

WALLY GALBA - SLOW PITCH PLAYER



Wally Galba played the game of softball during the prime years of 1958 through 1968. Galba played on teams that won 74 championships including such teams as East Side Sporting Goods, Michael's Lounge and Little Caesars. Galba was named to the all-american teams in 1962 and 1966. He played on two world championship teams - East Side Sporting Goods in 1958 and Michael's Lounge in 1966. He participated in seven world tournaments which also included two second place finishes.

He hit for both power and average. A testimony to his hitting prowess was his ability to hit in "clutch situations". Galba, who threw right-handed and batted lefty, performed best when the game was on the line, whether it was his fielding or his hitting.

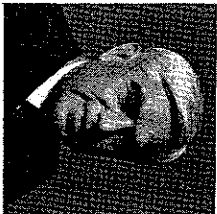
Galba acquired the reputation for being an outstanding player in tournaments in the Detroit area and invitational tournaments out of state. He also played in numerous local tournaments in Ecorse and Southgate being selected to more than seven all-tournament teams and three MVP awards. Over the years, he batted third on a team that was loaded with power hitters - some of the best in the world. Galba was one of the best line drive hitters in the game of softball.

He was a successful teacher and coach for 31 years, the last 27 years he has taught and coached in the East Detroit Public Schools.

Galba, who is still active in the Oak Park 50 & Over league, resides in Warren with his wife, Mickie. They have three children - Wally, Jr., Tami Marie and Raymond Nicholas; seven grandchildren - Andrew, Raychel, Nicole, Kristina, Anthony, Stephanie and Gregory.

Galba will go down in the history books as one of the best "all-around" legendary softball players in the Detroit area.

GEORGE LA PLATA - SPONSOR AND MANAGER



George La Plata is one of the best kept secrets in the metro Detroit area. When one thinks of sponsors and managers in the metro area, they normally do not think of George La Plata, but they will now.

La Plata began his activities as a softball coach in 1956 when he managed a fast pitch men's team called the State Fair Merchants in the Palmer Park Sunday night league.

La Plata switched his interests in 1972 as he sponsored and coached a women's slow pitch team in a class B Waterford league. Within two years, La Plata's women's team - the Raiders - captured the state class B championship and promptly moved up to the class A level the following year.

In 1975, competing in their first class A national ASA tournament, the Raiders finished 12th out of a field of 54 teams. Since that year, the Raiders have qualified and competed in the national tournament each year.

La Plata's teams have consistently been ranked as one of the top 20 teams in the country. The Raiders have been playing in the Major division for the past 10 years and finished third at last year's tournament in Marietta, Georgia.

The Raiders, who are continually sponsored by George and Fran La Plata, have been the longest continuous women's softball team with the same name in the state of Michigan. La Plata is currently a judge in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. La Plata's "Raiders" are now a household name in metro Detroit.

DON LAIR - COMMISSIONER



Don Lair first became involved with the game of softball in 1933. He eventually touched all bases being a batboy, scorer, player, coach, manager and commissioner of the Metro Detroit Amateur Softball Association.

Lair served for four years as a public relations representative and director of softball activities for the CYO, under director Ed Crowe. He also served as president and secretary of St. Catherine's Club for six years with the primary role of financing programs in softball.

As founder and president of the Pingree Park Athletic Association, Lair established the association as the outstanding softball league in Michigan during its eight year existence.

Lair's ability to encourage local merchant participation in subsidizing athletic programs enabled him to successfully continue softball as a parochial high school sport during the early depression years.

Lair was appointed softball commissioner of Metro Detroit ASA in 1958 by then President Fred Blum and served in that capacity until his retirement in 1971. He formed one of the first slow pitch leagues in metro Detroit and founded the International men's major fast pitch traveling league. In 1964, the Detroit women's slow pitch league honored Lair with their "Mr. Softball Award of The Year".

As commissioner, he attracted four regional softball tournaments to Detroit and also a national tournament in 1970. Lair was referred to as "Mr. Softball" by his boosters at his testimonial banquet upon his retirement in 1971. He was also presented with a resolution from the Mayor of Detroit (then Roman A. Gribbs) and the city council along with a key to the City.

Lair was inducted into the Michigan Amateur Sports Hall of Fame on November 27, 1973. Don Lair died on June 26, 1980 at the age of 66. Lair definitely made an impact on the game of softball in the metro Detroit area!

LINDA MUELLER - SLOW PITCH PLAYER



At the young age of 18, Linda Mueller began to shine on the ball diamond. Mueller, a starting guard for Wayne State's basketball team at the time, walked into a local sporting goods store and signed up for a "tryout" on one of the top women's class A teams in the state - the Motown Soul Sisters. She eventually earned a spot on that team and her softball career began to flourish.

Mueller, who has mostly been a leadoff hitter, has a lifetime batting average of nearly .500 while competing at the class A level. She has played second base for some of the nation's top ranked teams - the Soul Sisters, Little Caesar's, Beaumont Hospital, Athletic Uniforms and Mid-American Mavericks.

Mueller also played one year for the Michigan Travelers of the short-lived International Women's Professional fast pitch league, which Billie Jean King helped establish in 1976. She was the team's number one draft choice that year.

The Shrine High School teacher and coach participated on the 1970 ASA Metro Detroit championship and regional championship squad. In 1971, her team was runner-up for the metro Detroit crown before capturing the championship in 1972. In 1973, her team won the Class A state championship. In 1981, Mueller helped guide her squad to a regional crown and also received all-american honors that year.

Not only did she play the game of softball, but Mueller was an assistant coach for youth girls softball teams. In 1973, 74 and 75, her teams were the ASA Junior girls state champions and also the ASA national runner-up in each of those years. In 1978 and 79, her senior girls team captured regional championships.

Mueller is a valuable addition to Metro Detroit's Hall of Fame and Honor.

CARL WALKER - FAST PITCH PLAYER



Carl Walker has done it all! Walker was considered one of the greatest fast pitch players not only in the Detroit area, but was well respected throughout the country for nearly 20 years.

Walker, an outfielder, was a 10-time all-american and hit an astounding .312 while competing in 15 national championship tournaments. He participated on national championship teams in 1969, 1970 and 1972. Walker hit a record (at that time) three home runs in an ASA men's major world fast pitch game in 1964.

Walker's grass roots are right here in the Detroit area as he graduated from Detroit Northwestern at the young age of 16. He played with such Detroit powerhouse fast pitch teams as Club 500 and Nohdurft Tool. His 1959 Club 500 squad captured a regional ASA crown.

The "sparkplug" on many of his teams, Walker took his show on the road as he played in Providence, Rhode Island from 1962-74. Walker retired from the game in 1978. He was also named to the Michigan ASA Hall of Fame in 1976.

Carl Walker, a class act and a worthwhile addition to the MIDASA Hall of Fame and Honor.

JERRY ZARICK - FAST PITCH PLAYER



Jerry Zarick began his softball career in the 1940s. He first began playing with Briggs Beautyware in 1946 and continued through the 1954 season with the Detroit fast pitch team.

Zarick played in seven world championship tournaments. He made the all-world teams twice in those seven tournaments - 1948 at the Portland, Oregon national tournament and in 1953 in Miami, Florida. He batted over .400 in two of the world tournaments and led the Briggs team in hitting six of the eight years he played on the squad. Zarick, who played first base and outfield for Briggs, was also a major force for Briggs in consistently leading the team in RBIs and home runs.

Key hits were a common occurrence for Zarick, who often won many games when the game was "on the line". Two games come to mind when Zarick provided the winning edge - in 1952, Zarick belted a triple with two men on base to win the Industrial championship over the Pistons in Fort Wayne, Indiana. In the other memorable game, Zarick hit a home run in the 27th inning at Old Mack Park at 2:00 am as his squad defeated Dow Chemical of Midland.

Zarick's softball career continued when the Briggs teams disbanded in 1955 as he participated on many more championship teams around the Detroit area. Truly, a clutch player on the softball diamond, Zarick is a unanimous choice to the Metro Detroit ASA Hall of Fame.

FIRST ANNUAL MEDIA PERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD

Presented to PAT CYBULSKI, DETROIT FREE PRESS, for her continued dedication, promotion and commitment to the game of softball in the metro Detroit area.