

Jim Boender, New Bedford, IL

In 1955, over 5,000 fans came to watch the International Softball League's World Tournament played in New Bedford, IL. Out on the mound, in the white and black uniform of the New Bedford Elites, was a skinny 25-year-old named Jim Boender. Bedeviling the best softball players from New Castle, Pa., to Long Beach, Calif., Boender would spend the tournament offering convincing proof of his status as one of the nation's finest softball hurlers. "I pitched two no-hitters," Boender remembered. "In the third game, I lost it to Dinuba, Calif., in the eighth inning. Walked two guys and another guy got a hit and we lost 1-0. I'd pitched 21 hitless innings up to that time." The Elites came in third, a finish they reprised in 1956 before finishing second in 1957, both in New Bedford. The highlight of the three tourneys may have been the night in 1956 when the Elites edged Long Beach 1-0 in 10 innings, the first team to beat the Nitehawks in five years. Boender would go on to pitch in the ISC with Rock Falls Disco Bombers, Rock Island Sport Shop and Rock Island Hamm's Beer making the All World Team three times. He was featured in a [Chicago Tribune story](#) in 1998.