

Thomas Makea - HoF - 2016

Thomas Makea - Outfielder - Class of 2106



The Makea family of Hawke's Bay, New Zealand is synonymous with softball excellence "Down Under". Brothers Campbell, Fabian and Thomas and sister Leanne all represented New Zealand on their respective Black Sox and White Sox national squads.

In the International Softball Congress Thomas competed in ISC tournaments spanning 16 summers making his inaugural appearance with the Decatur IL Pride in 1994 and winding up his successful career in 2009 with the Bondurant IA Midwest Stampede.

Thomas helped lead his teams to four ISC championships - twice with Broken Bow NB Travelers/Spirit (2001 & 2003) and twice with Marathon WI County Materials (2005 & 2006). Thomas earned ISC All World distinction on six occasions between 1999-2009, including a superlative tournament in 2000 when

he batted .611, plated 10 RI's and was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player.

In International Softball Federation competition Thomas and the Black Sox earned four world titles and he officially announced his retirement from the world stage in Hastings - where he had deep softball roots - in April 2013.

Thomas stated "This is where I wanted to announce my retirement from international play - here at Akina Park surrounded by whanau where my career began."

That same year Thomas was named co-recipient of the prestigious Ngati Kahungunu's 2013 Sportsmen's Award.

Balancing his career as a drainlayer with softball and family has been a labour of love. Thomas and his wife Kara are proud parents of three sons, all of whom have strong interest in softball. Dante and Reilly are already making their marks in the Black Sox development program while five-year old Lijah is also demonstrating his family's athletic legacy.

As gifted as he was offensively, Thomas was equally competent patrolling the outfield, possessing psychic-like anticipation and deceiving speed that denied batters many a hit. As well, when combined with his dependable and accurate throwing arm, Thomas's pitchers were grateful for extra bases being limited.

Many regard Thomas as New Zealand's greatest ever outfielder, consistently performing at a superlative level in international competition for 18 years and helping his Black Sox national squad to four International Softball Federation world championships.

Thomas was voted as New Zealand's "player of the decade" for the 2000s.

In his post-playing career Thomas is building on coaching credentials where he was a two-time winning coach with the Wellington U-15s and a winning coach in the National Fastpitch Association championship.

In 2014 Thomas was named as head coach of the New Zealand Junior Black Sox national team which he led to the gold medal game, losing to Argentina in Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada. The Jr. Black Sox last won the ISF title in 1987 when fellow inductee Jarrad Martin was a key junior player and is now a fellow coach with Thomas on the national junior team. Last month

the team was competing in the ISF 2016 Junior Championships in Midland MI, and again earned a silver medal.