

Bob Guy - HoF - 2001

One of the Guys enters the Hall

By Bob Otto/Yucaipa, CA



If you're born into a fastpitch softball family, odds are that one of the kinfolk stuck a ball, bat and glove in your hands and pointed the way to the ball diamond.

Meet Bob Guy. Guy was so deeply buried in the fastpitch gene pool that avoiding the sport was all but impossible. "My whole family played," said Guy. "My dad (Bob, Sr.), and my uncles Don and Rich. Rich was a pitcher; Don, an infielder and catcher; and my dad played the infield and outfield.

"Getting my start in fastpitch softball, I owe to my dad. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't have made it into the (ISC) Hall of Fame."

Guy, an infielder and outfielder for 26 years (1960 to 1986), starred on several southern California teams. He received fastpitch softballs' top honor when he was inducted into the International Softball Congress Hall of Fame at Eau Claire, Wisconsin during the 2001 World Tournament.

"Getting inducted is a great feeling," Guy said. "I got a beautiful plaque and ring. The ISC made me and my three sons feel like royalty. I dedicated the award to my dad and my father-in-law (Gordon Pilkington). A week before (the induction ceremony) I lost my father-in-law. He was my mentor, coach and friend."

And based on his resume, Guy is deserving of the honor. He's a four-time All World selection with three of California's greatest fastpitch teams. The Burbank Comets (1972); Lakewood Jets (1973 -'74); and the Long Beach Nitehawks (1977). And Guy was the World Tourney's top RBI producer with eight in 1974 and 10 in 1977.

Aside from his personal accolades, Guy's teams also fared pretty well in World Tournament play. His Hawthorne Hustlers took second in 1970; the Comets won the championship in '72; the Jets were titleholders in '73 with a second in '74; and the Nitehawks finished runner up in 1977.

Guy arrived on the California fastpitch scene in the 1960s when the sport was booming. The ball player he became was a result of the tenacious competition that surrounded him.

"This was a premium time in my life," Guy said. "I was lucky to play at that time and in such a great league (Western Softball Congress) on great teams. I really got to face great pitchers - Ed Klecker, KG Fincher, Teske (Roger), Rich Stevens, Jack Randall and Bob Todd.

"Those pitchers were tough every day - game in and game out. They didn't give you much," he said. But two hurlers stand out in particular. "Klecker gave me a lot of trouble," he said. "KG (Fincher) was as good as they get. Thank God I got to play with them during my career."

Guy's athletic career began at Hawthorne High School where he starred in baseball, football, wrestling and pole vaulting. His senior year he lettered in all four sports and finished second in the state wrestling meet.

At the college level Guy again excelled in baseball, wrestling and pole-vaulting at El Camino Junior College, placing third in both wrestling and pole-vaulting at the state meets.

But baseball began driving to the top of the list. After earning all Metro Conference with .348 batting average and a ton of RBI's, baseball scouts came calling.

Guy signed with Yankees, spent four years (1961 - 1965) in the AA minor leagues and "got a cup of coffee by being invited to spring training in Ft. Lauderdale," he said.

Realizing that a major league career was doubtful, he returned home and focused his skills on fastpitch softball. After his major division career ended, he took up pitching and became a pretty fair hurler in the San Clemente City League. "It was no challenge to hit the pitching in the league," he said. "I needed a new challenge so I started pitching."

And Guy didn't forget that he had a fastpitch heritage to uphold. When his son Rob was old enough he baptized him into the sport.

One of his biggest thrills is playing along side 15-year-old Rob in a city league. "Playing ball with Rob is one of my fondest memories," he said.

Several years had passed since Guy last saw a World Tournament. He says the game has changed significantly. "The tournament isn't like it used to be," he said. "These 8-0 high scoring games were non existent in our time. We played a much more defensive game. You played for a run and then focused on defense to make it stand up.

"The bats and balls are so technologically advanced today. The balls stay hard the whole game and jump off the bat. The bats and balls produce more runs now. The balls we had turned soft after three innings."

After a 30-year career with the City of Hawthorne and L.A. County fire department, Guy, 61, retired as a fire captain. He spends time with his wife Donna between their homes in southern Calif. and Arizona. He still plays softball (slow pitch) on an age 60 - Over team. His softball travels take him to Denver, Detroit, Las Vegas and St. George, Utah playing in ASA, USSSA, and World Series softball tournaments.