

COP CORNER

With Jeff Blair

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In my past Cop Corner articles I have profiled the home run hitters ("Chicks Dig the Long Ball"), the pitchers ("The

Field Maestros") and the youth ("The Young Guns"). This month I decided to take a look at a less...ahem...glamorous collection of law enforcement softball players. You won't find them on the cover of GQ magazine, but you will find them on the rosters of most top law enforcement teams around the nation. They are the life blood of cop softball...the mammoth mashers. I learned that the inner circle of cop softball heavyweights is a tough clique to crack. They don't take lightly to lightweights so being less than ample in physical girth I felt I would be viewed with a jaundiced eye and tight lips. In order for me to breach this star chamber of Goliaths I had to contract out with my partner from Policesoftball.Com, Del Pickney, who himself spins the scale closer to 3 times rather than twice.

The term heavyweight typically conjures up images of the biggest and baddest boxers on the planet but other sports have their heavyweights too. In the NFL you envision Tony Siragusa controlling the trenches. In the NBA you think of Shaq owning the paint. In MLB you have visions of Big Papi ending another game with a walk off HR. The world of police softball has their heavyweights too and although they may not appear at first glance to be a finely tuned athlete, they are athletes in every sense of the word. Whether these guys succeed in spite of their size or due to their size they are successful. This month's article is going to focus on those heavyweights and give them the long overdue press that is generally reserved for the pretty boys. No large or XL shirts here. We are delving into the world of XXL and XXXL. So push away your diet soda and your salad and get in line at the buffet as this article is about the BIG BOYS of police softball. Here is what Del's investigative report revealed:



The first heavyweight contender is **Chris "C-Money" Meleen** of the Miami-Metro softball team. Chris is built like a fireplug at 5'7" and 260 pounds and he currently works as a patrol officer. Chris played high school and college baseball and says hitting the ball for average and power has always been his strength. Chris believes his size helps him in the sport as he gets a lot of drive and power from his legs. Chris was a power lifter in his younger days but as he has gotten older he has started focusing on the lighter weights. Chris is not a gym rat but hits the weights at least once a week and believes this is important to his longevity in the game. Even though he is a heavyweight, Chris can play some outfield with surprising speed. Chris lists twice robbing police softball legend Dan Spinelli with diving catches in 2005 as his career defensive highlights. Chris' softball motto is to hit the ball square and hard and good things will happen.



Next up in the ring is **Jeff "Morte" Mortham**. Jeff stands 6'0" and weighs in at 270 pounds. Jeff also plays for the Miami-Metro Red team and also the Pinellas County Softball club. Jeff played most sports growing up including baseball, basketball, football and golf, which has given him some great experience to draw from. Like many heavyweights, Jeff hits for power but he also maintains a good average. Jeff is not only an offensive player but he can play some serious defense for a heavyweight. Jeff played shortstop last year before an ACL injury moved him over to first base.



When asked if his extra poundage helps him or hurts him in softball, Jeff said it is a double edge sword. The extra weight helps to hit the long ball but it can hurt him defensively and makes it much harder to come back from injuries. Jeff doesn't work out much as he has a penchant for adult beverages and good cigars. Jeff is full of life and his personal belief is that something has to be fun or it isn't worth doing.

In the Blue and Gold corner we have **Brad "Frank the Tank" Borowy**. Brad is the player/coach of the 2005 PoliceSoftball.com World Series Champion Ohio Lawmen. He stands 6'3" and weighs in at 290 pounds. Brad is a very good hitter which probably stems from his childhood as his dad Tom was a batting practice pitcher for the Indians in the 1970's. With Dad throwing to him in his backyard batting cage, Brad got his hacks in on a daily basis. Like many softball players Brad's overall game has gotten better as he has aged. While his skills may have lessened somewhat, his knowledge of the game increased tenfold over his younger years. When asked if his size helps or hurts him in the game, Brad says it helped him when he was in better shape but all that size can break you down as you get older unless you stay in shape. Brad feels big guys are unfairly stereotyped in our society as "buffoons" but his mind is sharp and he frequently helps the team by his decision making skills. Brad used to work out



with heavy weights but he is now on a steady diet of pizza and television but his game has not suffered. Brad's mindset is you must have a sense of humor in life and that pretty much covers him in all situations. When asked to name his best moment in Police Softball, Brad did not hesitate in mentioning his team winning the 2005 PoliceSoftball.com World Series. When asked if he would like play at 5'10" 175 pounds Brad quickly laughed and said he would not want to be a "tunnel rat" which is his affectionate term for the small speedsters on his team.

And our last contender for the heavyweight crown is **Anthony "BigTone" Costanzo**. Tony stands 6' tall and weighs in at 283 lbs. Tony is a major part of the Sacramento Sheriff Razorbacks softball team and like most of the heavyweight contenders on this list, he played baseball and football in high school and college. Tony even saw a small stint in class-A level baseball. Tony started playing police softball in 1990 as an outfielder and like many of us has transformed over the years into a C/1B. As Tony has gotten older he has played smarter and will hit the ball where it is pitched. Tony doesn't hit with the power he used to but still hits lasers and will now use the complete field to find ways on base. Tony has very soft hands for a big man and



still possesses a rocket arm from his early outfield days. For the most part Tony feels his size has been a detriment to his play as he has gotten older with a lack of mobility the biggest issue. An area where his size helps him greatly is plays at home plate. If you try to reach the plate on a close play, you can bet Tony will own most of that real estate and won't even think about you ever seeing it. Like many men Tony's body has changed over the years and so has his mindset. A young Tony used to believe, "Win them all, cause second is for losers," but he now believes, "Give them all you got and shake hands afterward." On the job Tony sees a lot of death and this has helped him realize now to enjoy the moment, because tomorrow it may be gone.

Well that sums up some of the best XXL players in Police Softball. These men help make up the thin blue line and whether they are on the job or on the field, that line is a little thicker and a whole lot stronger with these everyday heroes.

<p>Tournament Results</p> <p>National Police Championship Dayton, Ohio</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jacksonville Police Softball Club/3N2 2. NYPD Blues 3. Ohio Lawmen 4. SoCal Alliance/Easton 5t. New Jersey G-Boys 5t. New York Metro <p>Sgt. Christopher Wouters Memorial Sterling Heights, Michigan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jacksonville Police Softball Club/3N2 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Wayne-Oakland Michigan 3. Michigan Lawmen <p>California Police & Fire Games San Diego, California</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. San Diego Excessive Force 2. CDC Hardcore 3. LAPD Blue/Easton <p>Anne Arundel Annual Tournament Anne Arundel County, Maryland</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New Jersey G-Boys 2. New York Metro 3. Dirty Jersey Boyz 	<p>Nevada Police & Fire Games Mens Open Division</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CDC Hardcore 2. Honolulu's Finest 3. SoCal Alliance/Easton 4. LAPD Blue/Easton 5t. DEA Combo/Anderson Bat 5t. North Carolina Fire <p>Mens 35+ Senior Division</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Riverside Sheriff Red 2. Team Florida 3. Team Vegas/Miken
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