

PLAY BALL

 POLICESOFTBALL.COM WORLD SERIES



THE POLICESOFTBALL.COM WORLD SERIES IS FIRMLY established as the most anticipated weekend in the cop softball season. The Worlds are played in October and mark the official end of the season by crowning a world champion.

This year, 50 teams descended on the Palm Springs, California region for a shot at the crown. It was a three-day event that featured two round robin seeding games followed by a double elimination tournament. The event was sanctioned by USSSA and officially sponsored by Easton Sports. Special thanks go out to Brett Helmer and Easton for making the event such a huge success.

The most popular feature of the event was the Friday night opening ceremony where 1,700 fans packed into the facility. The event was officially opened with the National Anthem played by the Palm Springs High School marching band while the Tustin Police Department honor guard presented the colors of our nation. A moment of silence was observed for all the fallen officers who lost their lives this past year including NYPD Shields player Ari Figueroa. As Ari's jersey was hung behind home plate a bag piper bellowed Amazing Grace to a silent crowd. Twenty-one officers were inducted into the Policesoftball.Com Hall of Fame and the year end awards were presented. The following is a list of those recognized:

Hall of Fame: Kevin Naylor - Suffolk County/NY Metro; Jim Dexter - Wayne Oakland; Richie Malek - NY Metro; Denny Braun - Kettering/Dayton Metro; Keith Glasgow - Jacksonville Police Softball Club; Terry Dugan - Virginia Beach; Joe Jezior - Cleveland FOP # 8; Roland Marsh - New Jersey State Police/G-Boys; Rich Butler - Cleveland FOP # 8; Christopher Wouters - Warren Police Department, Michigan; John Mack - LASD Red; Rick Record - LAPD Blue; Tommy Chevolek - LAPD Blue; David Clark - Arizona Softball Horrors; Mike Jones - LASD Red; Donnie Byers - Arizona Softball Horrors; Darin Ries - San Diego Gray; Darrel Williams San Diego Gray; Kevin Wise - Concord Police Softball; John Birtcher - SoCal Alliance/Easton; Angel Delgadillo - Sacramento PD.

Manager of the Year: East: Chris Moore and Tom Siedlecki - Buckeye Lawmen; West: Carl Gaskins - Concord Combo.

Sponsor of the Year: East: Minute Men Staffing Services; West: Easton Sports.

Sportsman of the Year: Keith Benjamin - DEA Combo/Easton.

Player of the Year: East: James Ruocchio - NYPD Blues; West: Ryan Coe - SoCal Alliance/Easton.

If you were to encapsulate the event into one moment it would be when Sportsman of the Year Keith Benjamin escorted the honorary Master of Ceremony, Shevy Wright, to the pitching



rubber to throw out the first pitch. Shevy is the young man profiled in the last Cop Corner article and he had been battling terminal cancer. There were very few dry eyes in the bleachers as Shevy wound up and fired off the first pitch to Keith. For many, it was the most touching moment ever experienced on a softball field. But, it wasn't a downer by any means. It was a display in courage by a tough young man and what followed was a celebration of the brotherhood shared by all in law enforcement. Shevy passed away three weeks after the event but his memory will live on forever and Policesoftball.com officially renamed the Sportsman of the Year



award the Shevy Wright Sportsman of the Year.

For the first time ever, the West defeated the East in the All-Star Game. The East bounced back to claim the Homerun title when Scott Czopek of the Ohio Lawmen out bombed West Champion Andy Williams of the DEA Combo/Easton for the title. Scott won a new Easton Stealth+ bat for his efforts.

There were very few upsets in the round robin so teams that posted 2-0 records were afforded a bye to begin the play-offs. By late Saturday night some very good teams had been eliminated, most at the hands of other very good teams.

Come Sunday morning all that remained were the Sweet 16. In the losers' bracket the Minnesota Lawmen eliminated Delaware. Wayne-Oakland dashed the dreams of the Maryland State Police who still had a much improved showing over their '06 efforts. Miami Metro Red defeated the San Diego Force. With the elimination of the Force, Concord was one of

two California teams remaining and they continued to roll with a win over the Tompkins County Choir Boys.

In the winners' bracket there were still eight undefeated teams, but that was soon to change. SoCal Alliance/Easton caught fire early and pushed South Florida into the losers' bracket. The Buckeye Lawmen won the battle of the Buckeye State with a victory over the Ohio Lawmen. The Michigan Lawmen continued to be the talk of the tournament after they defeated Team Texas. The resurgent NYPD Blues could not match the firepower of Jacksonville PSC as the Blues were bounced into the losers' bracket.

It was getting down to crunch time in the losers' bracket. Minnesota eliminated South Florida, Texas downed Concord, Miami defeated the NYPD Blues and Wayne-Oakland pulled a rabbit out of the hat with a win against the Ohio Lawmen. Wayne-Oakland ran out of steam in the next round and were sent home by Minnesota. Meanwhile Texas could not withstand the Miami attack and they were also eliminated.

Four teams still had unblemished records and all had aspirations of being crowned World Champions for the first time. The SoCal Alliance/Easton engine continued to fire on all cylinders with a win over the Buckeye Lawmen while Jacksonville PSC brought Michigan back to Earth.

Now that the Buckeyes and Michigan were bumped into the losers' bracket they knew they would have to get the hot hand again to see the final dance. The Buckeyes recaptured the spirit by defeating Miami. Michigan did not miss a beat and upended Minnesota. If this were football, the game between the Michigan Lawmen and Buckeye Lawmen would have rivaled that of Michigan vs. Ohio





SoCal Alliance/Easton



**Homerun Derby Winner
Scott Czopek**



Co MVPs Ryan Coe and Tim Morris



Buckeye Lawmen

State. On this day, the Buckeye Lawmen were the better team and they advanced to the final three and were waiting on the loser of the SoCal Alliance/Easton vs. Jacksonville PSC game.

The SoCal Alliance/Easton was 0-3 against Jacksonville in the past two years so they had a monkey they needed to get off their back. It was one of the most anticipated match-ups of the tournament as both teams came into the event with solid leads in the West/East rankings. It was a see-saw battle but when the dust cleared the monkey was gone. SoCal Alliance/Easton was in the final dance waiting for a partner to tango with. The smart money would have been on Jacksonville who has consistently been one of the most dominant teams in cop softball for the past five years. Not only that, Jacksonville was currently the top ranked team in the East division points standings. But, there is a reason games are played on the field and not on paper. The Buckeye magic was still strong and during the past year they were the monkey on Jacksonville's back. This time when the dust settled the monkey was still there as the Buckeyes had done the improbable and that was defeat Jacksonville.

The championship game was played between two teams that had rolled strong all weekend. Both teams started off feeling each other out as two heavyweight boxers do before they start throwing haymakers. Finally the teams started exchanging offensive barrages at the plate but the SoCal Alliance/Easton team began to pull away mid-game. When the final out was recorded the SoCal Alliance/Easton stood victoriously with a perfect 8-0 record on the weekend and were crowned 2007 World Champions. The team now felt that same magic that the Cal-Quake and Ohio Lawmen felt in past years. It was the icing on the cake for the SoCal crew who won six of the eight tournaments they played in this year and finished in second place in the other two, for a final record of 59-5.

In a showing of mutual respect both teams exchanged hugs afterward and the Buckeyes gathered at the mound and hollered out a team cheer, "SOCAL" as a tribute to the Alliance. Meanwhile the Buckeyes solidified their position atop

the East division cop softball totem pole and gained positive momentum rolling into the off-season. SoCal Alliance/Easton coach Del Pickney was obviously proud of his team's accomplishment and stated, "The key to our success is that we had fourteen individuals working toward one common goal." Although only one team won, the weekend was about much more than merely a softball tournament. It was about friendships and the brotherhood shared by all law enforcement officers who routinely put their lives on the line so all Americans can sleep soundly at night.

Final Results: 1. SoCal Alliance/Easton; 2. Buckeye Lawmen; 3. Jacksonville PSC; 4. Michigan Lawmen; 5T. Minnesota Lawmen & Miami Metro Red; 7T. Wayne-Oakland and Team Texas; 9T. NYPD Blues, Concord, Ohio Lawmen, South Florida Lawmen; 13T. San Diego Excessive Force, Tompkins County Choir Boys, Maryland State Police and Delaware Association of Police. Other participating teams: Kentucky Bluegrass Lawmen, LAPD Lawmen, RSO Red, LAPD Blue/Easton, Sierra Cartel, NY Metro, Direct Impact, Sacramento Razorbacks, A-1 Towing Hardcore, Central Ohio, Central Valley Kings, Seattle Officer's Only, NYPD Shields, DEA Combo/Easton, Cal-Quake, CHP Choir Boys, Las Vegas Shields, Cal Syndicate, St. Louis Top Guns, Chicago Metro, Nevada Combo, OCSD Hitmen, Dirty Jersey Boyz, Folsom-Sacramento, Cranston Rhode Island, Secret Service, Sacramento Probation, Dirty Berdoo, Illinois State Police.

CO-MVPs: Ryan Coe SoCal Alliance/Easton, Tim Morris - SoCal Alliance/Easton; All Tournament Team: Alfonso Trujillo - SoCal Alliance/Easton, Kris Ulibarri - SoCal Alliance/Easton, Jeff Blair - SoCal Alliance/Easton, Chris Warner - Buckeye Lawmen, Tom Siedlecki - Buckeye Lawmen, Charlie Miller - Buckeye Lawmen, Tim Cannon - Buckeye Lawmen, Paul Cullen - Jacksonville PSC, Brad Gidcum - Jacksonville PSC, Doug Cullen - Jacksonville PSC, Robbie Freitas - Jacksonville PSC, Eric Christensen - Michigan Lawmen, Marty Campbell - Michigan Lawmen; All Defensive Players: Bubba Baldwin - Jacksonville PSC, CJ Holden - Buckeye Lawmen; Scott Spalding - SoCal Alliance/Easton.