

## **SOFTBALL RESUME FOR DEAN WILLIAMS**

I started my fifty year softball in the summer of 1952 while living in Detroit, Michigan. I was working in the offices of General Motors and played fast pitch on a league team for General Motors. In December of 1952 I was drafted onto the Army. After basic training in 1953 I was assigned to an Army Brigade Headquarters at McCord AFB in Washington state and played fast pitch on the Brigade team. I was sent to Korea on December of 1953 and later re-assigned to Japan in 1954 where I played fast pitch on the Company team. I was discharged in December of 1954 and came back to Fort Dodge. I started to play fast pitch on local fast pitch teams in 1955 through 1957. I was in the Army Reserve at the time and in 1958 started my own team from members of the unit.

I played 2nd base, coached and managed the team during which we won three Battalion championships. The team also played in the Fort Dodge league, 1958 through 1960, winning two league championships. The league at that time had to play on school grounds as there was no ballpark in Fort Dodge. Many games were called because of darkness. In the Winter of 1960 I contacted other teams in the area and surrounding counties and formed a fast pitch traveling league called the Tri-County league. We had no park in Fort Dodge so our local teams played home games at Duncombe and Webster City. My team won this league championship every year 1961 through 1963.

Fort Dodge needed a park of our own. There used to be a park by the river in the 1940's. The ground was owned by the Gas & Electric Company. I got together all the team managers of the Fort Dodge teams and contacted the Gas & Electric Company about leasing the ground. They would not lease it us, but would lease it to the City for \$1.00 a year. I contacted the City Recreation Dept. and they agreed to lease the property, on the condition we would have to build the ballpark ourselves as no city money was available. I then formed the Fort Dodge Softball Association and we built ourselves, buying used bleachers and P.A. system. The Army Reserve unit I was in was an engineer unit so was able to use the Army heavy equipment. The City agreed to pay for the lights providing we paid them back over a five year period. We paid them back in three years.

I was elected president of the new Association in 1964 and have been re-elected every year since as president to date in 2002. I also started to umpire in 1964 and am still umpiring today, though not as much as in the past. I didn't know much about umpiring when I started so was mostly self taught. Got a rule book from a local sporting good store and started to train other people as umpires, and have been training umpires every year since. Started a five week umpire class at the Jr. College here about 25 years ago and am still teaching it today.

We knew nothing of the A.S.A. back in those days, in fact we never heard of the A.S.A. MY Army Reserve team depended on funds from the unit and donations from unit members which didn't amount to much, so the team was mostly funded by myself. In the Spring of 1964 I needed more funding for the team and finally got Sandy Williams (no relation to me) who owned the Budweiser

Distributing Company in Fort Dodge to sponsor the team, which was known as Sandys. In 1964 the team placed second in the league, and won the league championship the next three years undefeated.

In 1965 I heard about the A.S.A. and district tournaments. I then got all of our league teams, including our Women's fast pitch league, and our umpires to register with the A.S.A. Since 1965 all our teams and umpires, now including all our men's and women's slow pitch teams have been registered. It is a requirement of our association.

After joining the A.S.A. I was able to further my umpiring with clinics, etc. As an umpire I have worked league play, invitational tournaments, countless state fast pitch tournaments, regional and national tournaments. I have also worked High School and college games including the college Big 8. Every year since 1964 I have been elected as president of our local Association umpire Division and serve as our association UIC.

After winning our league three years in a row, 1965-1967, we had no competition so my team went independent in 1968, although we still belonged to our association. With the funding of a sponsor I was able to get better players from around the area to play for me, especially pitchers. In 1968 we won the district tournament, the sub-state in Des Moines, and placed fourth in the state tournament. There were no classes in those days, such as A-B-C. These were the days of the big teams such as Clear Lake Buttertop, Des Moines Bombers, Reames of Des Moines, Welty Way, Larry Lange Ford, etc. We played all these teams on a home and home basis and won several of the big invitational tournaments 1968 through 1971. My team also hosted the Regional Tournament in 1971. My team folded in the Winter of 1971 with the death of our sponsor, and I could not find another sponsor to put out the money our team required to continue.

By 1967 our fast pitch men's and women's league out grew our one ball park. We had to many teams for one field. There was a small city park located East of town by the shopping center which the city planned to build a sub-fire station, but gave up it because of train tracks close by. After hearing of this I contacted our City Recreation Director about building a ballpark there. It looked for a while I was going to get another park. I was told residents by the park were getting up a petition to stop this. I got together my team members and other team managers from our Association to pass around our own petition for the ballpark. We hit all the industrial plants in town and spent a whole week in bowling alleys with our petition. At the next City Council meeting both petitions were presented. The residents had around 300 names and I had close to 3000. The mayor asked if I would give up my petition if the city would find ground to build a ballpark. I did so under the condition this would be done right away and not five years down the road. He guaranteed me the city would start looking for a suitable place for a park right away, so I agreed to give up my petition. The next day the mayor appointed me to the City Recreation Commission and I served on the commission the next seven years. After being appointed to the commission I immediately set out to try and find a place for a park. I knew Harlan Rogers owned hundreds of acres North of the city. I contacted him and laid out what the city and our association needed. He agreed to donate the ground to the city for the new ball park. The city sold bonds to fund the construction. We moved into the new park in July of 1968.

Our leagues grew even bigger and in 1971 men's and women's slow pitch came into being. They had a small church league but needed a place to play. They requested to be a part of our association and we voted to take them in. Now we had to many teams for two fields. I again contacted Harlan Rogers, told him of our problem, and showed him blue prints of additional land we needed. He agreed again to donate the additional land and parking area. Three more fields were added to the complex. This is where and how Rogers Park came to be.

I started fast pitch invitational tournaments in 1964 at the old park, and continued them at the new Rogers Park. In 1969 I started the Iowa Classic Fast Pitch tournament, and is still going in its 33 year. Even though we do not have a fast team in Fort Dodge I am still promoting fast pitch and trying to keep it going. Backing up to 1967, I contacted Jack North, the Iowa A.S.A. State Commissioner, and told him I had many teams in Fort Dodge and surrounding area I could get to join the A.S.A. After talking with him he appointed me as a district commissioner in 1967. I have served as a district commissioner every since. I have served under every state commissioner Iowa has had. After moving to Rogers Park I was able to get the district tournament moved to Fort Dodge, including the Sub-state tournament

After Walt Kaiser retired in 1985 I was appointed a state deputy umpire-in-chief and still serve in this position today. I have been assigned by the state office for many years now as state tournament UIC and tournament director. I have been elected as the president of the Iowa A.S.A. for many years now, starting with state commissioner Bruce Maurer and continue in this position today.

In 1969 I started our own local association Hall of Fame in Fort Dodge. We were the second city in the state at that time to have a Hall of Fame. I was inducted into our Hall of Fame in 1979.

In 1972 I was asked to attend the National Meeting in Hawaii. I was called before the Executive Board to give testimony concerning then state commissioner Ron Findley, who had been relieved as the Iowa State Commissioner. After the meeting I was interviewed and offered the job as State Commissioner. I had to turn down the offer because of my employment, and other reasons. Harry Ostrander in Iowa City was appointed commissioner, and he told me he knew nothing about the A.S.A. He had me come to Iowa City many times in 1972 to help set up policies, etc. for the Iowa A.S.A.

When the Iowa Games in Ames first started I was contacted to run the Adult Softball part of the Iowa Games. I agreed and was appointed the Adult Softball Commissioner of the Iowa Games and am still doing this job today. The Iowa Game office takes the entries then turns them over to me for setting up the brackets, scheduling the games, and scheduling umpires and conducting the tournament.

In summing everything up, I have been in Softball now for fifty years. I played fast pitch from 1952 through 1971, managed and coached fast pitch from 1957 through 1971, umpired from 1964 to the present. I have been a district commissioner now for 35 years, a deputy UIC for 16 years, and president of the Iowa A.S.A for many years. I have been president of our local association for 38 years. I am really glad to have been a part of fast pitch in what I call the glory years of fast pitch softball in Iowa. Over the years I have met many people and have made many

great friends because of softball. I wouldn't trade these years for anything. I will keep my fast pitch Classic Tournament going as long as possible to help keep fast pitch going in Iowa. As far as I am concerned, fast pitch is the name of the game.

I wish to thank the Iowa Hall of Fame Committee for considering me for induction into the Iowa Hall of Fame. This would be without a doubt the highlight of my softball career of fifty years.

Sincerely yours in Softball,

DEAN WILLIAMS