

Rob Gray - HoF - 2018



Rob Gray, 43, spent his youth in Toronto, where as an eight-year-old he was first attracted to softball as a pitcher and a batter possessing a discerning eye for the strike zone.

After graduating from Scarborough's Pope John Paul II high school in 1992, Rob accepted an invitation to play in North Harbour, New Zealand, an experience that introduced him to world class softball. After two seasons "down under", Rob dismissed his pitching role and concentrated on his batting skills.

Following a lot of hard work as a 19-year-old in New Zealand with Darren Zack unselfishly throwing BP, Rob developed into a patient batter. Possessing a fluid, powerful swing, thanks to significant, much appreciated input from friend Todd Idenouye, Rob carved an memorable career.

He played three years (1993-95) with Oshawa Double B's following which, in 1996, he accepted an invitation from Jack Fireman to join the defending ISC Champion Toronto Gators. Rob's DH skills were highly sought after, and commencing in 1997 he donned the uniforms of the Owen Sound ON Canadian Tiremen, Tampa Bay FL Smokers, Ballston Lake NY Heflin Smokers, Portage WI 51 Classics, Marathon WI County Classics and Materials, and then a six year stint with the well-established and storied Madison WI Farm Tavern. Rob retired following his single season with the Kitchener ON Rivershark Twins in 2010.

Spanning 15 ISC seasons, Rob sported an impressive .339 life-time batting average that included 17 home runs.

Influential team-mates included roomie Brian Paton and veteran coach Terry Baytor. Rob played in six ISC Championship games and was a three-time ISC Champion with the Tampa Bay FL Smokers (1998), Marathon WI County Materials (2005) and Madison WI Farm Tavern (2007). Rob earned All-World status four times with County Classics (2001), County Materials (2003), and twice with the Farm Tavern (2004 and 2005).

Rob's fondest memories include winning the 1996 Canadian Championship with the Toronto Gators, the ASA Championship in 2004 with The Farm and the 2007 ISC Championship, also with The Farm.

Other highlights were competing against stellar opponents County Materials, WI and Broken Bow, NE and donning Team Canada colours against the New Zealand Black Sox.

Close friendships have resulted and Rob, along with fellow Hall of Famers Colin Abbott, Todd Budke and Todd Martin are a tight-knit foursome, frequently on the golf course.

He cited that "playing for Rod (Peterson) was like playing for your Dad and an experience that I will never forget. We had so much fun together joking around and laughing... usually at inappropriate times on the bench."

Rob attended the University of Guelph / Kemptville Campus, earning a horticulture diploma, and his Arborist Certification from Humber College. In 1997, started his career at the Arboretum at Humber College, where 21 years later he is a valued Horticulture Technologist and Arborist.

Rob and wife Jenni met in 2010 – they have two boys – Joshua, age 3, and one-year old Jaxson.