

BOB WELBY MEMORIAL “RECOGNITION OF SERVICE” AWARD

Bob McGowan, Freelon, ON, Canada – “Impact through Innovation”



Bob McGowan joined the ISC in 1990s as the Commissioner for the ISC Travel League of Eastern Canada, providing solid leadership for the prestigious and highly-competitive league.

He took charge finding sponsors for the league, creating financial incentives for teams to participate, embracing existing and state-of-the-art blossoming communications tools and technology resulting in the league’s viability for many seasons into the early 2010s.

During that decade, Bob lured skilled fastball enthusiasts into key roles within the ISC and the result was enhanced communications, improved scoring and statistics and the launching of broadcasts through streaming. While many of those innovations are assumed and taken for granted in today’s world, in the mid-1990s it was leading edge thinking and implementation..

Citing the need for junior players to connect with ISC teams, Bob enabled ISC teams to affiliate with U21 teams, creating a risk-free opportunity for younger players to experience a taste of ISC experience without jeopardizing eligibility.

At the ISC World Tournament in 2001, Bob introduced the concept of an ISC II format, which was approved and provided a much-needed and appreciated second chance for 20 teams to extend their play at the week-long competition at the following year’s ISC World Tournament in Kitchener, ON. At a time when the traditional “we’ve always done it that way” thinking was not sustainable, the introduction of the ISC II was a life-line. The adjusted format introduced an influx of new teams, competitors and fans to augment the economic impact of the World Tournament. This innovation provided dozens of new teams and hundreds of players who had never participated in ISC events with the opportunity to compete at a high level.

Locally in Ontario, Bob introduced the Ontario Challenge Cup, with a “tournament of champions” format for league teams to compete in a best vs best format, which further broadened the ISC brand and is still functioning today. In fact, many of the innovations first brought into the ISC by Bob are still in place – his work was truly foundational.

Bob, at 76, is still passionate and enthusiastic about the ISC World Tournament and attends tournaments in southwestern Ontario.

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