masters Championships.

These exemptions are all granted on a case-by-case basis depending on availability of Qualifiers in the team's region and the individual hardship.

All requests must be in writing and can be emailed to: [info@seniorsoftball.com](mailto:info@seniorsoftball.com).

*Terry Hennessy is chief executive officer of Senior Softball USA and can be reached at [terryh@seniorsoftball.com](mailto:terryh@seniorsoftball.com).*

# New Rules and Recommendations of Play

The rules and regulations allowing seniors to play softball tournaments largely depends on the location of the tournament. In several states, masks are required in any public gathering. In other places, there are limits on the total number of the people allowed inside a softball complex.

Below are the Senior Softball USA COVID-19 Pandemic Rules and Regulations, which can be modified to add local requirements:

## Social contact before, during and after games:

• There will be a "no-contact, no-handshake policy" to be observed at every level of the organization until further notice. This includes all physical contact and extends to customary game-related activities, such as umpire-coach introductions, and post-game handshakes between members of opposing teams. Instead,

staff, players and coaches should verbally "good game," without shaking hands, high-fiving or fist-bumping.

• Players will be expected to maintain social distancing and wear masks before and after the game – and during the game when possible.

• Managers will be responsible for keeping any sick players or players in quarantine out of the tournament.

• Spectators will be required to maintain social distancing and wear masks during the tournament.

## Dugout:

• Keep 6 feet of distance in and out of dugout. Players will be required to separate and in most cases be in and out of the dugout on the outside of the field fences to maintain space.

• Players will NOT be allowed to spread out on the field of play because of the inherent danger of being hit

by a foul ball.

• When one team leaves the dugout, the next team will need to wait until all players have exited, then enter.

• The team leaving the dugout will need to police the dugout and get rid of trash, especially empty drinking containers.

• Park personnel will be asked to periodically disinfect the dugouts.

## Manager meetings:

• Until it is safe to gather in groups of more than 10, SSUSA will forgo all manager meetings. All information pertaining to a specific tournament will be sent to managers via email before the tournament begins. A copy of the Manager Notes will be available in paper copy.

• Managers will receive their updated rosters with the Manager Instructions. It is up to the manager to let the director know if there are any

changes at the field before the team begins playing.

• We will be sending managers new Team Waiver Forms that each player will need to sign before playing, saying they understand softball is a game of risk and that there is always a risk in group activities of contracting viruses or other illnesses.

## Check in:

• Until the pandemic subsides, we will change our player check-in to minimize groups and contact.

• For the remainder of this season, players will not check in individually. Managers will fill in the back of the lineup cards with first and last names of all players present before each game and directors will use the lineup cards to check in the players for that tournament after the game.

• Managers will be responsible for letting direc-

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# COVID-19 Rules: No Community Water Jugs

## Continued from previous page

tors know about any changes to the roster before their first game.

- Managers will receive the balls, a pencil and a Sharpe to use during the tournament to mark balls, fill in the lineup cards and sign the cards at the end of the game.

### The Game:

- We will be providing directors and umpires with either masks or face shields. These will be worn during tournaments to protect officials who have multiple contacts with managers and players.

- It will be mandatory for catchers to wear a covering over their nose and mouth.

- We encourage players to wear masks when in the dugouts during the game.

- Umpires will keep the game balls and disinfect the balls they throw in each inning.

- The on-deck batter or a player assigned by the offensive team will wear gloves and be responsible for picking up the bat after it is used.

- We will NOT be supplying community water jugs for obvious reasons until the pandemic is over. Players will need to supply their own individual water.

- As supplies are available, we will be selling face masks, face shields and gaiters for players who want to buy them.

- We will be using single umpires for all games to help offset the increased costs of housing umpires in hotels alone. (Usually umpires share rooms). This will help keep your entry fees in place.

- Any gatherings of teams or players before or after games will need to follow personal distancing recommendations of being 6 feet apart, and wear masks. Beer, by the way, is not an approved COVID-19 treatment.

### Awards:

- We will NOT be handing out individual awards this season. In the TOC Qualifiers, managers will receive discount coupons for their players from the sponsors.

- There are three reasons for this policy:

1. First, and most important, we want to make tournaments more affordable because of the economic impact the pandemic is having on many people. Therefore, we will be cutting all entry fees by 15 percent.

2. We will be re-starting the sport and need to ensure there is enough money to retain staff so that we can maintain the tournaments.

3. Our major sponsors, as you may imagine, have lost a great deal of revenue already and this will also save them much needed capital so that they can continue offering the bats, gloves and products Senior Softball players need. We recommend players buy their equipment from these loyal sponsors, who help keep your entry fees lower.

### Personal hygiene:

- Most important: Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Cover your mouth and nose – with a tissue, if possible – when coughing or sneezing, then properly discard the tissue in the trash.

- Avoid close contact with anyone else who is coughing or sneezing or who is otherwise sick. People who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms will be asked to leave the park.

- Wash your hands often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds each time.

- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that con-

tains at least 60% alcohol.

**IMPORTANT:** We will be enforcing these safety measures so that we can get back on the fields as soon as possible in the safest way for all our players and officials. We will be ejecting any player or guest who refuses to follow these safety rules for the good of everyone else in the park.

We appreciate your cooperation in following these new procedures as we work together to maintain the highest health and safety standards.

SSUSA's primary concern is the health and welfare of players, officials and their families.

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# Mike Christy, 80, Founding Father Dies

The last of the three founders of the Senior Softball World Championships (SSWC), Mike Christy, 80, died July 1 in Oklahoma City.

Christy and Hal Wandry joined Senior Softball USA founder Bob Mitchell in forming the Senior Softball World Championships in 1992.

The three had worked with Ken Maas to produce the first Senior Softball World Series in 1989.

They broke off from Maas after the 1992 World Series to start SSWC, becoming the second national Senior Softball tournament. SSWC became the non-profit tournament arm of Senior Softball USA.

Within four years, the World Championships had overtaken the World Series and all other organizations in the number of participating teams. By that time, the Softball Players Association, the International Senior Softball

Association and the Huntsman Games also had begun holding national tournaments.

Christy and Wandry withdrew from the SSWC Board in 1996, but both continued to be active in holding tournaments and playing senior softball.

"Mike Christy was instrumental in developing SSWC Qualifiers and building the sport," said Terry Hennessy, SSUSA's chief executive officer.

Wandry died in 2001 and Mitchell in 2010.

Christy lived for many years in Lady Lake, Fla., and Hillsborough/Flemington, N.J. He was born on Jan. 26, 1940. Christy grew up playing baseball and basketball and, as an adult, he continued to excel in sports, bowling and playing softball, tennis and golf.

He coached many of his children's sports teams including baseball, soccer, softball and Special Olympics. In

2005, he was inducted into the National Senior Softball Hall of Fame. Mike returned to Oklahoma in 2018.

Christy graduated from Oklahoma City University in 1963 and worked in sales and marketing at Campbell Soup Co., the National Football League, Maritz Motivation and Performance Management Associates before starting his own company, Motivation Masters.

Christy ran Motivation Masters with his wife Sherry Christy and they operated two successful bowling pro shops, Three Amigos, in Lady Lake, Fla., for 20 years. They sponsored many Three Amigos senior softball teams in the Villages, where Christy played first base.

Mike and Sherry, who died in 2016, were married for 53 years.

He is survived by his three children: daughter, Cindy Christy-Langenfeld and



Mike Christy

husband, Randy; son, Christopher Christy and wife, Cheryl; son, Jack Christy, six grandchildren and his companion, Sue Stoneman.

Due to COVID-19, plans for a "Celebration of Life" for Christy will be held at a future date. Messages of condolence may be sent to [MichaelChristyFamily@gmail.com](mailto:MichaelChristyFamily@gmail.com). In lieu of flowers or gifts, please consider a donation to the Jack Christy Special Needs Trust - at P.O. Box 812, Normandy Beach, NJ 08739.

## So Cal State Champs Find Unlikely Host

YUMA, Ariz. – Due to the current pandemic that has continued to halt tournament play in the Golden State, the 2020 Southern California State Championships, originally scheduled to be held in Hemet and Cathedral City, was forced to move to Arizona, here at Pacific Avenue Athletic Complex.

The dates of the tournament remained unchanged, June 19 - 21.

To read the tournament recap that appeared in the newsletter, please [CLICK HERE](#).

The tournament featured 33 teams from five states (California, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and Nevada) in action across eight divisions in the Men's 40 through 60 age brackets.

The top three teams in each division were able to honor individual players with all-tournament selections.

First place teams receive five selections, second place teams earn four selections, while third place teams can pick three honorees.

Below are some of the all-tournament selections that

were submitted at the conclusion of the tournament.

### All-Tournament Teams

#### Men's 40 Gold

Whatever (AZ): Joe Lugo, Sergio Canastillo, Manny Argomaniz, Carlos Camarillo.

#### Men's 50 Major

Scrap Iron/Elite (CO): Matt Franci, Josh Stull, Rick Lundy.

#### Men's 50 AAA

Sin City Warriors (NV): Randy Mason, Mark Buchanan, William Zacharias, Kriss Shriver, Albert Montoya.

#### Men's 55 AAA

California Coast Plumbers/Horn: Marty Rodriguez, Erich Fischer, Pat Harris, Mike Dooley, Anderson Allamby.

#### Men's 60 Major

AZ Legends Suncoast: Bruce Thompson, Jeff Brian, Kelly West, Mark Hughes.

Managers, you can still submit your all-tournament selections from the 2020 Southern California State Championships to [anthony@seniorsoftball.com](mailto:anthony@seniorsoftball.com).

# Retreating Base Runners, When Is It OK?

During a recent Senior Softball-USA tournament, two different teams raised questions about a similar base-running tactic employed by their opponents.

Both defensive teams wanted the umpire to call the runner out.

Neither umpire did.

The games happened just hours apart. In each case, a runner retreated on the base path even though a force play was in effect. Both runners eventually reached the next base safely, after the fielders threw behind them.

In SSUSA, there are four situations in which runners cannot retreat without immediately being called out.

One is very rare and highly unlikely to happen. We'll get to all four later.

First, let's consider the actual situations that arose.

In the first game, a runner was on first when the batter hit a grounder to the second baseman. The runner took off for second but stopped and back-pedaled when the second baseman tried to tag him. As the second baseman threw to first to retire the batter-runner, the lead runner raced to second and reached it safely. Though some defenders thought otherwise, this is a perfectly legal base-running maneuver.

In the second game, with runners on first and second, the batter hit a grounder to the shortstop. The runner at second took a few steps toward third before turning and sliding back into second. The shortstop's throw to second hit the retreating runner in the back. The ball ricocheted

## Umpire's Corner

By Donna McGuire

away, allowing that runner to get up and run to third.

In the umpire's judgment, the runner did not intentionally interfere with the throw. Therefore, the umpire properly allowed the play to continue. (Whether the defense agrees or not, it is the umpire's judgment that counts in this situation.)

Retreating on the base path usually is legal. But our rule book hints at one very rare case when it is illegal.

**Section 8.1.C.** states:

"A runner in a double play situation who stops or retreats towards the base left is not to be considered as running the bases in reverse order or making a travesty of the game."

Ah, yes. A travesty of the game. That is the rare case mentioned earlier in this column.

Example: A runner is on third with two outs and his team trailing in the bottom of the seventh. The batter, who cannot run well, hits a grounder to shortstop. The runner at third decides to take off for second base in an attempt to

confuse the defense, perhaps draw a throw, escape a run-down and help his teammate reach first base safely.

Naturally, that type of play is not allowed. It would be considered a travesty of the game, a phrase Major League Baseball came up with more than a century ago to corral a certain speedy ballplayer who liked to steal second base on one pitch then steal first (yes, he would go back) during the same at-bat.

Running bases in reverse as part of "a travesty of the game" play is not allowed.

Here are three other situations in which a retreating runner should be called out immediately:

1. When a runner headed home crosses the commitment line and then retreats back over the line toward third base.
2. When a batter-runner headed to first retreats toward home plate as a defender is attempting to tag or otherwise make a play on him.
3. When a retreating runner throws up his hands to block a thrown ball or otherwise intentionally interferes with a play by the defense.

(Umpire judgment comes into play here.)

Now consider again our second actual case, the one where the runner slid back into second. Other things could happen if the throw reaches the second baseman.

If the second baseman touches the base, the force play is off. The runner coming from first is out, but the runner sliding back into the base is safe unless tagged before retouching the base.

However, a double play would be turned if the second baseman tags the sliding runner (whether or not he is back to the base) and then steps on second base to retire the runner coming from first. Heck, with a little luck, maybe the second baseman even throws to first to record a triple play.

A triple play is more likely than seeing someone called out for creating a travesty of the game.

*Donna McGuire is SSUSA's Central Region UIC and Chair of the SSUSA National Rules Committee.*



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# Send Barrel Instead of Knob to the Ball

By Art Eversole  
Senior Softball News  
Contributor

Previously, I covered the hitting technique of turning-the-barrel around your rear shoulder back towards the catcher, then forward deep into the swing plane.

Today, we'll explore bringing the barrel directly to the ball in contrast to the long-established method of knob-to-the-ball.

Bringing the barrel-to-the-ball directly is the end-result from turning-the-barrel method. Most senior hitters have been taught knob-to-the-ball their entire lives. In executing this old school technique, the hitter either pulls the bat with the front arm, or pushes it with the back arm, aiming to move the hands out in front before making contact.

I realize that sending the knob first to the ball has a deep history and is well ensconced in our baseball culture and teachings. But there are a veritable plethora of ways to deliver the bat to the ball, some work, others fail. Barrel-to-the-ball method employs your hands as the pivot point producing a quick spinning of the bat in a horizontal pendulum plane, without pressing arms forward. When pressing the knob-to-the-ball, there is a disconnect between the arms and core muscles which produces the power in your swing. The barrel-to-the-ball action is a fundamental part of rotational mechanics.

Barrel-to-the-ball utilizes your hands as the pivot point in a horizontal plane, like a spinning rotor blade on a



helicopter. During this motion, the knob of the bat is not going straight to the ball but is rotating around your body in a circle creating centrifugal force. The knob-to-the-ball method looks okay to those who have been taught the technique. When executed it does not create early bat speed. The barrel remains static when hands are pressed forward. Contrastingly, barrel-to-the-ball starts the bat-barrel immediately while maintaining the connection between arms and body as the hips fire (see insert above).

One major drawback with the knob-to-the-ball technique is that the barrel stays back and does nothing as you begin your swing to the ball.

Furthermore, moving the knob to the ball creates a separation of arms from the body losing the advantage of kinetic energy that is stored in legs and torso. Swinging the barrel-to-the-ball also creates a quicker move to the ball, allowing the batter to wait longer before swinging, helping eliminate going out early on a pitch. When invoking barrel-to-the-ball, the hands do not move forward of the body independently, but maintain a solid connection allowing

the hip turn to bring the barrel square to the ball.

**Execution:** Start by tipping the barrel of the bat directly toward the pitcher at about a 45-degree angle. Now begin drawing the bat back toward the catcher, at the same time cocking wrists and setting bat-lag, this is your launch position. The launch position is near your rear shoulder where the back elbow has now dropped down to the waist area (in the slot) and hands are in the palm-up and palm-down pattern. The rotation of the hips will bring the barrel to the hitting position. In the process of drawing the bat to the launch position, try adding a clockwise (opposite for lefty) twisting motion of the bat around your hands that initiates early bat-speed.

**Summary:** The Knob-to-the-ball delays the starting of swing speed as the barrel is not moving, just your arms.

Furthermore, Knob-to-the-ball can produce a chopping down swing action at the ball, making good contact more difficult. In contrast, the barrel-to-the-ball provides instant bat-speed in a circular motion, creating centrifugal force needed for power. Pow-

er comes from maintaining a solid connection of arms to body as the hips will turn the barrel to meet the ball flush.

On the other hand, knob-to-the-ball separates the connection of arms to the body and you then become just an "arm swinger". Barrel-to-the-ball also helps eliminate going out early on the pitch that weakens power.

Bottom line, barrel-to-the-ball will generate additional mph to your bat-speed.

Just a side note, Jose Bautista of the Toronto Raptors turned his career around when he adopted the turning-the-barrel.

*The insert photos were captured from the internet instructional video discussing knob versus barrel to the ball.*

- Link to barrel-to-the-ball instructional video a 2+min: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Henv2cKA9Es>

- Jose Bautista turning the barrel-to-ball 2+min video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0Tv9JTP2qs>

Happy hitting!

*Art Eversole, of Washington, has played on Major and Major Plus teams with W.E. Ruth Realty.*

*He is the NW Senior Softball Webmaster/Softball Communications/Hitting Club Admin/NW Leagues internet coordinator.*

*Eversole can be reached via email at [rtmyboy01@gmail.com](mailto:rtmyboy01@gmail.com).*

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# Opinions & Letters

## The Rumor Has It

**Terry Hennessy**

**Editor**

**Senior Softball News**

Rumors spread like wild-fire – and can be devastating. Not surprisingly, they tend to become much more prevalent during times of crisis.

They are also an entirely normal human activity.

In our softball world, the current rumors normally revolve around whether tournaments will be cancelled. That's understandable because states, counties and cities seem to be continually changing their stages of re-opening.

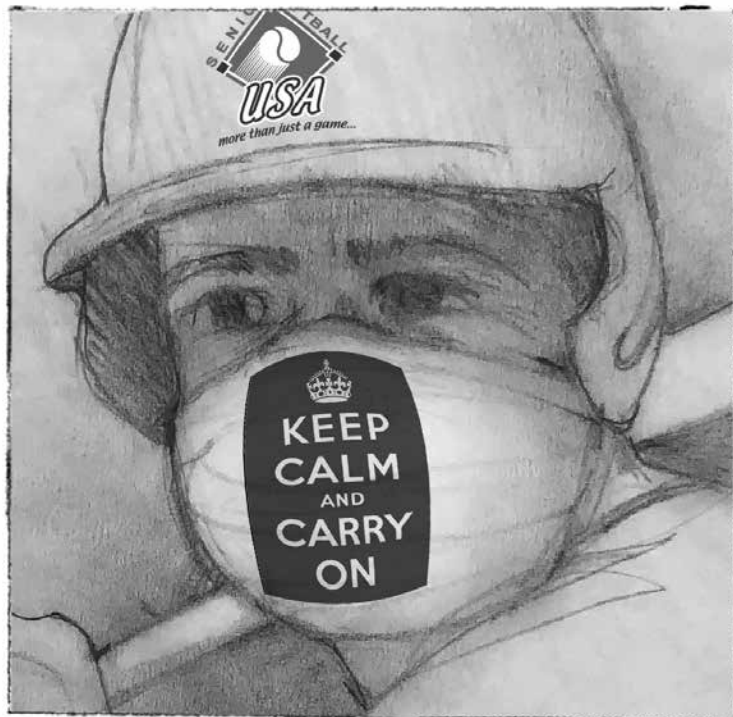
Those changes, in turn, are dependent on whether the state or county or city suddenly becomes a hot spot in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Senior Softball USA – and other softball organiza-

tion for that matter – can only react to the policies enacted at each tournament site. However, because it takes time to organize a tournament, SSUSA makes a go/no-go decision on each tournament at the entry deadline.

The timing of this decision gives teams a chance to cancel reservations and travel plans – and gives SSUSA time to arrange the necessary details to run the tournament if it is a go. We do need teams to confirm whether they are going to the tournament at that time so that we can do the schedules, and arrange for umpires and directors.

After the tournament entry deadline, there is always a chance the situation may change and the tournament may have to be cancelled. We



**Sue Ballenger**

will let you know as soon as we are informed, if that happens.

Our goal is to give you as much information as pos-

sible as soon as we know it. We will get through this together.... hopefully sooner than later.

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# Softball Doesn't Build Character, It Reveals It

I'm in a reflective mood today. I'm basically quarantined, like so many, as the COVID-19 crisis continues to affect the United States as I write this. It's kind of weird at the grocery store, not only do people give me the 6 feet of distance, it's almost like we can't even look at one another, maybe the virus spreads by eye contact.

When I think back to the good times I've had in softball and the good friends I've made, I realize that winning was never the thing that mattered most in the end. It's true what they say, it's the journey that matters, not the destination.

Two of my softball friends have died recently: Dick Sperling of Williamsville, N.Y., and Bruce Baumann of Erie, Pa.

If you read my previous story, Dick was Spud. He was an absolutely terrible ballplayer who was completely unaware of this fact. This is what makes softball so great, we become lost in the game, the rest of the world doesn't matter for an hour and a half. Dick was off the field a kind and gentle soul, and he'll be missed.

Bruce Baumann was the

## Senior Moments

By Dave Weinman

founder and for many years the big kahuna for the one and only senior softball league available in the Erie area- the Erie Codgers.

I began with the Erie Codgers in 2007; my friend Bart Neckers, who lives out that way, kept encouraging me to make the drive from Buffalo, and despite hearing about their nutty rules like running through all the bases, and 13 men in the field, and no umpires, I made the drive. I figured just once, what the heck. 13 years later I still make the hour and a half drive as much as I can in the fall for the doubleheaders they always play.

What made their league so fun was Bruce. His enthusiasm was infectious. He always remembered everyone's name. There are four teams in the league, but the rosters were always a little fluid. He moved people as the need arose from team to team; and everyone wore the same uniform. Everyone over 50 was welcome, no matter their ability level, and the whole lineup hits, no one sits.

Once I began playing in their league he occasionally called me at home, even in the off-season, no real reason, just to share something funny or just say hi.

At his opening day ceremony every year Bruce always arranged for an aide to bring a mentally challenged young man named Scotty to the fields. Someone would pitch to him until he was able to strike a fair ball, and then all us fielders would make errors and throw the ball away while he circled the bases for a home run for which he would receive a trophy as the Home Run Champ at the year-end banquet.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic we can't have a memorial service yet. That's OK, it will take some time to find a ballpark in Erie big enough for the crowd.

My last story is about another Erie Codger- Gary Shapira, who turns 80 this year. Bruce actually gave Gary the nickname Nomar, which stuck. Get it? Nomar Gary Shapira. Say it fast.

Gary has been playing with our team from Buffalo, the MOGS, in an over-60 tournament in Pompano Beach each of the last half-

dozen years, and at the most recent tournament another player approached him and asked if he was Coach Shapira. Gary hasn't been called Coach in years and he was puzzled. The other player explained that Gary had been his baseball coach at Camp Kohut in Maine, back when he was 10 and Gary was 21. They hadn't seen each other in all those almost 60 years since, and yet this "young" man recognized Gary. Gary never knew this, but this player told him that his coaching and the fun he had that summer led to a life-long love of playing ball.

"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water to create many ripples." (From Mother Theresa, not Dr. Dave).

Hoping that softball is again in full swing by the time you read this in the SSUSA Summer edition....

*David Weinman, of New York, is the newest contributor to SSUSA News. A member of SSUSA since 2010, Weinman has attended numerous SSUSA International Tours.*

# Annual Convention Postponed Until 2021

Senior Softball USA (SSUSA) announced it will be postponing its annual convention until 2021.

"Because of the uncertain nature of the current pandemic, we believe it is best to postpone our Annual Convention until 2021," said Terry Hennessy, SSUSA's chief executive officer. "However, the National Rules Committee will meet online at the end of the season."

The convention, originally scheduled Nov. 29- Dec3, 2020, will be held Nov. 29 - Dec. 2, 2021. The site will be the same: Sacramento.



**Sacramento, Calif., will host the 2021 SSUSA/ISA Convention Nov. 29 - Dec. 2, 2021.**



## 3 Key Exercises to Maintain A Healthy Back

By Stan Reents, PharmD  
Senior Softball News  
Contributor

In February, George Hood set a record by holding a plank position for 8 hours and 15 minutes. During a practice attempt in 2018, he claims he planked for 10 hours and 10 minutes.

Then, in May, Iceland's Hafthor Bjornsson set the deadlift record by lifting 1,104 pounds. These athletes don't seem too concerned about their back health.

It's been estimated that 80% of people will suffer back pain at some point in their lives. Back pain is a potentially serious medical condition. Thus, it's best handled by a physician, not a personal trainer.

However, Stuart McGill, PhD, a world expert on back rehab, provides intelligent guidance on what exercises are best for maintaining back health, and which ones to avoid.

McGill recommends these three:

• **Curl-Up:** Lie on your back with one leg straight and the other leg bent with that foot flat on the ground. Place your hands under your lower back. Contract your stomach muscles to lift your head, shoulders and chest slightly but don't sit all the way up. Don't tuck your chin; keep your upper spine straight.

• **Side Bridge:** This could also be called a side plank. Lie on your side with your knees bent. Lift your body up by placing your forearm directly under that shoulder. Only your forearm and your lower leg should be touching the ground.

Keep your spine straight as you hold this position.

• **Bird Dog:** On your hands and knees, extend one arm forward and the leg on the opposite side straight out behind you. Keep your spine and your extended arm and leg horizontal.

Each Side Bridge and Bird Dog pose should be held for up to 8-10 seconds.

Assuming they don't cause pain, McGill recommends doing each exercise in three sets: Start with 8 repetitions of each exercise, rest, then do 6, rest again, then do 4 reps. If you can't do all 18 repetitions in one session as summarized, then do fewer.

The key principle is to build up muscle endurance, not muscle strength. As you improve your endurance, increase the routine to 10 reps, rest, 8 reps, rest, 6 reps.

For images and greater detail, see: <https://www.acefitness.org/education-and-resources/professional/expert-articles/7077/low-back-exercises-stuart-mcgill-s-big-three/>

Another exercise McGill likes is a simple lunge, but modified by raising the opposite arm straight above your head. So, if you step forward with your left foot, you would raise your right arm. This position is held for two seconds and repeated several times on each side. People with knee pain might want to avoid this exercise.

What about holding a plank position for hours and hours?

McGill's research shows that the long, thin muscles that run along the

spine can be depleted of oxygen after 30 seconds of sustained contraction, even when the contraction is only moderate in intensity. You don't have to be a physician to understand that depleting any tissue of oxygen is a bad idea!

Also to be avoided are exercises where the back (spine) is twisted. Even sitting on an exercise ball and rotating your arms and shoulders from side to side is unwise, according to Dr. McGill.

Are back stretches helpful? McGill warns to avoid stretches that bring the chest and knees closer (bending forward at the waist), especially first thing when you wake up.

Finally, sitting for many hours at a time can cause back pain. If your job requires this, use a chair that keeps your spine in a natural, neutral alignment. Elevate your computer monitor to eye level. And, get up and walk around every 45 to 60 minutes.

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

# NSSHOF: 4 Managers Inducted In Newest Class

Continued from page 1

USA (SSUSA), as Dave Dowell, SSUSA National Director/Scheduling, was recognized for his 17-year career in Senior Softball.

The NSSHOF is split between the pioneer path and point system path.

In the pioneer path, all nominees must be a minimum of 75 years old and must have participated a minimum of 10 years in senior softball.

In the point-system path, all nominees must be a minimum of 60 years old, have participated a minimum of 10 years in senior softball, and may begin earning nomination points at age 50.

For further details on the nomination process, please [CLICK HERE](#).

## Dave Dowell, Director

As a director, Dowell has worked 15 World Championships, 12 Tournament of Champions, 12 Eastern National Championships, and five Western National Championships.

"SSUSA is extremely proud of Dave's achievements on the field and scheduling huge tournaments; this is a well-deserved honor," said Terry Hennessy chief executive officer, and Fran Dowell, executive director, in a statement.

Dowell has been an SSUSA Director since 2003 and has developed what many consider to be the finest tournament administration system being used today - in scheduling and bracketing the largest events in the history of Senior Softball. Through his system, Dowell has authored the game schedules for almost every

SSUSA regional and world/national tournament since 2004.

In addition to his scheduling duties, Dave has been on the SSUSA Rules Committee since its inception and has served as chair in 2014-2015 and is the editor of the Official SSUSA Rulebook.

Michael Boone, SSUSA National Director and NSSHOF Class of '16 member says of Dowell: "He sets a great example for all within SSUSA to be the most thorough, and best that they can possibly be to achieve tournament success."

The Pioneer Manager Category is highlighted by Jim Fulks and George Masters.

## Jim Fulks, Pioneer Manager



Fulks, current manager of Boyd Metals (formerly Tee-ters, The Crackerbox, Sigma Bank, and Bank of Rison), has a senior softball career that spans 25 years.

His teams have won World Championships in ISA (2006), NSA (2007 & 2013), and Heartland (2010). They have also placed second in World Championships in SSUSA (2010 and 2013), NSA (2010), SPA (2013).

For his efforts, Fulks was named Manager of the Year in

SPA in 2010.

Additionally, Fulks has been inducted into the Hall of Fame in both Heartland (2012) and Arkansas Softball (2015).

Outside of managing, Fulks also serves as president of the Board of Directors for the North Little Rock Softball Association.

"One of the characteristics of Jim's teams has always been loyalty and cohesiveness, and that starts with Jim and his concern for all his players," said Jim Morgan. "One strong point is the importance he puts on involving our wives, which in turn makes it much more enjoyable for all."

## George Masters, Pioneer Manager



Masters, who has built a 30-year career in senior softball, has managed Masters Marauders since 2001.

His teams have won championships in numerous associations, including Huntsman (2002 & 2010), SPN (2007), SSUSA (2011 & 2012), and NSA (2013).

Jim Klassen says of Masters: "George and his Marauder teams are well known. He has worked tirelessly at promoting the values of playing senior softball in

the Northwest and is without doubt part of the reason that Western Canada has as many teams participate in tournaments with the Huntsman and SSUSA."

The Manager Category is highlighted by Karen Honey and James Sears.

## Karen Honey, Manager



Honey's senior softball career spans 13 years, coaching California Spirit 50 and then 55 from 2002 - 14. Those years included three Triple Grand Slam crowns (2004, 2007, and 2009).

"The California Spirit teams that Karen has coached in the 50 & 55 divisions had over a .700 winning percentage, won many Huntsman and Senior Olympics championships, as well as a few Triple Crown championships," said Suzy Brazney. "In addition, during the 2004 and 2011 seasons, the team won every

Continued on page 18





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# NSSHOF: 8 Pioneer Players Earn High Honors

Continued from page 16

tournament that they played in.”

**James Sears, Manager**



Sears has spent a decade managing one of the top teams on the East Coast, Superior Senior Softball.

His teams have won numerous national championships at the highest level (60 Major Plus, 65 Major Plus, and 70 Major Plus), across various associations, USSSA, SPA, and ISSA.

Sears was a two-time Manager of the Year in SPA in 2014, earning the accolades with Superior Senior Softball 60 and Hamel Builders Superior 65.

Stephen Pierson, NSSHOF Class of '18 states: “As a natural leader, Jim stands out as a true gentlemen and ambassador of the great sport of Senior Softball. His ability to implement, organize, and coordinate a very com-

plex and demanding seasonal schedule is bar none a full time job.”

The Pioneer Player Category consists of the octuplet of: Doris Brown, David Bush, Ellen Cavins, Fred Donaghy, Ray Dye, Robert Eisenhauer, Peg Moyer, and Mary Niessel.

**Doris Brown, Pioneer Player**



Brown has played senior softball for 16 years with Blue Chicks, Thoroughbreds, Ohio Tri Stars and Classic. She has racked up eight All-American honors, an MVP award, and two-time best defense recipient.

Former manager of the Blue Chicks, Paula Klemm, says of Brown: “Doris hits with power, she hits for average, outstanding defense, throwing arm has a zip and she is a team player in every way. Her softball ability and enthusiasm do not adequately reflect all the intangibles Doris brings to the team. She is thoughtful and optimistic. She is a role model who typifies the best in senior softball and women’s athletics.”

**David Bush, Pioneer Player**

Bush has a senior softball career that covers 26 years. During that time, Bush has racked up numerous All-Tour-



namment/All-American selections, MVP’s, Best Defensive Player, and Leading Hitter awards. Bush has played with Ed’s Aluminum, Southern Pride, Premium Seats, Georgia Peaches, Florida Investment Properties, and currently Center For Sight.

“David has been our everyday short stop with great defensive skills and one of the strongest throwing arms,” said Hugh Brotherton, NSSHOF '16 and manager of Center For Sight. “David is a good person and is our Chaplin, leading us in a prayer of thanks before the start of each tournament.”

**Ellen Cavins, Pioneer Player**



Cavins played with fellow '19-'20 NSSHOF inductee Brown and has earned multiple All-American, MVP and Best Defense honors during her 13-year career, playing in SPA and ISSA with Blue Chicks, Thoroughbreds, and

Ohio Tri Stars.

For her contributions to women’s sports, Cavins won the Senior Sportswomen Award in Delaware in 2010.

“It has been a pleasure to coach Ellen Cavins,” said Gwen Cappadona. “Her dedication, focus and continual desire to improve the game make her a joy to coach.”

**Fred Donaghy, Pioneer Player**



Donaghy began playing senior softball in 1995, building an impressive 20-year career. He led his teams to championships in both SSUSA and SPA.

“Although Fred has experienced a significant amount of success, as defined in terms of winning, it has always been my feeling that this is not his primary focus,” said Robert Fisher. “In his approach to athletics, I believe Fred places greater emphasis on sportsmanship and on playing any sport in a fundamentally correct manner and by the rules.”

**Ray Dye, Pioneer Player**

Dye has a senior softball career that spans 18 years, where he has accumulated number MVP and All World Honors in SSUSA, SPA, and ISSA, as a member of Indy Fog, Chicago Classic, Direct

Continued on page 20





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# NSSHOF: Pioneers Total 163 Years in the Game

Continued from page 18



Employers, Bucks & Bulls, Pfeiffer Auto, and Canterbury Cruisers.

"Ray has been our MVP for most of our tournaments and when he was not, he still made the All-Tournament team," said Ron Hellier. "He is our leading offensive player as well as a defensive stand-out. Many players look up to him as he gladly shares his game knowledge with them."

**Robert Eisenhauer, Pioneer Player**



Eisenhauer's career dates over 27 years, as he began in 1988, forming a team for the Senior Games in St. George, UT. He also formed a 55s league in Portland, Ore., in 1989, and a 50s league in 1991, and 60s league in 1992, in Vancouver, Wash.

Eisenhauer continued forming leagues in his later years, creating a 75s league in Mesa, Az., in 2011.

"Bob is a pioneer of Senior Softball on the West Coast," said John Keller. "It was an honor to play with Bob and see the love that he had for Senior Softball."

**Peg Moyer, Pioneer Player**



Moyer's senior softball career began in 2002 and acquired over 30 individual awards (All-World, All-American, All-Tournament, MVP, Best Defense) over her 16 year career.

"Peg has improved women's senior softball with her suggestions, coaching and playing," said Peggy O'Neill. "She is always a threat when she comes to the plate. Hits all fields, a base hitter and can also hit the long ball. Very hard to defend. Peg has gotten stronger as the years go. She is a valuable asset to any team."

**Mary Niessel, Pioneer Player**



Niessel began her softball career with Ohio Cardinals and played her first tournament in 1997 at the Senior Olympics in Tucson, AZ.

Over her 27-year career playing in SPA and ISSA, Niessel has earned 10 All-American honors, as well as an MVP All-World selection, as a member of Ohio Tri Stars and Thoroughbreds.

"Mary has played the entire time she has been coaching," said Gwen Capadona, "with the exception of one season during which she battled and defeated cancer. Not only did she beat it, but she returned to play the very next season. That is the ultimate example of the fight and determination that runs through this fine lady's blood. She is an inspiration to all."

Sissy's main position is first base ... She has the ability to make our other infielders look like superstars by scooping and stretching, even if they aren't sending the best throws her way."

The group of 11 in the Player Category include: David Clover, Sam Golden, Wade Heppert, Raymond Hubbe, Shirley Karper, Richard Kuyath, William Macuch, Paul Salow, Stephen Wilson, Michael Wingard, and Anthony Vodola.

**David Clover, Player**

Clover's senior softball career spans 18 years, where he tallied eight NSSHOF points, earning All-World and All-American honors across the various organizations, LVSSA, SSUSA and SPA from 2006 – 2019.

Clover sponsored, managed, and played for his own



team The Clovers in the 50s, before later moving on to play with MOB, GSF, Joe Brown All-Stars, Full Circle, Rose Enterprises, and Venom.

"Dave is one of those players that comes along only so often possessing the rare five tool player skillset that makes him a special Senior Softball player," said Steven Imlay, NSSHOF Class of 2010. "He is an individual that is always offering support and help for his teammates when they are struggling."

**Sam Golden, Player**



Continued on page 22



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# NSSHOF: Karper Lone Female Player Inducted

Continued from page 20

Golden began his senior softball career in 1995, and earned All-World/All-Tournament/All-American honors playing with Texas Legends, Houston Texans, and Hendricks Sports Management.

Randy Hendricks said: "Hendrick Sports Management won a number of national/world championships, specifically in SSUSA, SPA, ISA, NSA, ISSA and USSSA. Sam was instrumental in that success, making many All American/All World teams."

**Wade Heppert, Player**



Heppert has amassed an incredible 26 points towards the NSSHOF over a 15 year career in senior softball playing with teams such as Mid-Atlantic, Fergie's, Damon's Grill, Bass Softball, Triangle Master, Carolina Corbras, and CrossFit/Great Clips. Heppert earned All-World and All-American honors playing in

all of the major associations.

John Scruggs, (NSSHOF 2017), stated that he considers Heppert to be a true "tool player." "His willingness to play anywhere and anytime shows his love of the game."

**Raymond Hubbe, Player**



Hubbe, who began playing senior softball in 2001, has tacked on 15 points towards the Hall of Fame over his 17-year career, playing with High Street Bucs and Crystal Cobra.

"Ray was one of the best players to even come out of the state of Maryland; helped lead our team to 15 National Major World Champs," said NSSHOF manager, Pat Carey '17.

**Shirley Karper, Player**



Karper's senior softball career spans 14 years, where she's earned best defense in 2003 and 2005 in USSSA, as well as MVP and All-Ameri-

can honors.

She also earned numerous All-Tournament and Best Defense in SPA playing with Touch of Class, Tennessee Stars, and Southern Stars.

**Richard Kuyath, Player**



Kuyath has racked up 12 NSSHOF points playing in 19 years with Korba Insurance, Minnesota Masters, Doc's Greyhounds, Rickers, and Minnesota P5/Ancell. Kuyath began playing senior softball in 1998, and has been inducted in the Minnesota ASA Hall of Fame in 2002, and the Minnesota USSSA Hall of Fame in 2007.

Ed Korba says of Kuyath, "Dick was one of the most productive power and clutch hitters on our roster, leading the team in home runs, RBI's, and was one of the leading hitters for average in all those years."

**William Macuch, Player**



Macuch has played senior softball for 22 years, earning 11.5 points towards the NSSHOF, while playing with Spicer Properties and High Street Bucs. For his efforts, Macuch has been named to the Anne Arundel County Hall of Fame, Washington DC Metro Slow Pitch Hall of Fame, and the Maryland Hall of Fame.

Ray Wimbrough says, "Bill is one of the first players you would pick when starting a senior team. He excels in pressure situations and is an excellent hitter with considerable home run power as well as very good defensively."

**Paul Salow, Player**



Salow began his senior softball career in 2008, earning 14 points towards the NSSHOF playing with Seacrest Mavericks, Nazzareno Longhorns, Summy's Nighthawks, and Sommerville.

"Though he has a quiet demeanor and an unassuming attitude on and off the field, Paul is incredibly talented both offensively and defensively," says Jon Kramer. "In our multiple National and World Championships, Paul has often led in homeruns, RBI's Gold Gloves, and MVP awards. His competitive attitude and great desire to win

Continued on page 24





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# NSSHOF: Sportsmanship a Key Attribute

Continued from page 22

separate him from even the superstars he plays with.”

**Stephen Wilson, Player**



Wilson began his senior softball career in 1999, playing with New York Statesmen. He's racked up 10 NSSHOF points over his current 20-year career, in which he also played with Thermco, Brix & Stix, and Beef O'Bradys.

Gary Richter says, "Steve has been a great competitor his whole life, a great teammate and a super class person!"

He has been a great pitcher, hitter and fielder, consistently excelling and leading our teams."

**Michael Wingard, Player**



Over his 17 year career, Wingard has totaled 12 points towards the Hall of Fame, playing with some of the top teams out of Maryland, including Fergies, Damons Grill/Angle Inn, Reckpo Spicers and High Street Bucs.

Ray Winbrough, HOF class of 2012, states, "Mike

has always been a great base hitter with home run power when needed. One of Mike's biggest assets is his speed for a senior player. He is versatile and energetic player that always helps his teammates when their games are not going well."

**Anthony Vodola, Player**



In his 18-year career, Vodola has earned 18 points towards the Hall of Fame, playing with Connecticut Sportsplex, New Jersey Hitmen, Northeast Hitmen, and



Team Florida.

"I played against Tony for years and have also been teammates," said Don Clatterbough. "He was and is an intense competitor, an outstanding outfielder, and a good hitter. He has proven to be a better teammate than opponent. I respect him as a player and as a person."

Congratulations to the NSSHOF Class of 2019-2020.

For more information on the NSSHOF, please visit <http://www.sshof.org/>

## Update on Upcoming August Tournaments

Two popular qualifiers that were scheduled in August, the Top Gun Summer Classic in San Clemente, Calif., and the Rocky Mountain Championships in Aurora, Colo., have been cancelled.

Tournaments have still not been given the green light in California, causing the cancellation of the Top Gun Summer Classic.

The City of Aurora has cancelled all scheduled tournaments at its facilities through the end of August, causing the cancellation of the Rocky Mountain Champs.

Additionally, the Smash It Sports Qualifier and Smash It Sports Last Chance, both

scheduled for next month in Lacey, Wash., have been cancelled.

The LVSSA/SSUSA Southwest Championships has been shortened to a 3-day tournament, Aug. 28-30. The tournament was originally scheduled for six days, Aug. 25-30. SSUSA expects a much smaller turnout because of the potential heat in Las Vegas in August. The tournament was moved from its traditional April dates because of the pandemic.

Please see the list of 15 upcoming tournaments, that still remain on as scheduled, near you and be sure to get your team in qualified for the

World Masters Championships in the fall.

**TEXAS STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS:** August 4 – 9 (Deadline July 21)

**WESTERN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS:** Nevada/Utah, August 11 – 16 (Deadline July 21)

**Kansas City Classic:** Missouri, August 6 – 9 (Deadline July 23)

**Milwaukee Classic:** Wisconsin, August 6 – 9 (Deadline July 24)

**NORTHERN CHAMPIONSHIPS:** Michigan, August 13 – 16 (Deadline July 30)

**SPRING NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS:** Florida, August 14 – 16 (Deadline July 31)

**Ocean State Classic:** Rhode Island, August 14 – 16 (Deadline July 31)

**Cool Country Classic II:** Arizona, August 14 – 16 (Deadline July 31)

**Classic Rock at the RAC:** Washington, August 15 – 16 (Deadline July 31)

**Gainesville Qualifier:** Georgia, August 15 – 16 (Deadline July 31)

**LVSSA/SSUSA SOUTHWEST CHAMPIONSHIPS:** Nevada, August 28 – 30 (Deadline August 4)

**Rochester 10,000 Lakes Classic:** Minnesota, August 21 – 23 (Deadline August 7)

**Last Chance Qualifier:** California, August 22 – 23 (Deadline August 7)

**Wayne Gilmore Memorial:** Maryland, August 21 – 23 (Deadline August 8)

**DeMarini Oregon Championships:** August 29 – 30 (Deadline August 14)



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When I think back on my death in 2009, one sequence of memories stands out vividly: the gradual loss of power.

At first I lost the power to run and I stood bent, struggling for air. Then the power to stand ebbed away and I sat down on the first base dugout bench. But soon I needed to lay down as I lost the power to sit straight. I could feel the power leaving my muscles and I knew that I could no longer arise. I could hear myself yelling at the players not to call an ambulance or I would kick their behinds when I managed to get up off the ground from where I'd fallen, no longer having the power to maintain my prostrate position on the bench.

## CARL'S CORNER

By Carl Gustafson

Then I lost the power to yell, then to speak at all. I lost the power after that to keep my eyes open, but I could still hear.

Finally all I had the power to do was to think a silent prayer, and then I no longer had the power to remain conscious and all went to black, and I no longer had the power to awaken, no power to stay alive as my heart beat its final — ba-bump.

The medics did have enough power to bring me back 45 seconds later, but I had already begun to decompose, my heart is to this day 15 percent dead tissue from

that decomposition process.

Months later when I returned to the ball field I discovered a new form of exhilaration.

My total loss of power had taught me that life is power, and in softball I found a way to visualize it and vicariously fly and soar.

The ball itself can not generate energy, it is just a hunk of lifeless material. The bat hanging in the dugout has no power, it is just a composite of hardened chemicals. But when you bat the ball, your power, your life, your verve and vitality, are transferred into the ball and when it flies away your power becomes excitingly visual. The power and flight of that ball is you rocketing a 100 miles an hour

into the gaps, or bouncing hard along the ground, and occasionally soaring in a towering flight high into the air to land beyond the boundaries of the ball park.

The power that a second ago was inside your body and soul, is now a shooting star zooming high over the green grass below testifying for all to see that you are very much alive.

Don't take that sight and feeling for granted. There comes a day...

*Carl Gustafson is an SSUSA Southern California Director and member of the SSUSA National Rules Committee.*



## JOIN THE SSUSA LEAGUE FAMILY!



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

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