

Gary "Dobie" Dobereiner - HoF - 2000

Gary "Dobie" Dobereiner

By Jeff S. Reich

In a fast pitch career that spanned only seven years, Gary Dobereiner made good use of his time. Inducted into the ISC Hall of Fame in 2000 (he played from 1962-1968), Dobereiner was named to the ISC All-World Team five times including his first year in fast pitch with Hamm's Beer (Rock Island, Ill.). The left-handed hitting, right-handed throwing Dobereiner was an outstanding outfielder during his playing days in Illinois. In 1962, while playing for Hamm's Beer he was just a young kid on the fast pitch scene, but helped carry his team to second place finish in the ISC World Tournament. "That was probably one of my greatest moments to go all the way to the finals and be named All-World", Dobereiner recalled.

His fastpitch career was preceded by professional baseball where Dobereiner played in the minor leagues (1959-1961) in the St. Louis Cardinals and Detroit Tigers organizations. "One thing I remember is that Brent Musberger was an umpire in the Midwest League when I played", Dobereiner chuckled. Dobereiner was named to the All-Star Team all three years while playing in the minor leagues. Best known for his hitting, Dobereiner was once called "the best hitter I ever faced" by 1984 Hall of Famer Ty Stofflet. That's high praise coming from Stofflet, who is the sixth winningest pitcher in ISC fastpitch history and a two-time ISC Most Valuable Player. Similar high praise was found in the 1998 ISC World Championship Guide (p. 40), when Art Cashion's All-Time ISC Roster was published and included Gary Dobereiner as one of the three outfielders on the team. "I felt honored when I read this in the guide", Dobereiner said.

Despite all the praise and awards, Dobereiner was just one of the good guys in the fastpitch world. Asked what one word he would use to describe his playing days Dobereiner did not hesitate, "fun". Dobereiner was also known for being congenial with the fans. "I liked talking to them. It added to the fun of the game", he added.

Dobereiner was a tough competitor and was a dependable teammate during his playing days. Playing with the Disco Bombers (Rock Island, IL.) and Harrelson Motors (Moline, IL.), Dobereiner was a top performer. In 1967, he was playing for Harrelson Motors when they won the ISC World Championship. "That was the other great thrill of my career", Dobereiner said. He played his final year with the Disco Bombers in Illinois and was named All-World once again. His career highlights include three second place and two third place finishes in the World Tournament. Dobereiner and 2000 Hall of Fame inductee Dick Zuccato played together in his final season with the Rock Falls (Ill.) Disco Bombers. "We went undefeated in the winner's bracket, but lost two straight to the Long Beach Nitehawks to finish second", Dobereiner recalled.

Dobereiner was asked if he keeps in touch with his former teammates and said, "As a matter of fact I got a call from one this morning. Chuck Thome (father of Philadelphia Phillies 1B Jim Thome) called and we're trying to firm up arrangements to go to the World Tournament this year." Chuck and I played together with Harrelson Motors", Dobereiner explained. It was a memorable year for both as Harrelson Motors was crowned World Champions in 1967. "We only lost three games all year", Dobereiner explained.

When you talk to "Dobie" you get the impression that he had a lot of fun because he made his own fun. His short career was filled with All-World awards and a World Championship, but you get the impression talking with him that having fun was the real key to his success. "It was just a lot of fun and I met a lot of nice people", Dobereiner said.

Today, Dobereiner and his wife Pat are living comfortably in Avon Park, Florida where "Dobie" plays golf, exercises regularly and well, has fun.

Jeff S. Reich