

Ferdi Nelissen - HoF - 2018



Ferdi Nelissen, 61, was born in Portage La Prairie MB to European immigrant parents who encouraged him to be active in sports. In Canada, that means hockey in the winter and baseball in the summer. The enthusiastic Ferdi also included badminton, basketball, football, lacrosse and volleyball.

His introduction to fastball was as a 15-year-old Grade 10 student at Portage Collegiate, his high school coach Barry Saddler invited him to play with the Albion Hotel Canadians, a senior men's team in the Central Manitoba Fastball League. At age 19 he moved to the Open Level, and subsequently played and coached in 15 ISC World Tournaments suiting up with Portage La Prairie MB Diamonds, Winnipeg MB Red Dogs, Fargo ND Kegel Black Knights, Saskatoon SK Rempel Brothers and in his final season in 2002 with Winnipeg MB Wes-Man Landmark Alliance.

While still competing as a player, he also accepted a 1993 appointment as an ISC volunteer. For 17 years until 2009, Ferdi was an ISC Area Commissioner for Western Canada. In addition, for 14 years he served on, and eventually chaired, the Rules Committee - a group that often served as a "lightning rod" for strategic challenges such as the "Out of Region Player Fee Structure" and the PRAWN designation for All-World players.

Other unique projects in which Ferdi participated were the formation of the Player Rep Committee, providing players with a "true voice" in the ISC, the Executive Director Search Committee and the Constitution Ad-Hoc Committee. He also served as an insightful member of the Executive Committee for eight years.

Memorable moments as a player occurred in 1988 when his hometown Portage MB Diamonds up-ended the ISC host Decatur IL Pride 2-1 in front of an estimated 6,000 fans and in 1992 in Salt Lake City UT when the Diamonds knocked off the 1991 ISC runner-up Owen Sound ON Canadian Tire and #4 ranked Midland MI Explorers teams. On a personal note, Ferdi enjoyed an incredible game in Kimberly WI registering four hits and walking twice to get on base six for six times.

With an obvious passion for the sport, Ferdi spent huge amounts of time at the ball park during ISC championship tournaments, including many hours as a member of the broadcast crew for the internet streaming of games, all the while helping to promote softball and the ISC worldwide.

In 2017, he was inducted into the Manitoba Softball Hall of Fame.

Following graduation from Portage Collegiate Institute, Ferdi attended University of Manitoba earning a degree in Physical Education, Kinesiology and Recreation, positioning himself for his 36 year career with the provincial government as a herapeutic Recreation Specialist for people living with disabilities.

Always active, Ferdi's hobbies including workouts, golf, old-timers hockey, snowshoeing and kayaking all balanced with similar passion for local cultural events.

Ferdi and his spouse Laureen have been married for 30+ years and have two adult children – son Devin in Winnipeg, and daughter Shaye in Victoria BC.