Doug Chase - HoF - 2008

Doug Chase

The town of Port Alberni, British Columbia in the 1960's, 70's, and 80's was like a lot of other small Canadian towns in the respect that in the summertime, fastpitch softball reigned supreme. And in Port Alberni, no family was more prominent on the playing field than the Chases. Each family member was an avid player, with a multitude of Provincial and several National appearances on their resumes. It turns out that Doug, the 5th of 6 children, would enjoy the most successful career of them all.

Following in the footsteps of his older brothers Rick and Vaughan, Doug took to the game quickly. As a youngster, he was a bit on the smallish side, sporting a bowl cut and his perpetual ensemble of shorts and gumboots. But boy, could he hit. He soon outgrew the competition at his own age level and began playing on his older brother's senior team, the Port Alberni Athletics. As the youngest member of that team he was awarded the Most Valuable Player Award at the 1983 Provincial Championships. The A's finished third that year, with the tournament gold going to Victoria Budget, the eventual national champions. This marked the start of a long career of superlative performances marked by Doug's rock solid defense and clutch hitting ability.

Doug led the mostly young but talented Port Alberni A's to Provincial Championships in 1986 and 1987 over the heavily favoured archrival Victoria Payless (previously Victoria Budget). In each year Doug hit decisive home runs to defeat the Victoria squad. His performances at the two subsequent National Championships attracted the attention of the Canadian National Team, which selected him to the 1988 club. He continued as a player or captain until he retired in 2000. Among Doug's successes with the National Team are three Pan American Games gold's and a World Championship gold in 1992.

The year 1988 was also significant as Doug joined Victoria Payless, as Port Alberni no longer had a team. The move, while hard at first, would lead Doug to several more successes on the ball field, both in Canada and abroad. The move also solidified an already strong Victoria club, looking to return to the winner's circle in the National Championships and challenge for the World title. The well-rounded club featured probably fastpitch softball's best ever tandem

behind the plate with Doug and longtime teammate Rocky Vitale. As always, Chase was a critical component of Victoria's three National Championship teams of 1991, 1992 and 1997. He also chipped in three All Canadian honours during this span.

1988 also marked the first of 13 ISC Tournaments for Doug as well. Doug's career really took off with the increased exposure to the best competition that fastpitch softball had to offer. Doug was the Most Valuable Player in the ISC Northwest Travel League 4 times. No small feat considering the league featured some of the most imposing pitchers of the era, such as Jimmy Moore, Terry Bell, Graeme Robertson, Darren Zack and Mike Piechnik. Doug's dominance did not end at this level, however. He was an All World selection 5 times, winning the RBI title in 1996. In two of those years he led Victoria teams to the ISC final, losing to Sioux City National Health Care in 1992 and to Madison's Farm Tavern in 1997.

Chase's abilities went well beyond the defensive gems and mammoth blasts which were some of the hallmarks of his career. Doug's talent and competitive spirit made the teams he played on much stronger and inspired others to elevate their game as well. He will be remembered as a feared opponent and a respected and admired teammate.

Doug would like to thank his family, friends and many teammates over the years for providing him with a lifetime of memories. In particular he would like to acknowledge Mike Piechnik, an individual who "always gave us an opportunity to win" and who was a "treat to catch" as well. In addition, Doug would like to express his appreciation to National Team coach Terry Baytor. In Doug's words, he was "the one who taught me that success

is a journey, not a destination". Finally, this tribute would not be complete without recognition of the two people who were instrumental to Doug's success. They would always be watching and supporting Doug at every level and locale. The unwavering support of Doug's parents, Orval and Eileen Chase will always be appreciated and never forgotten.

Submitted by: Dave Badovinac