

Larry Fisher - HoF - 1995



LARRY FISHER - - - - I.S.C. HALL OF FAME

To anyone in his hometown of Findlay, Ohio, he is the face of fast pitch softball - - and has been for decades.

To anyone familiar with the sport in Ohio, Larry Fisher has been "Mr. I.S.C." for about 30 years. During that time any Ohio team wanting to get involved with the I.S.C. has been told to "see the second baseman/manager of the Findlay team".

To anyone within the International Softball Congress organization over those 30 years, Larry Fisher is recognized for his innovative gifts, his creative imagination, and his ability to generate and convey ideas which often bring about change. If there was a problem, or an opportunity, all eyes would turn in the direction of Larry Fisher for an intelligent, well-developed idea or solution.

Larry Fisher was elected to the I.S.C. Hall of Fame in 1995. Gaining those laurels was hardly a signal to rest on them and enjoy the status that the H of F ring brings. Nothing of that sort! That honor seemed to serve as a trigger for even more fervor for the sport and for the organization. As a member, and for many years the Chairman, of the World Tournament Committee, his commitment, energy, leadership skills, and creativity were really unleashed.

The exciting beginning of Fisher's introduction to the I.S.C. is told in paragraphs which follow, and they began with his appointment as I.S.C. Commissioner for Ohio, a spot which he has occupied since 1980.

After serving several terms as Eastern Vice-President beginning in 1987, he was elected to the post of Chairman of the Executive Committee in 1997 when that post was created. Since 1996 he has served as Chairman of the World Tournament Committee. From those two positions (World Tournament Committee chair and chair of the Executive Committee) Fisher has been at the very heartbeat of the I.S.C. through the many difficult years which have followed for the sport of fastball (fast pitch).

Larry Fisher's adventures with the sport began half way around the world. In 1964 while serving in the U.S. Air Force at Itazuke Air Force Base in Japan, he was dismayed to find that the Air Force didn't play baseball (his sport throughout his youth) in Japan. Virtually forced to turn from baseball to fast pitch softball at that point, he immediately fell in love with the game. During the remainder of his time in the Air Force, he played softball with numerous teams in Japan, Thailand, and Texas.

INTRODUCTION TO FAST PITCH IN OHIO:

After being discharged in June, 1967, he caught on with the Fern Café team of his hometown Findlay, Ohio. Always the "organizer", along with friends (and several teammates from the Fern Café team) the love affair with the game continued as he started the Findlay 1st National Bank team.

Over the next few years, he played with various teams in Findlay with Ohio stalwarts lie Bob Doxey, Joe Dillon, Lefty Wilhelm and Jim Ramsey. A good hitter and versatile player, he was recruited by the Payne Realty team of Upper Sandusky in 1974. This was his first real experience of "big time" fast pitch in the Mid-Eastern region.

In 1978 he joined the Marlesta Nursing Home team and the next year he became a player-manager for that strong Ohio team

INTRODUCTION TO THE I.S.C.

After reading some stories of this “outlaw” organization called the I.S.C. in Ray Anderson’s Fastpitch Chronicle, Fisher wrote a letter to someone named Carrol Forbes for more information. Forbes was ready for this request, and in the spring of 1980, Fisher was surprised to receive a phone call from Carrol Forbes informing him that he was in Findlay and would Fisher like to meet with him! That meeting took place immediately, and in the parking lot of the Walmart store, and at some point the discussion turned to the possibility of bringing the International Softball Congress to Ohio. That meeting in Forbes little travel trailer resulted in Larry Fisher’s being appointed I.S.C. Commissioner for Ohio and challenged to organize a tournament with the winner qualifying for the 1980 I.S.C. World Tournament in Tempe, Arizona.

Serious problems emerged promptly with the Ohio A.S.A. (big surprise!) and Fisher received the first of his two threatened “life time suspensions” from the A.S.A. Fisher didn’t blink and the I.S.C. Ohio tournament was scheduled. Timing was to prevent the winning team to make it to Tempe, but the I.S.C. was launched in Ohio.

With bold and outstanding assistance from Larry Fox (West Liberty Cavemen), Bob Davidson (D & S Tire of Marysville) and Mike Van Dine, who rather bravely entered his Ashland Faultless Rubber team, Broadway, Ohio, became the site of the first-ever I.S.C. event in Ohio. Wooster won the tourney; and the first huge step along Fisher’s rewarding and enjoyable journey with the I.S.C. was accomplished.

In addition to his many I.S.C. roles, Fisher’s career record as a team manager (from 1978 through 1997) logged 1047 wins against 518 losses (.669 winning percentage). His Findlay teams competed in five I.S.C. World Tournaments and seven A.S.A. “Major” National Tournaments. In 1998, he was one of eight managers in the USA selected by ASA/USA Olympic Selection Committee for the Pan-American USA Men’s National Team Selection Camp.

A career highlight came in 1995 when he was inducted into the I.S.C. Hall of Fame. On the state, national, and world scene in the sport of men’s fast pitch softball, he is known and respected as an authority on the game and the organization which presents the game at its highest level. On a first-name basis with every world-class player, manager, and sponsor, his name, his endorsement, and his opinions are among the most recognized and most respected. Truly that parking lot meeting with Carrol Forbes launched one of the most productive and revered careers in the history of the International Softball Congress.