



Unfinished Business

**Runner-ups in 2005, So Cal Bombers
Capture 2006 Red Rock Tournament Title**

By Jim Flanagan, Editor, Fastpitchwest.com with photos by Madeleine Flanagan



Pitcher Sean Whitten • SoCal Bombers

After finishing second in last year's Red Rock tournament, Ralph Trejo's So Cal


Bombers reached the top of the mountain in 2006, coming away with the coveted Red Rock tournament title. The So Cal Bombers finished this year's seventh annual event with a perfect 6-0 record, for the top spot among 16 elite teams in men's fastball, who travelled to the beautiful Canyons's Complex in scenic St. George, Utah, from as far away as Hawaii, New York, and Wisconsin, with teams arriving from Colorado, Oregon, California and home state Utah. The Bomber's championship win in 2006 marked the second year in a row that a California team took home the championship trophy.

The 2006 Red Rock tournament was again hosted by Josh Olmstead and his crew from the City of St. George, who never fail to impress with their facility, or their attention to detail at the tournament. ISC Executive Director Ken Hackmeister, and Umpires Roy Stout and Robert Henning form the organizing committee which once again earned high marks for their professional handling of the event, including arrangements for worldwide radio broadcasts of selected games on Ballparkradio.com, and a tournament photographer to capture all the action. In addition to the hardware and gear received by the teams, each member of the championship team was fitted for a championship ring.


The highly regarded Bombers finished tenth among the world's forty best teams in last year's ISC World Tournament, and built on their success by going to work in the off season to improve their roster. Their pre-season press releases got plenty of attention as they added three of the games's best Canadian players, All World catcher Darren Box, and the 2006 Red Rock MVP's, hard-throwing pitcher Ryan Brand, and top hitter Chad Ghostkeeper. The 2005 pitching staff already boasted two pitchers with Team USA experience, Travis Price and Tony Peeples. If the addition of Brand wasn't enough, for the Red Rock tournament, the Bombers borrowed Saskatoon's Sean Whitten, one of the hardest throwers in the game. The addition of Whitten put the Bombers over the top at Red Rock, as his relief in the semi-final and championship game proved to be the difference. Despite it being early May, Whitten was topping 80mph on the radar gun, the rough equivalent of 100mph in baseball.

The Bombers entered the championship game against the Houston Aces with a

Wayne Wells•Houston Aces



Pitcher Wayne Wells, who played a pivotal role in the runner-up finish by the Houston Aces, commented: "Red Rock is one of my favorite tournaments of the year, with exceptional weather and some of the best ball fields in the fastball world. All of the teams were very competitive and brought excellent pitching staffs. For us to beat the number 5, 20 and 22 ranked teams in the world was extremely satisfying and special to our players, and will hopefully springboard us towards a successful 2006 season." (Editor's note: Houston's winning ways continued later in late May, as they won the ISC Qualifier for the Texas region, and earned a berth to the ISC World Tournament in August.)



Darren Box • SoCal Bombers

This year was So Cal Bombers coach Kelly McGiffin's first trip to St. George, Utah for the Red Rock Tournament. McGiffin had this to say about the tournament: "The tournament was a first class affair, from the organization to the officiating, to the caliber of the teams at the event. From a coaching perspective, you want to see strong competition at tournaments that will assist in readying your club and this tournament provided that. While we performed very well with some outstanding hitting performances, the positive note for me was that it was against top caliber pitchers like Colin McKenzie, Mike Piechnik, Bill Hillhouse, and others. The facility and setting of Red Rock were very impressive and provided a great atmosphere for the tournament. I look forward to coming back in 2007."

10-1 elimination win over The Bar of Appelton, Wisconsin, for a 4-0 record. They rallied from three runs down in a Sunday morning quarter-final as Portland's Evan Potskin staked them to a 3-0 lead with a 3 run homer. The Bombers got even on back-to-back-to-back solo homers in the third, by Chad Ghostkeeper, Albert Mendibles and Glen Ormsby, scoring two more runs in the inning, and a sixth and deciding run in the sixth, for a 6-3 lead. Portland very nearly knocked off the Bombers, scoring two in the seventh inning to trim the lead the 6-5, and putting the tying and go ahead runs in scoring position, before the Bombers' Sean Whitten closed out the semi-final win.

The other big story of the tournament was the Houston Aces, who entered the tournament as the # 33 team in the pre-season ISC rankings of the best teams in the world, and turned heads by knocking off the #5 ranked Patsy's of New York, as well as #20 Portland, and #22 Team Rainey of Southern California enroute to their runner-up finish. Houston's Canadian pitching duo of Wayne Wells and Jason Smith played a key role for the newly formed Aces, as did shortstop Joe Morales and Moises Davilla. Houston also garnered extra attention in a manner not intended, by arriving too late for their first game Saturday morning, due to confusion over the time zone change from Las Vegas to St. George, Utah. To their credit, they battled back to win their pool on Saturday, despite the forfeit loss, smiling through the good natured ribbing they took concerning their late arrival. Houston entered the championship game with just one loss, before falling to the So Cal Bombers.

In the championship game, starters Travis Price of the Bombers and Wayne Wells of Houston threw three scoreless innings each, before the

Bombers broke the ice in the 4th inning, scoring two runs. The Bombers' Darren Box led off the fourth inning with a single to center. Paul Walford followed with a single to right, and both scored on a two-RBI single to right by Raymundo Parra. Houston catcher Troy Gilmore got the Aces to within one with a solo home run over the centerfield fence. Houston then got their best look at the game when Benny Carmona followed Gilmore's home run with a single to center, advancing to second on an infield error. Ben Duron legged out a bunt to load the bases. Enter pitcher Sean Whitten for the Bombers. Whitten struck out the next hitter and induced an inning ending force out at second base to escape the jam. It was as close as the Houston Aces would get, as the Bombers scored two more runs in the fifth on a double by Albert Mendibles, an RBI single by Glen Ormsby, sacrifice by Darren Box and infield out, extending their lead to 4-1. The Bombers loaded the bases with one out in the 6th but did not score as veteran Wayne Wells pitched out of the jam. Houston could not figure out Whitten, who struck out 6 in 3 innings, including the side in the 5th, and yielded but one hit to pick up the save. The Bombers put the game out of reach in the 7th with three more runs on singles by Walford, Kelly Wenstrom and Rob McGiffin.

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME: Canyons Complex, St. George, Utah; So Cal Bombers, CA - 7, Houston Aces, TX - 1; WP - Travis Price, Sean Whitten (4) & Ghostkeeper, Box (4); LP - Wayne Wells & Gilmore.

A-1 Tank's Zack Abernathy slides in ahead of the throw to NY Patsy's shortstop Omar Moraga



Final Four

Patsy's of New York behind the pitching of Gerald Muizelaar and Terry Luster, members of Team Canada and Team USA, respectively, and hitters Chris Miljavac, Frank DeGroat, Jr., and Chad Busch and The Bar of Appleton, Wisconsin behind pitchers Colin McKenzie of Canada, New Zealander Gerard Long and slugger Josh Johnson rounded out the Final Four, staying unbeaten until their semi-final games.

Elite Eight

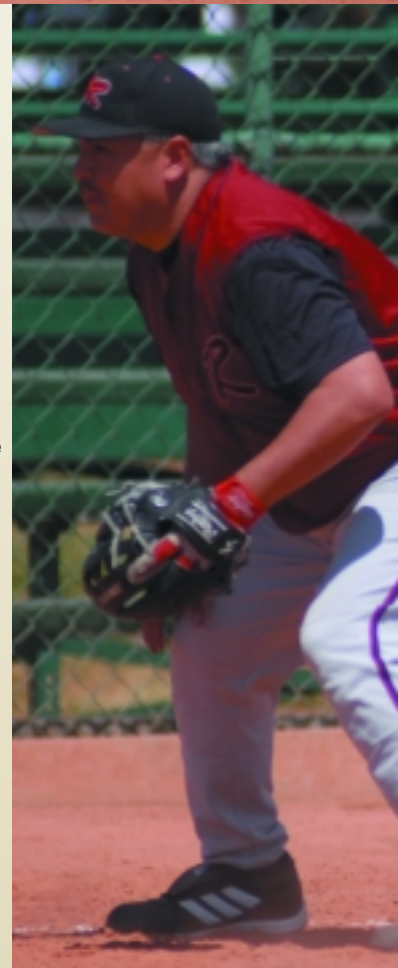
The sixteen teams competing in the 2006 Red Rock tournament were placed in (4) four team pools, playing three round robin games on Saturday, to determine placement and seeding for Sunday's single elimination brackets. The "Elite Eight" teams advance to the Championship Bracket, while the other eight advanced to a separate Consolation Bracket. In 2006, in addition to the Bombers, CA, Houston, TX, Patsy's, NY and The Bar of Appleton, WI, the Elite Eight consisted of CR/Portland, OR, Team Rainey, CA, A-1 Tank, CA and Hilo Hawaii. Hilo, Hawaii rallied for two runs in the seventh inning of their last game Saturday to qualify for the Championship bracket, while A-1 Tank, CA took a big step up in classification of play from last year, proving they had come to do more than just compete at Red Rock.

Consolation Bracket Final

The Consolation bracket final turned out to be the "Utah State Championship", between the Hogs of Salt Lake City Utah, and the Hi Desert Dawgs, in one of the tournament's wildest games, with the Hogs of Salt Lake City, Utah coming out on top, 15-10.

The Hogs took a big, early lead, scoring seven runs in the first inning. The High Desert Dawgs chipped away though, and refused to go quietly, scoring two in the first, one in the second, two in the third, to cut the lead to 7-5 after three innings. The Hogs added two more in the fourth, but the Dawgs scratched for one of their own, running the score to 9-6. In the sixth, the Hogs added four, while a Gin Barnes homer for the Dawgs kept them within reach at 13-7. The Hogs plated two more in the final frame, to take a 15-7 lead, but in a game when no lead seemed safe, the Dawgs battled mightily to score three more in the bottom of the seventh, cutting the lead to 15-10, and loading the bases before pitcher Ryan Webb got the final two outs, and with it, the 2006 Red Rock Consolation final. The High Desert Dawgs earned a great deal of respect from players and fans alike, for their resilience and never-say-die attitude. Late Saturday night, the Dawgs were involved in another game of "last man standing", falling just short, 12-10 to the Northern California Cardinals, putting the tying runs aboard in the seventh before the final out was recorded.

Hogs, UT - 15; Hi Desert Dawgs, UT - 10; WP - Urqhart, Webb (4) & Bratnin; LP - G. Hone & Winterhalder
The Northern California Cardinals, stepping up in classification knocked off the Colorado Rage, while the Lumberkings of Bakersfield, California outstated the Las Vegas Cowboys, to earn Final Four finishes in the Consolation bracket. The Cardinals were outstated by the Salt Lake City Hogs, while the Lumberkings were eliminated by the High Desert Dawgs.





So Cal Bombers 2006 Red Rock Champions



Houston Aces 2006 Red Rock Runner-ups

Members of Championship Team, So Cal Bombers: Chad Ghostkeeper, Albert Mendibles, Glenn Ormsby, Darren Box, Paul Walford, Raymundo Parra, J.R. Mendez, Kelly Wenstrom, Rob McGiffin, Travis Price, Dan Winnick, Sean Whitten, Arturo Solano, Jason Porto, Ryan Brand, Tony Peeples, and Nate Devine. Coaching staff: Kelly McGiffin, Cesar Rodriguez. Owners/GM: Ralph Trejo, Sr. and Ralph Trejo, Jr. Individual Awards: Most Valuable Player - Chad Ghostkeeper, So Cal Bombers; Most Valuable Pitcher - Ryan Brand, So Cal Bombers. All Tournament Team: Gerard Long, The Bar of Appelton, WI; Josh Johnson, The Bar of Appelton, WI; Colin McKenzie, The Bar of Appelton, WI; Chris Miljavac, Patsy's, NY; Frank DeGroat, Jr., Patsy's, NY; Chad Busch, Patsy's, NY; Joe Morales, Houston Aces, TX; Moises Davilla, Houston Aces, TX; Wayne Wells, Houston Aces, TX; Jason Smith, Houston Aces, TX; Darren Box, So Cal Bombers, CA; Paul Walford, So Cal Bombers, CA; Rob McGiffin, So Cal Bombers, CA; Glenn Ormsby, So Cal Bombers, CA; Albert Mendibles, So Cal Bombers, CA.



The Bar of Appleton's Matt Paulsen, on the bases and Greg Hogan of the Colorado Rage

Saturday's Pool Play Results from Red Rock Tournament; Canyons Complex, St. George, Utah:

Saturday May 6, 2006 9:00 a.m. results: **Pool A:** A-1 Tank, CA - 8; Las Vegas, NV - 1; WP - Ed Gasper & Rogers; LP - Cockerin & Hartley. **Pool B:** Hilo Athletics, HI - 6; Santa Rosa CA - 0; WP - Rob O'Brien & O'Brien; LP - Bill Hillhouse & Osborn. **Pool C:** CR/Portland, OR - 5; West Coast Cardinals, CA - 0; WP - Mark Bennett & Rasmussen; LP - Crawford & Winship (4) & Muratella. **Pool D:** Team Rainey, CA - 5; Lumberkings, CA - 4; WP - Bricklen Anderson & Acedo; LP - Grant Patterson & Harbison.

Saturday May 6, 2006 11:00 a.m. results: **Pool A:** Patsy's NY - 6; Hogs, UT - 1; WP - Muizelaar & DeGroat; LP - Urquhart & Gray. **Pool B:** So Cal Bombers, CA - 6; Castlewood, UT - 2; WP - Travis Price & Ghostkeeper; LP - Black, Fawcett (5) & Bingham. **Pool C:** Hi Desert Dawgs, UT/AZ - 2; Houston Aces, TX - 0; (forfeit, arrived late). **Pool D:** The Bar of Appelton, WI - 7; Colorado Rage, CO - 3; WP - Colin McKenzie & Wartman; LP - Tabashnuik & Rowan.

Saturday May 6, 2006 1:00 p.m. results: **Pool A:** A-1 Tank, CA - 6; Hogs, UT - 3; WP - Doug Sleep & Reyes; LP - Cody Thompson & Gray. **Pool B:** Castlewood, UT - 10; Santa Rosa CA - 2; WP - Chadwick & Bingham. **Pool C:** CR/Portland - 4; Hi Desert Dawgs - 2; WP - Piechnik & Rasmussen; LP - Ratliff & Hajjar. **Pool D:** Lumberkings, CA - 4; Colorado Rage, CO - 3; WP - Sonny Perkins & Mooneyham; LP - Smock & Rowan.

Saturday May 6, 2006 3pm results: **Pool A:** Patsy's NY - 8; A-1 Tank, CA - 1; WP - Terry Luster & Joglar; LP - Darcy Byrne &

Rogers. **Pool B:** So Cal Bombers CA - 14; Santa Rosa, CA - 0; WP - Ryan Brand & Wenstrom; LP - Bill Hillhouse, Hugh Hillhouse (3) & Osuorn. **Pool C:** Houston Aces, TX - 2; CR/Portland, OR - 0; WP - Wayne Wells, J.Smith (2) & Gilmour; LP - Bahler & Rasmussen. **Pool D:** The Bar of Appelton, WI - 7; Lumberkings, CA - 5; WP - Gerard Long & Wartman.

Saturday May 6, 2006 5pm results: **Pool A:** Patsy's NY - 16; Las Vegas Cowboys, NV - 4; WP - Scheller & DeGroat Jr.; LP - Simkins, Cockerin (5) & Carlos. **Pool B:** So Cal Bombers, CA - 10; Hilo Athletics, HI - 3; WP - Whitten & Box; LP - Lehano & Lehano. **Pool C:** Houston Aces, TX - 5; West Coast Cardinals, CA - 4; WP - J. Smith, Wells (5) & Gilmour; LP - Shaun Winship & Muratella. **Pool D:** The Bar of Appelton, WI - 11; Team Rainey, CA - 4; WP - McKenzie, Johnson (3) & Wartman; LP - Panfilo Valdez, Duncan (3) & Garcia.

Saturday May 6, 2006 7pm results: **Pool A:** Hogs, UT - 7; Las Vegas Cowboys, NV - 5; WP - Ryan Webb & Gray; LP - Cockerin & Hartley. **Pool B:** Hilo, HI - 4; Castlewood, UT - 3; WP - Rob O'Brien & O'Brien; LP - Fawcett & Bingham. **Pool C:** West Coast Cardinals, CA - 12; Hi Desert Dawgs, UT/AZ - 11; WP - Crawford & Muratella; LP - Ratliff & Winterhalter. **Pool D:** Team Rainey, CA - 8; Colorado Rage, CO - 2; WP - Bricklen Anderson & Acedo; LP - Kammueler & Rowan.

Red Rock Tournament Website:
www.fastpitchwest.com/redrock.htm
Broadcast Website:
www.ballparkradio.com