

Adam Smith, Hagersville ON



In 1987, veteran Ontario fastball player Larry Lynch had never seen, or even heard of, a teenager from Hagersville named Adam Smith. After just one season, Lynch knew the second baseman was going to be something special.

“We played each other a lot,” said Lynch, a competitor with Waterloo at the time while Smith took the field for Burlington. “I just knew he was going to be a force to be reckoned with for a long time after he turned 20 years old.”

Lynch was right.

A few years later, Jack Fireman recruited a de facto fantasy roster to form the Toronto Gators. Smith was the team’s captain, helping lead the club to a pair of International Softball Congress (ISC) World Championships in 1993 and 1995.

With Smith at second, former Simcoe Storm coach Brian Paton in centre field and legendary hurler Darren Zack, the Gators became the stuff of legend.

Smith went on to take part in 109 ISC games, compiling a .322 average at the plate and five all-world selections between 1994 and 2003. He led the 1995 ISC World Tournament in runs-batted-in (11) and led the 2001 ISC's in hitting with a staggering .583 average.

In 2012, the 47-year-old joined Paton and Zack when he was officially inducted into the ISC Hall of Fame at the World Tournament in Midland, Michigan.

"I kind of had an idea that they were going to try, but I'm pretty proud to have been selected. You never know — it goes to a selection committee, and it's up to them whether you're worthy," Smith explained. "I'm pretty happy about it, there's so many great players that are in so I'm pretty proud that they thought I was good enough to get in."

Smith was deadly with a bat in his hands, but just as impressive was his defensive efforts. While web gems don't hold up as a statistical category, they certainly hold up in the memory of those who witnessed them.

"I have seen him carried off the field from being taken out at second base and come back and finish the game. He would dive after balls — he would do anything to knock a ball down to save it from going through the infield," said Lynch, who went on to both coach against, and play alongside, Smith.

"He always batted three in the order and he was the type of guy that could beat you so many ways. He was a master of coming up with the big home run when you needed it most and I've seen him win so many ball games with a big, clutch hit.

"The tougher the competition, the bigger the game, the bigger he hit he got."

Chris Jones and Adam Smith have been fastball friends and team-mates for many years and provided defensive strength up the middle for the world champion Toronto Gators in the mid 1990s. At Adam's ISC Hall of Fame induction in Midland MI, Chris introduced Adam to the audience and described Adam's gritty play, stating that it was amazing, and Chris was in awe, that Adam could field hard-hit grounders as well as he did utilizing an abused, beat-up, ill-treated leather softball glove that, in essence, resembled a pancake. To emphasize his point, Chris presented a Rawlings pancake to Adam as a HoF gift.