

Dick "Zucc" Zuccato - HoF - 2000

One of the few players to have made the transition from minor league baseball to fastpitch softball, Dick "Zucc" Zuccato exemplified toughness and a competitive spirit during his successful fastpitch career that spans some 30 years. During his career, the 6'1" Zuccato was an imposing catcher that gained him a reputation as being very competitive and a player that loved to win. "That's a big part of why I played the game. I like to win," Zuccato said.

"Zucc" began his fastpitch career at age 13 as a pitcher in the men's league of Upland, CA. "Through high school I played both fastpitch softball and baseball", Zuccato recollected. After high school, Zuccato was drafted immediately and played professional baseball (Cleveland '53 out of high school in Daytona Beach, and Fargo, ND (N.Y. Giants - Triple AAA), for three years. "From 1957 on, fastpitch softball became the number one sport in my life", Zuccato explained.

His competitive spirit helped him and his teammates win two ISC World Championships and one ASA National Championship during his fastpitch career. Zuccato also was an All-American in 1964, 1965 and 1968 and did not finish lower than third place with any team in the ISC World Championships during this time. During his lengthy and impressive fastpitch career, Zuccato played for many successful teams such as the Pacific Forge Bombers of Etiwanda & Pomona, CA. in the Men's Triple "A" Assoc., of So. CA.. From 1957-1963, Zuccato played in the Western Softball Congress. Next stop for Zuccato was Bettendorf, Iowa (1966-1967) when he played for Harrelson Motors of Moline, IL. "I managed and played for Mr. Harrelson, who did not sponsor a team after the 1967 season", Zuccato explained.

During his long career, Zuccato won a lot of games and cherished his playing days. Asked if any events stood out in his memory, Zuccato said, "Well, when I played in Aurora, Illinois, there were only four teams picked to play in the inaugural Colorado Springs Sports Festival (later became the U.S. Olympic training location) and we were one of the four so that was quite a thrill."

His career then took him to Rock Falls, IL. (Bombers, 1968), Cedar Falls, IA (1969-1970), Cedar Rapids (1971-1976), and Clear Lake, IA. (1977). He finished out his wonderful career in Aurora, IL., where he retired from the game he loved so much (1978). Zuccato said, "All in all, it was happy, rewarding and educational." In 2000, Dick "Zucc" Zuccato was inducted into the ISC Fastpitch Hall of Fame. "I'd like to be remembered as a guy that always gave 110%, hustled all the time and never gave up", Zuccato said.

Reflecting back, Zuccato added that his thirty years of fastpitch softball allowed him "to meet a lot of people that resulted in many lasting friendships. By being inducted into the ISC Hall of Fame, I can say I am among the best fastpitch softball players ever to play the game." Reflecting further, Zuccato said, "I was fortunate to have played with a lot of talented players".

His teammates were certainly fortunate to have played with Dick "Zucc" Zuccato as well. Dick is retired and is living in Wofford Heights, CA.

By Jeff (J) Reich