

# cop corner

with Jeff Blair • www.policessoftball.com

## 2008 Season Finale



It seems like just yesterday I was feverishly typing away on my first installment of the Cop Corner for 2008. Yet, here I am feverishly typing away on my final article of the year. When I use the word feverishly, that means about 15 words per minute. I guess I deserved that D in my 7th grade typing class.

Life would be a lot easier if the genius who invented a keyboard would have put the letters in alphabetical order rather than scramble them all over the place. And just what the heck is this thing ~ or this thing ^ supposed to be used for? OK, enough of my rant; now I am back on topic.

The Police Softball World Series is fast approaching and I will have those results for you when I kick off the '09 Cop Corner series. I do have some important year-end awards and accomplishments to report. The most prestigious of these awards is being named to the Police Softball Hall of Fame. This year the inductees had the option to be recognized on the field at the Sawyers-Wouters Memorial in Sterling Heights Michigan or at the Police Softball World Series in Palm Springs. This year's Hall of Fame class includes:

**East:** Scott Affholter - Michigan Lawmen; John Anderson - Michigan Lawmen; Dave Clark - Columbus, Ohio; Mike Evans - Maryland State Police; Don Fradette - Wayne/Oakland; Lenny Glover - Suffolk County, NY; Jerry Harkins - New York Metro; Dan Spinelli - NYPD Blues

**West:** Edward Aceves - San Diego Gray; Alvin Beckett - San Diego PD; Sandy Crosthwaite - Los Angeles Sheriff's Dept.; Terry Lewis - California Quake; Gary Magana - Sacramento PD; Mike Moller - SD Blue/SD Excessive Force; Tim Morris - SoCal Alliance; Frank Pina - Arizona Softball Horrors; Dan Rose - Palm Springs PD; Joe Tucker - RSD Red; Victor Woods - California Quake

These gentlemen will be perpetually recognized on the www.policessoftball.com website and bring our Hall of Fame total up to 73.

Also at the World Series event we recognize our yearly achievement award winners and they include:

**Zada Enterprises West Sponsor of the Year: OSS International (Concord Combo);** OSS International has been a big supporter of the Concord Police Softball team and they are one of the big reasons for their success this year. The backing of OSS has allowed the Concord team to travel across the country and support other tournaments. Concord has always been a big player in West Coast softball and with the assistance of OSS, they have been even bigger.

**Zada Enterprises East Sponsor of the Year: Blackwater Worldwide (Virginia Lawmen);** In the Spring of 2008,

Blackwater Worldwide signed on as the primary sponsor for the Virginia Lawmen Softball Team and this allowed them to play some great ball over the year and helped them host one of the best softball tournaments of the year which coincided with Police Memorial week. The successful tournament reflected directly on the support of the 25 teams who competed at one of the premier softball complexes on the East Coast. Along with the outstanding softball played that weekend, the tournament also made its largest donation ever to the Police Memorial Fund.

**West Manager of the Year: Ralph Knecht - Sacramento Police Softball**

Ralph is the driving force behind the Sacramento Police Softball team. Over the last three years, Sacramento Police Softball was primarily a NorCal team and didn't play enough tournaments to make the top 20 of the rankings. At the end of last year, Ralph made it his goal to get his team playing on the circuit and see how good this team could be. This year the team has done just that as



they are #4 in the West rankings going into the World Series.

**East Manager of the Year: Walter "Red" Conry - New York Metro**

Red has coached the New York Metro team since 1982. Many times he has reached into his own pockets to support the team and he has never thought twice about doing so. Red is an original inductee into the PoliceSoftball.com Hall of Fame and he currently possesses over 75 tournament wins under his belt. This



year his team is currently tied for #1 going into the World Series and they have won two tournaments.

**Shevy Wright Sportsman of the Year: Anthony Costanzo - Sacramento**

**Razorbacks;** When you study the police softball landscape, there are a handful of people who make you realize what makes this sport so special and Anthony is one of those rare people



who values the brotherhood of police softball above all else.

**West Defensive Player of the Year: Nate Baez - SoCal Alliance;**

There are very few players who you cannot take your eyes off of due to their exciting style of play. Nate is one of those players. When Nate is playing 5 man, opposing batters are very aware of where he is and this is one thing that makes him so effective. Nate has always been one of the top infielders in the police game but this year he seems to have elevated his game to a new level. His defense has



been a big key to the Alliance defense this season and he has helped the team produce another strong season.

# clearing the bases

with Brett Helmer • Sponsored by Easton

**H**ello Softballers,

We touched on the USSSA Men's Major World Series at the end of last month's "Clearing the Bases," this month we lead off with a tip of the cap to what was truly a remarkable effort from Dan Smith/Menosse/Benfield/Combat, eight elimination games, eight wins to end a three-year title run for Resmondo/Specialty Tank/Worth.

Doesn't get much better than that.

Kudos to ABS/Easton as well after taking home the title at the ASA Men's Class-A Slow-Pitch Nationals in Oklahoma City at the end of September. It was definitely a pleasure to be on the same field with them.

Brian Wegman and I lent a helping bat to ABS/Easton as their Elite pick-ups. They're a veteran bunch, they've won a lot of titles for Easton and have always been one of our most consistent teams – they yet again did an outstanding job. I also want to personally thank Bill Wallace, the sole sponsor of the team, for everything he does and especially the way he represents the company.

Congrats to all that competed and those who were fortunate enough to win World Championships. Shout outs to Bud Light/Easton, who won USAAA Men's B World Series and won the Conference Championships for Men's B, and Enough Said, which won the USSSA Women's title – and no less, at the home to the Women's Fastpitch College World Series, the ASA Hall of Fame Stadium.

I spent a good chunk of the tournament with members of both the men's and women's teams from the Armed Forces, all of whom were handpicked from the Men's and Women's Military World Series. Sitting in



the stands with them, talking shop was definitely a tournament highlight, and watching them even more so. They're

out there because they deserve to be and they put up one heck of a tournament.

Finally, completing the Easton sweep, ABS/Easton took the USSSA 35-and-over Nationals.

Off the field, we're in the process of putting together Easton/Brett Helmer "Bring Ur Real Skilz" Series for 2009 after an incredible '08. The response was unbelievable this season and we look forward to more events and venues in '09. Same goes for the Long Haul Bombers Tour which concluded with one of its most competitive seasons ever with a hit-off between Denny Crine and I, which Crine ultimately won.s

We're also looking forward to the upcoming "Toys for Tots" Tournament in Palm Springs on December 12th through the 14th. It's a great fundraiser for the kids, and a lot of fun for everyone involved.

What's more, it's a friendly reminder that Christmas is right around the corner. Be looking for the new Stealth Clarity and Reveal two-piece line. Everyone should get an opportunity to swing those. And if you're lucky, you will find one under the Christmas tree.

Enjoy the holidays, and remember, training for the '09 season starts now. Take advantage of fall leagues, winter tournaments and stay playing. Heal up injuries, get ready to go.

It comes around quicker than you realize.

**Brett**

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**East Defensive Player of the Year: Jeff "Biscuit" Graus - Michigan Lawmen:**

When you face the Michigan Lawmen you may think of their power, their solid defense and team history of excellence, but one of the things you always think of is how you must deal with facing Biscuit on the bump. Biscuit is truly a game changer and the type of pitcher which will take hitters out of their games. Biscuit is an

agile player and not only changes the game with his pitches, but will change it with his glove and ability to cover a vast area around the box. One a side note: Biscuit's civilian team Bud Light won the USSSA Class B Worlds last month so he has had quite a productive year.

**West Overall Player of the Year: Mark Tolliver - A1/HardCor:** Mark has pitched HardCor into the top of the West Coast standings over the last four years and he has pitched his teams



to top 5 finishes in every tournament he has played in this year. Mark is fearless on the mound and will glove anything near him. As good a pitcher Mark is, he is equally as strong of a hitter and will consistently hit in the .700s. Mark can hit for average, power and he can place the ball anywhere on the field.

**East Overall Player of the Year: Doug Cullen - Jacksonville PSC:** Doug is the cornerstone of the powerful Jacksonville PSC squad. He has been their top player for several years and 2008 was no different. Doug has been playing injured all year due to an on duty traffic accident but even so, he has been named to two all-tournament teams and has lead the Jax

team in defense playing second and third base. Even injured Doug is unquestionably one of the most feared hitters on the cop softball circuit.



I look forward to my first installment of the Cop Corner in 2009 where I will give you a blow by blow on the World Series and announce which team will reign as king for the year!