



The Messenger



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Red, White and Blue Memories

Players and coaches from the United States Olympic Softball Team and the Midwest Collegiate All-Stars pose together following the June 17 game at Zenoff Park in Stevens Point. More photos from the event are found in Section 4. (Don Geiger photo)

2008 WASA Season Filled With Highlights

FREDONIA – The Wisconsin Amateur Softball Association's 2008 season was highlighted by a number of noteworthy events and accomplishments.

These included:

- ** Farmington's ASA national championship in Men's Fast Pitch 23 & Under.
- ** The Oshkosh Raiders winning the Girls Fast Pitch Class B 10 & Under Northern National crown.
- ** Patsy's of New York City repeating as the ASA Men's Major Fast Pitch national champions in spectacular fashion as Stevens Point became the first city in Wisconsin to host the ASA's oldest national tourney.
- ** The June 17 visit to Stevens Point of the U.S. Olympic Softball Team as part of its Bound 4 Beijing Tour. The sold-out game at Zenoff Park was Team USA's only Wisconsin stop.
- ** Another record year of registrations and state tournament entries for Dale Ferron's booming Junior Olympic program.

This edition of *The Messenger* concentrates on these top stories as well as other key events from a sterling summer of softball in Wisconsin.

A Beautiful Day: U.S. Olympic Team Visits Stevens Point

STEVENS POINT – Tuesday, June 17, 2008 was a gorgeous day for softball.

Just ask anyone fortunate enough to be part of the sell-out crowd of over 2,500 fans who jammed Zenoff Park to witness the nearly invincible United States Olympic Softball Team take on a squad of talented but star-struck collegians.

The game itself, the solitary Wisconsin stop on Team USA's pre-Olympic Bound 4 Beijing Tour, was a mismatch with the Red, White and Blue dismantling the Midwest Collegiate All-Stars 20-1.

The final score, however, wasn't very important because everyone emerged a winner. That included the players, coaches, umpires and fans, especially the many youngsters with the rare opportunity to observe their heroines in person and even get some cherished autographs and photos.

The vibrant atmosphere of this magical evening was captured for the Wisconsin ASA by the lenses of photographers Don Geiger, Lynn Hintz, Dale Ferron and Rob Whitmire, who all kindly donated their talents.

In Section 4 of this issue, *The Messenger* is proud to present a small sample of snapshots from an historic event that, sadly, may never happen again unless softball regains its Olympic status.

On Deck For Spring 2009:

- **2009 Rule Changes.
- ** WASA Umpire Awards
- ** Sharp-Dressed Men in Uniform
- ** Don Kottke: A Half-Century of Hits

WASA Officers Re-elected

STEVENS POINT – The Wisconsin ASA's voting members certainly weren't clamoring for change in '08.

All four of the WASA's incumbent officers up for re-election ran unopposed and each received another two-year term during the election of officers at the WASA's annual meeting here Oct. 4.

Re-elected were:

President Dick Buskov, Madison

Vice-President Matt Disher, Stevens Point

Treasurer Arlene Case, Madison

Secretary Gordie Adler, Marshfield



The Messenger

The Messenger is an official publication of the Wisconsin Amateur Softball Assn.
N5372 Loraine Court
Fredonia, WI 53021
WASA Office Phone: (262) 685-7984
Fax: (262) 692-9940
Web site: www.wisconsin-asa.org

Editorial Office at:

Wisconsin ASA Messenger
c/o Randy Wiesel
1901 Michigan Avenue
Stevens Point, WI 54481
Editor's Phone: (715) 344-6846 or (715) 341-2804

Personnel:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Editor | Randy Wiesel |
| Assistant Editor | Matt Disher |
| Commissioner | Tom Raimer |
| President | Dick Buskov |
| Columnists | Dale Ferron Roger Regez |
| Design/Layout | Jim Krueger |
| Photo Credits | Matt Disher, Dale Ferron, Rob Whitmore, Julie Flaherty, Tom Rausch, Randy Wiesel, Rob Whitmarsh, Don Geiger, Lynn Hintz, Rex Mehlberg, Rob Whitmire, Jerry Davidsavor, Gordie Adler, Varsity Photo |

Mailing List

To be added to *The Messenger* mailing list, please send your e-mail request to: matt@stevenspointsoftball.com

Farmington's Father/Coach Knows Best

BRANDON, SOUTH DAKOTA – Farmington's victory in the 2008 ASA Men's Fast Pitch 23 & Under National Championship here August 2-3 resembled an episode of "Father Knows Best."

Things looked bleak for Farmington, a team comprised of players hailing from various small towns in the northwestern Wisconsin counties of Polk and St. Croix, after a 7-3 loss to the smokin' hot BAC Pride of Rockford, Illinois in Sunday's first championship game.

Following the defeat, Don Potting, Jr., Farmington's workhorse pitcher, informed his coach, who also happened to be his father, Don, Sr., that he was gassed and couldn't take the circle in the decisive second game.

"It was really hot and I'd pitched four games in less than two days," Don Jr. explained. "I told my dad I was done."

That wasn't exactly what Don Sr. wanted to hear.

"He was frustrated, hot and tired and didn't want to go out there for the last game. But I told him he was our best pitcher and that he had to give it a try," the elder Potting stated.

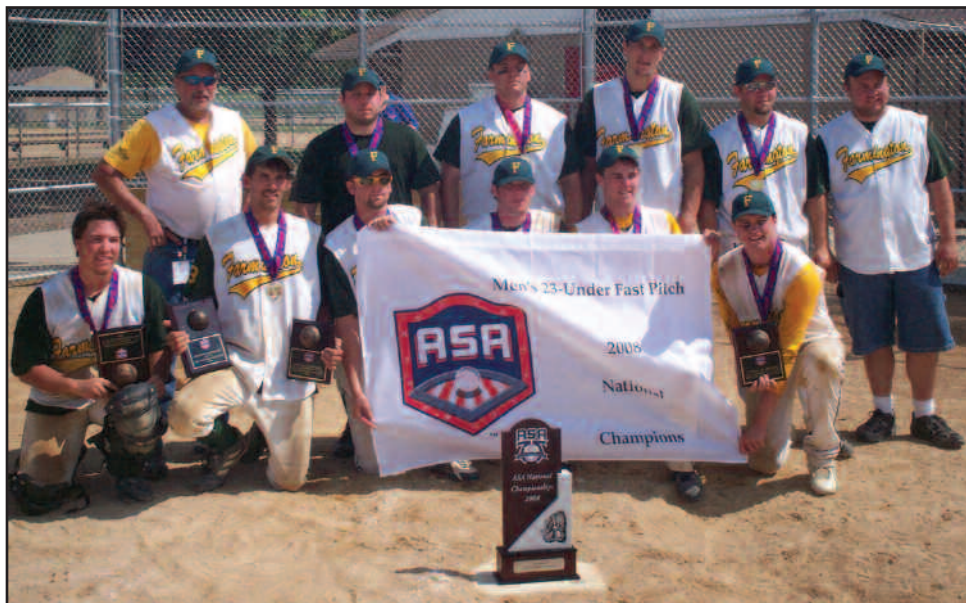
Junior reluctantly agreed to take the ball and a quick early lead for Farmington did wonders.

"Dad basically told me to 'Get out there' and when we took the lead right away I got a second wind," the 21-year-old righthander recalled after tossing the 5-1 victory that gave Farmington the national title.

"We scored early and that got him fired up," Don Sr. agreed.

Potting also helped his own cause with the bat as he joined Josh Bottolfson and Mike Nilssen in producing two hits plus an RBI apiece while Dan Wells contributed a pair of runs scored in the clincher.

Potting hurled every inning over the weekend for the champs, going 4-1 and notching 34 strikeouts which resulted in his being named to the tournament's All-America First Team as well as earning the Most



FARMINGTON U-23: (Front row, from left) Josh Calleja, Don Potting Jr., Josh Bottolfson, Matt Pettersen, Mike Nilssen, Joby Davidsavor, (Back row) Coach Don Potting Sr., Tommy Wells, Joe Dietmeier, Brandon Larson, Danny Wells, Coach Jason Bottolfson.

Valuable Player award.

Centerfielder Joby Davidsavor and catcher Josh Calleja also received All-America honors for Farmington, which had to survive two intense battles in Saturday's opening action.

Farmington, co-managed by Potting Sr. and Jason Bottolfson, began the eight-team event Saturday morning versus future fellow-finalist BAC and squeezed by the Pride 2-1 as Potting whiffed nine and Nilssen belted a solo homer.

That afternoon Farmington advanced to Sunday's winner's bracket final by outlasting Crow Bar (Sioux Falls, South Dakota), 4-3.

Crow Bar pushed across two scores in the seventh to make Farmington squirm a bit before Potting closed the door.

Calleja, Wells, Davidsavor and Brandon Larson drove in the runs against the South Dakotans that kept Farmington unbeaten.

Early Sunday morning Potting blanked the only other unbeaten, the Dakota Sports Barnstormers from Lester, Iowa, 8-0, to secure Farmington a spot in the championship game.

(Continued on page 4)

Farmington (Continued from page 3)

Calleja went 3-for-3 and scored three times to lead the assault behind Potting, who struck out 10.

A resurgent BAC then eliminated the Barnstormers 12-4 for its fifth win in a row to set up a rematch against Farmington.

“Pitching and defense won it for us,” Don Potting, Sr. concluded while complimenting the “great” umpiring in Brandon.

His son, who learned the art of pitching from his 60-year-old father (who’s been at it since 1964 and has “around 500 to 600” wins), admitted that “I started playing softball when I was 15 and this is the first tournament we’ve ever won for Farmington.”

That statement held up for about seven days since the very next weekend Farmington captured the Ox Cart Days tourney back home in Star Prairie, Wisconsin.

“Two championships in two weeks ... imagine that,” Potting Jr. marveled.

Farmington’s national championship is Wisconsin’s first in the 23 & Under division since Don Stram Logging of Prairie du Chien won in 2000.

And don’t rule out a repeat performance in 2009.

“Everybody should be back next year,” revealed Jason Bottolfson, 24, Farmington’s co-manager.

Bottolfson then summed up his club’s national championship quite nicely by stating “It was really something. I’ve never experienced anything like it.”

And it’s thanks in part to a father, and coach, who really did know best.

2008 ASA Men’s Fast Pitch 23 & Under National Championship

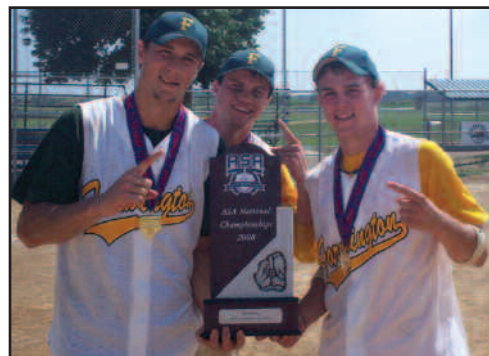
August 2-3 - Brandon, South Dakota

| | | | |
|----|----------------------------|------------------|-----|
| 1. | Farmington | Farmington, WI | 4-1 |
| 2. | BAC Pride | Rockford, IL | 6-2 |
| 3. | Dakota Sports Barnstormers | Lester, IA | 2-2 |
| 4. | Crow Bar | Sioux Falls, SD | 2-2 |
| 5. | LX Fastpitch | La Crosse, WI | 2-2 |
| | Strikers Corner | Stewartville, MN | 1-2 |
| 7. | NW Implement | Maryville, MO | 0-3 |
| | Wiley’s Lounge | St. Joseph, MO | 0-3 |

First Team All-America Selections from Wisconsin ASA Entries

| | | |
|----------|------------------------------|------------|
| Pitcher | Don Potting, Jr. | Farmington |
| Outfield | Joby Davidsavor | Farmington |
| Outfield | Brian Christ | LX |
| Utility | Josh Calleja | Farmington |
| MVP - | Don Potting, Jr., Farmington | |

Thanks to Garth Olson of *The Valley Wire* in Osceola for his help with this story and Jerry Davidsavor for the photographs.



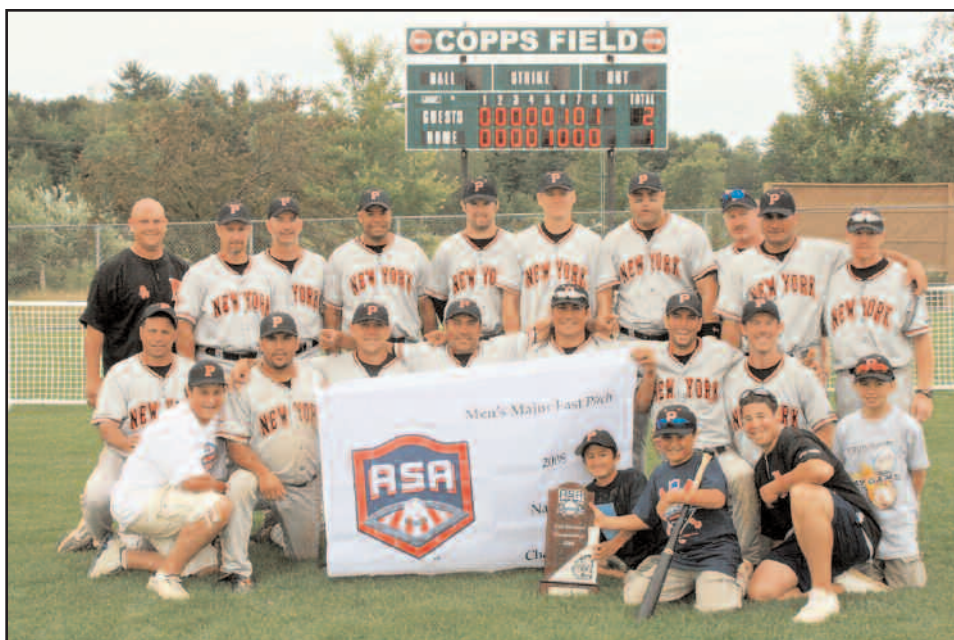
Farmington’s (from left) Brandon Larson, Joby Davidsavor and Mike Nilssen with the championship plaque.



Joby Davidsavor flies the championship banner.



All-American and tourney MVP Don Potting Jr. delivers a pitch.



**Patsy's of New York:
2008 ASA Men's Major
Fast Pitch
National Champions
(Don Geiger photo)**

Makea's Monster Mash Earns a Major Repeat for Patsy's

STEVENS POINT – Just call him “Makea the Knife.”

One mighty swing of Thomas Makea's bat thrust a dagger through the dreams of the Rivershark Twins and gave defending champion Patsy's of New York City the 2008 ASA Men's Major Fast Pitch national title.

Makea's titanic blow punctured a 1-1 tie and lifted Patsy's to a 2-1, 8-inning victory over the Twins from Ambler, PA in an intense showdown at high noon on Sunday, August 3 on Zenoff Park's Copps Field.

The decisive moment came with one out in the top of the eighth as Makea launched a Frank Cox delivery way over the 300-foot permanent fence and high into a stand of white birch trees.

“I was just trying to get on base and let one of my teammates get me home,” Makea admitted to the *Stevens Point Journal's* Kyle Falstad. “But I got home by myself.”

Makea's heroics provided Patsy's with their initial lead of the day after nearly 15 frustrating innings versus the Twins' stingy mound corps and ace righthander Adam Folkard wasn't about to see it vanish in the bottom of the eighth.

Folkard, named the winner of the Herb Dudley Award as the tourney's outstanding pitcher, surrendered a 1-out single to Blake Miller but brawny catcher Frank DeGroat shot Miller down attempting to swipe second and the final out followed when Ryan

Wolfe bounced out to tournament MVP Brad Rona at third.

Rivershark had nosed in front 1-0 in the last of the fifth on Blair English's single and Steve Mullaley's RBI double.

Patsy's, scoreless on the day against Twins' hurlers Cox and Todd Martin and down to their final four outs, tied it in the sixth when DeGroat drove in Makea, who'd doubled to snap an 0-for-11 funk, with a pressurized two-out single.

“There was never a doubt,” quipped Patsy's manager Phil Rogers after the emotional win with a sarcastic smile that betrayed his feelings of utter relief.

Rivershark forced the decisive championship contest, the third meeting between the two antagonists in about 16 hours, by blanking Patsy's 6-0 in the first title game as Cox spun a solid four-hitter.

That came right after the Twins began the morning at 8 o'clock by disposing of the Broken Bow (Nebraska) Gremlins, 6-2.

Wolfe's 3-run tater in the second supplied the major impetus as Don Scott befuddled the lethargic Gremlins, who settled for third place after toiling past midnight to oust Farm Tavern from Madison, Wis.

The first collision between Patsy's and the Twins occurred Saturday evening with both clubs unbeaten at 3-0 and a berth in the national championship game at stake.

(Continued on page 6)

Patsy's

(Continued from page 5)

Omar Moraga's two-run double got the New Yorkers in gear in the top of the first and Michael Tanner's solo shot in the third was frosting as Folkard, sporting sunglasses at night, breezed to a 3-0 triumph allowing only three hits while whiffing 11 Twins.

While Patsy's and the Twins squared off, the two Wisconsin powerhouses, Farm Tavern of Madison and Circle Tap from Denmark, engaged in a three-hour and seven minute loser's bracket classic that might've been the most exciting of the tourney's 38 games.

Circle Tap, the 2006 national champs, shattered a 5-5 deadlock in the top of the seventh on big Chris Delarwelle's massive homer and tacked on an unearned run to go up 7-5 with three outs to get.

Jeff Goolagong, at .715 the tourney's leading hitter, pulled one back for The Farm with a one-out long ball and free passes to the next two hitters brought Collin McKenzie on for Circle Tap starter Juan Potolicchio.

McKenzie induced an infield out that moved the two runners into scoring position and brought left-handed-hitting leadoff man Paul Rosebush to the plate.

After some deliberation Circle Tap elected to pitch to Rosebush with two down, first base open and Zenon Winters on deck.

In a mesmerizing duel that lasted nearly 10 minutes, Rosebush, after fouling off a number of 3-2 offerings, lined a shot into center that chased home the tying and winning runs.

The devastating loss halted Circle Tap's five-game roll after an opening round setback to Iowa's Midwest Stampede.

The Farm's reward for the heroic win? Go right back to work against Broken Bow's lanky southpaw Andrew Kirkpatrick.

Sadly for the 2003-04 champions, Kirkpatrick was dealing aspirin tablets and he set down 16 Farm batters on strikes as the Gremlins won easily, 6-0.

The clock struck midnight for The Farm shortly after 12 and relegated the Madison outfit to fourth place, leaving only Patsy's, Rivershark and Broken Bow to settle the issue once the sun came up on Sunday morning.

And, when the day ended, Makea made sure it was shining on Patsy's.

2008 ASA Men's Major Fast Pitch National Championship July 31-Aug. 3 - Zenoff Park - Stevens Point

| | | | |
|-----|------------------------|-------------------|-----|
| 1. | Patsy's | New York City, NY | 5-1 |
| 2. | Rivershark Twins | Ambler, PA | 5-2 |
| 3. | Broken Bow Gremlins | Broken Bow, NE | 4-2 |
| 4. | Farm Tavern | Madison, WI | 3-2 |
| 5. | Midwest Stampede | Elkhart, IN | 3-2 |
| | Circle Tap | Denmark, WI | 5-2 |
| 7. | Florida Fastpitch | Jacksonville, FL | 3-2 |
| | Midland Explorers | Midland, MI | 3-2 |
| 9. | Dolan & Murphy | Aurora, IL | 1-2 |
| | Casa Trejo A-1 Bombers | Yucaipa, CA | 1-2 |
| | The Bar - Appleton | Appleton, WI | 1-2 |
| | Townline Pub | Green Bay, WI | 1-2 |
| 13. | MinnDak Millers | Fargo, ND | 2-3 |
| | The Freight | Vandalia, IL | 1-3 |
| | The Bar - Green Bay | Green Bay, WI | 0-3 |
| | Thomson Area Merchants | Thomson, IL | 0-3 |
| 17. | The Bar - Wausau | Wausau, WI | 0-3 |

ALL-AMERICA FIRST TEAM

| | | |
|---------|--------------------|---------------------|
| IF | Jeff Goolagong | Farm Tavern |
| IF | Brad Rona | Patsy's |
| IF | Omar Moraga | Patsy's |
| IF | Matt Palazzo | Midwest Stampede |
| OF | Jeff Ellsworth | Rivershark Twins |
| OF | Steve Mullaley | Rivershark Twins |
| OF | Freddy Terkelsen | Broken Bow Gremlins |
| OF | Jarrod Martin | Broken Bow Gremlins |
| Utility | Nathan Nukunuku | Broken Bow Gremlins |
| Utility | Glenn Ormsby | Circle Tap |
| Utility | Tim Jorgenson | Circle Tap |
| C | Pat Shannon | Rivershark Twins |
| P | Adam Folkard | Patsy's |
| P | Andrew Kirkpatrick | Broken Bow Gremlins |
| P | Jeremy Manley | Midwest Stampede |

ALL-AMERICAN SECOND TEAM

| | | |
|---------|------------------|---------------------|
| IF | Roman Foore | MinnDak Millers |
| IF | Michael Tanner | Patsy's |
| IF | Todd Schultz | Midland Explorers |
| IF | Blake Miller | Rivershark Twins |
| OF | Jason Hill | Farm Tavern |
| OF | Thomas Makea | Patsy's |
| OF | Ryan Wolfe | Rivershark Twins |
| OF | Stacey McLean | Midwest Stampede |
| Utility | Kerry Shaw | Broken Bow Gremlins |
| Utility | Dean Holoein | Florida Fastpitch |
| Utility | Chris Delarwelle | Circle Tap |
| C | Frank DeGroat | Patsy's |
| P | Juan Potolicchio | Circle Tap |
| P | Frank Cox | Rivershark Twins |
| P | Todd Martin | Rivershark Twins |



MEN'S MAJOR PHOTOS

(All photos this page by Don Geiger)

At left, Adam Folkard, the “Ace of Shades,” hurled Patsy’s to the national title.

Below left, Thomas Makea rounds the bases after belting the monstrous eighth-inning home run that gave Patsy’s a 2-1 national championship victory over the Rivershark Twins.

Below right, Michael Tanner welcomes Makea home.





Men's Major Fast Pitch National Tournament Umpires pose prior to the action getting underway in Stevens Point: (Front row, from left) John Peterson, D.J. Postle, Eric Hawthorne, Guy Marcoux, Ted Germain, Billy Norton, Tony Greer, Tim King, Paul Derenzo, (back row) Umpire Coordinator Marcus Flowerette, Jeff Sloan, Keith Kearney, Jack Floyd, Rick Havercroft, Kevin Wallace, Scott Thomas, Mike Painter, Ricky Sexton, Paul Kemp and Umpire-In-Chief Bill Humphrey. (Rob Whitmire photo)



Legendary ASA Hall of Famer Bill Humphrey, the national tournament's Umpire-in-Chief, lights up during a break in the action. (Don Geiger photo)

Wisconsin Teams Fare Well in National Tournaments

FREDONIA – Spearheaded by Farmington’s national championship in the Men’s Fast Pitch 23 & Under, Wisconsin ASA adult teams forged a 43-43 record in 2008 ASA nationals en route to five top four finishes. In addition to Farmington’s first national title other final four showings were provided by:

| | |
|--|---|
| New Image (Montfort) | 2 nd in Men’s Fast Pitch Class A |
| AFT/Coors Light/Ida’s (Wisconsin Rapids) | 3 rd in Coed Slow Pitch Class A |
| Budweiser/Electro-Glo (Ft. Atkinson) | 3 rd in Men’s Slow Pitch Class D North |
| Farm Tavern (Madison) | 4 th in Men’s Major Fast Pitch |

Complete team-by-team results for all 21 WASA adult teams that played in an ASA national this summer are listed below.

(To view the 2008 WASA Junior Olympic Girls Fast Pitch results go to Dale Ferron’s JO News column found elsewhere in this issue)

Fast Pitch

| Team | City | Tournament | W/L | Place |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----|-------|
| Circle Tap | Denmark | Men’s Major | 5-2 | 5 |
| Farm Tavern | Madison | Men’s Major | 3-2 | 4 |
| Farmington | East Farmington | Men’s 23 & Under | 4-1 | 1 |
| LX | La Crosse | Men’s 23 & Under | 2-2 | 5 |
| New Image | Montfort | Men’s Class A | 6-2 | 2 |
| The Bar - Appleton | Appleton | Men’s Major | 1-2 | 9 |
| The Bar - Green Bay | Green Bay | Men’s Major | 0-3 | 13 |
| The Bar - Wausau | Wausau | Men’s Major | 0-3 | 17 |
| Townline Pub | Green Bay | Men’s Major | 1-2 | 9 |

Modified Pitch

| | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|-----|---|
| Dillinger’s | Fond du Lac | Men’s 10-Man | 1-2 | 7 |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|-----|---|

Slow Pitch

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|---------------|-----|----|
| AFT/Coors Light/Ida’s | Wisconsin Rapids | Coed Class A | 2-2 | 3 |
| Bigalke’s | Milwaukee | Men’s C North | 2-2 | 17 |
| Budweiser/Electro-Glo | Ft. Atkinson | Men’s D North | 5-2 | 3 |
| Cubby’s | Menomonie | Men’s D North | 3-2 | 17 |
| Fleet Feet | Menomonie | Men’s C North | 2-2 | 17 |
| Ready Randy’s | New Richmond | Men’s C North | 2-2 | 25 |
| Stepan Enterprises | Mosinee | Men’s B East | 1-2 | 9 |
| Superior Trucking | Superior | Men’s C North | 0-2 | 49 |
| Tranberg Roofing | Blair | Men’s C North | 0-2 | 49 |
| Two Beers/Nasty Dogs | Mosinee | Men’s C North | 1-2 | 33 |
| X-treme Measures | Amery | Men’s C North | 2-2 | 17 |

Wisconsin Players Earn All-America Honors at Nationals

FREDONIA – Congratulations to the following players from Wisconsin ASA teams who earned either All-America or All-Tournament recognition at an ASA national championship in 2008:

First Team

| Player | Team | Position | Tournament |
|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Casey Knollmaier | AFT/Coors Light/Ida's | Utility | Coed SP A |
| Glenn Ormsby | Circle Tap | Utility | Men's Major FP |
| Tim Jorgensen | Circle Tap | Utility | Men's Major FP |
| Jeff Goolagong | Farm Tavern | Infield | Men's Major FP |
| Joey Benash | New Image | Infield | Men's FP A |
| John Brandon | New Image | Infield | Men's FP A |
| Kris Agnew | New Image | Outfield | Men's FP A |
| Todd Burlage | New Image | Outfield | Men's FP A |
| Jeramie Holman | New Image | Pitcher | Men's FP A |
| Don Potting, Jr. | Farmington | Pitcher | Men's FP 23-U |
| Joby Davidsavor | Farmington | Outfield | Men's FP 23-U |
| Josh Calleja | Farmington | Utility | Men's FP 23-U |
| Brian Christ | LX | Outfield | Men's FP 23-U |
| Steve Siegel | Budweiser/Electro-Glo | Infield | Men's SP D North |
| Travis Carothers | Budweiser/Electro-Glo | Outfield | Men's SP D North |
| Jeff Behling | Budweiser/Electro-Glo | Outfield | Men's SP D North |

Second Team

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|----------|------------------|
| Juan Potolicchio | Circle Tap | Pitcher | Men's Major FP |
| Chris Delarwelle | Circle Tap | Utility | Men's Major FP |
| Jason Hill | Farm Tavern | Outfield | Men's Major FP |
| Justin Pettit | Budweiser/Electro-Glo | Outfield | Men's SP D North |
| Michael Cherti | Budweiser/Electro-Glo | Infield | Men's SP D North |

Worth and the WASA Sign 3-Year Deal

FREDONIA – Worth Sports is the new official softball and equipment sponsor of the Wisconsin ASA.

WASA Commissioner Tom Raimer disclosed the three-year agreement between Worth and the WASA at the organization's annual meeting Oct. 4 in Stevens Point.

"We are very excited to be partners with Worth and are anticipating a long and beneficial relationship," Raimer stated.

Raimer urged all of the WASA affiliates to contact their local Worth dealers for special ASA pricing on Worth softballs for 2009.

The pact between the WASA and Worth runs through 2011.

For more information on Worth products, see your local dealer or contact Rick Herron, Worth's Wisconsin representative at (262) 375-2438.

Worth's special prebook pricing for ASA softballs is effective through March 1, 2009.

2009 WISCONSIN ASA INC.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Wisconsin ASA
N5372 Loraine Ct
Fredonia, WI 53021

www.wisconsin-asa.org

COMMISSIONER

Tom Raimer
N5372 Loraine Ct
Fredonia, WI 53021

raimertm@msn.com

262-685-7984

ASSISTANT - COMMISSIONER

Tom Rausch
619 Guinette Ave
Fond du Lac, WI 54935

tomr@rauschins.com

920-922-5517

BOARD of DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

Dick Buskov
34 Belmont Rd
Madison, WI 53714

rbuskov@charter.net

608-241-8629

VICE-PRESIDENT

Matt Disher
1009 Park St
Stevens Point, WI 54481

matt@disherinsurance.com

715-342-6886

715-344-4427 fax

TREASURER

Arleen Case
2506 McDivitt Rd #4
Madison, WI 53713

608-445-1047

SECRETARY

Gordy Adler
104 E 3rd St. Suite 202
Marshfield, WI 54449

gjacpa@tznet.com

715-384-9176

PAST PRESIDENT

Tom Monahan
142 Scout Way
DePere, WI 54115

tommonohan@netnet.net

920-339-9190

STATE PLAYER REPRESENTATIVE

Mike Disher
2616 Prais St.
Stevens Point, WI 54481

mike@disherinsurance.com

715-341-6856

715-344-4427 fax

2009 WISCONSIN ASA INC.

UMPIRE-IN-CHIEF FAST/MODIFIED PITCH

Dick Buskov
34 Belmont Rd
Madison, WI 53714

rbuskov@charter.net

608-241-8629

UMPIRE-IN-CHIEF SLOW PITCH

Jim Mitchell
919 Paperjack Dr
New Richmond, WI 54017

cayouth@spacestar.net

715-246-7788

J O COMMISSIONER

Dale Ferron
4801 Marsh Rd.
Madison, WI 53718

daleferron@charter.net

608-838-3202

SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTOR

Randy Wievel
1901 Michigan Ave.
Stevens Point, WI 54481

zenoff@stevenspointsoftball.com

715-344-6846

FAST PITCH COMMISSIONER

Mark Higgins
149 Shelley Lane
DePere, WI 54115

md.higgins@athenet.net

920-217-0665

Tom Monahan
142 Scout Way
DePere, WI 54415

tommonohan@netnet.net

920-339-9190

MODIFIED PITCH COMMISSIONER

Paul Wagner
500 Windrose Ct
Green Bay, WI 54311

yanksandpack2712@yahoo.com

920-406-9146

SLOW PITCH COMMISSIONER (Interim)

Matt Disher
1009 Park St
Stevens Point, WI 54481

matt@disherinsurance.com

715-342-6886
715-344-4427 fax

WOMENS COMMISSIONER

Paula Suemnicht
N9352 Elm Beach
Fond du Lac, WI 54935

pjsuemnicht@hotmail.com

920-960-9684



Wisconsin Line Drives

By Roger Regez

One of the inductees at the 2007 WASA Hall of Fame program in Ashwaubenon was the first-ever state commissioner, the late Silas G. Johnson. He was honored as the 100th member of the Wisconsin ASA Hall of Fame.

Johnson was a former basketball and baseball star at Mt. Horeb High School who was recruited by the University of Wisconsin but wound up playing in college at what is now UW-Whitewater.

Johnson's son, Silas, Jr., from Madison, accepted his plaque and had no recall that his father had ever played softball but stated that he was known to be a great organizer.

The first state fast pitch tournament under Johnson's leadership was in 1934 at Madison, where Johnson resided. It was a two-tournament combo with a bracket for both the women and the men.

Johnson's organizational ability showed in news clips from the *Wisconsin State Journal* of that time.

Admission was 10 cents. Prices changed for the 1935 state meet; men were charged 25 cents and women 10 cents.

The state tournaments had printed programs, PA announcers and team trophies and Johnson acquired newspaper sponsorship for all the trophies.

He also had a promotion called "Bank Night" where a person with an admission ticket could win \$50.

Every player that homered received a trophy.

Johnson also had a five-man com-

mittee select a state all-tournament team. The box scores of each game were printed in the newspaper and he had the mayor of Madison presenting the trophies at the conclusion of the tournament.

At the time Johnson became the state commissioner, major league baseball was an "all-white" game. "All-white" baseball even carried over into the amateur ranks.

For example, the 1941 handbook of the Association of Minnesota Amateur Baseball Leagues had in its by-laws No. 12, which stated "All colored players are barred."

Under the Johnson commissionership he left no doubt that Wisconsin softball was to be an "all comers" game.

One of the entries in the very first state tournament was an all-colored team, Beloit Edgewater Hi-Y. Johnny Watts, at the time arguably the best Beloit high school basketball player ever produced, was the star of that team.

Other entries were Kenosha Ke-Nash-A, Richland Center Red Crowns, Madison Security State Bank, Wausau Employers Mutual, Green Bay Olson Transportation, Beloit Freeman Shoes, Waukesha Third Ward Booster, Portage Wingates, Madison St. James, Columbus Penney Stores, Stoughton City Team, Fort Atkinson Arcadia Alleys, Madison Bowman Dairy, Marathon Paper Mills, and Madison Kennedy Dairy.

Ke-Nash-A defeated Madison St. James 10-0 in the men's finale on WASA Hall of Famer Bill Pecknick's no-hitter. The 1934 tournament drew a total of 10,000 fans with 3,000 watching the championship game.

Johnson went with Ke-Nash-A to Chicago's Soldier Field where the 1934 national tournament was held.

Kenosha sportswriter Eddie McKenna wrote: "Ke-Nash-A followers were especially pleased with the interest shown in their behalf by "Cy" Johnson of Madison, Wisconsin's commissioner of softball for the national body. As enthusiastic as if he was the manager of the team, he assisted in every way possible to make the stay in Chicago a pleasant one."

Prior to the state tournament Johnson established district tournaments around the state, staffed by district commissioners.

District tournaments were set up at Portage, Boscobel, Waunakee, Kenosha, Janesville, La Crosse, Green Bay, Wausau, Stoughton, and Merrill. The winners of those district meets qualified for state tournament play.

Johnson's executive staff consisted of C.L. Carver, Oshkosh, as vice president, and Jim Webb, Kenosha, as secretary-treasurer.

Two years later he organized the Badger State League, a traveling league made up of the finest teams in the state.

One year before he became state commissioner in 1933, Johnson directed the Wisconsin American Legion baseball state tournament, probably drawing the attention of his organizational ability from people who wanted to promote softball.

Johnson, who passed away in 1965, was the Wisconsin state commissioner through the 1942 season.

It is believed that he was instrumental in the formation of the national organization and may have had an administrative role in the first national tournament.

He laid the groundwork for the Wisconsin ASA.

(Continued on page 14)

Line Drives

(Continued from page 13)

Now, 70-plus years later, nearly everything Silas G. Johnson put in place, from the staffing to the way state tournaments are promoted and run, continues to be used as blueprints for success.

2009 Men's Slow Pitch Mandatory Reclassifications

FREDONIA – As a result of the Wisconsin ASA's slow pitch reclassification system that became effective Jan. 1, 2007, the following teams are subject to mandatory reclassification in 2009:

| Team | City | Reclassification |
|-----------------------|---------------|------------------|
| X-treme Measures | Amery | Men's Class B |
| Budweiser/Electro-Glo | Fort Atkinson | Men's Class |

Special Thanks

A special "thank you" from The Messenger staff to all of the managers, tournament directors and fans who submitted photographs for this edition.

Regez Compiles Book On Trempeleau Valley Conference

EAU CLAIRE – Roger Regez, the former commissioner and sports information director of the Wisconsin ASA and current columnist for *The Messenger*, recently took a break from researching softball's past to compile an intriguing basketball history of the old Trempeleau Valley Conference.

The study is entitled "Hoops in the Trempeleau Valley 1927-59" and has over 130 pages of stories, highlights, box scores, stats and trivia from the TVC.

The now-defunct conference included the following high schools at some point during its existence:

Alma Center
Blair
Eleva-Strum
Fairchild
Hixton
Independence
Melrose
Merrillan
Taylor
Whitehall

Any fan of Wisconsin high school basketball should enjoy this detailed compilation, especially those who follow the sport from the small communities that comprised the TVC.

The soft-cover book is available for \$18.50 and can be ordered by contacting Regez at (715) 832-3550.

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