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90s Team Rosters



2022 World Championships Logo

90s Team Rosters



90+ Game: Eastern Team

Manager: Dick Anderson (MN)

Coach: Hugh Brotherton (FL)

In alphabetical order:

Raymond Bosetti (PA)

Robert D'Armadio (FL)

Donald Deaton (TN)

Dave Goldberg (MN)

Robert Johnson (FL)

Roland (Chuck) Johnson (WI)

Norris Kruse (MO)

Dwight McVicker (FL)

Roger Schroder (IN)

Dick Skinner (MO)

Michael Smieja (MN)

Henry Smith (IN)

Fred Swenson (MN)

Joe Sykes (TN)

Willie Wood (FL)

90+ Game: Western Team

Manager: Guy Anderson (CA)

Coach: Dominick Greco (TX)

Coach: Ralph Ventura (CA)

First-Ever 90s Game at 2022 World Championships

By Donna McGuire



LAS VEGAS - A veteran Senior Softball USA player nearly broke down in tears as a director placed a glossy medallion around his neck following a first-of-its-kind softball game here Monday.

"This is the best day of my life," the player said, even though his team had just lost.

Similar sentiments spilled across the Fenway Park infield at Big League Dreams in Las Vegas on Monday afternoon following an East/West championship game featuring two tear of players in their 90s.

Yes, players in their 90s.

"When they said 90s versus 90s, I thought: Wow! That's unheard of," said Ray Bosetti, a 88-year-old Pennsylvanian who was one of several "youngsters" recruited to help fill out the rosters.

Unheard of, until now.

In Alphabetical Order:
 Bill Altman (TX)
 Eldon Brast (TX)
 Rocco Cambareri (FL)
 Raymond Everingham (CA)
 Donald Fields (CA)
 Roe Kennedy (OK)
 Jay Lavanway (TX)
 Albert Lenski (TX)
 Robert McElrea (WA)
 Jose Perez (OK)
 Eloy Solis (CA)
 Roland Stiarwalt (CA)
 Alonzo "Smiley" Trevino (TX)
 Phil Watkins (TX)
 George Windle (TX)
 Warren Wood (OK)

90s Coordinators:

Bobby Ellison and Anthony Hinojosa



Second Baseman, Albert Lenski (TX), of the 90s West Team,
 Stretching to Catch the Ball

"When you stop and think, very few players make it to this point," said Hugh Brotherton (photo below), a 91-year-old Floridian known for his great sense of humor. "I was looking at picture of one of my teams from 1991, and all of them have passed except me."



Dick Anderson (left), Coach of the East Team with Hugh Brotherton (right), Assistant Coach

The SSUSA World Championships proved the perfect place for this first-ever slow-pitch 90+ division game. After all, 85+ and 80+ division teams also competed Monday during the 662-team World Championships being played in the Las Vegas area.

A couple hundred spectators, including many children and grandchildren and even great grand children of players, packed the stands and nearby concessions area to watch the historic game. They cheered the 27 participants during pregame introductions as heartily as they booed the plate umpire for calling out a batter who stepped out of the batter's box.



In the opening ceremonies, SSUSA Chief Executive Officer Terry Hennessy noted that when he started playing senior softball more than 25 years ago, the oldest divisions were for 70+ players.

"Now we have teams with players in their 90s," he said, adding that these players give younger ones hope that they can keep playing for many years to come.

The five-inning game featured a home run, a shoestrapping catch in left field, and the first-ever courtesy runners from home plate in SSUSA tournament play. Base hits abounded, as did sportsmanship and camaraderie.

Oh, and the East won 14-9.



90s East Team

"This was wonderful," said Joe Sykes, an 88-year-old from Tennessee who played for the East. "I love to play, and at this age we are so lucky and so blessed to be able to participate

The game felt extra special. More than extra special, perhaps.

After all, the oldest player, Mike Smieja of Minnesota, was born in 1929, the year the stock market crash triggered the Great Depression. All the players were born multiple years before Little League baseball was founded in 1939 and before World War II began in Europe. And when a spectator asked some of the guys to name their favorite Major Leaguers, their answers revealed just how many decades they've been around.

Guy Anderson, a 90-year-old Californian who managed the West team, (photo below) adored New York Yankees shortstop Phil Rizzuto. Bosetti, who played for the East team, favored Stan Musial, known to St. Louis Cardinals fans as Stan the Man. Both Hall of Fame players broke into the Majors in 1941.



Guy Anderson Reviewing Line Up With the West Team

Before Monday's game, Anderson reminisced about playing baseball as a kid in the Peanut League in the Napa Valley area. Players wore single-color hats and shirts that lacked numbers or team names.

"We didn't have fancy uniforms," said Anderson, who grew up to become a Sacramento-area teacher and high school baseball coach. Forty-five years later, he retired with 927 victories. All those years of hitting fungo balls to infielders helped keep his hand/eye coordination sharp, he said.

"It's kinda neat to still go on the ball field, put on a glove, take a couple of ground balls," Anderson said.

Seven years after retiring from softball, 88-year-old Oklahoman Jose Perez returned to league play this year against 60-year-olds because he'd grown tired of being cooped up during the Covid pandemic. Now here he was, ready to take the field with a big crowd watching. He had played semi-pro baseball until age 78. But this feat? Perhaps that was even better.

"He was so excited to play today that he had to get here two hours early," said his daughter, Maria Perez.

Staying active helps keep these "mature" players in the game, participants said.

Anderson bikes 60 miles a week. Brotherton still does pushups like back in the day when he trained to enter the 82nd Airborne Division. Roland Stiarwalt, a 90-year-old Californian, plays softball twice a week and bowls twice a week. Roger Schroder, an 87-year-old from Indianapolis, still plays indoor pick-up softball games two days a week in the winter. Willie "Woody" Wood, an 88-year-old Floridian, plays tennis in addition to softball.

"The main thing is to keep being active as long as possible," said Bill Altman, 92, the long time leader of the San Antonio Senior Softball League who played for the West. "Once you stop being active, you might as well pull the covers over your head."



West Team Pitcher, Roland Stiarwalt

As East members settled into their dugout Monday, someone asked who currently plays on the most league teams.

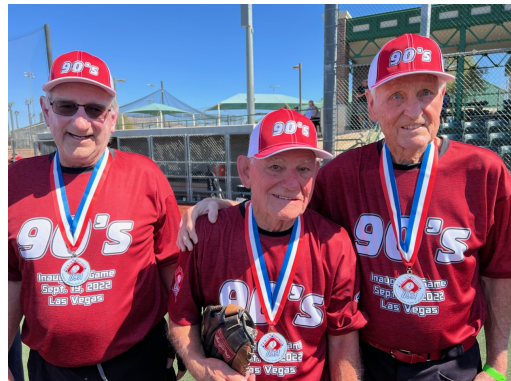
"I play in five leagues," said Dick Skinner, a 91-year-old Missourian and longtime member of the Kansas City Metro Senior Softball League. Since some of those conferences involve double-headers, he usually plays eight games a week, Skinner said.

None of his nearby teammates could top that.

For the 90+ game, teams played defense with five outfielders and five infielders plus a pitcher and catcher.

Normal SSUSA rules applied, except that the bases were shortened to 65 feet (instead of the normal 70), and orange cones in the outfield marked a home run line about 200 feet from home. Fly balls that cleared the cones would be home runs, Hennessy explained before the pregame coin toss. Grounders that rolled past the cones would be declared ground rule doubles.

Sykes (photo below), a former fast-pitch player, batted first. He drove the game's second pitch into left-center field, making history as the first person to get a hit in a 90+ game. A few batters later, he became the first to score. Shortly after that, he became the game's first courtesy runner.



The East Team Champion Players, Left to Right: Bo Deaton, Dwight McVickers, and Joe Sykes.

The players' batting skills, running skills and defense awed spectators. They roared for good plays and big hits. They took videos and pictures. And they bore grins nearly as wide as those of the players.

When Chuck Johnson, an 88-year-old from Wisconsin, grabbed a bat in the top of the fourth, he looked a bit nervous.

"This is the first time I've batted in two years," he said. "I hope I hit it."

He did. The ball bounded just past the second baseman's glove. Johnson hustled to first and quickly departed for a courtesy runner.

"It felt good to hit that ball," he said just before noticing that his son-in-law had raced to field level to congratulate him.

"That was awesome," Jack Henning told his father-in-law. "We got it on video."

Not far away in the dugout, one player introduced himself to a teammate and asked: "How are you doing?"

"Still on the green side of the grass," Skinner answered. "And proud of it."

As the fifth inning arrived, organizers noticed some of the players tiring in the afternoon heat. Some already had played that morning for their 85+ teams. So after the inning finished it became time to call this a game.

Teams lined up on the first and third-base lines to receive team trophies and individual medallions. One by one, each player took off his hat so that SSUSA Executive Director Frar Dowell could drape his medal over his head (photo below).



In the infield, dozens of family members recording the scene on their cellphones.

Seeing how much the game meant to the players inspired Dowell.

"That was the most proud I've been in my whole career of softball," she said. "The players were so touched."

Brotherton, who for years had encouraged Hennessy to launch a 90s division, thanked SSUSA for organizing such a grand event.

"I'm glad we could find enough bodies to play," he said.



90s West Team

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