

Guest Editorial
by Homer Matheny
USSSA Umpire
Expressway Park
Milford, Ohio

***EDITOR'S NOTE:** Homer Matheny, veteran All-City third baseman for Freeze/Arnold/BW3/Easton, became a softball umpire in 2005. Although he originally believed it would not be much of a challenge, he has discovered that it demands more hard work, mental toughness, and people skills than he ever envisioned. Below Matheny shares some valuable insights from his experiences as an umpire, urging players and managers to have more respect for the game and its officials until they've tried it themselves.*

I have been given the opportunity to umpire leagues and tournaments at Expressway Park in Milford, Ohio. I have attended the required classes the past two years and met all the requirements to call balls, strikes, and outs. After years of playing softball, I wanted to look at the game from another angle. Umpiring at Expressway Park has given me that new view of the game.

Last year was the first year of being an umpire and I quickly learned it was a difficult job. I love to sit and discuss the game. And it is easy to talk balls and strikes and outs while you are in the bleachers. It is a totally different approach, however, to be in the middle of a game in action. I wanted the opportunity to prove to the umpire nation that this "gig" was not that difficult. I have learned otherwise. Managing players, coaches, and fans can also be a big part of the game. One must be able to explain decisions and situations to all levels of players. This can be challenging when some fans, players and scorekeepers are still unsure of such rulings as the infield fly, batter's box, and pitching guidelines. Every level of team usually has at least one player that knows very little about the rules. This is usually the player that will always speak up first, too. I know our Freeze team has a couple.

Knowing all the rules is not a requirement to play the game, though. An understanding is expected, but in depth knowledge is no requirement. This is why there are coaches or experienced players on each team. What is expected is a level of decorum satisfactory to the social atmosphere. I have always been one to enforce the rules whether in softball, golf, or life. Structure is a good thing. A problem begins when behavior of grown men starts to step outside these lines. An umpire has many responsibilities on the field. They are expected to get EVERY call right. Does this ever happen? Not very much. Can an umpire ever perform to the level of players' expectations? We can try.

Every umpire should hustle. Every umpire should try and complete each game without any confrontations and try to go unnoticed. Every umpire should know the rules. Every umpire should expend all energy necessary to enforce a fair playing field. Many umpires are umpiring because they like the game of softball and want to contribute to the game in some other way than playing. Players wonder why the ump missed a call or how the umpire could make a mistake. Until you have respect for the game and put yourself between the lines as the umpire, you should think twice before acting out of character. Many players are the nicest people you can ever talk to off the field, until they get on the field. Competitive nature takes over and the beast comes out. I know. I have always been vocal but cordial with umpires through the years. I was the first to bring up a point and many times try to get the last words in with an umpire. This umpiring experience has made me realize the work and mental toughness it takes to be an umpire.

A competitive instinct seems to always come out in a player after a close call. I am not saying that the initial outburst is wrong, but the player cannot always use the excuse of being "caught up" in the game. Umpires are taught to make quick, forceful decisions after the play has been completed. If a call does not go his way, a player will quickly question the umpire's decision. Remember, as a player, to pause, take a deep breath, and continue the remarks with the umpire in a normal tone of voice. I am definitely not asking a player to take the competitive edge out of their mindset; but, pause and regroup before going too far. The umpire in question will be much more receptive to your questions once the sharpness of your voice is retired. A quick, snappy, verbal jab could get you a quick, snappy exit.

Always feel free to question the umpire's hustle and make sure you and the umpire discuss a rule, if in question. But make sure you - as a player or coach - have done your homework and everything possible to represent your team well before acting out of character. Too many times after a team has committed four or five errors in the 7th, the team wants to blame the umpire for losing the game. Softball can be played with common sense. Very few, if any, games have ended without a team making errors. The next time you get ready to "act up" at a softball game toward the umpire, make sure you and your team have done what you needed to do to be the winning team. And realize softball is not life. It is only a very small portion of a bigger world. Have fun. If you want the experience of being an umpire, check with your local park for instructions and classes.

In My Opinion
by Ron Jeffers

This is the fourth in our series of articles featuring drills umpire groups can use in the instruction of new and veteran umpires. This month's drill requires the use of a pitcher, catcher, batter and plate umpire. The drill is somewhat different for slow pitch than it is for fast pitch. If the drill is for fast pitch, you will need someone to pitch the ball that has some fast pitch pitching skills and experience, but almost anyone can and will be able to fulfill the pitcher's role of a slow pitch pitcher for the purposes of this drill.

This drill is different for the ASA game than it is for the USSSA game, because in ASA play the umpire is mandated to vocally call "Illegal Pitch" or "Illegal" and extend his left arm straight out to his side as soon as the pitcher does anything that makes that pitch illegal. In USSSA play, the pitch is not vocally called "Illegal" until after the ball has passed the batter or hits the ground. For the drill we will discuss here today we will use the ASA mechanics and rules, but you can easily adapt the drill to USSSA play if that is better for your umpires.

Select someone to pitch who will take the drill seriously, and someone who will not try to clown around and turn this event into a circus. Instruct the batter to never ever hit the ball, but to occasionally swing at a pitch in a manner where he does not come close to hitting it. Have the batter take a position deep in the batter's box, and only move up to where he is parallel with the plate, when he gets a count of three balls on him. Now we are ready to start the drill.

Prior to the pitcher delivering his first pitch have the umpire hold both hands high above his head until everyone is ready to play. The umpire should then bring his hands down and point at the pitcher with his right hand while saying "Play Ball" or "Play." The pitcher will now deliver the first pitch.

Check the umpire's stance behind the catcher to make certain his feet are at least shoulder width apart and parallel with one another. You will find that many slow pitch umpires have their feet and body facing first base while turning their head toward the pitcher, and this should be corrected immediately. The feet, body and head of the plate umpire should all be facing the pitcher at all times.

When a pitch is swung at and missed by the batter the umpire should be taught to give the strike signal, and if desired say "strike" in a soft voice. Do not allow the umpire to make a big vocal call on an obvious swinging strike for this does nothing but bring embarrassment and humiliation to the player. A called strike needs a solid vocal call, with even more voice used when the strike is the third strike on the batter, but no call by the umpire should ever be one that humiliates any player. Learning to sell a call without sticking the call up the players' rear end is imperative.

Many umpires, for some unknown reason, do not vocally say anything when a pitch is out of the strike zone and ruled a "ball," but this is as wrong as two left feet. A pitch ruled a "ball" is not nothing, and it deserves a call. The call of "ball" should be made with a short burst of the voice much like a dog's bark, and it should be made while the umpire keeps his head locked straight ahead, and his body remains in the down position.

The call of "strike" is only made after the umpire comes to an upright position, and the signal is made by the umpire raising his right hand high in the air, with the palm of the hand facing his right ear. He then brings the elbow down, in a crisp motion, to a height never below his shoulder and his hand in a fist with the fist always facing his right ear.

The ball and strike count is given vocally and with the appropriate fingers held high above the head every time the count changes, and only when the umpire has eye contact with the pitcher. The number of balls is always given first and immediately thereafter the number of strikes is announced.

Teach the umpires to keep the plate clean with the plate brush they should all keep in their ball bag. Cleaning the plate should be done crisply while the plate umpire faces the backstop.

Whenever the plate umpire leaves his position from behind the plate to make another call he needs to be taught to leave to the left of the catcher and right over home plate.

When all apparent play is over the plate umpire should raise both his hands high above his head and call "Time", and then return to his position behind the plate.

Each umpire should take his or her turn until the batter is either walked or called out on strikes. He then should rotate to the end of the line, and the next umpire moves up to begin his turn.

This drill is great for checking the umpire's positioning, signals, timing and game management, and is extremely beneficial for new and veteran umpires alike. Remember, any pitched ball, not swung at, needs to pass over home plate, not be deeper or over the batter's back shoulder, and the ball cannot hit any part of home plate and be ruled a strike. Most batters are deep in the batter's box and do not stand next to home plate, but the umpire must judge the pitches to be either a ball or a strike as if the batter was alongside home plate.

The biggest complaint players and coaches have with umpires everywhere is inconsistency and lack of hustle. This drill should go a long way in developing consistency with calling balls and strikes.

That is my opinion. What is yours?

What's Your Gripe?

By Ron Jeffers

Q. Mr. Jeffers: In a recent slow pitch league game, our opponent had to start the game short-handed as only nine players were there at game time. In the 3rd inning, a guy showed up wearing a cast on his left arm and began to keep score for the other team. Later in the game one of the other team's players was injured and had to be taken to the hospital, so they put the player with the cast in to catch so they wouldn't have to forfeit.

Is that legal, assuming he was on the roster?

A. The rule book clearly states a player can participate in a softball game while wearing a cast or splint, provided it is wrapped with a protective padding, and "it does not pose a significant risk to the safety of the other players."

If the person keeping score has his or her cast properly protected with the padding the rules book requires, that person could go into the game and catch or play any other position in the field, provided he or she is on the roster of that team. I doubt, however the player had the cast prepared as the rules book requires.

Q. Last month our team was playing out of town and during one of the games a player slid into 2nd base safely. Amazingly he got up and starting walking off the field, thinking he was out. No time was ever called. Our player tagged him, but the umpire ruled him safe, and put him back on the base despite our objections. His only explanation was that "the play was over." Can an umpire arbitrarily rule that a play is over without ever calling time?

A. The umpire was as wrong as two left feet. The ball is alive and in play until all play is complete and one of the umpires calls "TIME." In baseball and fast pitch softball "Time" is not called as quickly or as frequently as it is in slow pitch softball, because of base runners in those games being allowed to steal and etc. Even in a slow pitch game the umpire should never have called "TIME" if he had any indication the runner was going to leave the base.

I question how emphatic the umpire's call was at second base causing the runner to not know he was safe. The ball does not become dead automatically as the umpire told you. One of the umpires in this play, should have raised both his hands high above his head and verbally called "TIME" for everyone to hear. Since he did not do his job and sell his call at second base he caused the runner to be confused and at risk, and I believe he then decided to cover his rear end and put the runner back at second base.

The runner should have been called out if he walked away from the play and was tagged with the ball, but poor umpiring causes more made up rules and half truths to cover up for the umpire totally messing up a simple play.

Q. I have read in the Softball News and Softball Magazine where the Amateur Softball Association and some bat manufactures are going to sue the people responsible for doctoring bats in an attempt to make the game safe again. What is your opinion of this action?

A. I am definitely opposed to the doctoring of bats in any way, and believe me this is not a new phenomenon in the game of softball.

I was assigned as the umpire-in-chief of the very first ASA National 16" softball championship tournament, and it was held in Chicago some twenty years ago. As I walked through the gates prior to the first game of the tournament a man was passing out his business cards, and unknowingly he gave me one to me as well. The card read "We doctor the bats to your specifications."

I showed the card to the umpires, and instructed them to inspect every bat, and if they found one to be doctored or altered to eject the player using the bat, and confiscate the bat and deliver it to me for safekeeping. The ASA commissioner of Chicago told me to give him all the altered bats and cease inspecting the bats in the tournament. I was not about to allow the game to be played with these illegal and altered bats, and kept them locked in my car until the tournament was over. He was furious, because this made some of his home town players furious, but I could have cared less. I believe in playing the game by the rules, and that includes with legal safe equipment.

Is the Amateur Softball Association concerned with the safety of the players in their program? Is that why they are going after the bat doctors advertising at the tournaments, newspapers and in the internet? "Yes" and "no" would be the answer to those questions. If the Amateur Softball Association was sincerely concerned with the safety of the players in their program and the integrity of the game, why did they knowingly allow all The Ball Manufactures to cheat on the CORE requirements of all their balls for years and do nothing about it? After each and every one of ASA's National Tournaments the tournament directors were required to send about ten of the balls used in each respective tournament to the National Office of ASA for the Director of Umpires to test each ball. The test required the balls be dropped from a pre-determined height and the balls were only allowed to bounce a required height. This drop test

was used to make certain the ball manufacturers were following the agreed upon CORE requirements as specified in the playing rules at that time. Any ball that bounced higher than the allowed height was HOT and illegal as prescribed by the Playing Rules of the game. Year after year not one ball ever passed the test. I was told by Merle Butler that every year he performed these tests each and every ball was too hot to pass the CORE test for ASA sanctioned play. Knowing these balls were all illegal and unsafe did ASA drop the license agreement with any of these ball manufacturers? Do you think they fined any of the ball manufacturers? You have it right. They did absolutely nothing to any of the ball manufacturers, so you tell me are they sincerely concerned about the safety of the players in their program?

These same sanctimonious ball manufacturers, who year after year knew they were manufacturing balls too hot for the rules requirements, now want to sue the people who are doctoring their bats? Somehow this seems a tad ridiculous and/or hypocritical to me.

Years ago the national softball organizations lost total control of the bats and balls used in their programs, and the game has been unsafe for the players for years because of their neglect. I agree the governing bodies of softball do seem to be attempting to correct years of neglect in this area, but if they are indeed sincerely concerned for the safety of the players in their programs, why are the baserunners not required to wear helmets in the adult slow pitch program? Helmets are required in all youth play where the best players don't throw the ball hard enough to seriously hurt any one. Helmets are required in all levels of youth and adult fast pitch softball, and these players do not hit the ball nearly as often or as hard as they do in the slow pitch game. Helmets are required equipment in all high school and college softball games yet ASA and USSSA refuse to address the unsafe condition that they know exists in the adult slow pitch game. If helmets are needed to protect the safety of the runners in adult fast pitch softball in every program, why do they look the other way at the safety of the slow pitch players?

A batter-runner running to first base or a runner going into second base on a possible double play ball is in every bit as much danger of a serious head injury in the slow pitch game as he is in the fast pitch game. This too will change, but not until a few more slow pitch players are killed or made into vegetables. Now you tell me, are the powers of softball really concerned about the players' safety or is this all about pride, protecting one's turf, and money?

Q. We were playing in our league game this May at Triple Greek park, and we had this play happen to end our game. With two outs in the bottom of the 7th inning we were down by one run when our batter hit what would have been a double to score the game tying and winning run from second and third base. The batter jogged to first base while carrying his bat, and after he reached first base, the umpire called him out, and said no runs could score giving the win to our opponent. He told us the batter was out because he carried the bat to first base. Where is this in the rule book?

A. It is not in the rule book, and it is not a violation of the rules, unless his carrying of the bat interfered with the defensive teams' opportunity to make a play. It would be nice if the umpires would take a few minutes of their time each year and read the playing rules. Everything that looks unusual or weird is not a violation of the rules.

The next time you have this umpire ask him to tell you where this violation can be found in the rules book. He will tell you "I don't have to show you anything." because he can't.

Why did you not tell the umpire you wanted to play the game under protest after he made this obvious error in the application of the rules? You made your mistake by assuming he knew what he was talking about, and you know what they say about assuming.

ASA Urges Early Registration For 54th Annual EMR Group-Cincinnati Metro Championship

Metro Cincinnati Amateur Softball Association Commissioner Danney Saylor is issuing a "friendly reminder" to teams planning to register for the 54th Annual Cincinnati Metro Championship Tournament July 14-16 (Industrial Divisions) and July 27-August 8 (Men's Open Divisions) at Rumpke Park, Eggleston Park, Northside K of C, Riverfront West, Riverstar Sportsplex, Spoils Field and Westside Sports Park.

Saylor's message is simple: "apply early.

"Last year we had 340 teams in the Men's open divisions of the tournament, and at least 150 waited until the last day to register," says Saylor. This summer will mark the 54th year for the event, and several special events are planned, notes Saylor.

While Saylor's office is prepared to deal with the deluge of last minute paperwork for the event, last minute registrations result in another problem that his office simply cannot remedy.

"If we don't know the teams, we don't have the time to track down their league directors and their tournament background to see if they're in the right division," explains Saylor. "Due to our lack of knowledge of the team, we'll have to bump them into a division they shouldn't be in."

Saylor says the integrity of the tournament won't be compromised because of late entries. And his office will go to any extreme to safeguard the balance of the Metro tournament and preserve its reputation for parity in every division - even if that means seeding teams into divisions where they probably can't compete.

"We've moved teams into divisions where they've gotten killed because we didn't have the time to check them out," says Saylor.

"We urge all teams to apply early so they can be evaluated correctly. Every year we're flooded with entries two or three days before the deadline. Ideally we need teams to register at least a week in advance to be evaluated properly."

Another concern teams need to be cautious of, says Saylor, is eligibility.

"If teams don't understand the eligibility rules for the Metro Tournament, we urge them to contact our office for information," stresses Saylor.

"This is particularly imperative in view of the Recreational Division we started last year," explains Saylor. "We need to scrutinize this level of play more carefully than any other in order to assure the remarkable success that the event enjoyed last year.

"For teams that have not played in the Metro before, this may be the division to get their feet wet," he suggests.

Saylor says that applications are available at Rumpke Park, or can be obtained by calling 738-2646.

The deadline for all Industrial division entries is Monday, July 10th, at noon, and for Men's Open division entries the deadline is Saturday, July 22nd at noon. Entries must be received at the park by the noon deadline.

Saylor says there will be two major changes involving this year's tournament.

For the first time in the tournament's 53-year history, teams participating in the "open" divisions will be permitted to play in more than one event.

"We're going to allow 'A' and 'B' open teams to enter in the 'Open' division so they can showcase their teams while still competing for a title at their own level," explains Saylor.

Also new for this year, a consolation tournament will be held for Men's "C," "D" and "E Rec" teams, says Saylor.

"Any teams that go 0-2 or 1-2 in the Men's 'C,' 'D' or 'E Rec' divisions will advance to a consolation tournament at Eggleston Park beginning Thursday, August 3rd."

Honoree Sought For John Earls Memorial Award

Crosby Township, Oh.--Applications are now being accepted for the eighth annual "John Earls Memorial Award," which will be presented during the EMR Group-ASA Cincinnati Metro Tournament July 27-August 8 at Rumpke Park.

The award is given in honor of former Watanabe/TPS first baseman John Earls, who lost a battle with cancer on October 17th, 1998. The three-time ASA All-American helped power his team to an ASA "A" National Championship and USSSA "A-AA" State title in 1993. Earls led the city in home runs in 1990 and '91, and hit over 100 home runs every year from 1994 through 1997. He was a first team All-City selection for ten consecutive years.

But Earls was more than an athlete, recalls his former sponsor-manager, Dave Watanabe.

"John was a great family person and just a great person in general," points out Watanabe. "As a coach, he was one of those individuals you wanted to have on your team. He carried himself as a gentleman on and off the field. He was our team leader by example, and very dependable. It was a pleasure to have him on the team."

"This award represents the better aspects of the game," adds ASA Cincinnati Metro Commissioner Danney Saylor. "Things like friendships and loyalty and sportsmanship and honor. It's not just based on talent. It's what you do for the game - what you give back to the game.

"If you know someone with these qualities," we would encourage you to contact Rumpke Park at 738-2646 for details about submitting an application," says Saylor.

The first winner of the John Earls award was Earls' former friend and teammate, Pat Shanks, in 1999. Then John Angstadt, manager of the TGIF softball team, and a softball coach and manager for 25 years, received the award in 2000. Bruce Kraus, a veteran player

and manager; was presented with the award in 2001. Paul Spaulding, an ASA umpire and player with the M & S Drywall men's and mixed couples teams, received the award in 2002. Former ASA Metro and National Championship team manager Jim Del Monaco, who managed Pastime Park from 1981 until his death in 2002, was the 2003 recipient. Jack Erp, a player and manager for some 40 years, received the award in 2004. The 2005 winner was Gary Macke, a player who sacrificed a year of softball and a kidney for a co-worker who needed a transplant.

All-Star Games To Kick Off 54th Annual EMR Group-ASA Metro; Shriner's Burn Institute Named 2006 Charity Designee

Crosby Township, Oh.--Three All-Star games pitting the 2005 Class "B," "C" and "D" Metro champions versus respective All-Star teams selected from the "B," "C" and "D" divisions of last year's Metro Tournament will kick off the 2006 EMR Group ASA Cincinnati Metro Tournament on Thursday, July 27th, at Rumpke Park.

Metro officials will contact teams that competed in the ASA "B," "C" and "D" divisions last year to select the All-Star teams. The "B" Division champions last year was Come-gets'em/Goodtimers II. Airway won the "C" division, while Coldwell Banker/West Shell took the "D" crown. The "C" All-Star game will begin at 7 PM, followed by the "D" at 8 PM, and then the "B" at 9 PM.

The following night, Friday, July 28th, All-Star games will be held featuring last year's "A" division winner, Concepts/Blitz, and an "A" All-Star team at 7 PM. Then at 8 PM defending "Major" division champion Watanabe/Kattus/Tiny Town/Western Hills Window/Alpine/TPS will take on an All-Star squad comprised of "Major" division players from 2005.

Metro officials have also announced that the Shriner's Burn Institute has been designated the local charity to benefit from various charitable fund raising functions held at this year's Metro, including the annual home run hitting contest.

For any information prior to the tournament, contact Rumpke Park at 738-2646.

USSSA News

13th Annual Expressway Park Round Robin Appreciation Jacket Championship September 23rd

The tournament will feature the top sixteen teams from Expressway Park round robin play based on order of finish and participation in the park's 2006 weekend round robin program.

Adopted by Expressway Park in 1994, the program has proven to be a popular enhancement for Expressway's mini and maxi men's D-E round robins.

"Teams will accumulate points in Expressway Park's round robin tournaments played at the park in 2006," explains park manager Bob Owens. "Teams will receive 1,000 points for first place, 800 for second, 600 for third, and 500 for participating. The top sixteen teams will qualify for the appreciation series on September 23rd."

Owens says the tournament will feature tournament champion jackets, and a \$100 credit to be used during the 2006 season at Expressway Park for either league or tournament fees. The tournament will also feature a special entry fee structure, with the top three teams receiving a free entry fee, and a \$99 fee for the remaining thirteen teams.

Owens says that only D and E teams and players will be eligible to play in the appreciation series finals on September 23rd. Teams will accumulate points in mini and maxi round robins through the weekend of August 26-27.

Owens says that a "top 16" will be listed beginning in the July issue of the CINCINNATI SOFTBALL NEWS and posted at the park. Teams may also call the park to find out their standing anytime beginning July 1st.

Following round robins on September 9-10, Expressway Park will notify the top sixteen teams regarding their eligibility for the appreciation series by mail. Teams will have until September 18th to register.

Expressway Park has continued its popular round robin awards program in 2006, which provides "Expressway Bucks" that teams earn towards award options while participating in the park's mini and maxi round robins. Award options include t-shirts, trophies, jackets, caps and pro shop merchandise. In addition, after playing in their first mini round robin at the regular price of \$99, teams can participate in their second round robin for \$89, their third round robin for \$79, and each additional round robin for only \$69.

For additional information, call Expressway Park at 831-2273.

Expressway Park Mid-Summer League Championship August 2-7

Milford, Oh.--The 5th Annual Expressway Park "Mid-Summer League Championship Tournament" has been scheduled for August 1-6 at Expressway Park.

The tournament, which will feature \$2,500 in cash awards, will be open to Expressway Park Men's Class D, E and Mixed teams only. Teams are restricted to players on their league rosters.

This year the Men's D and E divisions will once again offer an expanded format, with three divisions - Men's D, Men's E and Men's Recreational E - instead of two. The Recreational E division will be open to Expressway Park E league teams with sub-.500 records.

Expressway Park manager Bob Owens says that in addition to the cash awards, which will be distributed equally between the D, E, Recreational E and Mixed divisions, the tournament will offer several other special awards and features.

"We'll be giving away sweatshirts, t-shirts and other softball merchandise, and awarding two USSSA Great Lakes Division National berths and four Ohio USSSA State berths in each division," says Owens. "Also there will be special concession pricing at the park for the entire week.

"If you only play in one tournament a year, this is the one," says Owens.

Owens says that August 1-4 will be a "bye" week at Expressway Park, with no league games scheduled from Tuesday, August 1st, through Sunday, August 6th, based on a minimum number of entries.

Also according to Owens, tournament openings are limited. Game times will be 6:30 PM through 9:30 PM. Tournament packets will be available June 1st at Expressway Park. The registration deadline is July 15th.

The entry fee for the tournament, which will utilize a round robin format during the week, with advancement to a single elimination bracket on the weekend, will be \$150.

April 29-30...

Roesch, Burbrink, Spicer Lead Watanabe/Kattus/Tiny Town Pizza/Superior/B & A/TPS Romp In "Spring Open"

Maryville, Tn.--Jason Roesch went 18-for-19 (.947) while pitchers Jim Burbrink and Shane Spicer combined to hold five opponents to 33 runs as Watanabe/Kattus/Tiny Town Pizza/Superior/B & A/TPS overpowered a five team "Spring Open" field April 29th in Maryville, Tn.

Watanabe/TPS mercy-ruled four of their five victims in the tournament, a precursor to the Smoky Mountain Classic.

The champions were never seriously threatened as their average margin of victory was 21 runs per game. Only one team - D & D Select in the opening round - lasted more than five innings against Watanabe/TPS.

"We were on it pretty much throughout the tourney," understated manager-sponsor Dave Watanabe. "And the combined pitching of tournament MVP Jim Burbrink and Shane Spicer kept the opposition from getting into any kind of groove.

"Our big guns were hitting bombs, and everybody was base hitting the heck out of it," added Watanabe.

Following Roesch's near perfect .947 effort were Burbrink at .857, Larry Wert at .824, Kevin Birkofer at .818, Jeff Edington at .783, Ryan Minges at .762, Tom Thompson at .737, and Brad Reckart at .700. Watanabe/TPS batted a sizzling .751 as a team.

"We were in a real nice groove," said Watanabe. "Lots of hits and three-runners made our staff pretty happy.

"We're a hungry club right now," continued Watanabe. "And (assistant manager) Kevin Bullock and I like the early chemistry we've established thus far. (Field manager) Andy Stephens and I reviewed the stats, and they were exceptional. Key hits and maximizing our runs versus the eight home run limit was almost flawless."

Watanabe said his club also turned in a stellar defensive performance.

"Rusty Scott, Brad Reckart and Kevin Birkofer were solid in the infield, and our three-man outfield of Wert, Minges and Roesch were tireless on those big 'Smoky' fields," said Watanabe.

Watanabe/TPS broke open a 7-7 contest with two runs in the 3rd and eight in the 4th en route to a 23-10 whipping of D & D Select in game one. A sac fly by Jason Roesch put his club ahead to stay in the 3rd. A three run blast by Jeff Edington and a two run Tom Stephens shot highlighted the 4th. Stephens later capped off both the 6th and 7th with two run swats as well.

Tom Thompson, who homered twice for the winners, shared twelve hits with Roesch and Stephens.

In game two Watanabe/TPS exploded for fifteen runs in both the 1st and 2nd innings and never looked back in a 33-8, three inning shelling of 3N2. Ryan Minges contributed a three run bomb, then Jason Roesch followed with a two run sock to cap off the 1st. Jeff Edington connected on a pair of home runs for five rbi's in the 2nd. Edington, Roesch, Kevin Birkofer and Brad Reckart were each perfect in four at bats.

Next Watanabe/TPS steamrolled the Tennessee Hitmen 35-4 in four innings, putting up five in the 1st, seven in the 2nd, and six in the 3rd before delivering the knockout blow with a seventeen run 4th. Jeff Edington homered in the 1st, 3rd and 4th innings, and Tom Stephens went yard in the 1st and 4th. Tom Thompson, Larry Wert, Rusty Scott and Andy Baker also contributed dingers in the 4th.

Edington and Ryan Minges banged out five hits apiece, and Andy and Larry Baker and Jim Burbrink combined for twelve hits.

Southern Heat battled Watanabe/TPS to a 4-4 stalemate after two innings in game four, but failed to answer Watanabe/TPS scoring barrages in the 3rd, 4th and 5th in a lopsided 21-4 affair. Ryan Minges clubbed a two run homer to break the 4-4 tie in the top of the 3rd, and Tom Thompson followed with a three run bomb to make it 9-4. Watanabe/TPS finally put the Heat on ice with a ten run 5th that featured a three run Tom Stephens swat and an Edington slammer.

Kevin Birkofer and Brad Reckart collected four hits each and Shane Spicer and Jim Burbrink went 3-for-3.

Watanabe/TPS scored two in the 1st and 2nd, three in the 3rd and five in the 4th to open up a 12- lead against D & D Select in their finale, then exploded for sixteen runs to forge a commanding 28-4 advantage and seal the title. Tom Thompson went solo to give his club the lead for good at 3-2 in the 2nd, then clubbed a two run shot to cap off a three run 3rd. Thompson, Rusty Scott, Jeff Edington, Brad Reckart and Tom Stephens each belted a two run homer in the 6th, and Jim Burbrink delivered the coup de grace with a slammer.

Thompson, Scott, Ryan Minges and Kevin Birkofer pounded out four hits apiece to power the champions.

Sponsor-manager Dave Watanabe could find little fault with his team in just its second outing.

"We still need improvement in some areas, but I can't complain at this point so early in the season," said Watanabe.

Champions Avenge '05 Losses To Isenberg Concrete, 9-7 And 24-15...

Rickman, Merriman Lead TPE/AST/Miken To TPS-USSSA "C" NIT Title At RiverShore

Hebron, Ky.--Led by defensive wizard Danny Rickman at short and leading hitter Dean Merriman, TPE/AST/Miken battled past four opponents to capture first place in the TPS-USSSA Men's "C" National Invitational April 29-30 at River-Shore Sports Complex.

Revenge was sweet for the champions, who knocked off 2005 nemesis Isenberg Concrete 24-15 in the finals.

TPE/AST/Miken manager Adan Shepherd said that his club got some extra incentive "when we found out were playing Isenberg in the winners' bracket finals and finals.

"We played them three times last year, and all three times they beat us in the bottom of the 7th," recalled Shepherd. "So we felt like we owed them a couple from last year."

Despite the rivalry, Shepherd said his team has nothing but respect for Isenberg.

"They're a really good team and a classy team out of the Louisville area," said Shepherd. "And they're a really good bunch of guys."

A berth to the USSSA "C" World September 22-24 in Sterling Heights, Mi. passed down to Isenberg. TPE/AST/Miken had previously qualified.

Shepherd said that after his team saw the bracket on Saturday morning, they felt pretty good about their chances.

"We had a meeting when we got to the park Saturday morning and looked at the bracket, and we all agreed that if we could win the first two games, we'd have a chance.

“Not to take anything away from any of the teams, but the bottom half of the bracket was definitely the stronger half. We knew if we could make it to the winners’ bracket finals, a lot of the teams would have to beat up on each other before they got to us.”

The defensive play of tournament MVP Danny Rickman and the hot bat of Dean Merriman helped carry TPE/AST/Miken to the title.

“Danny’s our shortstop and he made plays that shouldn’t have been made all day long,” said Shepherd. “We played a five man infield and our middle infielder was able to play on the 1st base side of the bag because Danny was having such a good tournament defensively.”

Merriman led Isenberg in hitting with a sizzling .764 weekend. He was joined on the all-tournament team by John Nicely (.687), Bart Vaughn (.647) and Kyle Holmes (.647).

“In my opinion, Dean is one of the best leadoff hitters in the area, and on the year he’s batting really close to .850. He’s one of those guys who is hard to get out. He’ll take a walk any time he can get it, and he can hit the ball anywhere he wants to. He’s a left handed batter with a lot of speed who always gives a hundred percent.”

Pitcher Dave Grooms also played a big role in TPE/AST/Miken’s championship, said Shepherd.

“Only one team scored more than ten runs on us, so Dave is obviously a really, really good USSSA pitcher,” observed Shepherd. “He keeps the batters off-balance, and when he gets into a zone, he can throw strikes whenever he wants to and can play with the batters a little bit.”

TPE/AST/Miken appeared to be looking past their first round opponent, as Brock Restoration took a 10-9 lead through six. But in the top of the 7th, John Nicely delivered a one out rbi double to knot the score, then with two outs Kevin Spivey cleared the bases with a double to give his club a 13-10 lead. Brock got a leadoff double in the bottom of the 7th, but pitcher Dave Grooms retired the next three batters to shut down the rally and preserve the win.

Nicely, Roger Boles and Bart Vaughn each banged out three hits to pace the offense.

TPE/AST/Miken never trailed in game two after jumping out to a 4-0 lead in the top of the 1st against Sequa/Sexton Flooring/Temper Mortgage. Chris Long’s two run shot highlighted the inning. Long came through again in the bottom of the 6th with a bases loaded triple as TPE/AST/Miken blew open a 10-5 contest with an eight run outburst. A two run single by Kevin Spivey capped off the inning. Sequa answered with four in the top of the 7th to make the final 18-9.

Kyle Holmes and John Nicely were both perfect in four at bats, and Dean Merriman chipped in with a 3-for-4 effort.

That lifted TPE/AST/Miken into the winners’ bracket against Isenberg, which led 5-4 at the midway point of the game. But in the bottom of the 4th Dan Rickman soloed to knot the score at 5-5, then TPE/AST/Miken tacked on four more in the 5th to forge a 9-5 lead. Bart Vaughn tripled to put his club ahead to stay, then scored on Roger Boles’ double to make it 7-5. Chris Long then launched a two run homer to extend the lead to four at 9-5. Isenberg mustered a lone run in the 6th and another in the 7th before succumbing 9-7.

Dean Merriman collected three hits, and Chris Long and Kyle Holmes each went 2-for-3.

TPE/AST/Miken scored in each of the first four innings to build a 19-7 lead and never looked back in a 24-15 rout of Isenberg in the finals. A two run double by Chris Long put the eventual champions on the board, and John Nicely followed with a two run swat. Isenberg answered with three in the bottom of the 1st, but TPE/AST/Miken erupted for seven in the top of the 2nd to improve their lead to eight. Chris Shiabone’s two run single made it 6-3, Chris Long doubled in two to make it 8-3, and finally Dan Rickman socked a two run homer to extend the lead to 11-3. TPE/AST/Miken added three in the 3rd with the help of a two run Bart Vaughn double, and five in the 4th on the strength of a Dave Grooms two run double.

Isenberg rallied for five in the bottom of the 4th and one in the 5th to cut the deficit to 19-13, but TPE/AST/Miken slammed the door with a five run 6th. Dan Rickman sealed MVP honors with a two run single to cap off the inning.

Vaughn and Merriman combined for ten hits, and Long and Shiabone shared eight to power the champions.

TPS-USSSA “C” NATIONAL INVITATIONAL RIVERSHORE SPORTSPLEX, HEBRON, KY

1. TPE/AST/Miken, Trenton, OH 4 0
2. Isenberg Concrete, Clarksville, IN 4 2
3. Sequa/Sexton/Temper Mortgage, Centerville, OH 4 2

4. Steve's Drywall, Perrysburg, OH 3 2
5. Cincysoftball/Cooper/Miken, Cincinnati, OH 2 2
Mike Foulks/Team Insanity, Covington, KY 2 2
7. Brock Restoration, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
PRI, Cincinnati, OH 0 2
9. Empire/Easton, Cincinnati, OH 0 2
GZG Const./Beef O'Brady's, Union, KY 0 2
S & J Demolation/Frickers, Union, OH 0 2

TPS-USSSA MEN'S "C" NATIONAL INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM

Rob Meyer Sequa/Sexton/Temper Mortgage
 Dusty Birchler Sequa/Sexton/Temper Mortgage
 Greg Chipman Sequa/Sexton/Temper Mortgage
 Kyle Lewis Isenberg Concrete
 George Roberts Isenberg Concrete
 Bubby Roberts Isenberg Concrete
 Jason Holder Isenberg Concrete
 Nate Gibson Isenberg Concrete
 Dean Merriman TPE/AST/Miken
 Bart Vaughn TPE/AST/Miken
 John Nicely TPE/AST/Miken
 Kyle Holmes TPE/AST/Miken
 Roger Boles TPE/AST/Miken
 Danny Rickman - MVP TPE/AST/Miken

Riley, Barnes Lead Best Way Frame/Nasty Boys In 2nd Annual Worth-USSSA "D" NIT

Joliet, Il.--Pitcher Roger Riley limited four of five opponents to single digit scoring, and Adam Barnes turned in a white hot .840 performance to lead Best Way Frame/Nasty Boys to a first place finish in the 2nd Annual World-USSSA "D" NIT April 29-30 at Inwood Sports Complex.

Best Way/Nasty Boys knocked off Money Softball 20-6 in the winners' bracket finals to claim the title, as the championship game of the 25-team event was washed out.

The victory gave Best Way/Nasty Boys a paid berth to the USSSA "D" World Tournament September 21-24 in Overland Park, Ks., plus \$600 travel expense.

The Nasty Boys' Roger Riley and Adam Barnes were named co-MVP's.

"The weather was terrible and Roger only walked three batters and he held every team to single digits except for Black Hawk Athletic Club," observed Barnes.

"Adam led every game off with a hit and got a lot of key hits for us with two outs. He really set the tempo for the whole tournament," said Barnes.

Barnes said that after a sluggish start - the Nasty Boys only scored 31 runs in their first three games - "we started to heat up a little.

"We only had ten guys this weekend, so everybody had a lot of at bats, and guys who normally don't get to play that much got to play and really contributed."

Barnes make-shift line-up ended up exploding for fifty five runs over their last two games, shelling Black Hawk A. C. 35-17 and Money 20-6.

"All the guys did a really good job this weekend," said Barnes. "We went up short-handed and everybody really came through for us. This is the first NIT I've ever won - it feels great."

Defensively, Barnes lauded the efforts of shortstop Bob Schewmaker.

"He didn't make an error this weekend in five games and he was part of eight double plays we turned," said Barnes.

Best Way Frame/Nasty Boys used a ten run 5th to break open a 4-4 contest and help dispose of Lynch Mob 14-4 in game one. Randy Lee's two run double put his club ahead to stay at 6-4. Later in the inning John Schwalbach delivered a big bases clearing double. Lee, Schwalbach, and Joe Barnes were all perfect in four at bats to pace the winners.

After being held scoreless the first three innings, the Nasty Boys finally broke loose with four runs in the top of the 4th to erase a 1-0 take a 4-1 lead over Squeeze Softball. The Nasty Boys tacked on two in the 5th and one in the 7th to claim an eventual 7-1 victory. Brian Kelly and Benny Fields banged out three hits each, and Bob Schewmaker chipped in with two.

Next the Nasty Boys battled to a 5-5 deadlock with Players Only through four. Then in the top of the 5th Roger Riley connected for a three run double and scored on an Adam Barnes base hit to give their club a comfortable 9-5 lead. Two more runs in the 6th made the final 11-5, as Riley held Players Only scoreless over the final three frames.

Barnes and Randy Lee combined for eight hits, Riley added three and Kip Mason went 2-for-3 with a sac fly.

The Nasty Boys never trailed in game four after jumping on top of the Black Hawks 6-0 in the top of the 1st. Adam Barnes got Best Way on the board with an inside-the-park home run. Benny Fields followed with a bases clearing triple to make it 4-0.

But Black Hawk refused to go away, and continued to threaten the Nasty Boys through five 23-17. Then in the top of the 6th the Nasty Boys erupted for twelve unanswered runs to seal a 35-17 victory. Barnes and Randy Lee pounded out six hits apiece, and Bob Schewmaker went 5-for-6.

The Nasty Boys got off to a slow start in the finals, falling behind Money 2-1 after two. But in the top of the 3rd they exploded for fifteen runs to take a 16-1 lead and Money never recovered. Adam Barnes' bases loaded triple put Best Way ahead for good at 4-2. Davey Johnson followed with a two run double, and Randy Lee a two run single to make it 8-2. Bobby Schewmaker capped off the inning with a three run double.

Adam and Joe Barnes collected five hits each, and Johnson and Lee went 4-for-5 for the champions.

Pitching, Defense Lift BCP/Mr. Tint/Kahoots To TPS-Worth-USSSA "D" NIT Title At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--Pitcher Rod Dale limited six opponents to only 28 runs to lead BCP Associates/Mr. Tint/Kahoots to a first place finish in the TPS-Worth-USSSA Men's "D" National Invitational April 29-30 at Expressway Park.

Dale held all six of BCP's victims to single digit scoring, allowing only two teams to score more than five runs. BCP/Mr. Tint/Kahoots drilled Dizzy Rooster 12-2 in the championship game to complete the sweep of the 35-team field.

The victory netted BCP a berth to the USSSA "D" World Tournament September 21-24 at Overland Park, Ks.

Tom Beck (.667), Alan Miller (.636) and Justin Wagner (.545) were named to the All-Tournament team for BCP. Dave Hodge turned in a solid .562 weekend. Rod Dale was named Tournament MVP.

"He held them to 28 runs in six games," remarked BCP manager Jack McCallister. "And he had a couple of clutch hits for us on Sunday. He was very consistent this weekend."

McCallister said his team played "really great defense.

"I have a bunch of young guys on the team and they play really good defense," said McCallister. "Good pitching also helped and definitely some timely hitting - especially in the low scoring games."

McCallister singled out the performance of Josh Martin in centerfield.

"He covers a lot of ground out there," said McCallister. "We play a five man infield and he covered a lot of ground."

BCP never trailed after jumping out to a 4-0 lead against Sneaky Pete's/Noran LLC/Backstabbers in the top of the 1st in game one. Billy Moore's rbi double put his club on the board. BCP broke the game open with a five run outburst in the top of the 4th to forge a 12-2 lead. An rbi single by Dave Hodge capped off the inning. Tom Beck and Alan Miller banged out four hits each to pace the offense.

Extreme Softball was poised to drop BCP into the losers' bracket as they took a 3-1 lead into the bottom of the 5th. But there BCP rallied for four unanswered runs and held on for a 5-3 victory behind the pitching of Rod Dale, who held Extreme to one run after the 1st. Tom Beck collected three more hits and Dave Hodge chipped in with two.

BCP struggled again in game three, finally overcoming a 5-4 deficit with two runs in the top of the 6th to squeeze out a 6-5 victory over the Trailblazers. Tom Beck's sac fly knotted the score at 5-5, then Alan Miller singled in the eventual game winner. George Parker and Jared Mucciardi each went 2-for-3 for the winners.

BCP's offense began hitting on all cylinders in their next two games, as they mercy-ruled the Northern Kentucky Dawgs 28-9 in six and Triple L 17-3 in five.

Against the Dawgs, BCP struck early and often, taking a 6-0 lead in the top of the 1st, then plating seven in the 3rd to break open a 9-6 contest before delivering the knockout punch with a nine run 6th. George Parker's two run single highlighted the 1st, while Tim Nease delivered the big blow in the 3rd with a two run triple. Justin Wagner, who pounded out five hits, had a two run single to cap off the scoring in the 6th and make the final 28-9. Josh Martin and Alan Miller shared eight hits.

That pitted BCP against Columbus area rival Triple L. BCP drew first blood on an rbi single by Alan Miller in the top of the 1st. They padded their lead with four in the 2nd on the strength of a bases clearing double by Josh Martin. Then in the 5th they put the game away with an eight run outburst to invoke the mercy rule. Greg Bolin came off the bench to deliver a key bases loaded, two run single. George Parker's two run double capped off the scoring.

Rod Dale, Alan Miller and Tom Beck combined for nine hits to fuel the offense.

Finalist Dizzy Rooster held BCP at bay for three innings in the championship game, as they held a narrow 2-1 lead after three innings. But in the top of the 4th, BCP erupted for five runs, then tacked on six in the 6th to seal a 12-3 victory. Justin Wagner's two run double gave BCP the lead for good at 3-2, then later in the inning Tim Nease contributed a two run, inside-the-park home run as the lead swelled to 6-2.

Nease collected two more rbi's with a two run triple in the 6th, and Tom Beck added a two run double as BCP padded their advantage to 11-2, and Dizzy Rooster never recovered. Wagner was perfect in three at bats, and Nease and Billy Moore shared four hits.

BCP manager Jack McCallister said that Dizzy Rooster simply "ran out of juice" in the finals.

"They have a really good ball team," said McCallister. "They lost their first game, and by the 3rd inning they were out of juice."

McCallister said his club "went flat" in their narrow 5-3 win over the Trailblazers.

"We knew that would be a tough game," said McCallister. "But after that we came out and started stroking again."

McCallister said that BCP was also very concerned about playing hometown rival Triple L.

"We were worried about coming down and playing Triple L since they're a Columbus team. If they stay close to you in the 5th, 6th or 7th inning, they'll beat you. They have a scrappy club," said McCallister.

"We want to thank the park and the umpires," concluded McCallister. "We've been chasing NIT's and this was my very first one (title) after a lot of years.

"That's the reason we play," continued McCallister. "That's why I stay and coach. You have to love what you're doing.

"You don't know how great it feels to until you've actually won one," added McCallister. "Hopefully it's not our last."

TPS-BUD LIGHT-USSSA MEN'S "D" NATIONAL INVITATIONAL - EXPRESSWAY PARK, MILFORD, OH

1.	BCP Associates/Mr. Tint/Kahoots, Cols., OH	6 0
2.	Dizzy Roosters, Louisville, KY	8 2
3.	Triple L/Inner Health, Columbus, OH	4 2
4.	D & M Concrete, Lebanon, OH	5 2
5.	N. T. S., Toledo, OH	5 2
	NKYDawgs, Taylor Mill, KY	3 2
7.	Team Bring It, Cincinnati, OH	4 2
	Moe's Southwest Gill/Saints, Cincinnati, OH	3 2
9.	OutKast Softball, Dayton, OH	3 2
	Cincinnati Diamondbacks, Cincinnati, OH	2 2
	Comegets'em/Muggbees Sports, Bellevue, KY	2 2
	Trailblazers, Cincinnati, OH	2 2

13. Pharmacy Solutions, Florence, KY 3 2
 Chris's Band Box, West Carrollton, OH 2 2
 Sn. Pete's/Noran/Backstabbers, Ft. Thomas, KY 2 2
 Two-N-Out.com/Easton, Florence, KY 2 2
17. Black-N-Blue, Erlanger, KY 2 2
 Good Guys/Dino's Sports Cafe, Taylor Mill, KY 2 2
 20/20 RCP, Liberty Center, OH 1 2
 Big O Softball, Florence, KY 1 2
 Budget Door, Grove City, OH 1 2
 Cooper Auto/Tanel 360, Huber Heights, OH 1 2
 Extreme/KLM Mortgage/Turner, Hamilton, OH 1 2
 Schmoe's Collision/Blair Masonry, Cinti., OH 1 2
25. Armor Windows, Florence, KY 1 2
 T & T Lyons/Tanel, Independence, KY 1 2
 A & A Millwright, Crossroad Bar, Cinti., OH 0 2
 American Legion Bombsquad, Cold Springs, KY 0 2
 Animation Ballers, Cincinnati, OH 0 2
 Cincy Sting/Dean Roofing, Goshen, OH 0 2
 Daugherty's Tribe, London, OH 0 2
 DPP, Middletown, OH 0 2
 M & M Connection, Carlisle, OH 0 2
 Sneaky Pete's/Clark's Heating, Milford, OH 0 2
 Via Quest, Marysville, OH 0 2

TPS-BUD LIGHT-USSSA MEN'S "D" NATIONAL INVITATIONAL TOURN. ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM

Eric Smith NKY Dawgs
 Casey Burmeister NTS
 Travis Lakins D & M Concrete
 Phil Kelley Triple L/Inner Health
 Aric Thomas Triple L/Inner Health
 Scott O'Daniel Dizzy Roosters
 Jason Brooks Dizzy Roosters
 Tom Beck BCP Associates/Mr. Tint/Kahoots
 Alan Miller BCP Associates/Mr. Tint/Kahoots
 Justin Wagner BCP Associates/Mr. Tint/Kahoots
 Chris McCauley - MVP Dizzy Roosters
 Rod Dale - MVP BCP Associates/Mr. Tint/Kahoots

**Eddie's/Village Tavern Diamond Dawgs Pound Competition In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" State-National Qualifier At Kolping Park
 By Andy Zureick**

Mt. Healthy, Oh. - Eddie's/Village Tavern Diamond Dawgs won all four games they played by an average margin of more than 11 runs to win the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" State-National Qualifier at Kolping Park on Saturday, April 29th. Their bats were on fire as they scored an average of 19 runs per game.

Eddie's/Village Tavern Diamond Dawgs got the day underway facing NKY Thunder. They blew open a 17-13 game with eight runs in the top of the 6th inning. Bobby Moore, Zach Maxfield, and David Latire knocked extra-base hits and drove in two apiece in the decisive inning. NKY Thunder could only manage two in their chance and the game ended via mercy rule, 25-15 in six. Johnny Gertz, Craig Detilion, and Bobby Moore were all 5-for-5 in the win. "We lost to [NKY Thunder] earlier this year and didn't take them for granted this time," noted Eddie's/Village Tavern Diamond Dawgs manager Bobby Moore. "We wanted to get some redemption and we did."

In the top of the 1st in game two, Eddie's/Village Tavern Diamond Dawgs jumped out to a commanding lead over Cincinnati Brothers with seven runs in the opening at bat. Rick Rohlfs doubled in two to get the scoring underway. After three, the lead had swollen to 11-4. The Dawgs tacked on five more in the top of the 4th to seal the five-inning victory, 15-4. Four members of the Village Tavern team – Rick Rohlfs, Dave Latire, Brian Maertz, and Brad Burly – went 3-for-3 in the game.

Eddie's continued to roll in game three opposite Team Puma. Bobby Moore doubled in a run in the top of the 3rd to break an 8-8 tie. Dave Latire added a two-run homer. Their team would score six in all for a 14-8 advantage. The game ended in five via the run-rule, 19-8. Moore and teammate Rick Rohlf's were 4-for-4 in win number three.

Queen City Nutrition would be the only team on the day to go the distance with the Diamond Dawgs. In the top of the 1st of the final game of the tournament, Bobby Moore, Rick Rohlf's, Dave Latire, and Brian Maertz drove in one run each giving the Diamond Dawgs a 4-0 lead. They would seal the deal in top of the seventh by plating eight scores. Bobby Moore doubled in two; Zach Maxfield capped the scoring with a sacrifice fly. Queen City Nutrition failed to score even a single run in their last chance, making the final 17-4. Johnny Gertz was 4-for-4 in the win. Craig Detillion and Dave Latire also had four hits for the game. Three of those for Latire were doubles. Bobby Moore also collected three doubles in his five trips to the plate.

Moore, also the team spokesman, led the squad offensively, posting a .824 batting average with nine doubles and a triple. "I had great people in front of and behind me. I saw the ball really well and hit it where they weren't."

Craig Detillion and Dave Latire each hit .765, second best for the Dawgs. Rick Rohlf's had a solid day at .706. Johnny Gertz blasted two home runs to go with a .647 average.

The fine defensive play of Gertz, the left-centerfielder, was also a valuable component of the Eddie's success. "He made some key plays and a couple of diving catches. He's really the leader of our outfield. He keeps everybody together and keeps them talking," commented Moore.

"We're dedicating this tournament to our coach, Gary "Bones" Miller on his 49th birthday," concluded the manager. "He kept our heads up and in the game."

The Diamond Dawgs and second-place Queen City Nutrition each qualified for both the USSSA State Tournament in Dayton on August 19-20 and the nationals on September 2-4 at in Milford, Ohio.

JB's Mercies Huber 17-6, Defends Title In Cincysoftball.com-Dick's-Big 64-USSSA "E" Finals At Queen City

West Chester, Oh.--JB's mercy-ruled Huber Landscaping 17-6 in the championship game of the Cincysoftball.com-Dick's Sporting Goods-Big 64-USSSA "E" World Qualifier April 29th at Queen City Sports Complex.

JB's, 2nd place bracket champion Dirty Birds/Blade Lawn Care, 3rd place bracket champion Team Crosley/Eagles 1162 and 4th place co-champions Caribbean Jerks and Packaged Home Solutions were all awarded berths to the USSSA "E" World Tournament September 21-24 in Lake Buena Vista, Fl.

JB's sailed to a perfect 5-0 record in the tournament, rallying from behind to win two of their games in their final at bat as they successfully defended their 2005 title - won under the "Rocky's Drywall" banner.

Manager Matt Hutchinson credited his club's title to timely hitting - especially by leading hitter Chris Perry, pitching and defense.

"Chris led off several innings and got rallies started with singles and doubles," noted Hutchinson. "Whenever we needed a timely hit, he helped get things started and the other players followed through behind him."

Perry hit a team high .643. Robby Dixon and Brian Croley followed at .625, Hutchinson batted .611, and Jeremy Snyder chipped in with a .562 mark.

But Snyder's most important contribution came on the mound, said Hutchinson.

"Throughout the day the most runs scored against us was ten in our first game, then six, six, seven and six. Jeremy was able to get the other teams to hit a lot of ground balls, and we turned several double plays that killed a lot of rallies throughout the tournament."

Hutchinson said that right fielder Robby Dixon anchored the defense.

"In the finals Robby made several putouts. He tracked down a lot of fly balls that were hit down the line and in the gap," said Hutchinson. "That was very crucial to our championship."

JB's barely survived their first game, as they entered the bottom of the 7th trailing the Renegades 10-6. Matt Hutchinson delivered a single with one out to cut the deficit to 10-7, then with two outs, JB's strung together a pair of walks and three consecutive singles to pull out a dramatic 11-10 victory. Brian Croley's two run single knotted the score, then Dan Nichols' base hit plated the game winner.

Croley and Rob Dixon each went 3-for-4 to pace the offense. Shawn Drake chipped in with a 2-for-3 effort.

In game two JB's exploded for ten runs in the top of the 1st and never looked back en route to a 21-6, five inning rout of Walt's Bar-B-Que. Matt Hutchinson, whose bases clearing double highlighted the 1st, shared nine hits with Brian Croley and Shawn Drake.

JB's needed another 7th inning rally to finish round robin play with a 3-0 mark. Trailing Backyard Boys 6-5 after six, JB's struck for three unanswered runs in the top of the 7th to emerge with an 8-6 win. Matt Hutchinson singled in the tying run, Shawn Drake followed with a sac fly to score the game winner, then Jeremy Snyder doubled home Hutchinson with an insurance run. Snyder then held Backyard Boys scoreless in the bottom of the 7th to preserve the win.

Hutchinson banged out three hits and Brian Croley added two for the winners.

JB's needed yet another come-from-behind win in the first round of the elimination tournament after falling behind OC Softball 6-3 after four and a half innings. Matt Hosterman's two run single in the bottom of the 5th cut OC's lead to 6-5, then Shawn Drake delivered an rbi single to make it 6-6. Chris Perry followed with an rbi double to put JB's ahead 7-6. Then later in the inning Dan Nichols capped off the inning with an rbi single as the lead swelled to 10-6. OC Softball could only muster one more run against Jeremy Snyder over the next two innings to make the final 10-7.

Chris Perry laced out three hits, and Gene Conner pitched in with a 2-for-3 performance.

JB's never trailed in the finals against Huber Landscaping, scoring at least three runs in each of the first four innings to build a 13-3 lead. Huber never recovered, falling 17-6 in six. Chris Perry's rbi single put his club on the board in a three run 1st. Jeremy Snyder, who had a big bases clearing triple in JB's four run 4th, collected four hits, and Chris Perry, Rob Dixon, Matt Hutchinson and Matt Hosterman shared twelve hits.

JB's manager Matt Hutchinson said his team got a big boost during the tournament from sub Aaron Brewster.

"He came off the bench throughout the day and batted 1.000 in the second game and drove in three runs," said Hutchinson. "His efforts coming off the bench inspired our team."

Hutchinson said his team never really thought about repeating in the event until several events in the tournament began reminding them of their 2005 championship.

"It was kinda funny," said Hutchinson. "We really didn't think about it throughout the day. But after our first game, when we started out slow and came back and got some timely hitting and pulled out a victory, then we got on a roll like last year, we noticed a lot of similarities with rallying from behind."

Bayes & Sons/Kodiaks Bomb FBC 25-15, Guido's Shells A & A 35-17 For Kolping Park Titles

Mt. Healthy, Oh.--Bayes & Sons/Kodiaks bombed FBC #2 25-15, while Guido's shelled A & A 35-17 in the deciding games in a pair of four team Saturday night round robins April 29th at Kolping Park.

Bayes & Sons/Kodiaks drilled ALBA (0-3) 15-4 in their opener, then battled past FBC (1-2) 10-7 before steamrolling FBC #2 (2-1) 25-15 in a showdown for first place.

While in division two, Guido's drilled Noonan's Hitmen (2-1) 18-7, then suffered an 18-16 setback to the Cardinals (2-1) prior to overpowering A & A Enterprises (35-17) to nail down the title.

May 6-7

Willis, LeGree Lead Graystone Past Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "B-C" NIT Field At Pastime Park

Harrison, Oh.--Pitcher Kirk Willis held four opponents to 33 runs and Keith LeGree hit a near perfect .941 to lead Graystone Mortgage past a nine team Worth-Bud Light USSSA Men's "B-C" National Invitational field May 6th at Pastime Park.

The title gave Graystone a berth into the USSSA Men's "B" World Tournament September 22-24 at Lake Buena Vista, Fl.

D & S Engineering, the highest finishing "C" team, earned a paid berth to the USSSA "C" World September 22-24 in Sterling Heights, Mi.

LeGree was nearly unstoppable (16-for-17) in leading Graystone in hitting and shared tournament MVP honors along with Willis. Brian Anderson (.867), Brian Key (.706), Todd Hayes, Carey Taylor and Gordon Powell joined LeGree and Willis on the all-tournament team. Key shared tournament home run honors with four.

Graystone sponsor-manager Carlos Gray called Willis' pitching "outstanding.

"He pitched all four games and kept guys off-balance. No one was ever able to get comfortable with him at the plate," said Gray. "His breaking ball was working both ways. He can make it break either inside or outside. He has a knuckle ball too and he had it all working yesterday."

Gray said his team had been a hitting slump recently and LeGree's .941 effort "sparked the team.

"We haven't been hitting the ball well lately and it just got contagious," said Gray.

"Keith led our offense and Kirk held it down with great pitching," summed up Gray.

LeGree also stood out defensively along with Walter Crump and Donald Broach, said Gray.

"Keith made play after play at short, Walt had an outstanding day at 1st base, and Donald Broach pulled one back in against PRI and he was all over the place in centerfield," said Gray.

"We played excellent team defense and finally showed some consistency at the plate," remarked Gray. "We just haven't been performing well at the plate. We've been playing pretty good defense but just not hitting."

Graystone trailed Max Softball 7-5 after three innings in their opener, but in the top of the 4th rallied for four runs to take the lead for good. A two run shot by Otis Steele knotted the score, then Gordon Powell and Keith LeGree followed with rbi singles. Max trimmed the deficit to 11-10 with three runs in the bottom of the 5th, but Graystone answered with three in the 6th, then sealed the win with a seven run outburst in the 7th to make the final 21-10. Pitcher Kirk Willis held Max scoreless in their final two at bats.

Brian Anderson and Keith LeGree banged out five hits apiece to pace the offense. Todd Hayes added four and Brian Key and Otis Steele each went 3-for-5.

The top of the 4th proved to be Graystone's inning to rally from behind in game two also. Trailing PRI 6-5 after three, Graystone erupted for six runs to grab an 11-6 lead and never looked back in a 16-8 rout. Otis Steele's rbi single put his club ahead to stay at 7-6, then Donald Roach delivered a bases clearing triple as the lead swelled to 10-6. Two innings later Graystone plated five more runs to blow the contest open. Carey Taylor's solo shot sparked the rally, and a Brian Key two run swat capped off the scoring.

Donald Broach collected five rbi's and went 3-for-4 along with Brian Anderson, Keith LeGree, Brian Key and Carey Taylor.

In the winners' bracket finals Graystone jumped out to a 14-1 lead after an inning and a half, then fended off Community Cab/Marty's Pub/Easton 17-13. Back-to-back solos by Brian Anderson and Donald Broach got Graystone on the board in a three run 1st. Broach added a two run tater to highlight an eleven run 2nd. Community Cab's offense woke up in the bottom of the 6th, as they plated ten runs to cut the deficit to 16-13. But Graystone tallied the final run of the game in the 7th while Kirk Willis shut down Cab in the bottom of the 7th to preserve the win.

Anderson and Keith LeGree combined for eight hits, and Willis, Carey Taylor and Gordon Powell chipped in with three.

The finals was all Graystone. The eventual champions exploded for eleven runs in the top of the 1st and never looked back in a 20-2, five inning rout. Todd Hayes and Brian Key both contributed two run homers in the 1st, with Hayes' shot making it 6-0 and Keys' swat capping off the inning. Cab never recovered.

Keith LeGree and Brian Key pounded out four hits apiece for the champions, and Donald Broach, Todd Hayes, Carey Taylor and Gordon Powell shared eight.

Carlos Gray, whose team won the USSSA Black American World last September, said that winning local "B" NIT's was one of Graystone's top priorities in 2006.

"I told the guys one of our focal points was to try to do well locally, and finally we had everyone there yesterday," said Gray. "We didn't want to spend the whole summer sweating trying to get that (World) berth.

"I'm proud of the team," concluded Gray. "We worked through the tough times over the last month and a half and we stuck with it."

**WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA MEN'S CLASS B-C
NATIONAL INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT**

- | | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 1. | Graystone Mortgage, Cincinnati, OH | 4 0 |
| 2. | Community Cab/Marty's Pub/Easton, Cin., OH | 3 2 |
| 3. | Freeze/Arnold/BW3/Easton, Cincinnati, OH | 3 2 |
| 4. | PRI/Easton, Cincinnati, OH | 3 2 |
| 5. | Wessel/A & K/Blitz, Cincinnati, OH | 1 2 |
| | D & S Engineering, Cincinnati, OH | 1 2 |
| 7. | Sentry Fire Protection/Apex/LBYC, Erlanger, KY | 1 2 |
| | Max Softball, Cincinnati, OH | 0 2 |
| 9. | PRI/Premier Sports, Cincinnati, OH | 0 2 |

**WORTH-BUD LIGHT-SPORTS-USSSA MEN'S
CLASS B-C NATIONAL INV. ALL-TOURN. TEAM**

Jeff Click	Freeze/Arnold/BW3/Easton
George Farris	Freeze/Arnold/BW3/Easton
Tony Sharkins	Freeze/Arnold/BW3/Easton
Trevor Barth	Freeze/Arnold/BW3/Easton
Mike Rogers	Community Cab/Marty's Pub/Easton
Mike Reichert	Community Cab/Marty's Pub/Easton
Dave Beall	Community Cab/Marty's Pub/Easton
Tony Huber	Community Cab/Marty's Pub/Easton
Chris Hunt	Community Cab/Marty's Pub/Easton
Todd Hayes	Graystone Mortgage
Brian Key	Graystone Mortgage
Carey Taylor	Graystone Mortgage
Gordon Powell	Graystone Mortgage
Brian Anderson	Graystone Mortgage
Ben Moerlein - ODP	Community Cab/Marty's Pub/Easton
Mike Canupp - HR Ldr. (4)	Freeze/Arnold/BW3/Easton
Brian Key - HR Leader (4)	Graystone Mortgage
Kirk Willis - MVP	Graystone Mortgage
Keith LeGree - MVP	Graystone Mortgage

BPSI/Fairfield Flooring/Absolute Electric/1 Call Awards Escapes Real Deal, Steamrolls Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "C" Field At Kolping Park

Mt. Healthy, Oh.--BPSI/Fairfield Flooring/Absolute Electric/1 Call Awards held off Real Deal 10-9 in their opener, then steamrolled three opponents to capture first place in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "C" State-National Qualifier May 7th at Kolping Park.

BPSI outscored their final three opponents by a combined 58-27 margin as they routed Zone 15 17-7, then mercy-ruled Big "O" Softball 22-11 and Memories 19-5 in five innings.

The victory gave BPSI a berth into the Ohio USSSA Men's "C" State Tournament August 12-13 in Milford, and into the U-Trip "C" Great Lakes Nationals Labor Day Weekend in Indianapolis.

Runner-up Big "O" qualified for the "D" Nationals Labor Day Weekend in Milford, and must play in the "D" State Tournament August 19-20 in Taylor Mill, Ky.

John Messinger paced the champions with a blistering .900 day. He received ample support from Jay Byrd at .727, James Ahrens, Tim Bacon and Adam Asphaw at .615 and Jason Osborne and Shawn Huff at .571.

Player-manager Jason Osborne credited his club's victory to "clutch hitting.

"We came up with the big hits when we needed them," summed up Osborne. "John Messinger had quite a few key hits for us."

Messinger, BPSI's pitcher, also stood out defensively along with left fielder James Ahrens, said Osborne.

"John grabbed a lot of balls up the middle, and that was definitely a big help," said Osborne. "And James Ahrens came up with a lot of key assists throwing guys out from left field."

BPSI got off to a slow start, needing six runs in the bottom of the 4th to overcome a 7-4 Real Deal lead. Jason Osborne's rbi single put his club ahead to stay at 8-7 in the 4th. Real Deal was able to muster loan runs in the 6th and 7th to make the final 10-9.

Tim Bacon and James Ahrens banged out four hits each, and Osborne and Messinger were both 2-for-3.

Next PBSI broke open a 3-2 contest with eight runs in the top of the 2nd to seal an eventual 17-7 victory over Zone 15. Jay Byrd contributed a two run single and speed merchant Wally Drake's three run single capped off the inning.

Adam Asphaw and Ryan Whitey combined for three hits, and John Messinger added two.

That pitted PBSI against eventual runner-up Big "O" Softball in what turned out to be the deciding game of the tournament. And once again PBSI used an eight run outburst, this time in the top of the 3rd, to break a 9-9 stalemate and take a commanding 17-9 advantage. Ryan Whitey's sac fly plated Wally Drake with the go-ahead run, then Mike Little followed with a big bases clearing triple. Big "O" never recovered, falling 22-11 in five. Shawn Huff and Tim Bacon shared eight hits, and Jason Osborne and James Ahrens chipped in with three each.

In the finale Memories threatened to spoil PBSI's perfect record, as they jumped out to an 8-3 lead after two and a half innings. But in the bottom of the 3rd, PBSI erupted for seven runs to take the lead for good at 10-8. A Tim Bacon three run blast cut the deficit to 8-6. Later after his club had knotted the score at 8-8, John Messinger delivered a two run single to put PBSI ahead to stay. PBSI added four in the 4th and four in the 5th to nail down a 19-9, five inning win.

Six PBSI players - Bacon, Messinger, Jason Osbourne, James Ahrens, Shawn Huff, and Jay Byrd - went 3-for-4 to fuel the offense.

PBSI manager Jason Osborne said his team was "surprised" to capture the tournament in such convincing fashion.

"We were very surprised," said Osborne. "But we did have a very good defensive and offensive day."

Loveless Hardwood/Conveyor Solutions/A Total Tan/Tri-Serv/Easton Rolls To Third Title In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "C" At Riverstar

Loveless Hardwood/Conveyor Solutions/A Total Tan/Tri-Serv/Easton rolled to their third title of the year in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "C" State-National Qualifier May 6th at Riverstar Park.

Pitching and defense lifted the champions as they held three opponents to only thirteen runs behind Kelly Ferreira. Loveless/Easton mercy-ruled Cincysoftball.com/Cooper Sports 19-8 in their finale to nail down the title.

Ferreira led his club on both sides of the line, as he also led Loveless/Easton in hitting with a .750 average.

"He's one of our team leaders as far as his overall play," commented Loveless/Easton manager Tom Richmond. "He always hustles and plays hard, and it shows in his pitching and hitting."

Other hitting leaders included Jason Wood at .667, Jason Roeder at .660, Bo Heinrich at .636, Jud McMillin at .625 and Wayne Reese at .556.

Heinrich led Loveless/Easton in home runs with two and rbi's with ten.

"He seems to come up with a big, clutch hit in just about every game we play," observed Richmond. "And he also does a great job in the field."

Loveless/Easton put up three in the 2nd, three in the 3rd and three in the 5th to take a commanding 9-0 lead en route to an 11-1 victory over Merchants El Mariachi in game one. Billy Villines put his club on the board with an rbi single in the 1st. Bo Heinrich smacked a two run double and scored on Tony Huston's rbi single to account for Loveless/Easton's three runs in the 3rd. Joey Vandever doubled home two runs in the 5th, and Bo Heinrich socked a two run homer in the 7th to close out the scoring.

Kelly Ferreira was perfect in four at bats, and Heinrich and Jason Wood each went 2-for-4.

After allowing four runs in the top of the 1st, pitcher Kelly Ferreira held Pride Cast/S & W/DeMarini scoreless over the final six innings as Loveless/Easton roared back to take an easy 14-4 win. Tony Huston's two run double put his club ahead for good at 5-4 as Loveless answered with seven runs in the bottom of the 1st. Loveless tacked on three more in the 3rd with the help of a Jud McMillin solo shot and a Jason Roeder rbi double.

Kelly Ferreira, Bo Heinrich, Tony Huston and Jason Roeder shared twelve hits, and Ryan Richmond and Billy Villines chipped in two apiece.

Cincysoftball.com/Easton held an early 5-4 lead after an inning and a half in game three, but the wheels fell off the wagon in the bottom of the 2nd as Loveless exploded for eleven runs to grab a 15-5 lead. Tony Huston put Loveless ahead to stay for the second straight game with a two run double. Ryan Richmond followed with a two run single as the lead grew to 8-5. Finally in the bottom of the 5th Bo Heinrich delivered the knockout blow with a three run blast to invoke the mercy-rule at 19-8.

Wayne Reese and Ryan Richmond combined for six hits, and Heinrich, Jason Wood and Jud McMillin added three each.

Loveless/Easton manager Tom Richmond credited his club's championship to "pitching and defense."

"We only gave up thirteen runs in three games," noted Richmond. "And we had a good weekend hitting. Everybody hit the ball really well."

Richmond said that no one player really stood out on defense.

"We just played pretty steady on defense," he said. "We just made the routine plays and the plays you have to make to win ball games."

A berth to the Ohio USSSA "C" State Tournament August 12-13 in Milford and to the U-Trip "C" Nationals September 2-3 in Indianapolis passed down to runner-up Cincysoftball.com/Cooper Sports.

Late Rallies Lift Walker/Tanel Past Pharmacy Solutions 24-17 In Cincysoftball.com-Dick's-Big 64-USSSA "D" World Qualifier At Rumpke Park

Crosby Township, Oh.--Walker/Tanel rallied for sixteen runs in their final three at bats to overtake Pharmacy Solutions 24-17 in the championship game of the Cincysoftball.com-Dick's-Big 64-USSSA "D" World qualifier May 6th at Rumpke Park.

In a see-saw finals, Walker/Tanel battled from behind on three separate occasions to outlast Pharmacy Solutions, which had jumped out to a 7-0 lead in the bottom of the 1st, and later blew leads of 12-8 in the 5th and 17-16 in the 6th.

The victory netted Walker/Tanel a berth to the USSSA "D" World Tournament September 21-24 in Overland, Ks. Pharmacy Solutions and lower division champion and runners-up Schmoie's Collision and Watson's received paid state berths.

Walker/Tanel was led offensively by Mark Thompson at .727, Andy Foster at .690, Mark Foreman at .588 and Dave Farmer at .571. The champions hit .522 as a team.

Thompson just recently joined the team, said Walker/Tanel manager Ray Jackson.

"He just moved here from Florida," said Jackson. "He's played with us a couple of weeks now. Even when he made outs, the ball was well struck. He hit the ball well all day."

But it was team defense, stressed Jackson, that led this team to the title.

"No doubt about it," said Jackson. "We didn't hit real good starting out the tournament. Our first three games we didn't reach ten runs. Our middle infielder Chris Lee had eight putouts in the in our first two games and five in the second."

Left fielder Andy Foster also stepped up defensively, noted Jackson.

"Andy had two great defensive plays," said Jackson. "In the championship game he made a diving catch down the line with bases loaded and two outs and that prevented them from having a big inning. They had already scored a few but were looking to score a lot more if he had not made that catch. It was the bottom of the 5th and they had just taken a 17-16 lead."

Two games before that Foster made another huge grab, said Jackson.

"It was a diving catch in the gap. He laid out and got it. There were runners on 1st and 2nd and he dove and caught the ball and it ended up being a double play that got us out of the inning. He got up and threw the runner out going to 2nd."

Pitcher Davey Farmer tossed a 7-0 shutout win in Walker/Tanel's opener, then the Hoosier club eased past Alvis Landscaping before falling to Schmoie's Collision 11-9 in their round robin finale. Walker/Tanel's 2-1 record earned them a berth in the elimination round.

Walker/Tanel's sluggish offense didn't come to life until the top of the 4th in game four. Trailing the Diamond Dawgs 2-0 after three, Walker/Tanel erupted for seven runs, taking a 3-2 lead on Mark Thompson's bases-clearing triple. Pitcher Davey Farmer limited the

Dawgs to a lone run over the final four innings and Walker/Tanel emerged with an 11-3 victory. Thompson banged out three hits to pace the offense.

Walker/Tanel's offense clicked on all cylinders in game five as they mercy ruled CWA #4400 17-4 in five innings. The winners jumped out to a 10-2 lead with four runs in the top of the 2nd and six in the 3rd and never looked back. Benny Lassiter's two run double capped off the 2nd, and Terry Johnson ignited the 3rd with a two run double. Mark Foreman, Chris Lee and Andy Foster combined for nine hits to pace the offense.

Extreme/Turner was poised to oust Walker/Tanel from the tournament in the semi-finals, as they carried a 4-0 lead into the top of the 5th. But in the 5th Walker/Tanel erupted for seven runs, taking the lead for good at 5-4 on Tom Wissel's two run single. Back-to-back three run innings in the 6th and 7th sealed a 13-5 victory. Mark Thompson and Andy Foster collected four hits each, and Ray Jackson added three.

Walker/Tanel needed another come-from-behind win in the finals, as Pharmacy Solutions jumped out to a 7-0 lead in the bottom of the 1st. Walker/Tanel finally wrenched the lead away with an eight run 5th to go ahead 16-12, but Pharmacy Solutions answered with five in the bottom of the inning to grab a 17-16 lead. Finally Walker/Tanel plated four in the 6th and four in the 7th to pull out a hard-fought 24-17 victory. Andy Foster pounded out six hits, Mark Thompson added five, and Terry Johnson and Davey Farmer each went 4-for-5 to power the champions.

Walker/Tanel's Ray Jackson called the "Big 64" a "good, well-run tournament.

"We liked it," said Jackson. "We liked playing on just one day. We were surprised you could do that with that many teams."

Schmoe's Collision Sweeps Consolation Bracket - After finishing third with a 2-1 mark in round robin play due to tie-breaker rules, Schmoe's Collision roared through the Cincysoftball.com-Dick's-Big 64-USSSA "D" lower bracket to earn a paid state tournament berth.

Alvis Landscaping delivered Schmoe's a devastating 21-11 first round setback that ultimately kept them from advancing to the championship bracket. But Schmoe's bounced back to trim Watson's 10-9 and then delivered eventual overall champion Walker/Tanel their only setback, 11-9.

Schmoe's then steamrolled Woodpeckers 18-4 in four innings, Watson's 6-2, Accurate Masonry 12-9 and Guido's 15-5 in six innings.

Mike Pettyjohn and Mike Baldrick banged out four hits each against the Woodpeckers. Scott Blair, John Westheider and Chad Downing chipped in with three hits, and Ralph Witaker added two.

Baldrick collected three more safeties versus Watson's. Pitcher Ron Loveless held Watson's scoreless after the 2nd inning to preserve the win.

Wayne Emmons and Mike Pettyjohn combined for eight hits in the semi-finals over Accurate Masonry. Russell Engle, Ron Loveless and Mike Baldrick shared nine safeties.

Then in the finals Pettyjohn and Chad Downing pounded out four hits apiece, and Bo Latscha, Mike Baldrick and Wayne Emmons added three. Mike Mitchell chipped in with a 2-for-2 effort.

Mike Baldrick turned in a blistering .740 day to pace the offense. Mike Pettyjohn was close behind at .714, Wayne Emmons hit .694, Bo Latscha .667, Russell Engle and John Westheider .582 and Chad Downing .541.

Schmoe's got a big lift from their bench too, stressed manager Scott Blair, with Ian Thorpe (5-for-9), Blair (3-for-3) and Tom Weldon (2-for-3) combining for a 10-for-15 outing.

"We had good hitting and good defense," said Blair. "We hit all day. The other team just hit a little more than us in that first game. We hit together and scored in almost every inning. We were fighting for runs."

Defensively, Blair said his squad "didn't have many errors.

"Our pitcher (Ron Loveless) fielded the middle all day. And Mike Pettyjohn turned three or four unassisted double plays at 2nd base. He had a helluva day. Chad Downing had a good day in right center too. They were running him all day.

"It was the best ball we've played all year," summed up Blair. "It felt good. It was nice to win."

Two-n-out.com/Easton Breaks Through In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" Super Qualifier At Riverstar

By Andy Zureick

Two-n-out.com/Easton won four games with no losses to win the 10-team Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" Super Qualifier at Riverstar Park on May 6th. It was their first championship of the year. "We were glad to get some second place jinx off of us," said a relieved Shawn Sproles, the team manager. "It was our sixth tournament and we've had four second-place finishes." Two-n-out.com/Easton also walked with \$500 cash.

In the day's opener, Two-n-out.com/Easton faced Clark Co. Merchants. Shawn Sproles singled to drive in two in the top of the 4th, breaking a 6-6 tie. They ended that inning with a 10-6 lead. Each team would score one more to make it an 11-7 final. Jeff Hughes went 4-for-4. Chris Malay was 3-for-4 while Anthony Coleman hit 2-for-3.

The second game against Dirt Merchants would be the biggest win of the day for Two-n-out.com/Easton. Jeff Hughes gave them the lead in the three-run 4th with an RBI single. Five more in the 5th and four in the 6th broke the game open. In that stretch, Anthony Coleman and Chris Malay each drove in two. The game ended via mercy rule, 17-5, in six innings. Jeff Hughes, Mike Sellet, Chris Fogt, and Michael Daniele were all 3-for-4.

Two-n-out.com kept up their winning ways versus the Diamond Dawgs. They jumped out to an early lead with five runs in the top of the 1st. Mike Sellet got the scoring underway in that at bat with an RBI double. Chris Fogt would single in two more. After the Diamond Dawgs cut the lead to 7-6, Two-n-out.com answered with four runs in the top of the 6th. Shawn Sproles capped the at bat with a two-run single. The final score was 11-7. Mike Sellet and Shawn Donaghy were both 3-for-3; Chris Fogt was 2-for-3.

The championship game was a rematch between Two-n-out.com and Clark Co. Merchants. Trailing 6-5 in the bottom of the 6th, Two-n-out.com plated five to take a 10-6 lead. James Evans and Jeff Hughes posted a pair of run-scoring singles in the decisive inning. Clark Co. Merchants managed only one run in their final chance to make the final tally 10-7. Jeff Hughes, Mike Sellet, and Brian Cook were all 3-for-4.

"It was an overall team effort, everybody contributed," explained Sproles. "We used 13 or 14 players."

"Our defensive outfield of Chris Millay (leftfield), Jeff Hughes (centerfield), and Shawn Donaghy (rightfield) cut off most balls and they didn't allow many doubles in the gaps. Chad Johnson made a couple of good diving plays...it was his second tournament at shortstop. I pitched the first two games and Tony Pompilio pitched the last two and I don't think we gave up more than seven runs in any game," added Sproles.

Jeff Hughes led Two-n-out.com with 11 hits on the day, good for a .687 batting average. "It was the first time we put him in the leadoff spot. He's our 21-year old soccer man (he plays professional soccer for the Cincinnati Kings) and he came through for us big time." Shawn Donaghy and Chris Fogt each hit .692 for the tournament. Michael Daniele finished at .636.

"We want to thank Bill Chard [the Riverstar Sportsplex manager] for running a smooth and quick qualifier," concluded Sproles.

Clark Co. Merchants and Diamond Dawgs earned berths to the USSSA "D" nationals on Labor Day weekend in Milford, Ohio. They also qualified for the post-season state tournament. Clark Co. Merchants will play in Columbus while the Dawgs will make an appearance in the Dayton tournament.

Hitmen Continue Solid Season In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" State-National Qualifier At Expressway Park

By Andy Zureick

Milford, Oh. – The Hitmen started the month of May the same way they did April, winning a tournament at Expressway Park. This time it was the May 7th Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" State-National Qualifier.

They opened the event against the Cincy Sting. Wally Cox got his team on the board in the top of the 1st with an RBI sacrifice fly. Joe Downing did the same to increase the lead to 2-0. Tim Roth doubled in two to cap off a four-run 6th that increased the Hitmen lead to 14-4. Cincy Sting made a run at it with seven runs in their final three at bats, but eventually fell 15-10. Roth finished the game 3-for-4 with four runs batted in. Greg Carson was also 3-for-4. Wally Cox went 2-for-3.

The Hitmen also got out early in game two versus JB's by scoring eight runs in their first at bat. Tim Roth and Brian Roberts drove in two apiece with a double and single, respectively. They tacked on four more in both the 4th and 5th innings to blow the game open, 17-5. JB's failed to close the gap in the bottom of the 5th, and the game ended at that score via the mercy rule. Joe Downing was a perfect 4-for-4; Ron Sterling was 3-for-4. Adam Dettwiller and Pat Rarick each were 2-for-3.

The final game of the day pitted the Hitmen opposite the Cincinnati Riverdogs. Going into the Hitmen half of the 5th, they trailed 6-5. But nine runs in that turn erased the deficit and built an insurmountable lead. Ron Sterling doubled in the go-ahead run. Later in the

inning, Pat Rarick and Adam Dettwiller had hits that tacked on two more each. Neither team scored the rest of the way. The final was 14-6. Greg Carson nabbed top offensive honors by going 4-for-4. Ron Sterling and Rodney Burns each collected three hits.

Sterling was also tops at the plate for the Hitmen in the entire tournament with a .667 batting average. "He had a huge day," praised the team manager, Greg Carson. "He usually bats between .500 and .600 and he's been hitting the ball well the whole season." Carson hit a team second-best .636.

Joe Downing was the top run producer, driving in nine runs. Tim Roth collected eight RBI. "We've been hitting the ball real well," explained Carson.

"Our outfield carried us...they do a great job covering the outfield and they pretty much played every game," Carson added. "Those three guys (Pat Rarick, leftfield; Adam Dettwiller, centerfield; Gordon Cordell, rightfield) did an outstanding job."

"We played some pretty good competition this year in some pretty good tournaments...we're 19-5 overall now on the year."

Coming into the day, all the teams in the tournament had already qualified for the postseason so no berths were awarded.

Secret Service Puts The Clamps On Opponents In Expressway's Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D-E" State-National Qualifier

Milford, Oh. – Secret Service allowed only four runs and never trailed as they won the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D-E" State-National Qualifier at Expressway Park on May 7th.

"We were loose, had confidence and the "D" was there. We played really solid, made the plays we should have been making," explained Secret Service manager Ed Popp. "We only gave up two walks in the whole tournament, and that helped. Any time you can avoid giving away free bases...it helps out a lot. We only gave up four runs [in the entire tournament]."

Game one was a great indicator of just how stingy the Secret Service defensive was going to be. Facing the Unstoppables, Ed Popp tossed a five-inning shutout. Greg Peeno's two-run double got Secret Service on the board in the bottom of the 2nd as his team jumped out to a 4-0 lead. They added four more in the 3rd. Andy Lucking doubled in two as part of a seven-run 4th that put the game away, 15-0. Dave Wade and Greg Peeno were a perfect 3-for-3 in the victory. Tony Huber and Ed Popp were 3-for-4 and 3-for-5, respectively.

Remax, the eventual runner-up, at least managed to dent the scoreboard versus Secret Service in game two. John Huber collected two RBI in the three-run 1st. Ed Popp did the same in the second as the Secret Service lead swelled to 8-0. Eight more in the top of the 4th, including another run batted in for John Huber, made it 17-1. That would also be the final in the five-inning, run-rule shortened game. Ed Popp led all hitters at 4-for-4. John Huber went 3-for-3. Tony Huber also chipped in three hits.

In the deciding game, Secret Service faced Airtight Plumbing. Secret Service jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the top of the 1st. John Huber helped his team draw first blood with a two-run double. Ed Popp doubled in two more in the five-run 2nd. They added one more in the 3rd, another in the 6th, and two in the 7th. Airtight collected single runs in the 2nd, 3rd, and 5th to fall short in the 9-3 final. Andy Lucking was a team-best 3-for-3 in the win. Tony Huber and Ed Popp were both 2-for-3.

Lucking (.777) also posted the top batting average in the tournament for Secret Service. "What is most impressive is he normally comes to sub for us and to get seven hits on the day was a big lift for us," commented Popp.

Popp finished the day at .750. Tony Huber rounded out the offensive honor roll with a .727 average.

"The bottom of the order really came through for us with Andy Lucking and Greg Peeno going 11-17 for the day with several key hits."

Popp also singled out Dave Durken as a defensive standout in the tournament. "David Wade left after the first game and he was able to fill in and turned a big double play in the third game."

"It's nice to be qualified for the nationals this early in the year," concluded Popp.

Dirty Birds Top Ten Team Field At Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" World Qualifier At Riverstar Sportsplex By Andy Zureick

Cincinnati, Oh. – The Dirty Birds won six games with no defeats as they took top honors in the May 7th Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" World Qualifier at Riverstar Park.

Of the four games the Birds won in pool play, three were decided by three or fewer runs. The first of the day against Adi's Place was one of them. Scott Pangallo and Mike Whitaker were 3-for-4 while teammates Adam Bolinger and Mike Orick went 3-for-5 as they won 11-9.

Game two against the Renegades was a five-inning mercy rule blow out, 17-2. Mike Orick, Dion Pangallo, and Derrick Smith all went 3-for-3 in that one.

Facing Evil Twin Bar & Grill, the Dirty Birds squeaked out a 5-4 decision thanks to 2-for-3 hitting from Steve Madlener, Dan Clevenger, and Dion Pangallo.

They wrapped up a perfect 4-and-0 start with a 14-11 besting of Lights Out. Dan Bridges led the way in that one, going 4-for-4. Dan Clevenger and Derrick Smith each were 3-for-3.

The first game of the single-elimination playoff for the Dirty Birds versus JB's was their second victory on the day by way of the run rule. Dan Clevenger's two-run single led the way to a six-run 1st. Mike Whitaker did the same in the top of the 5th as four runs increased the lead to 15-4. JB's failed to score in the bottom of the frame, and that is how the game ended. Clevenger was 4-for-4 in the victory.

In the finals, the Dirty Birds took on Westwood Style/Game Day Café. In the top of the 4th they plated five runs to erase a 6-3 deficit and take a two run advantage. Paul Guenther singled in two to put his team ahead, 7-6. Rick Rorick and Dan Clevenger had a pair of run-scoring singles in the 6th as the Dirty Birds increased the lead to 10-7. That capped the scoring for the game making that the final score. Steve Madlener was a team-best 4-for-5 in the championship win. Mike Orick was 3-for-4.

The middle and bottom of the Dirty Bird line-up had an especially good day. "[Steve Madlener (.591), Mike Orick (.667), Dan Clevenger (.650), and Mike Whitaker (.667)] did a great job," noted Bird manager Paul Guenther. "The middle of the line-up got 50 hits and the bottom got 30 – that's how we won the tournament right there."

"Our whole defense was great. We only committed six errors in six games...that's pretty good for "E" ball," Guenther commented.

"Dan Clevenger hurt his ankle last week in the "Big 64", and we had to bring him in from the outfield to third base and he helped us out a lot. Mike Whitaker switched from right field to left field the last couple of weeks and he's done a great job."

"We played sound defense and we hit the ball great with two outs," concluded Guenther. "We played good as a team and we won as a team."

Silverton Café Arsenal Punches Postseason Ticket In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" State-National Qualifier At Expressway Park **By Andy Zureick**

Milford, Oh. – Silverton Café Arsenal secured berths to both the state and national USSSA postseason tournaments by going a perfect 3-0 and winning the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" State-National Qualifier at Expressway Park on the 7th of May. Second-place Team Old Spice also qualified for the state tournament, which will be played in Harrison on August 19-20. The nationals are scheduled for Labor Day weekend in Ft. Knox, Kentucky.

Silverton Café Arsenal started the day with a 17-3, six-inning mercy-rule pasting of Nighthawks. Mike Delfavero got the scoring underway in inning number one with a two-run triple. Four runs in all crossed the plate in that at bat. They added four more in the 4th and then six in the 6th, including two on another Delfavero extra-base hit. He finished the game 3-for-4 with five RBI. Teammate Chris Berling drove in four on 3-for-3 hitting. Steve Schott and Scott Nathan were also 3-for-4 in the victory.

Facing Auto Appearance Center in game two, the key for Silverton Café Arsenal was the bottom of the 2nd inning. Scott Nathan and Larry Chialasteri each singled, driving in two apiece as their team jumped out to an 8-1 lead. In the last five innings, each team would tack on two more to make the final 10-3. Chris Berling was 3-for-3 for the second straight game.

The final game of the tournament between Silverton Café Arsenal and Team Old Spice would be the one to decide first place. Going into the bottom of the fifth, things did not look good for Silverton as they were on the wrong side of a 6-0 score. But in that at bat, they pushed across six runs to tie the game. Larry Chialasteri capped the inning with a two-run double. In the 6th, each team added a run to raise the total to 7-7. Team Old Spice failed to score in the top of the final frame, so Silverton Café Arsenal would need only one to win the game and the tournament. Chris Berling and Larry Chialasteri led off the at bat with back-to-back singles. Shane Beverly followed with a walk and the bases were juiced. Then, with one out, Keith Topmiller sealed the deal by bringing the winning run home with a sacrifice fly. Mike Delfavero was a perfect 4-for-4 in the championship contest. Brandon Hickey had his best game of the tournament going 3-for-4.

“It came down to the Old Spice game,” explained Silverton Café Arsenal manager Scott Nathan. “We fell behind and we weren’t hitting the ball, but we knew we could beat them. It was just a matter of putting some hits together and scoring runs. Mike Delfavero led the way and we finally got a big inning.”

Delfavero, with seven runs batted in and a .727 batting average, was second only to Chris Berling in hitting for the Silverton team. Berling finished the day at .800. “[Chris] really did a good job for us today...a lot of clutch hits,” noted Nathan.

Along with clutch hitting, great outfield play from Delfavero in leftcenter and Steve Schott in rightcenter was also key to the Arsenal success according to Nathan. “Everybody stepped up when we needed it.”

Best Performance Of Year For Cincinnati Diamondbacks In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “D” State-National Qualifier At Expressway **By Andy Zureick**

Milford, Oh. – The Cincinnati Diamondbacks turned in their most complete performance of the year as they went 3-0 to win the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men’s “D” State-National Qualifier at Expressway Park on May 7th.

“This was the first tournament [of the year] that we’ve actually played well in every game,” explained team manager Steve Sliter, “and we played some pretty good teams.”

The first game of the day was a nail-biter against OC Softball. Going into the bottom half of the 7th with the Cincinnati Diamondbacks coming to bat, the game was tied 7-7. Matt Wallar got things started with a base on balls. After an out, he advanced to third on a double by Jason Broxson. Rick Lowery then collected the game-winning RBI with a sacrifice fly to centerfield. Broxson was 3-for-3 in the 8-7 victory. Teammate Donnie Jefferson was also 3-for-3.

Game two of the four-team round robin versus Moe’s Southwest Grill was not nearly as close, thanks in large part six first-inning runs. In that at bat, Jeremy Dick tripled to drive in two and Ken Throckmorton drove in two more with a double. The Cincinnati Diamondbacks went on to win 12-4. Justin Dick led the way at the plate with a perfect 3-for-3 performance. Donnie Jefferson went 2-for-3.

In the wrap up opposite Greenies, the Cincinnati Diamondbacks won going away as they again jumped out to an early first-inning lead. This time it was ten big runs in the opening frame that told the story. Ricky Lowery knocked in two with a double and Steve Storms plated three with an inside-the-park homerun. The game ended via the mercy rule in five with the score 17-2 in favor of the Diamondbacks. Storms and Jason Broxson were both 4-for-4 in the win; Bryan Molina and Justin Dick each finished at 3-for-4.

Jason Broxson was also the leading hitter in the tournament for the Cincinnati Diamondbacks with an .818 batting average. “He kept us on pace offensively,” noted Sliter. A trio of Diamondbacks – Justin Dick, Donnie Jefferson, and Steve Storms – hit .600 to tie for second-best honors.

According to Sliter, the key for his team was their play in the field. “[We got] great pitching by Kenny Throckmorton in the first two games and Steve Storms pitched the third game and [we had] great all-around defense.. Bryan Molina played great at third base and Jeremy and Justin Dick played well in the corners of the outfield.”

No berths to post-season play were awarded as all participating team had qualified in previous events.

Fat Daddies Escapes Nirvana, Sweeps Expressway Round Robin

Milford, Oh.--Fat Daddies battled past eventual runner-up Nirvana Nutrition 11-9 in the opening round, then overpowered their next two opponents by a combined 42-16 margin to complete a three game sweep of a four team round robin on Sunday, May 7th at Expressway Park.

After getting past Nirvana, Fat Daddies steamrolled Who Day 23-4 and Jergenson 19-8. Nirvana went 2-1, Who Dey 1-2 and Jergensen 0-3.

Hammertime Trims Sibcy Cline 13-11, Auggies Escapes With Narrow Win At Kolping Park

Mt. Healthy, Oh.--Hammertime trimmed Sibcy Cline 13-11 in the deciding game in division one, while Auggies was awarded a first place finish by the smallest of margins in a pair of four team Saturday night round robins May 6th at Kolping Park.

Hammertime drilled Hope We Got 10 (1-2) 14-3 in their opener, then clipped eventual runner-up Sibcy Cline (2-1) 13-11 to seal a first place finish before steamrolling American Income (0-3) 23-4.

While in division two, Auggies got past Death Row (2-1) 12-8, suffered an 18-15 setback to Moose 36 (2-1) before spanking Miami Lakes (0-3) 21-6. Auggies was awarded the title by a narrow one run margin over Death Row and Moose 36.

Old Spice/Putters Bar Squeezes Past Kolping Field

Mt. Healthy, Oh.--Old Spice/Putters Bar won four games by a combined margin of seven runs en route to a first place finish in a five team Sunday morning round robin May 7th at Kolping Park.

Old Spice/Putters trimmed A & A Enterprises (1-2) 10-8, Paul's Pub & Grill (0-3) 16-15, and Crosley's (2-1) 16-15 prior to polishing off Bushwackers (3-1) 13-10 in the deciding contest.

Lykins/Tower Tee/Tap Out, Groesbeck Tavern, Miller Brewing Take Queen City Divisions

West Chester, Oh.--Lykins Contractors/Tower Tee Golf/Tap Out posted a 3-1 mark in the "C" division, Groesbeck Tavern overpowered three opponents in the "D" division, and Miller Brewing clipped Allied Restoration 13-12 in the deciding game of the "E" division to claim their respective division titles in an eleven team, three division Sunday round robin May 7th at Queen City Sports Complex.

Lykins/Tower Tee/Tap Out routed Emanon (0-4) 19-4 and M & M Connection (3-1) 20-10, then outslugged Emanon 18-17 to clinch first place in the "C" bracket before suffering a 19-13 setback to M & M in the finale.

Groesbeck was never seriously challenged in the "D" division, as they steamrolled the Regulators (2-1) 18-10, Harrison Bowl (1-2) and M. I. A. (0-3) 13-3.

While in the "E" division, Miller Brewing spanked Troy's Boys (1-2) 12-6, then clipped Allied Restoration (2-1) 13-12 in a key second round match-up with the eventual tournament runners-up prior to dropping a tough 8-7 decision to AIM (1-2).

Hirschauer, Late Rallies Lift Ty-1-On Past Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Women's "C" "May Classic" NIT At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--Theresa Hirschauer batted a red-hot .764 and Ty-1-On rallied in their final at bat to win two of their four games en route to a first place finish in the class "C" division of the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Women's "May Classic" National Invitational May 6th at Expressway Park.

Ty-1-On battled past The Shooters 11-6 in the deciding game to complete a four game sweep of the five team round robin affair. The Shooters finished 3-1, while Smokey's Softball, Northern Diamonds and Hart Environmental each posted a 1-3 mark.

Tournament MVP Theresa Hirschauer paced the champions with a hefty .764 effort. Karen Kron was right behind at .733, Shelly Cummins hit .636 and Barb Blesar turned in a .600 performance.

Celia Fritz batted 1.000 (5-for-5) in two games.

Ty-1-On manager Colleen Needham attributed her club's success to "good solid hitting - especially at the top of the line-up.

"And we played pretty good defense," added Needham. "In one game we let them back in it but other than that we played pretty solid defense."

Needham said that tourney MVP Theresa Hirschauer "certain set the tone.

"She led off for us the whole weekend and seemed to always be on base," observed Needham. "And if we needed a hit from her when she came up later in the game, she always seemed to come through."

Hirschauer also stood out defensively, noted Needham.

"Theresa made some good catches in the gaps in left center. She's so fast she covers a lot of ground out there," praised Needham.

Ty-1-On never trailed in game one after jumping on top of Hart Environmental 3-0 in the top of the 1st. Shelly Cummins delivered a two run single to put her club on the board. Hart answered with two in the bottom of the 1st, but Ty-1-On struck for four more in the top of the 2nd to seal an eventual 14-4, five inning rout. Lisa Tyler, whose two run single sparked Ty-1-On's big 2nd inning, was perfect at the plate in three at bats along with with Celia Fritz and Karen Kron.

Smokey's Softball had Ty-1-On against the ropes in game two, as they took an early 6-2 advantage, and later led 8-6 after five and a half. But in the bottom of the 6th, Ty-1-On rallied for three unanswered runs to pull out a 9-8 victory. Brenda Ryan singled to cut the

deficit to 8-7, and Karen Kron followed with a two run double to give Ty-1-On the eventual 9-8 win. Pitcher M. J. Ranz retired the final two batters in the top of the 7th with a runner in scoring position to preserve the win.

Ryan, Celia Fritz, Theresa Hirschauer and Erin Engelkamp combined for eight hits to fuel the offense.

In game three the Northern Diamonds rallied for four runs in the bottom of the 7th to force extra innings before yielding two runs in the top of the 8th as Ty-1-On held on for a 12-10 victory and rolled to a 3-0 record. One out singles by Lisa Richter and Theresa Hirschauer and a two out walk to Shirley Cummins loaded the bases for Erin Engelkamp in the top of the 10th, and Engelkamp calmly came through with a two run single to give her club an eventual 12-10 victory. Pitcher Brenda Ryan retired the Diamonds one-two-three in the bottom of the 8th.

Hirschauer pounded out five hits, Karen Kron collected four and Erin Engelkamp chipped in with a 3-for-5 effort.

That pitted Ty-1-On against the tournament's other undefeated team, the Shooters. The Dayton, Oh., club battled Ty-1-On to a 2-2 stalemate through two, but in the top of the 3rd, Ty-1-On erupted for four runs to grab a 6-2 lead. A bases loaded walk to Shirley Cummins broke the tie, and sac flies by Erin Engelkamp and M. J. Ranz pushed the advantage to 5-2. Then Shelly Cummins struck an rbi single to cap off the inning. The Shooters cut the lead to 7-5 after four, but in the top of the 6th, Ty-1-On broke the contest open with a four run outburst to take a commanding 11-5 lead. The Shooters mustered up one more run in the top of the 7th before succumbing 11-6.

Cummins, Hirschauer and Lisa Richter banged out three hits each to lead the champions.

Ty-1-On manager said while the tournament field was small, it was very competitive.

"There were only five teams, but three of our four games were pretty good games," said Needham. "And we had to come from behind to win two of them."

Needham said that Ty-1-On boasts a "pretty good line-up if everybody does what they're supposed to do. But that doesn't always happen."

WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA WOMEN'S MAY CLASSIC CLASS "C" NATIONAL INVITAT. FINAL STANDINGS

1. Ty-1-On, Cincinnati, OH 4 0
2. Shooters, Dayton, OH 3 1
3. Smokey's Softball, Columbus, OH 1 3
4. Northern Diamonds, Streamwood, IL 1 3
5. Hart Environmental, Springfield, IL 1 3

Doyle Leads Pelle's To Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Women's "D" "May Classic" NIT Title At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--Pitcher Stacy Doyle hit a blistering .833 and held four of her team's five opponents to single digit scoring to lead Pelle's to a first place finish in the class "D" division of the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Women's "May Classic" National Invitational May 6th at Expressway Park.

After going 1-1 in pool play, Pelle's rallied to erase three elimination round opponents, knocking off James Arnold/Beaches 10-8 in the finals by pushing across two runs in the top of the 7th.

And it was pitcher Stacy Doyle who paved the way to the title with an outstanding pitching performance and hefty .833 batting average.

"She's one of the top - if not the top - pitchers in the city," praised Pelle's manager Butch Holloway. "She enables us to play a five man infield. We're one of the only girls' team around that does. And Stacy pitches well to the five man."

Following Doyle's .833 average were Laura Schuster at .778, Heather Dickerson at .769, Abby Voelker at .667 and Freedom Fogt at .600.

"It was phenomenal that way out top three hitters hit the ball throughout the whole tournament," beamed Holloway. "We had five players who hit .600 or better.

"Plus we hit the ball really well with two outs. We scored fifty five runs and probably scored the majority with two outs."

Holloway said his team's defense was anchored by Tonya Feinauer in left field.

"When Arnold/Beaches came back and tied the game 8-8, she threw out a runner in the 6th," noted Holloway. "They had scored one run and they had runners on 1st and 2nd, and there was a long fly to left field and she threw a strike to 3rd for a double play, and that kinda snuffed out the rally. That left the game tied instead of us going into the top of the 7th down a run,"

In round robin play Mass Construction ambushed Pelle's 16-4, but Pelle's bounced back to even their record at 7-4 against the Milford Hit-Hers.

Pelle's jumped out to an early 8-3 lead over Crosley's Sports Bar, then broke the game open with five runs in the bottom of the 6th to invoke the mercy rule at 13-3. Pelle's opened up a 5-2 lead with three runs in the bottom of the 2nd on rbi singles by Laura Schuster, Stacy Doyle and Freedom Fogt. Crosley's never recovered. Missy Holloway finally brought the curtain down with a two runs single to cap off the 6th.

Doyle banged out four hits, Shuster, Heather Dickerson and Tony Feinauer combined for nine and Freedom Fogt collected five rbi's to pace the winners.

Next Pelle's scored four in the top of the 1st, five in the 2nd and three in the 3rd to open up a 12-2 lead over the Underdogs and never looked back in a 19-8 rout. Heather Dickerson put her club on the board with an rbi single in the top of the 1st. Mindy Johnson's two run single highlighted Pelle's big five run 2nd.

Abby Voelker and Laura Schuster shared eight hits, and Sawyer and Doyle added three each.

Finalist James Arnold/Beaches battled Pelle's to an 8-8 stalemate through six innings in the championship game, but in the top of the 7th, Laura Schuster singled, advanced to 2nd on a ground out, then scored the eventual winning run on a Heather Dickerson bingle. Missy Holloway then pinch run for Dickerson and scored an insurance run on back-to-back two-out singles by Mindy Sawyer and Liz Werrman.

Dickerson pounded out four hits and drove in six runs to power the champions. Werrmann and Laura Schuster chipped in with three hits apiece.

Pelle's Butch Holloway said his club could do nothing right against Mass Construction in their opener, when they were man-handled 16-4.

"We tried a four man (infield), then went to a five man, but they just hit the heck out of the ball," said Holloway.

The 19-8 win over the Underdogs was sweet revenge, added Holloway.

"They had beaten us in the last NIT 6-5, so we came back on them."

WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA WOMEN'S MAY CLASSIC CLASS "D" NATIONAL INVITAT. FINAL STANDINGS

1. Pelle's, Silver Grove, KY 4 1
2. James Arnold/Beaches, Cincinnati, OH 3 2
3. Mass Construction, Muncie, In 3 1
Underdogs, Indianapolis, IN 3 1
5. Franklin Financial, Cincinnati, OH 3 1
Kurtz & Associates, Cincinnati, OH 2 2
Property of GRK/Masur Trucking, Cleves, OH 1 3
8. Pure Romance, Milford, OH 3 2
9. Gilmore Girls, Hamilton, OH 2 3
10. Sneaky Pete's/Milford Hit-Hers, Milford, OH 1 3
11. Intimidators/Sneaky Pete's, Batavia, OH 1 3
Battlin' Bullets, Indianapolis, IN 0 3
13. Dirty Devils, Hamilton, OH 0 3

Schon Shot Lifts EAP/Western Hills Windows Past Bish's 10-9 In ASA "B" Qualifier At Rumpke Park

Crosby Township, Oh.--Steve Schon launched his 6th home run of the day - a two run shot in the bop of the 6th - to lift EAP/Western Hills Windows to a 10-9 victory over Bish's in the championship game of an ASA "B" National Qualifier May 13th at Rumpke Park.

Schon's belt erased a 9-8 deficit. Pitcher Gary Nelson held Bish's to one hit over the final two frames to preserve the win.

The victory gave EAP/Western Hills Window a 4-1 mark on the day in the eight team, two division affair. After going 2-1 in round robin play, EAP knocked off Chico's Playboys 14-8 before rallying to dispose of Bish's in the finals.

Richie Jones had a red-hot .765 day to pace the champions offensively. He was followed by Johnny Richmond at .722, Steve Atkinson and Brian Oaks at .600 and Steve Schon at .556. Schon also led the team in home runs with six and rbi's with twenty. Atkinson contributed three home runs and drove in twelve runs.

"Every time we needed a clutch hit, he came through," said EAP manager Rob Schlemmer. "Especially that last one to win the game. It seems like all he was hitting all day was three run homers, in part due to the two guys who were getting on in front of him. And he played a great middle as well."

The "two guys" Schlemmer was referring to were Jones and Richmond.

"Richie had a big tournament for us," said Schlemmer. "We led him off and he doesn't normally lead off. Our normal leadoff hitter was working. He ended up with six doubles and three homers and scored fifteen runs. He's the youngest player on the team. He's only 23 or 24. It was a big tournament for him.

"If there had been an All-Tournament team, Richie would have been tournament MVP," praised Schlemmer.

Schlemmer credited his club's title to its offense.

"We just scored a lot of runs in the first couple of games," pointed out Schlemmer. "We didn't score as much over the last couple of games, but our defense was good, obviously."

Gary Macke, Gary Nelson and Scott Rees anchored the defense, said Schlemmer.

"Gary Macke had a great day with his glove at shortstop, and Gary Nelson did a solid job pitching and fielding the middle all day," remarked Schlemmer. "He had a couple rocket shots hit right back at him and he caught everything."

"Scott (Rees) ended up having to fill in at 2nd base when our normal 2nd baseman couldn't be there and he did a real good job for us at 2nd," added Schlemmer.

EAP/Western Hills Windows mercy-ruled their first two opponents, bombing Brock Restoration 23-8 in four and Local #392 Blue 19-8 in five.

A fifteen run first - highlighted by two, three run home runs each by Steve Schon and Steve Atkinson - sealed the win over Brock. Atkinson and Scott Rees each went 3-for-4, and Schon was 2-for-2 with a walk.

Then against Local #392 EAP jumped out to a 13-2 lead after two and never looked back. Three run blasts by Steve Schon and Scott Hammerle accounted for all six of EAP's 1st inning runs. Then in a seven run 2nd Steve Atkinson connected for his third three run sock of the day.

Hammerle and Gary Nelson combined for six hits, and Scott Rees added two and collected four rbi's.

Tom's Renegades ambushed EAP in game three 11-10 on a walk-off slammer in the bottom of the 7th. Bob Shad banged out three hits in the loss.

Chico's Playboys had EAP against the ropes as they led 8-6 after five in the first elimination round contest. But EAP erupted for five runs in the top of the 6th to grasp an 11-8 advantage, then added three in the 7th to pull out a 14-8 victory. Steve Schon cracked a three run homer to put his club ahead to stay at 9-8 in the 6th. Brian Oaks followed with a solo shot and Gary Macke an rbi single to give EAP a pair of insurance runs. Pitcher Gary Nelson held Chico's at bay over the final three innings.

Richie Jones collected four hits, Brian Oaks added three and Johnny Richmond went 2-for-4 with four rbi's.

EAP needed to rally from behind again in the finals against Bish's. With his team trailing 9-8 after five, Steve Schon delivered the key blow of the day with a two run shot in the top of the 6th. Pitcher Gary Nelson shut down Bish's in their final two at bats.

Schon, Richie Jones, Johnny Richmond and Brian Oaks shared twelve hits for the champions.

“We want to thank our sponsors, Bob Shad with EAP and our new sponsor this year, Western Hills Window,” concluded manager Rob Schlemmer.

Late Rallies Lift GRK Softball To Worth-Bud Light-USSSA District XIII Title At Armco Park

Lebanon, Oh.--GRK Softball rallied from behind in their first three games, then mercy-ruled OCD Studio 17-3 in their finale to complete a four game sweep of the Worth-Bud Light-Ohio USSSA District XIII Championship May 13th at Armco Park.

Late rallies highlighted the day for GRK, which scored two runs in the bottom of the 11th to win their opener, rallied for seven runs in their final two at bats in game two, then exploded for twenty runs in the bottom of the 5th to overcome a 12-2 deficit in game three.

The championship qualified GRK for the Ohio USSSA State Tournament August 12-13 in Milford, and for the USSSA Great Lakes “C” National Tournament Labor Day Weekend in Indianapolis.

Fred Tippitt posted a red hot .750 effort to pace the offense, Sean Lambert pitched in with a .667 day, and Wayne Miller and Mike Dillon batted .643 and .600 respectively.

Lambert led GRK in rbi’s with eleven, and Tippitt drove in nine.

“Fred is our team leader,” remarked GRK’s Gayle Kell regarding his club’s top hitter. “He’s our leadoff hitter - he’s the spark.”

Kell acknowledged that after his club fell behind 12-2 after two innings in game three, he was ready to write that game off.

“I actually thought that was going to be our loss for the day,” said Kell. “But (pitcher) Shannon Louden held them to three hits from the 3rd inning on.”

Kell said his team had to rally twice to pull out a 10-9 victory over D & M Concrete in game one.

“They actually went up on us twice - once in the 7th and once in the 11th,” recalled Kell. “In the 7th we had to come up with one to tie, and then after they went up one in the 11th, we had to come up with two in the bottom of the inning to win.”

Mike Dillon got GRK going in the 11th with a leadoff single. Dave Hoover walked with one out, then Sean Lambert delivered a clutch two out double to score both runners for the 10-9 win.

Lambert collected five hits, including a home run, Fred Tippitt added four hits, and Shannon Louden chipped in with three.

A Craig Linnemann slammer erased a 6-4 deficit in the top of the 6th in game two and helped propel GRK past Cooper Auto 10-7. Fred Tippitt, who banged out three more hits, singled in a pair of insurance runs in the top of the 7th with two outs.

M & M Connection jumped out to a 12-2 lead over GRK after two innings in game three. But pitcher Shannon Louden shut M & M down over the next five innings, and GRK erupted for twenty runs in the bottom of the 5th to pull away 22-12. Sean Lambert cracked a three run homer to put his club ahead to stay at 13-12. Fred Tippitt’s two run single capped off the scoring.

Tippitt pounded out four more hits, and Wayne Miller, Craig Linnemann and Mike Lacey combined for nine.

Shannon Louden continued his pitching mastery in game four. After allowing OCD Studio to tie the score at 3-3 in the bottom of the 1st, Louden held OCD scoreless over the next four innings, while GRK plated fourteen unanswered runs. Mike Lacey’s slammer broke the tie and put GRK ahead for good at 7-3 in the 2nd. Sean Lambert added a grand slam of his own as the lead swelled to 12-3 in the 3rd. GRK added five more in the 5th to complete the scoring.

Wayne Miller went 4-for-4 to lead the champions. John Lambert added two hits.

Huber Lawn Care Rips Competition In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “E” Qualifier At Expressway By Andy Zureick

Milford, Oh. – Huber Lawn Care won all five games they played by way of the mercy rule as they cruised the championship of the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA “E” Qualifier at Expressway Park on May 13th. They had only one game that made it past the 5th inning.

Huber Lawn Care started the day in round robin play by pounding the Big Hogz 18-3 in five innings. Brian Littleton and JR Price were both 3-for-3 in the opener. Chad Case went 3-for-4.

They followed that with a 20-8 pasting of JB's in five. Jerry Applegate (4-for-4), Chad Case (3-for-3), Kevin Bennett (3-for-3), JR Price (3-for-3), and David Folino (3-for-3) were all perfect at the plate in the victory.

Huber Lawn Care wrapped up a perfect pool play round with a 12-2 whipping of the Untouchables, also in five innings. This time it was Kevin Murphy, JR Price, and Glenn Huber going 3-for-3 to lead the way at the plate.

The first game of the elimination round between Huber Lawn Care and the Renegades was a nail-biter by the day's standards as it took six innings for the Huber boys to finish off the competition. Kevin Bennett had a run-scoring triple in the 3rd and Brian Marshall singled in two in the 4th as Huber Lawn Care put back-to-back three-run innings together to blow the game open, 9-3. Eight more in the top of the 6th sealed the Renegades' fate. Jason Jett drove in two and David Folino had an RBI-single to cap that decisive inning. Jerry Applegate was 4-for-4 for the second time on the day. Chad Case, Brian Marshall, and JR Price all were 3-for-4. For Price, it was the first time in the tournament he had an at-bat where he had not safely reached base.

Pitcher Myron Iery got in on the action in the finals against G-Unit/Macon Hawks by tossing a 10-0, five-inning shutout. His team staked him to a 5-0 lead in the bottom of the 2nd, and that was all he would need. Kevin Murphy got the team on the board with a run-scoring single. David Folino added a couple more when he tripled with two aboard. They padded the lead with three more in the 4th. Leading 8-0 in the bottom of the 5th, Kevin Murphy ended the game when he double in the two runs necessary to invoke the run rule. Murphy led all hitters at 3-for-3. Glenn Huber and Jason Jett were both 2-for-2. Chad Case, JR Price, and Jeremy Jones had 2-for-3 performances.

JR Price topped a list of impressive offensive outings, batting a scorching .875. "He really found his stoke," explained team manager Glenn Huber.

The rest of the honor roll included Kevin Bennett (.778), Chad Case (.765), Kevin Murphy (.750), Jerry Applegate (.714), Jason Jett (.692), Brian Marshall (.688), Brian Littleton (.647), and Jeremy Jones (.645). "Everybody batted .570 or better and we batted .690 as a team," noted Huber. "We really focused on getting on base."

"Myron Iery was reliable and accurate and pitched really well the entire tournament. Kevin Murphy (left center) had a big play in the final game. On a deep fly ball with a man on second and one out, he threw the runner out at third trying to tag up. Chad Case (right center) made plays on some really tough balls. Brian Littleton at second base showed his old form," said Huber speaking about his team's play in the field.

"We just had a really good day," Huber modestly concluded.

Huber Lawn won \$300 in cash for the tournament victory. Second-place G-Unit/Macon Hawks won a paid berth to the USSSA "E" World Labor Day Weekend in Lake Buena Vista, Florida.

May 20-21

Freeze/Arnold/BW3/Easton Romps Past Mike Foulks/Team Insanity 28-14 In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "B-C" Finals At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--Freeze Concrete/Jas. S. Arnold/BW3/Easton outscored five opponents 107-45, romping past Mike Foulks/Team Insanity 28-14 in the championship game, en route to a first place finish in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "B-C" National Invitational Tournament May 20-21 at Expressway Park.

Freeze/Arnold/BW3/Easton was never seriously challenged in the nineteen team event, as they defeated each of their opponents by at least eight runs on their way to the title. Freeze/Easton was buoyed by solid pitching and defense in their first three games, as they held three teams to a combined ten runs. Mike Malesko (.762, 5 HR's) and Tony Sharkins (.667, 2 HR's) powered the offense.

Malesko was joined on the All-Tournament Team by Bob Noeth (.769), Jeff Schmidt (.733) and Jayson Scott (.667). Sharkins was named tournament MVP.

"We had just moved him up to third in the line-up," commented Freeze/Easton manager Homer Matheny. "Pitchers don't like to pitch to him. He's an imposing figure and gets a lot of walks. When he doesn't walk and gets a chance to swing, he produces. We picked him for MVP for a combination of his on base percentage, hitting and hustle."

Defensively, Matheny felt that "everyone as a whole did their part.

"There were a couple small throwing errors, but other than that, everyone caught everything hit at them and played outstanding defense to to along with Bobby's (Bob Noeth) and Trevor's (Trevor Barth) outstanding pitching," said Matheny.

Matheny said Noeth and Barth “dominated” in his team’s three games on Saturday.

“Then in the last two games (on Sunday) our offense stepped up and started to jell like we hoped it was going to in the beginning of the year,” said Matheny.

Freeze/Easton scored in every inning in a 20-5, five inning rout of the Trailblazers in game one. Mike Malesko homered to account for the games first three runs in a four run 1st. Freeze/Easton added three in the 2nd and five in the 3rd to extend their lead to 12-2. A Jeff Schmidt three run sock highlighted a four run 4th, and Malesko cracked his second home run of the game - a two run shot - in a four run 5th.

Malesko, Sean Melampy, Jayson Scott and Tony Sharkins combined for twelve hits.

TPE/AST/Miken fell next 11-3. Freeze/Easton jumped out to an 11-0 lead after four and TPE never recovered. A Mike Malesko slammer capped off a six run 1st. Bob Noeth delivered a three run blast in a four run 3rd. Noeth, Jayson Scott, George Farris and Jeff Schmidt each went 2-for-3 to pace the offense.

Freeze/Easton put eighteen runs on the board before GZG/Beef O’Brady’s finally plated two runs in a lopside 18-2 decision in game three. George Farris launched a three run dinger in a four run 1st. Freeze/Easton added four in the 2nd, then erupted for seven in the 3rd to seal the win. A three run swat by Tony Sharkins capped off the inning. Jeff Schmidt, who added a three run homer in the 4th to close out the scoring for Freeze/Easton, shared six hits with Jayson Scott.

Mike Foulks/Team Insanity battled Freeze/Easton to a 10-10 stalemate through two innings in the winners’ bracket finals, but Freeze/Easton exploded for six in the 3rd and seven in the 4th to break the game open, then fended off a late rally by Mike Foulks to claim a 30-21 victory. Tony Sharkins connected for a grand slam in the 3rd. Homer Matheny’s two run single capped off the 4th as the lead ballooned to 23-10.

Mike Malesko pounded out six hits, Bob Noeth and Trevor Barth went 4-for-5, and Sharkins, Tom Atha and George Farris chipped in with three hits apiece.

Mike Foulks drew first blood in the finals with five runs in the top of the 1st, but Freeze/Arnold answered with fourteen in the bottom of the 1st and seven in the bottom of the 2nd to take a commanding 21-5 advantage. The lead mushroomed to 27-8 after Freeze/Arnold added three in the 3rd and three and the 4th and the champions never looked back.

Freeze/Arnold sandwiched a pair of slammers - one by Mike Malesko to give his club their first four runs, and one by Homer Matheny that produced the final four - around six other runs in the 1st. Malesko added a two run double in the seven run 2nd. Trevor Barth also delivered a three run shot for the winners in the 4th.

Malesko collected four hits, and Barth, Matheny, Jeff Click, Jayson Scott, Sean Melampy and Tom Atha combined for eighteen.

Although there were four “B” teams in the tournament, Freeze/Arnold managed to play all five of their games without encountering a single one.

“We were hoping for a little more competition,” acknowledged Freeze/Arnold’s Homer Matheny. “But one bright side is that even though we were only allowed to hit three home runs every game, we only had one hit for an out. So even though we played (mostly) ‘C’ teams the whole tournament, we kept our composure as far as the home run rule goes.”

Matheny said that even though his team allowed 35 runs in their final two games - versus only ten in the first three - it wasn’t because of a defensive letdown.

“Mike Foulks hit the ball and put a couple of big innings up on us,” said Matheny. “They’re a good team. We have to give them credit. “They looked a lot better than they had the previous two weeks.”

Matheny concluded by thanking sponsors Jim Freeze, James Arnold, BW3 and Easton, and Expressway Park for running an outstanding tournament.

WORTH-BUD LIGHT-USSSA MEN'S CLASS B-C NATIONAL INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT

1. Freeze/Jas. Arnold/BW3/Easton, Cincinnati, OH 5 0
2. Mike Foulks/Team Insanity, Union, KY 4 2
3. Storm/Wessel/Nixco/Flanagan’s, Burlington, KY 5 2
4. EAP/Western Hills Window, Cincinnati, OH 4 2

- 5. GZG Const./Beef O'Brady's, Florence, KY 3 2
PRI/Easton, Cincinnati, OH 2 2
- 7. East End/Air Industrial, Cincinnati, OH 3 2
PRI/Premier Sports, Milford, OH 2 2
- 9. EZ Cash/Steve's, Columbus, OH 2 2
A & A Enterprises, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
Community Cab/Marty's/Easton, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
TPE/AST/Miken, Trenton, OH 1 2
- 13. Max Softball, West Chester, OH 1 2
Trailblazers, Cincinnati, OH 1 2
Win-Place-Show/Kastaway, Mason, OH 1 2
Sequa/Kemper Mort./Sexton Floor., Dayton, OH 0 2
- 17. GRK Softball, Cincinnati, OH 0 2
Big "O" Softball, Florence, KY 0 2
Brock Restoration, Cincinnati, OH 0 2

**WORTH-BUD LIGHT-SPORTS-USSSA MEN'S
CLASS B-C NATIONAL INV. ALL-TOURN. TEAM**

Gary Nelson EAP/Western Hills Windows
 Jason Kraemer Storm/Wessel/Nixco/Flanagan's
 Scott Young Storm/Wessel/Nixco/Flanagan's
 Craig Johnson Mike Foulks/Team Insanity
 Eddie Weinberg Mike Foulks/Team Insanity
 Andrew McGowan Mike Foulks/Team Insanity
 Mike Malesko Freeze/Arnold/BW3/Easton
 Jason Scott Freeze/Arnold/BW3/Easton
 Jeff Schmidt Freeze/Arnold/BW3/Easton
 Bob Noeth Freeze/Arnold/BW3/Easton
 Roger Drake - Co-MVP Mike Foulks/Team Insanity
 Tony Sharkins - Co-MVP Freeze/Arnold/BW3/Easton

Trimpe, Late Rallies Lift Empire/Easton Past Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "C" Field At Pastime Park

Harrison, Oh.--John Trimpe turned in a blistering .833 day, and Empire/Easton capitalized on two late rallies en route to a three game sweep of a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "C" qualifier May 21st at Pastime Park.

Empire/Easton sandwiched a pair of 6th inning, come-from-behind victories around a 20-4 spanking of Northern Kentucky Thunder on their way to the title, rallying to clip Sneaky Pete's/Noran LLC/Backstabbers 12-11 in the finals.

John Trimpe went 10-for-12 (.833) to pace the champions. Jason Gardner and Jason Stidham chipped in with a .667 effort, Chad Vordemesche batted .636, Jamie Stidham .615, Red Tucker .600, Andy Perkins .571 and Micah Gray .546.

Empire/Easton manager Dave Steinmetz said his team won with "solid defense, pretty good pitching and a lot of timely hitting.

"John Trimpe had a lot of timely hits," praised Steinmetz. "He only made two outs all day. He's a real solid hitter. He's only 27 and he hits the ball real hard all the time."

Defensively, Steinmetz said his club was led by Jason Gardner, Jamie and Jason Stidham and Micah Gray.

"We play a three-man and Jason (cf) covered a lot of ground and made some nice catches," said Steinmetz. "He keeps us in the the ball game out there.

"Also Jamie Stidham played the middle and had quite a few putouts," added Steinmetz. "Jason Stidham (2b) and Micah Gray (ss) had three or four double plays and played real solid defense."

Steinmetz also saluted Chad Vordemesch for his work on the mound.

"It was his first time out pitching, and he pitched very well for us," said Steinmetz.

Empire/Easton needed a five run rally in the bottom of the 6th to overcome a 9-8 deficit and grab a 13-9 lead over the Outlaws in game one. Dave Steinmetz ignited the rally with a leadoff single. A bases loaded walk to John Trimpe forced in the tying run. Then

Chad Vordemesche delivered a two run single to put his club ahead to stay. A Micah Gray rbi single and an Eric Keeton sac fly pushed the lead to four. The Outlaws answered with two in the top of the 7th before succumbing 13-11.

Jamie Stidham banged out four hits, Jason Gardner and Chad Vordemesche went 3-for-4 and Red Tucker chipped in with two safeties.

A twelve run 1st sealed a 20-4 rout of Northern Kentucky Thunder in game two. Chad Vordemesche put Empire/Easton on the board with a two run single. Micah Gray followed with a slammer to make it 6-0, then a quick two run swat from Andy Perkins pushed the lead to 8-0. John Trimpe added a three run triple as the lead ballooned to 11-0. Thunder never recovered.

Jason Gardner and John Trimpe were both perfect in four at bats, and Jamie Stidham, Chad Vordemesche, Jason Stidham and Micah Gray shared twelve hits.

That gave Empire/Easton a berth into the finals versus Sneaky Pete's/Noran LLC/Backstabbers. The Backstabbers took a 10-7 lead into the 6th, but there Empire struck for five runs to take a 12-10 lead. Jason Gardner's two run double knotted the score at 10-10, then John Trimpe cracked a two run homer. Sneaky Pete's threatened in the bottom of the 7th with the help of back-to-back walks. After a fly out and a fielder's choice cut the deficit to one, Chad Vordemesche induced the next batter to fly out to centerfielder Jason Gardner to preserve the win.

John Trimpe continued his red-hot afternoon, pounding out four more hits. Jason Stidham and Red Tucker combined for six hits.

Late Rallies Lift Moe's Southwest Grill/Saints To Third Title In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--Two late-inning rallies helped lift Moe's Southwest Grill/Saints to their third tournament championship of the year in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" State-National Qualifier May 21st at Expressway Park.

Moe's Southwest Grill/Saints scored two runs in the top of the 6th to overcome an 11-10 deficit in an eventual 13-11 victory over JB's in their opener, then in game three they rallied for three runs in the top of the 7th to emerge with a 10-9 victory over Off A Lot. Moe's/Saints routed OC Softball 17-7 in game two in their only other contest, thus compiling a 3-0 record in the four game round robin affair.

Tim Duffey paced the champions with a red-hot .692 effort, followed by Jeff Thomas at .636, Brian McDonald and Scott Reupert at .615 and John Tomlinson at .583.

Moe's/Saints player-manager John Tomlinson said that 2006 is Duffey's "first year playing competitively and he's just a great find.

"He plays shortstop and he's a staple, he keeps us together," said Tomlinson. "He didn't let anything get through the hole in our five man infield. He keeps it altogether, turns a quick double play and keeps control of the game."

"Timely hitting" was the key to winning the tournament, said Tomlinson.

"We hit when we needed to. We were exhausted after a tough tournament on Saturday at Queen City. We didn't have a lot of pep and a lot of energy, but when we had to have the runs, we got them," said Tomlinson.

Besides the solid performance turned in by Duffey at short, Tomlinson said his team also got a boost defensively from centerfielder Mike Barone.

"He covers a lot of ground," remarked Tomlinson. "He made a couple of really good throws and has a really good arm."

Moe's Southwest Grill/Saints were almost ambushed by JB's in their opener. The Saints trailed 11-10 after five, but in the top of the 6th, Scott Reupert singled to tie the game, then Tomlinson singled home the go-ahead run. A Ken Duffey rbi single in the 7th added an insurance run.

Tomlinson, Mike Barone, Jeff Thomas and Bill Brinkman each went 3-for-4 for the winners.

Next Moe's flattened OC Softball 17-7 in five behind four hits apiece from Brian McDonald and Tim Duffey, and three from Scott Reupert, Troy Brinkman and John Tomlinson. A ten run 3rd inning outburst erased a 3-0 deficit and put the Saints on top for good. Troy Brinkman delivered an rbi single in the 3rd to put his club their first lead at 4-3. Brian Erdman followed with a big two run double.

OC answered with four in the top of the 4th to cut the deficit to 10-7, but Moe's slammed the door with seven more runs in the bottom of the 4th. Brian Erdman contributed another two run double to give the Saints a 16-7 bulge.

Off A Lot had Moe's against the ropes in the finale, as they took an 8-7 lead into the top of the 7th. But there the Saints plated three runs to grab a 10-8 lead. Troy Brinkman singled in the go ahead run, then Bill Brinkman's bingle made it 10-8. Off A Lot made it interesting in the bottom of the 7th, scoring a run and loading the bases before pitcher John Tomlinson retired the final batter on a fly ball to centerfield.

Jeff Thomas banged out three hits for the champions.

Tomlinson said his team was pleased to win considering they fielded a make-shift line-up.

"We had a lot of guys who couldn't play, but we have nineteen people on our roster and we gave a lot of our subs an opportunity to play," explained Tomlinson. "It's nice to have other people who really love the game and want to play and come out whether they get to play or not, and we got to win one with them, which is good."

M&M Connection Takes Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Men's "D" Qualifier At Expressway

By Andy Zureick

Milford, Oh. – M&M Connection was 3-0 in the four-team Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" Qualifier at Expressway Park on May 21st. The championship earned them berths to the USSSA state tournament in Dayton of August 19-20 as well as the nationals on Labor Day Weekend back at Expressway.

The opening game of the day for M&M Connection was the toughest. Taking on Longshot Saloon, M&M trailed 9-5 after one inning of play. Dave Ridener then came in to relieve Dave Huff on the mound and the offense kicked it into high gear. Over the final six innings, M&M Connection outscored Longshot 13-4. In the top of the 6th, Justin Charleton drove in two while Matt Hipsher and Mike Ditmer collected one RBI each as M&M finally climbed on top, 16-13. They added two more in their last at bat for an 18-13 final. Justin Charleton was 3-for-3 with five RBI. Ron Williams and Matt Johnson were both 3-for-4. Dave Ridener also had three hits.

Dave Ridener also handled pitching duties in game two against the Dirty Birds. The switch continued to pay off as Ridener tossed a 10-0 shutout. Five runs in the top of the 3rd would be more than enough in the five-inning mercy rule victory. Matt Johnson singled in two and Justin Charleton one as M&M Connection built an insurmountable lead. Ron Williams was 2-for-2 in the victory. Mike Lamb went 2-for-3 with three RBI. Matt Johnson also collected two hits.

In the final game of the day, M&M Connection jumped out early on T&T/Lyon/Tanel with four runs in the top of the 1st. Matt Johnson got the team on the board with a sac fly. Ira Denlinger, Justin Charleton, and Dave Huff all had RBI singles. M&M Connection added two more in the 2nd, and three in the 3rd. Two of those scored on a Ron Williams triple. Justin Charleton and Ron Williams drove in two more each as M&M Connection put the game away with nine runs in the top of the 4th. The final was 18-6 in five innings. Williams was 3-for-3 with four runs batted in. Dave Huff was also 3-for-3. Justin Charleton, Ira Denlinger, and Mike Ditmer were all 3-for-4.

Ron Williams was also the leading hitter for M&M Connection on the day at .889. "He had been struggling lately," said Dave Ridener, the manager, "he got off to a slow start this season, but he's found his groove."

Justin Charleton hit .700 and led his team with nine RBI. Mike Ditmer hit a solid .750. Mike Lamb and Matt Johnson both finished at .600.

Pitching and solid defense was also key for M&M Connection. They walked only two batters on the day while turning seven double plays. "Matt Hipsher (second base) is our key double play guy and made a couple of diving stops up the middle. Ron Williams (third base) took a couple of doubles away with diving stops...down the line at key times during the tournament," explained Ridener.

Second-place T&T/Lyons/Tanel also qualified for the USSSA "D" state tournament.

Lights Out Softball Wins First Of Year At Pastime's Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" Qualifier

By Andy Zureick

Harrison, Oh. – Lights Out Softball captured their first championship of the year by winning the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" Qualifier at Pastime Park on May 21st. "We've been close a couple of times this year," noted team manager John Miller. "It's good to get the monkey off our backs and get our first tournament win."

The day started with Lights Out Softball taking on Joe's Sports Bar. Brett "Mooch" Hamilton got Lights Out on the scoreboard in the top of the 1st with a bases-loaded triple. In all, they would score tens runs and take a commanding early lead. John Miller had his own three-run triple in the top of the 2nd as Lights Out increased their lead to 16-4. The game ended 26-9 in five innings via the

mercy rule. Miller finished the game 5-for-5 with seven RBI. Hamilton drove in six, going 3-for-4. Dave Broxterman was a perfect 3-for-3 and scored five times; Jeff Iker was also 3-for-3. Dave Miles and Joe Scully were both 3-for-4.

In game two of the day versus Schultz/Young Guns/Oasis, Lights Out put five runs on the board in bottom of the 1st and 3rd innings. Dave Orr doubled in the 1st to drive in the first three of the game. Jeff Iker collected two RBI in the 3rd. Joe Scully led all hitters in the game, going 3-for-3. Pitcher Doug Ware held the Young Guns to just two runs as Lights Out Softball won the game 12-2 in six innings.

Lights Out Softball finished the day with GT Swarm. Brett Hamilton and Joe Scully each had RBI-singles in the top of the 1st, staking Lights Out to a 2-0 lead. Tracy Morris' run-scoring single later capped a four-run 2nd. Then, in the third, they put the game out of reach with nine runs. John Miller and Tracy Morris drove in three each in that at bat. In a relief appearance, Doug Ware held GT Swarm to four runs in the final 4 and two-thirds of an inning and Lights Out went on to claim their third victory of the day, 20-9 in six innings. John Miller finished the game with a team-best six runs batted in. Joe Scully was 4-for-4 with four RBI. Dave Broxterman went 3-for-3.

Joe Scully on the day was 11-for-12, a .909 batting average. "He tore the cover off the ball," said Miller, the manager. "Joe set the tone for us...he was on base when we needed him."

Dave Broxterman finished a close second to Scully, hitting .875 and scoring nine runs. Brett Hamilton hit .700. John Miller batted .615 while driving in 13 runs. Jeff Iker hit a solid .600.

The right side of the Lights Out Infield, first baseman Tracey Morris and Matt Hines at second, had a particularly good day according to Miller. "[Tracey] was a rock like he always is. He keeps our infield in line when we don't make the best of throws and digs them out. [Matt] stepped into a tough situation after a couple offensive ejections and shut down the middle."

"Dave [Broxterman] the left centerfielder anchored a tough outfield. He made several key plays with some diving catches and key catches at the wall," added the manager.

The tournament championship qualifies Lights Out Softball for the USSSA "E" Indiana State Tournament as well as the nationals in Ft. Knox, Kentucky on September 2-3.

Sneaky Pete's/GT Swarm Stingy In Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" Qualifier At QCSC By Andy Zureick

West Chester, Oh. - Sneaky Pete's/GT Swarm gave up four or fewer runs in four of their five games as they went 4-1 to win the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" Qualifier at Queen City Sports Complex on May 20th.

In the first game of round robin play, Sneaky Pete's/GT Swarm took on Burns Construction. Despite a solid defensive performance, they lost the game 5-4.

They bounced back in the second game versus Backyard Boys. In the bottom of the 3rd, they rallied from a 10-1 deficit by scoring nine runs. The Backyard Boys reclaimed the lead with four in the top of the 4th, but Sneaky Pete's/GT Swarm came right back with five in the bottom of that frame. Brent Nicholas doubled in the final run of the at bat to give his team a 15-14 lead. They would never trail again. In fact, they would only give up six runs the rest of the tournament. Six more runs in the bottom of the 5th, including a three-run inside-the-park home run by Sean "Bug" Emmitt, put the game away. The final was 22-15. Emmitt was 5-for-5 in the victory. Clayton Vaughn went 3-for-3.

In the final game of pool play, Sneaky Pete's/GT Swarm locked horns with the Dayton Hit Squad. Both teams scored one in the 1st and that was it until the 7th. Ben Buis led off the top of the inning with a single. Sean Emmitt then beat out a slow roller to second. Josh Caplinger brought those two guys home with a triple, giving his team a 3-1 lead. It would be enough as Dayton Hit Squad failed to score in the bottom of the inning. Andrew Tucker and Sean Emmitt were both 3-for-3.

That win allowed Sneaky Pete's/GT Swarm to advance to the four-team single elimination round.

Facing Shamrock/Pacesetter, Sneaky Pete's/GT Swarm jumped ahead early with eight runs in the bottom of the 1st. Josh Hunter got the team on the board with an RBI single. James "Bear" Deters later cleared loaded bases with a double. Brent Nicholas capped the inning with his own run-scoring single. The game ended 12-2 in five via the mercy rule. Nicholas and Ben Buis were each 3-for-3; Hunter was 2-for-2.

It was more of the same in the finals against Evil Twin Bar. This time, it was 10 runs in the bottom of the opening inning. Clayton Vaughn and Andrew Tucker each singled in a run. Jake Sexton drove in two. They went on to win a second-straight 12-2, five-inning

decision. Jake Sexton and Josh Hunter were both a perfect 3-for-3. Jason Emmitt also had three hits. Hunter, the pitcher, tossed four scoreless innings to close out the game.

Sean Emmitt led Sneaky Pete's/GT Swarm in hitting on the day with a .750 batting average. "He's probably the fastest player in 'E' ball today. He can out run any ball," said Sneaky Pete's/GT Swarm manager Brent Nicholas of Emmitt. Other offensive notables included Josh Hunter (.727), Jake Sexton (.714), and Andrew Tucker (.687). Tucker also played a very solid left field. "He was steady all day; he didn't miss a ball and never got burned."

"This was the first tournament we were all together as a team," noted Nicholas. "The biggest things were pitching and defense, especially up the middle with Josh Tucker at shortstop and Jason Emmitt at second...they turned at least six double plays."

"After we lost our first game, we were down. But Josh Hunter kept everybody up and motivated. Josh pulled us aside and we had a little talk, and we turned it around from there," commented Nicholas.

"Keep an eye out for us, we're not done yet," Nicholas said in conclusion.

Qualifying for the USSSA "E" State Tournament in Harrison on August 19-20 were Sneaky Pete's/GT Swarm, Evil Twin Bar, Backyard Boys, and Shamrock/Pacesetter. Sneaky Pete's/GT Swarm and Evil Twin Bar also earned berths to the nationals in Ft. Knox, Kentucky on September 2nd and 3rd.

Chiefs Escape In House, Capture Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Mixed "D-E" Qualifier At Expressway Park

Milford, Oh.--The Chiefs overcame a 9-1 deficit in their final two at bats to clip In House 10-9 in their opener, then spanked Fayetteville County 10-5 and Evans & Sons 15-8 to compile a perfect 3-0 mark in a Worth-Bud Light-USSSA Mixed "D-E" qualifier on Sunday, May 21st at Expressway Park.

The victory gave the Chiefs a berth into the USSSA Mixed "D" World Tournament October 13-15 in Lexington, SC. The Chiefs also qualified for the U-Trip "D" Nationals September 30-October 1 in Dayton, Oh. along with runner-up Evans & Sons.

Frank Hardin and Jeremy Satterly hit .667 to pace the champions offensively. Mike Burch followed at .600, Jenny Thompson batted .500 and Jennifer Hinkle chipped in with a .400 day.

"We played some good defense in every game and we had some timely hitting," summed up Chiefs manager Greg Smith. "We didn't hit the cover off the ball, but we did have some timely hits, and our defense kept us in each game.

"We were really fortunate to win our first game," acknowledged Smith. "That was the toughest one. "We were down 9-1 and came back.."

A big day from the bottom half of the line-up was also a key, said Smith.

"Frank (Hardin) and Jeremy (Satterly) both seem to hit it well whenever we play co-ed, and they were both at the bottom of our line-up," said Smith. "Jenny Thompson is down there too, so the bottom half of our line-up was really producing."

Defensively, it was an all-around effort, said Smith.

Alan Gipson (p) did a good job on the mound, and we played good solid defense at every position," observed Smith. "The corner positions made plays when we needed them to, and the middle played good and the outfield hit the cutoffs, and we didn't let baserunners take extra bases. We didn't make any mental mistakes."

The Chiefs scored five runs in the bottom of the 6th and four runs in the bottom of the 7th to pull out a miraculous 10-9 victory over In House in game one. The winners scored all four of their runs in the 7th with two outs. Back-to-back rbi singles by Frank Hardin and Kathleen Smith cut it to 9-8, then Jeremy Satterly delivered a two run single for the win. Satterly collected three hits, and Hardin and Jenny Thompson shared four hits.

Next the Chiefs put up two runs in the bottom of the 1st, four in the 2nd and three in the 4th to forge a 9-2 lead and eased to a 10-5 victory over Fayetteville County in game two. Sean Smith put his club on the board with an rbi single in the 1st. Mike Burch had a big two run double in the 4th. And Jennifer Hinkle accounted for two of the Chiefs three runs in the 4th with a two run single.

Hinkle banged out three hits, and Burch and Sean Smith each went 2-for-3.

The Chiefs trailed Evans & Sons 6-5 after three and a half innings in the deciding game, but in the bottom of the 4th the Chiefs plated two runs, taking the lead for good at 7-6 on a Kathleen Smith rbi single. Then in the 6th the Louisville club blew the game open,

exploding for eight runs with two outs to take a commanding 15-6 lead. The Chiefs benefitted from five walks. A two run single by Mike Burch highlighted the inning.

Burch went 3-for-4 to pace the offense. Sean Smith, Alan Gipson and Frank Hardin combined for six hits.

Nirvana Nutrition Finds Happy Place At Kolping's Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" Memorial By Andy Zureick

Mt. Healthy, Oh. – Nirvana Nutrition run-ruled five of their first six opponents, going 7-1 and winning the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" Memorial at Kolping Park on May 27-28.

They were a perfect 3-0 in round robin play beating Team VIP 13-3, Master Batters 10-0, and Young Guns 15-6.

Nirvana Nutrition advanced to face Upinya Sheep in the first game of the double elimination round. In the bottom of the 2nd, Ryan Carter had an RBI single and Jeremy Jeffries had both a two-run double and two-run single as they scored a total of 13 runs. The Sheep could never overcome the early deficit. The game ended in five innings at 19-6. Jeffries and teammate Jeff Howell were both 3-for-3. Matt Lutz went 4-for-4; Keith Brock was 3-for-4.

They followed that up with a 13-3, six-inning win over the Cardinals. Jeremy Jeffries singled in two as Nirvana Nutrition jumped out to a 4-0, 1st inning lead. They tacked on two more in the second. Dave Hensley drove in two in the three-run third. Jeff Howell did the same in the next inning. Howell would finish the game 3-for-3. Jeremy Jeffries was 3-for-3 for the second game in a row. Sean Brehm led all hitters, going 4-for-4.

Facing The Players, it was two big innings that put Nirvana Nutrition over the top. Mike Pappas had a two-run double and Ryan Carter an RBI-single in the eight-run 3rd. That erased a 5-4 deficit. In the next frame, Jeremy Jeffries had a two-run double and Pappas drove in three more with a bases loaded triple. Ten runs total increased the lead to 22-7. The Players only managed two more in their last chance, ending the game at 22-9 in five innings. Sean Brehm was again 4-for-4. Mike Pappas was also 4-for-4. Shane Hartley and Jeremy Jeffries both went 3-for-4.

That set up a rematch with the Cardinals for the tournament championship. The Cardinals, coming out of the loser's bracket, got the better of Nirvana Nutrition in the first finals, 17-7 in seven innings.

In the winner-takes-all second finals, Nirvana Nutrition trailed 10-7 going into the bottom of the 5th. A two-run single from Jeremy Jeffries in that at bat tied the game 10-10. Jeff Howell then put his team ahead with an RBI-single. They would total seven runs in the inning and go on to win 18-11. Matt Lutz and Shane Hartley were both 5-for-6 in the championship game. Joe Renois, Mike Schneider, and Dave Hensley were all 3-for-5.

Key to the championship according Nirvana Nutrition manager Sean Brehm was solid team play. "Mike Pappas had three outfield assists, two of them were at home. We got base hits when we need them. And not getting down after losing one was probably the biggest key."

"We run ruled every team but one in our first six games," noted Brehm. "We just hit all day."

Nirvana Nutrition hit .648 as a team in the tournament. Leading the way was Jeremy Jeffries at .815. "The kid was non-stop, line drive after line drive. He was hitting seeds everywhere," Brehm said.

Other offensive notables included Mike Pappas (.783), Matt Lutz (.710), Shane Hartley (.696), Jeff Howell (.679), Dave Hensley (.667), Keith Brock (.636), Joe Renoit (.600), and Mike Schneider (.600).

Defensive standouts, according to Brehm, were Mike Pappas in the outfield, Joe Renoit at third and Jeff Howell at short. "For playing out of position, [Jeff] came up big. He normally plays third and Joe plays outfield," explained the manager.

"We played almost a perfect tournament," Brehm concluded.

TEAM HAVOC OUTLASTS MASTER BATTERS 5-2 IN CONSOLATION BRACKET - Team Havoc fended off the Master Batters 5-2 in the second championship game to capture first place in the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "E" Memorial consolation bracket. Team Havoc redeemed themselves in the elimination round with a 4-1 mark after floundering in round robin play at 1-2.

Dale Downad banged out four hits, and Ricky Arnold and Tony Storer each went 3-for-4 to lead their club to a 13-6 rout of the Master Batters in game one. Then Arnold, Bob Stahl, Brady Webster and Andrew Wise combined for twelve hits as Team Havoc survived a 14-13 scare with Team VIP.

In the winners' bracket finals, Dave Hurley tossed a 12-0, four inning shutout victory over Island Sakau as Arnold, Wise, Brian Boyle and Mike Boggs shared eight hits.

Master Batters then ambushed Team Havoc 14-9 to avenge their first round setback, but their offense sputtered in the second finals, as Team Havoc prevailed 5-2. A two run triple by Bob Stahl put his club ahead to stay in the top of the 1st. Rbi singles by Brian Boyle and Brett Vandergriff pushed the advantage to 4-1 in the 3rd. Then Mike Boggs drove in Team Havoc's final run with an rbi single in the 5th. The Master Batters answered with a run in the bottom of the 5th, but went scoreless in the 6th and 7th.

Bob Stahl collected three hits, and Dave Hurley chipped in with two.

Dale Downard hit a blistering .714 to pace the winners. Brady Webster followed at .684, Tony Storer hit .667, Bob Stahl .583, Mike Boggs .560, and Ricky Arnold .524.

Faders Bombs Nighthawks, Sweeps Expressway Round Robin

Milford, Oh.--Faders outscored three opponents 45-18 en route to a first place finish in a four team round robin on Sunday, May 21st at Expressway Park.

Faders bombed the Nighthawks (2-1) 20-10 in a key first round match-up with the eventual tournament runner-up, then steamrolled Renegades (1-2) 15-3 and 669 Mafia (0-3) 10-5 to complete the sweep.

Fat Daddies, Royals, Ballers Sweep Queen City Divisions

West Chester, Oh.--Fat Daddies held three opponents to single digit scoring, the Royals battled past runner-up M & S Drywall 16-14, while the Ballers outscored their opponents 53-18 en route to their respective division titles in a twelve team, three division round robin on Sunday, May 21st at Queen City Sports Complex.

Fat Daddies allowed only 15 runs as they disposed of Clarion Hotel (2-1) 10-7 in a key first round match-up, then got past Caribbean Storm (1-2) 8-6 before leveling Rock-N-Roll (0-3) 17-2 in their finale.

The Royals spanked Allied Restoration (0-3) 12-2 in their opener, then outslugged M & S (2-1) 16-14 prior to brushing off Havoc (1-2) 15-7.

While in division three, the Ballers blanked Pierre Foods (0-3) 15-0 in the first round, then romped past Emanon Property (2-1) and Linwood Cafe (1-2) 19-9.

May 27-28

M & M Connection Continues Solid Season At Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" Memorial By Andy Zureick

West Chester, Oh. – On May 27-28 at Queen City Sports Complex, M & M Connection won the Worth-Bud Light-USSSA "D" Memorial Tournament. It was already their fifth tournament championship of the year.

Matt Johnson and Mark Hill were both 3-for-4 in the opening game win over the Hitmen. M & M Connection also got the better of A & A Enterprises, 19-9. In that one, Mike Ditmer, Justin Charlton, Dave Huff, and Ron Williams were all 3-for-4.

They dropped the third game of round robin play, 12-8 to the UHR Canes. It would be the first of three meetings between the two teams.

Despite the loss, M & M advanced to the double elimination round. Their first opponent was the Playmakers. In the top of the 2nd, Matt Hipsher singled in one run and Mike Ditmer drove in two as M & M scored six times to take a 9-3 lead. In the next inning, Ditmer's three-run johnson helped his team stretch the lead to 15-3. The Playmakers battled back to within two, 15-13, after four innings. But relief pitcher Mike Lamb came on to toss three scoreless innings.

"They had all the momentum," noted M & M manager Dave Ridener. His team went on to win 22-13. "That was a springboard for us for the rest of the tournament." Ira Denlinger led the way at the plate, going 5-for-5. Matt Johnson, Matt Hipsher, and Ron Williams all turned in 4-for-5 performances. Mike Ditmer finished 3-for-4 with six runs batted in.

That set up a rematch with the UHR Canes in the championship. M & M would need two victories over them to take the tournament title.

In the bottom of the second of the first finals, Ira Denlinger blasted a two-run homer, Matt Hipsher double in two, and Mike Ditmer drove in two more with a triple. That gave M & M an 8-0 lead. The Canes narrowed the lead to 9-7 going into the bottom of the sixth. Mark Hill's RBI-single capped a three run inning that padded the M & M lead to 12-7. The Canes did not have another run in them and that is how it ended. Matt Hipsher and Mike Ditmer each went 3-for-4.

In the second finals, M & M broke a 1-1 tie in the bottom of the 4th with seven runs. Justin Charlton had a two-run double and Dave Huff a two-RBI triple as their team built a commanding 8-1 lead. The UHR Canes scored three in the top of the 7th to make it interesting, but it was too little, too late. M & M came out on top, 8-6. Matt Hipsher was a perfect 3-for-3. Josh Laughlin went 2-for-3.

Dave Huff at .733 led all M & M hitters in the tournament. "He always hit. He hits toward the bottom of the line-up, [but] he would hit third or fourth on any other team," explained Ridener.

Matt Hipsher was a close second at .667. Ron Williams (.650) and Josh Laughlin (.600) also had solid weekends at the plate. Mike Ditmer collected a team-best 12 RBI. "[Mike] is a triples machine - he has about 30 already. He hits to all parts of the field with power."

Ridener, the pitcher, was solid defensively and together with second baseman Matt Hipsher and shortstop Mike Ditmer, they formed a very tough middle infield. "[Matt and Mike] is the best double play combination I've seen in the 15 years I've been playing softball," Ridener boasted.

Total Package Express will be cruising into 2006 in search of the ever elusive Metro title. 2005 turned out to be a year of close calls as TPE finished 2nd in both the 'B' Metro as well as the ASA Super Shootout. The men of TPE did, however, manage a couple of Eggleston League titles, and finished 2nd in Rumpke's Wednesday "A" division. It should also be noted that many t-shirts were secured and added to Scoot's booty.

The highlight of 2005 would have to be a strong showing at the ASA 'C' Worlds in Valdosta, GA. Sure, the 0-2 record was nothing to write home about, but drinking a local establishment out of Miller Lite and Bud Light was quite a feat. For this accomplishment, TPE shared MVP honors with the boys of EAP/Cincysoftball.com.

Joe Eken (A & A, Taylor Made) will be leading the squad into battle as the Manager of TPE. Julius Cornett (A & A) and Billy Heinrich (A & A) are welcomed additions to an already potent lineup. Once again the offense will be led by Steve Williams (.683, 81 hrs, 1.662 SLG), Goose Gabbard (.585 / 24 hrs), Todd Zurweller (.579, 37 hrs, 1.154 SLG) and Kevin Knox (.500, 35 hrs, .996 SLG). Our table setters also happen to be our strength defensively. While outfielders Larry Land and Scott Hummell are responsible for many of the ooohs and aaaahs coming from the stands, Jeff McFarland, Goose Gabbard and Brian Heidorn anchor a strong middle infield. Jet Wilkins (.573, 32 hrs) will return to the 'hot corner' and attempt to defend his TPE stolen base title. Steve Dashley (returning from 2 injury plagued seasons) and Grady Harris (1 hr per 4 abs) will be returning as the clubhouse and spiritual leaders of TPE. We are also proud to have Bobby McIntyre returning to the hill in 2006. BMac is one of the finest ASA pitchers in the city and is an original member of the club.

- * 2005 Record: 63-28
- * Manager: Joe Eken
- * Key Personnel: Steve Williams (.683, 81 HR's, 249 RBI's), Todd Zurweller (.579, 37 HR's, 129 RBI's, Metro All Tournament), Gary Gabbard (.585, 24 HR's, 142 RBI's, Metro All Tournament), Dave Wilkins (.579, 32 HR's, 136 RBI's)
- * Additions: Julius Cornett (A&A Enterprises), Bill Heinrich (A&A Enterprises)
- * Losses: Ron Mitchell (retired)
- * Final USSSA Ranking: N/A
- * ASA Metro: 2nd
- * ASA World: 79th
- * League Highlights: 1st Eggleston Tuesday "Upper", 2nd Rumpke Wednesday "A"
- * Tourney Highlights: Runner Up Cincinnati Super Shootout, Runner Up Cincinnati "B" Metro

Managers Comments: TPE had a great year last year and everyone on the team is ready to improve on last year's performance. Our strength is our team chemistry, which helps us stay loose in tight situations and focus on winning. We only lost one player from last season, so the chemistry will be there again, but we added two quality players to improve the defense and help with the pitching. The players we added to our team plus the proven veteran talent on this team should make us very competitive throughout the year. TPE will be focusing on ASA league and tournament play, with the exception of the City Slam. Also on the schedule is the annual pilgrimage to Indianapolis, IN for the NSA Jeff Gordon Classic where we have two team goals: first place in a Karaoke contest and consume all the beer in Gatsby's Sports Bar that weekend. I want to thank our sponsor Total Package Express, we're very fortunate to

have such a generous sponsor, Thank You Jet & Joe. I also want to thank Steve Williams for the great work he's done on our web site, probably the best web site of any softball team in the country. Good luck to all the teams this year and don't forget to have fun and enjoy the game.