



Rob Gray – Vaughan ON - OUTFIELDER



Rob Gray – Vaughan ON Rob Gray, 43, currently resides in Vaughan ON, but spent his youthful days in Toronto, where as an eight-year-old he was first attracted to softball. In the early years Rob was a pitcher and a batter possessing a great eye for the strike zone.

In 1992 he 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 fine tuning his skill as a batter He played three years (1993-95) with the 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..

As a patient batter and possessing a fluid and powerful swing, Rob carved a career spanning 15 seasons that resulted in an impressive .339 life-time batting average that included 17 home runs. He 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).



Sean O’Brien – Brockville ON - CATCHER



Sean O’Brien – Brockville ON Sean O’Brien, 47, currently resides in Brockville ON and works in the nation’s capital Ottawa ON, but was born “down east” in St. John’s Newfoundland.

As a youth, Sean played minor sports, emulating his father Gerry who was an avid participant in softball and hockey. At age 17, Sean became impassioned with softball, honed his skills and along with brother Rob departed “The Rock” to travel to New Zealand to further advance their skills.

On returning to Canada, Sean finished his junior career with the Stittsville ON 56ers. In senior ranks, Sean played four seasons with the Grande Prairie AB Pride of the Nor West Fastball League. Returning to Ontario, Sean made his inaugural ISC appearance in 2000 as a member of the Owen Sound ON Selects. His decade-long career ended in 2010 in a “dream-come-true” season suiting up with his brother Rob as team-mates with the ISC World Champion Jarvis ON Travelers.

Sean has represented Canada internationally in the developmental ranks (1995-2000) and at the senior level (2000-2010), competing in two ISF World Champions (silver and bronze medals) and three Pan-Am qualifiers. During his eleven year ISC career, Sean was also a member of the back-to-back champion Amsterdam NY Broken Bow Spirit. As a respected and highly skilled catcher, complemented by clutch hitting, Sean earned ISC All-World honors on five occasions – 2002 and 2003 with Amsterdam NY Spirit; 2008 and 2009 with Saskatoon SK Aspen Interiors, and in his final 2010 season with the Jarvis ON Travelers. During his illustrious ISC career, Sean batted .304, including four tournaments when he batted .400 or higher.



Paul Rosebush, Bakersfield CA - OUTFIELDER



Paul Rosebush, Bakersfield CA Paul Rosebush, 42, was born in Wellington ON, and as youngster, watching his father Rick play men's softball in Prince Edward County, Paul became attracted to the sport.

From age eight to 15, Paul played minor softball for the Wellington Quinte Meats, a team that won three Ontario Championships. The next three seasons he played in the Moira River Men's Softball League in Belleville, and was in awe of the skill caliber of senior players when he attended, as a fan and spectator, the highly competitive Perth Shoot-out Tournament..

Paul's ISC debut was in 1999 as a member of the Oshawa ON Gators where he quickly established himself as a feared top-of-the order hitter. In 2000, he joined the Madison WI Farm Tavern for the first of nine seasons where he earned ISC All-World laurels at three tournaments (2001, 2003 and 2008), helped his team to seven top four finishes, played in three championship games and was a member of The Farm Championship squad in 2007. Paul finished his ISC career in 2011 as a member of the Bakersfield CA Angels, and in 12 tournaments used speed and finesse to carve a well-respected .330 batting average.

Paul is also a highly skilled hockey player, having been an outstanding member of the Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union (CIAU) 1997 champion University of Guelph ON Gryphons in 1997. Following that, he fashioned a six-year professional hockey career with the Bakersfield CA Condors of the East Coast Hockey League. His hockey journey resulted in he and his family currently residing in Bakersfield.



Bruce Bierman – Ayr ON - UMPIRE



Bruce Bierman – Ayr ON Bruce Bierman, 75, of Ayr ON has enjoyed a lengthy career in softball, initially as player and coach, and later as an umpire and official. Born in Waterloo in his grandparents', home, he initially lived in Erbsville and at age nine moved to New Dundee.

Softball was a fixture in rural communities and Bruce recalls playing whenever the weather permitted, and his career extended into his mid-thirties.

After his playing days, he coached his daughter's team. In due course, Bruce ventured into officiating, initially as a member of the Hespeler ON Umpire's Association. In 1985 he was appointed the Zone 3 UIC for Softball Ontario and the following year became the UIC for the Ontario ISC Travel League. In 1987, he assumed the role as the Umpire in Chief for ISC qualifiers.

In 1997, Bruce achieved his Level 5 Designation from Softball Canada at the Senior Men's Canadian Championship in Victoria BC, and two years later, umpired in the PAN AM games in Winnipeg MB. Bruce served as the UIC for the inaugural ISC II Tournament in Kitchener in 2002 and then again in 2006.

In 2006, he also assumed the role of UIC for the ISC and has held that position for twelve years, including the 2017 championship in Grand Rapids MI. Bruce was recognized as a "Legend" in the Officials category of the Kitchener-Woodstock based Legends of Softball tournament in 2008, and was inducted into the Softball Canada Hall of Fame in Winnipeg MB in 2015. For the ISC, Bruce has been a valued and well-respected official and leader in the ISC for thirty years.



Ferdi Nelissen – Portage LaPrairie MB - ADMINISTRATOR



Ferdi Nelissen – Portage LaPrairie MB Ferdi Nelissen, 61, was introduced to fastball was in 1974 when, as a 15-year-old Grade-10 student at Portage Collegiate, his high school coach Barry Sadler 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. 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 world-wide.



Jim Hallman- Kitchener ON - BOB WELBY MEMORIAL RECOGNITION OF SERVICE AWARD



Jim Hallman, 63, and his extended family have had a long-time love affair with softball as local players, corporate sponsors and team/league administrators.

At the ISC level, Jim became a co-sponsor in 2002 of the Waterloo Twins who at that time were one of the longest participating senior teams in Canada.

In 2005, Jim assumed primary sponsorship creating the Kitchener Hallman Twins, with the team finishing 3rd at the ISC Championship in Eau Claire WI. As well, Jim was very supportive of Kitchener’s hosting of the ISC Championships in 2006 and 2007.

In 2008, following an amalgamation with the Orillia ON Quaker Riversharks, the new look Rivershark Twins became just the 2nd Canadian team to win the highly competitive ISC Championship, defeating Saskatoon SK Aspen Interiors in Kimberly WI.

In 2009, the Rivershark Twins enjoyed repeated success in Quad Cities IA/IL beating the Broken Bow NE Patsy’s in the final game. In 2010, in Midland MI, they almost made it three-peat, losing in the championship final to the Jarvis ON Travelers.

The Hallman family has also been instrumental in forming the Kitchener Cubs, a team that has consistently competed in the ISC annual tournaments from 2006-15, finishing the 2009 tourney as ISC II finalists.. Jim, along with his wife Sue, together have enthusiastically embraced the sport at the ISC level, and provide generous support that has been instrumental in keeping competitive men’s fastball alive in the Kitchener-Waterloo community.

This legacy of fastball excellence is notable not only locally, but as well throughout the broader ISC world, as evidenced by Kitchener’s hosting, for the 5th time, the ISC World Tournament in August 2018.