

# COP CORNER

by Jeff Blair • Sponsored by Mizuno



By the time you read this article, the 2005 public safety softball season will be in full swing. The West Coast circuit got an early kickoff and three major tournaments have already been recorded into the annals. My team, the SoCal Alliance/Mizuno, got off to our best start ever as we reeled off two consecutive tournament championships by running the table both times. Our partnership with Mizuno and the support of

Greg Harding has really paid off for us and we hope to continue stacking up more W's than L's. Speaking of Mizuno, if you go to any Internet softball message board, you will find the masses clamoring for the new Mizuno Techfire Envy bat that should be available around July 1st. The Envy should have a major IMPACT on our sport. Other teams in the news include the LAPD Blue/Easton crew who underwent an off-season youth movement. The movement seems to be a success because they are back on the winners platform with a Gold Medal performance in the Arizona Games. The powerhouse NorCal Quake squad is looking stronger than ever and should battle the perennial champs, the DEA Combo/Anderson Bat Company, all season as being the "team to beat" in the West. Corcoran Prison Hardcore could be the most fundamentally sound team in California right now and the USBP Heat might have the most explosive offense. Cagey senior teams such as the San Diego Gray and O.C.S.D. Hitmen are not backing down from anybody and both have already knocked off some of the premiere "open" teams early in the season. The Central/Eastern circuit will be firing up soon and everyone is talking about the NYPD Metro and NYPD Blues as being the top dogs. I suspect teams like the New Jersey G-Boys, Houston Police Officer's Association, Jacksonville, Belle-Tire Michigan, and TPS Lawmen might have something to say about that.

I have some exciting news to share with you this month but to do so we must first look back. If you were to reflect back into the history of softball you would find significant defining events that have shaped our sport. Examples include: The first guy who thought it would be a good idea to loft the ball underhanded so regular guys like us had a fair chance to actually hit the darn thing. The genius who decided to shorten the bases because he was tired of running a full 90 feet. The advent of the aluminum bat, then the double-wall bat and now the composite bat. Softball websites where you can order equipment, obtain tournament information and chat with others who share similar interests. The advent of Softball Magazine and Bat Wars. The list of defining moments goes on and on and I am pleased to announce another event that will leave its mark in the history of our sport...well at least the history of public safety softball. October 21st, 2005, will be a landmark date in public safety softball history because it will mark the beginning

## World Series of Police Softball

of the first ever World Series of Police Softball. The event will take place over three days and the venue will be the Big League Dreams facility in sunny Cathedral City, California. Thirty-two of the nation's best teams will converge in the



Southern California desert and battle for the opportunity to claim the title of Police Softball World Champions. Let me break down the events: Friday night will be the East vs. West All-Star Game where every team participating in the tourney will send one representative to participate. There will be sixteen top players from the West Coast going at it against the best sixteen players the Central/Eastern States have to offer. I imagine the grandstands will be packed with spectators who will actually be cheering for guys they normally play against. I know I'll be there pulling for my usual rivals from the Riverside Black, Concord Police Softball, DEA Combo etc... because their representatives in the game will be defending the honor of the West Coast circuit against those "outsiders" from the other part of the country. In my mind's eye, I can see the short-stop from the South Florida Lawmen starting a double play with a quick throw to the second-baseman from the NYPD Shields who in turn fires the ball to the first-baseman from the Delaware Association of Police. I can envision one of the bombers from the San Diego Excessive Force squad launching a tape measure shot off the pitcher from the Minnesota Lawmen. I can imagine the representative from the New Jersey G-Boys peppering a gapper into left-center and scoring a guy from the Tri-County Ohio crew. A Home-Run derby will immediately follow the game. The staff at Big League Dreams has assured me their BBQ will be flaming with tri-tip sandwiches made to order and there will be a surplus of libations on hand for the social gathering that runs concurrent to the Friday night events.

Saturday will be round-robin play. The thirty-two teams will be broken up into eight brackets of four teams. Every team will play three round-robin games and then be seeded 1-4 depending on their W/L record. Teams who do well on Saturday and secure the top seed in their bracket will find their road to glory a lot shorter than those who don't because they will receive a two game bye in the playoffs. Number two seeds will get a one game bye, while number three and four seeds will have to scratch out six consecutive wins on Sunday to claim the title.

Sunday is money day; the single elimination playoffs will start bright and early. All good things must come to an end and on Sunday the end will come for thirty-one very good teams as they are eliminated one by one throughout the day. One team will be left to bask in the spotlight of victory and receive national recognition as being the World Champions of Police Softball. They will then have the entire off-season to gloat, but they better be ready to defend their title next year because they will definitely have the proverbial target on their backs.

Even though this will be the First Annual World Series of Police Softball you can count on it being a success because it is being brought to you by PoliceSoftball.Com in association with Softball Magazine. My team (shown in the photo) will be hosting the gala and all of my teammates have vowed to make the tourney enjoyable for everyone. Softball Magazine's Publisher Gene Smith has been active in the planning of the event and you can bet it will get plenty of coverage in the year-end issue. I'll keep you updated as things progress but for now...I am 10-98.