

PLAY BALL

THE FARM TAVERN COMES HOME IN WISCONSIN TO DEFEND ISC WORLD TITLE IN 2008

By Jim Flanagan, Editor, www.fastpitchwest.com with contributions from the ISC's Gordon Wise and Doug Moe gratefully acknowledged. Photos by Maddy Flanagan, www.maddysphotos.com.

Since 1958, the ISC has been holding the most prestigious annual event in all of men's fastball, the ISC World Tournament, starting on the second Friday in August.

In August 2007, the Farm Tavern of Madison, Wisconsin captured the 2007 ISC World Tournament held in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, sweeping through the 32-team field with a perfect 6-0 record. The title was the third for sponsor-owner Rod Peterson's team, in the event generally regarded as the premier event in the world of men's fastball. In 2008, the ISC World Tournament will be back in Kimberly, Wisconsin for a record setting eleventh time, providing the Farm Tavern with an opportunity to defend their 2007 title in their home state.

The Farm Tavern came onto the men's fastball scene in 1975, another year in which the ISC World Tournament was hosted in Kimberly, Wisconsin. (That year's champions were the legendary, ten time ISC Champs, the Long Beach Nitehawks). The one constant throughout the years has been the team's owner and sponsor, Rod Peterson. Peterson started out in the early years of the franchise as player-manager, and is still the face of the franchise.

Peterson's team is a perennial contender for the ISC title, finishing in the Final Four in 11 of the past 12 years, and reaching the top of the mountain three times, winning ISC World Titles in 1997, 1999, and again last year, in 2007. The team has also won several ASA Major titles as well.

In an interview with Doug Moe, reprinted with permission from ISC Information Officer Gordon Wise, Peterson put to rest rumors of a possible retirement following the ISC title run of 2007:

"We'll be back to defend! I know I'm coming toward the end. I'm getting older and every year the kids seem younger. It's a tremendous amount of work." But the 2008 World Tournament is in nearby Kimberly, Wis. You can bet the farm boy from Rio, Wisconsin and The Farm Tavern will be there."

As noted in Gordon Wise's feature story on Peterson appearing in the 2008 ISC Media Guide:

"Peterson was drawn to the game by a friend in the early 1960s. He became a first baseman, and in 1966 he became manager of the Music Box Tavern team in the Madison City recreation league. That role fit him just fine and it has fit so very well ever since. The indelible image of the powerfully built Peterson, hat pulled down over his eyes, with an intense and competitive visage strolling to the coaching



Right: Shortstop Mike Butler of the So Cal Bombers, avoiding a sliding Nathan Nukunuku of Broken Bow, NY

Above: Most Valuable Player, Karl Gollan of Albaugh, IA

Right: Outstanding Pitcher of ISC Tournament, Korrey Gareau



box or to the mound is one that every follower of the top levels of the game knows very well."

Peterson, at the age of 70 is now into his fourth decade of sponsoring and managing the Farm Tavern team, and was inducted to the ISC Hall of Fame in 1994. (See photo of Rod Peterson with this story, picking up the 2007 ISC World Tournament trophy).

The 2007 ISC World Tournament

The 2007 ISC World Tournament was hosted by Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, marking the first time since 1969 that a city hosted consecutive world tournaments. Kitchener, Ontario was very successful in all regards. Going in, there was concern that the second year would see a drop in attendance, concession, beer and souvenir sales but that wasn't the case. They virtually generated both attendance and sales equal to their 2006 numbers. Kitchener and its large organization of volunteers earned kudos from both players and fans for the outstanding job they did in both 2006 and 2007, including a separately run ISC II tournament for intermediate level teams.

In the past few years, the ISC has worked to create more parity among the top teams, most notably with the "PRAWN" rule, which limits the number of "All World" players that a team may have. After several years in effect, the rule seems to be having its desired effect. In 2007, for the first time in a long time, there were more teams in the tournament with a legitimate chance of winning the title.

The Farm Tavern's Title Run

The Farm Tavern capped off their perfect 6-0 record in the tournament with an 8-1 win over the So Cal Bombers, of Palm Springs, California. Pitcher Korrey Gareau went the distance to pick up the win, yielding but 4 hits. The Farm dominated the title game, as they had an earlier winner's bracket final against the Bombers, scoring runs in five of the seven innings, with the offense powered by Jeff Goolagong, who went 3-for-3, including a home run to lead off the second inning.

Gareau, a Canadian native, won the Tournament's Outstanding Pitcher's Award by picking up 5 of his team's 6 wins, for a 5-0 mark, with a microscopic 1.08 ERA over 32 innings, striking out 41.

In addition to pitcher Korrey Garreau, the Farm placed four more players on the tournament's All World First team, third baseman Jeff Goolagong, first baseman Donny Hale, and outfielders Jason Hill and Colin Abbott. Goolagong hit .444 in the tournament, Hale and Abbott .353, while Jason Hill hit an eye-popping .500.

The Farm Tavern entered the tournament as the ISC's # 6 ranked team, behind five other teams who would eventually fall by the wayside: Broken Bow, NY; Patsy's, NY; Orillia, Ontario; Bombers, So Cal; Kitchener, Ontario.

The Farm appeared no higher than # 6 on any of the ranking committee cards, save one that placed them in the # 5 slot.

The Farm cruised to its first two wins, with a pair of 12 strikeout shutouts by Farm pitchers Korrey Garreau, and Rob Schweyer, topping Innerkip Ontario in the opener, 4-0 behind Garreau, and 8-0 against Portland behind Rob Schweyer.

In their third game, the Farm faced # 3 ranked Orillia Riversharks of Ontario, though once again, Garreau was dominant, dispatching Orillia, 6-1. The Farm scored three runs in an inning twice, out hitting the Riversharks, 10-5, with Donny Hale and Jason Hill notching three hits each in the win.

In their fourth game of the tournament, # 2 ranked Patsy's put the Farm Tavern. They say in every tournament, there is a turning point, for the eventual champion,

and this may well have been it for the Farm. The Madison squad could muster but one hit against young Phenom pitcher Adam Folkard, not long out of the Australian Jr. Men's program where he won a world title. But Garreau was equally masterful, shutting out Patsy on just four hits, and striking out eleven.

The lone hit for the Farm in the Patsy's game was by Kevin Schellenberg, but they made the most of it. In the second inning, it was a pair of walks and wild pitches, along with Schellenberg's hit that notched a pair of runs, which proved to be all that Garreau would need for the win.

So after knocking off two higher seeded teams, the Farm found themselves taking on a third, the # 4 ranked Bombers of Southern California. The Bombers were themselves turning heads in the tournament, knocking off the tournament's # 1 seeded Broken Bow, New York to get to the winner's bracket final against the Farm Tavern. (The ISC World tournament has returned to its



Above: The Farm Tavern of Madison, Wisconsin, 2007 ISC World Champions
Lower left: The Farm Tavern celebrates as they clinch the ISC World Title



double-elimination format, except for a winner-take-all final). The Bombers were led by Argentine pitcher Lucas Mata, who had earned a pair of championship rings with two-time ISC Champion County Materials in 2005 and 2006.

In their winner's bracket semi-final win over Broken Bow, New York, Mata struck out 14, while Bomber teammates Jason Porto and Adam La Londe each homered, with La Londe's two run shot providing the eventual margin of victory.

In the winner's bracket final, it was again Korrey Garreau getting the start for the Farm, while Sean Whitten took the ball for the Bombers, following Mata's earlier win. The Farm jumped on Sean Whitten early, taking a 5-0 lead through three innings. The Bombers brought Mata into the game in relief and fought back,

cutting the lead to 5-3 in the top of the fourth inning, on a three-run home run by the Bomber's Evan Potskin. The lead was short-lived however, as Whitten re-entered the game in the fourth and surrendered a three run homer to the Farm's Colin Abbot, extending the lead to 8-3. The Bombers never recovered and Garreau cruised to a 10-3 win, with teammate Rob Schweyer closing things out in the seventh inning. The Farm offense in the game was led by Colin Abbott, who had 3 hits, scored 3 runs and drove in 3.

2007 ISC World - Final Day

Quarterfinal - Patsy's NY 3, Broken Bow NY 2

By the tournament's ninth and final day, there were but four teams remaining: Patsy's and Broken Bow of New York, and the winner's bracket finalists, the Farm of Wisconsin and the Bombers of Southern California. The two New York teams entered the tournament as the number one and number two seeded teams in the tournament, but had to square off against each other, for a shot at the

Bombers in the tournament's semi-final. The game pitted a pair of young pitchers from Australia, Andrew Kirkpatrick for Broken Bow and Adam Folkard for Patsy's.

New Zealander Rhys Casley put Broken Bow on the board first, with a two run homer in the first inning. But it would prove to be the only hit Broken Bow would muster against Adam Folkard, who went the distance, striking out 16. Meanwhile, his teammates notched 8 hits, and rallied for 3 runs, with Daniel Milne driving in two in the fourth to tie the game, while the game winner was the product of a Frank DeGroat double and Stephen Ratu RBI single in the sixth.

Semi-final - So Cal Bombers 3, Patsy's NY 1

The 3-2 win by Patsy's pitted them against the So Cal Bombers in



Rod Peterson of the Farm Tavern accepts the 2007 ISC World Tournament Trophy, with Dave LeBlanc

the tournament's semi-final. The Bombers once again relied on Lucas Mata to make the start, while two-time ISC World Most Valuable Pitcher Gerald Muizelaar got the nod for Patsy's. The Bombers scored three in the first against Muizelaar, on a bases clearing double by Greg "Scrappy" Crawford. Patsy's scored a run in the top of the fifth on an RBI single by Louie Joglar, but it was the only run against Mata, who struck out 12 and scattered four hits en route to his fourth win.

Championship Game - The Farm, WI 8, So Cal Bombers 1

The title game was a rematch of the earlier winner's bracket final won handily by the Farm, 10-3. Both starting pitchers entered the championship game with four wins, impressive amidst the top caliber competition. For the Bombers, it was Argentine Lucas Mata, while the Farm Tavern once again relied on Canadian Korrey Gareau. The game was decided early, though, as the Farm touched up Mata for 4 runs in the first three innings, and never looked back, cruising to an 8-1 win as Garreau went the distance. The Farm's Jeff Goolagong drove in three of the four early runs, with a homer and a triple. Mata struck out seven in his three innings of work, and Bombers pitchers combined to strike out 13 in the game. But the Farm Tavern hitters continued their offensive outpouring that got them into the title game as the tournament's lone unbeaten team. The Bomber's Jason Porto homered for their lone run, his second of the tournament, but the Farm tacked on four more runs down the stretch, scoring two in the fifth and two more in the sixth for the final 8-1 tally. With that, the Farm Tavern team had brought Rod Peterson his third ISC World Championship (adding to those won in 1997 and 1999), while eyeing a chance in 2008 to defend the 2007 and win a fourth in front of the home state Wisconsin fans.

ISC 2007 All World Teams and Awards:

Best Dressed Team - Clifton Park NY Broken Bow Gremlins; Frank Porth Memorial Team Sportsmanship Award - Elkhart Albaugh; Fourth Place Team - Clifton Park NY Broken Bow Gremlins; Third Place Team - New York City NY Patsy's of New York; Second Place Team - Palm Springs CA So Cal Bombers; First Place Team - Madison WI The Farm Tavern.

1st Place Individual Awards:

Kevin Herlihy Memorial Newcomer of the Year Award - Wayne

Laulu - Green Bay WI Townline; RBI Leader - Dan Skillings - Innerkip ON Innerkip Eagles - 15; Leading Hitter - Nick Shailes - Green Bay WI Townline (12-18) .667 average and Tyler "Tex" Lessard - St. Thomas ON Evergreen Centennials (8-12) .667 average; Cleo Goyette Most Valuable Player - Karl Gollan - Elkhart IA Albaugh Inc. Gollan was 4-0 as a pitcher and hit .375, going 6-15 including 3 home runs; Leroy Zimmerman Most Outstanding Pitcher - Korrey Gareau - The Farm Tavern Madison WI.

All World Teams; Second Team:

Pitcher: Andrew Kirkpatrick - Clifton Park NY; Nick Underhill - Vancouver BC (Underhill led the tournament in strikeouts with 72); Gerald Muizelaar - New York City NY; Catcher: Ben Fjelland - Elkhart IA; Frank DeGroat - New York City NY; Infield: Jarrad Martin - Clifton Park NY; Kyle Beane - Midland MI; Andrew Medwedrich - Vancouver BC; Evan Potskin - Palm Springs CA; Jeff Goolagong - Madison WI; Outfield: Steve Mullaley - Orillia ON;

Steve Running - Innerkip ON; Steve Schucker - Denmark WI; Dale Levy - Kitchener ON; Designated Hitter: Derek Mayson - Vancouver BC.

First Team:

Pitcher: Korrey Gareau - Madison WI; Lucas Mata - Palm Springs CA; Karl Gollan - Elkhart IA; Catcher: Aaron Neemia - Green Bay WI; Chad Ghostkeeper - Palm Springs; Infield: Donny Hale - Madison WI; Travis Wilson - New York City NY; Nick Shailes - Green Bay WI; Tyler "Tex" Lessard - St. Thomas ON; Wayne Laulu - Green Bay WI; Outfield: Ryan Wolfe - Orillia ON; Jason Hill - Madison WI; Colin Abbott - Madison WI; Dan Skillings - Innerkip ON; Designated Hitter: Jeff Wilson - Ashland OH.

2008 ISC World Tournament

August 10-16, 2008 at Kimberly, WI

The Kimberly Recreation Association (KRA) has named the Stone Yard of the Fox Cities as the Host Team for the 2008 ISC World Tournament to be held at Sunset Park in Kimberly from August 10-16, 2008.

The ISC World tournament will be hosted by the Kimberly Recreation Association for a record 11th time, and will feature 32 of the top men's fastpitch softball teams from throughout the world.

The Stone Yard team includes players who previously played in the ISC World Tournament with The Bar on the Avenue and the Circle Tap Lumberjacks.

The Farm Tavern of Madison, WI will be defending their 2007 World Championship Title.

Players and fans are anxiously anticipating the return of the ISC World Tournament to Kimberly, Wisconsin in 2008, for a variety of reasons. Talent among the teams appears spread out again, so a good number of teams will be "in the hunt" for the ISC title. The 2008 tournament will also mark the first time that the tournament will be a seven (7) day tournament (instead of nine or ten days), which will help players and teams with the time and expense involved in such a tournament.

The ISC will be inducting six new people to the ISC Hall of Fame, the largest number in recent memory, as well as holding a Hall of Fame reunion during the World Tournament, inviting all living Hall of Fame members.

The International Softball Congress (ISC) is a non-profit association for the promotion and administration of men's and boy's fastpitch softball throughout North America with athletes coming from literally all over the world. The organization's Executive Director is Ken Hackmeister, with a supporting organization of directors in various regions in North America and beyond. The official ISC website is at www.iscfastpitch.com, and includes information on the qualifying tournaments for teams desiring to play in the ISC World Tournament.