

# COP CORNER

by Jeff Blair • Sponsored by Mizuno  
"A Tribute to the Field Maestros"

POLICESOFTBALL.COM  
Complete Guide to Police Tournament Softball

Last year I dedicated an article to the power hitters of cop softball titled, "Chicks Dig the Long Ball." (Sept '04.) That article was chocked full of muscle and set to a heavy metal backbeat. It's true, the long ball hitters get all the girls and admiration from the spectators as they draw "oohs" and "aahs" from the bleachers with each one of their prodigious blasts. Homeruns definitely entertain, but solid pitching is what wins games. In all honesty you can only do so much with a 12" softball that is softly lobbed underhand, but this month I am going to profile a few guys who bring a little something extra when they step on the pitching rubber. Instead of muscle, this article is chocked full of gray matter and wisdom because pitching is a thinking man's position. Instead of a heavy metal backbeat I feel an orchestra might be more appropriate as a good pitcher, like a maestro tends to bring out the best in his supporting cast. Here is an in-depth look at some of the best pitchers that cop softball has to offer.



**Name:** Jim Gomez  
**Team:** D.E.A. Combo/Anderson Bat Company (Southern California)  
**Agency:** Drug Enforcement Agency  
**Rank:** Agent  
**Assignment:** Classified  
**Softball Experience:** Had the opportunity to play at many different levels in the competitive softball arena but enjoys law enforcement softball above them all.  
**Thoughts on Going Middle:** We all have to go to work on Monday...  
**Most Memorable Moment on the Hill:** 2002 Nevada Games. Arguably, the toughest tournament in the nation. Over 50 teams from all over the nation brought their best squads for a shot at the



gold but the D.E.A. Combo stood victorious.  
**Secret to Pitching:** Pitch for a team that scores 30+ runs every game and you should do O.K.

**Name:** Dan Spinelli  
**Team:** New York Blues  
**Agency:** New York Police Department  
**Assignment:** Sergeant, Fugitive Enforcement Division  
**Softball Experience:** Seventeen years of playing in the cop softball circuit  
**Mindset on the Hill:** Never give in to a hitter, even if I am behind in the count.



**Name:** Lloyd "Rocky" Alexander  
**Team:** Tri-County Lawmen (Ohio)  
**Agency:** Springfield, Ohio Police Department  
**Rank:** Lieutenant  
**Softball Experience:** Previously played for the Dayton Metro and Dayton Metro Gold teams with his



softball career dating back to 1987.  
**Secret to Pitching:** Never let the batter see the same pitch twice. Move around on the rubber, vary the pitch in arc and speed. Know the batter and don't give him what he wants.  
**Thoughts on Going Middle:** It's all part of the

game. If there is a big pull hitter at the plate and I don't want him to go yard, I'll pitch him away. That means he will probably end up coming right back at me. You can't fault a guy for hitting it where you pitch him.  
**Scary Moment on the Hill:** In 2002 I was hit square in the face by a ball and suffered several broken facial bones and spent a week in the hospital. Back on the hill the following week, but promised his wife he would always wear protective headgear and has not broken his promise yet.

**On Going Middle:** I don't mind when teams shoot middle. I drop back and become a 5th infielder. I can defend well on the mound and also turn some double plays that get us out of jams.

**Favorite Memories:** Winning the New York State Law Enforcement Championships four years in a row, and throwing shutouts in two of them.

**What the Scouts Say:** "He plays on (arguably) the best cop team in the nation. Love him or hate him you have to respect his game because nobody is more intense on the field."

**Name:** Dennis Leonard  
**Team:** Jacksonville Police Softball Club  
**Agency:** Orange County Sheriff's Office, Florida  
**Rank:** Patrol Lieutenant  
**Thoughts on Going Middle:** I've been hit a bunch but I have no problem with it. I have a glove and better know how to use it. If I think its intentional, I will defend myself and pop off about it! I have a lot of brothers off the field, but not on it. It's all about getting in their heads and the scoreboard!

**Most Memorable Moment on the Hill:** Double dipping NYPD Blues at Dayton with

the Florida Lawmen for another ring. First game top of the seventh we were down by sixteen runs...we came back and scored twenty-six in front of 2,000 fans.

We went on to CRUSH them in the "if" game 46-20. All of their iced down champagne was wasted.

**Uniform Number 612:** At 6'3" and 260 lbs. many people think he is so big he needs three numbers. The real reason is to honor his daughter Brittany who was born on June 12th (6/12).



**Name:** Steve Loftis  
**Team:** Corcoran Hardcore  
**Agency:** Corcoran State Prison, California  
**Assignment:** Corrections Officer, Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Corcoran Yard  
**Softball Experience:** I started playing softball in 1982. I played my first tournament in 1983 and I've been addicted ever since. I have two gold medals from the World Police and Fire Games, one in the open division, Australia 1995 and one in the 35 and over division, Indianapolis 2001. I also have a silver medal 40 & over from the International Games Las Vegas 2004.

**Secret to Pitching:** As a pitcher you have to pitch from behind the rubber, take a few steps back and be on the balls of your feet before the ball is hit. That lets you protect yourself most of the time. I try to watch teams play and remember where they hit. Right side hitters - pitch them in and pull hitters - pitch them deep and out sometimes it works.

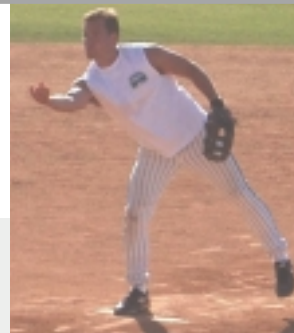


**Most Memorable Moment on the Hill:** Winning World gold medals, playing against Bruce Meade (Hall of Fame) in the Nevada Police & Fire games 2002.

**Name:** Skip Stephenson  
**Team:** San Diego Gray  
**Agency:** San Diego, California Police Department  
**Rank:** Detective assigned to the San Diego District Attorney's "CATCH" Team (High-tech Task Force)  
**Athletic Experience:** Four years of college football and thirty years of competitive softball.  
**Defending the Middle:** I feel I can still



**Name:** Barry Midthun  
**Team:** Minnesota Lawmen  
**Agency:** Duluth, Minnesota Police Department  
**Assignment:** Community Policing  
**Softball Experience:** Played one year of softball with Long Haul Trucking (now a major



**On Fielding his Position:** Personally I don't mind when teams hit the middle because there is a legitimate opening there. I chose to play the position realizing the risks, besides, I like to hit the

## Late Breaking Police Tournament Results

April 8, 9 Houston Police Officer Association Houston, Texas 1. NYPD Metro 2. Houston P.O.A. 3t. Jacksonville P.S.C. 3t. Team Five-0	April 9, 10 Karp Memorial Tustin, California 1. SoCal Alliance/Mizuno 2. Corcoran Prison Hardcore 3t. LAPD Blue/Easton 3t. Ventura County Black
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pick it, but more seem to get through than in the past. The older I get, the better I was.  
**Career Hi-Light:** Pitching a perfect game in the 2004 Arizona Olympics.  
**Money Pitch:** The low knuckler into the wind.  
**Future in Softball:** I received an expensive new ball glove for Christmas so I have to play long enough to break it in.

team) and many years of cop softball.  
**Secret to Pitching:** My pitching game plan is simple \*no walks\* let the batter beat you with his bat. Having said that, I will try to pitch for the situation, throw a quick pitch, go to the edge of the arc limit (low and high), throw in a borderline trick pitch (USSSA) and at times put myself in the batter's shoes and try to throw a pitch that I wouldn't want to hit at that very moment.

middle myself. Some players and spectators don't realize that there are some of us who have a natural swing for the middle and taking an unnatural swing somewhere else really doesn't help our team or our personal enjoyment of the game.  
**Most Memorable Moment on the Hill:** A few years ago in the Nevada Games we lost early to Sin City (Vegas Metro) but fought through the losers' bracket with seven consecutive wins to claim the gold medal at 2 A.M.