



MINNESOTA SOFTBALL HALL OF FAME
NOMINATION FORM



2024

Nominee LeRoy Van Wyhe Birth date 1957

Address 505 S Elizabeth Ave City/State Hills, MN Zip 56138

Softball Community where major accomplishments were achieved Hills, MN and Sioux Falls, SD

Is that softball community's program currently affiliated with the MSF, the MN Softball Hall of Fame Administrator/Custodian? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Home Phone () Cell Phone (507) 227-0900

Email Address _____

Check the Nomination Category:

- ☒ Superior Performance
☐ Meritorious Service
☐ Pioneers of Yesterday

Check all that apply:

- ☒ Player ☐ Manager/Coach
☐ Promoter ☐ Administrator
☐ Umpire ☐ Sponsor

Check all that apply:

- ☒ Fastpitch
☐ Modified Pitch
☐ Slowpitch

Nominated by Greg Kruger Date of Nomination 6-11-24
(If a relative, must have a seconding nomination by non-relative)

Address 309 S Mulberry St City/State Ellsworth, MN Zip 56128

Home Phone () Cell Phone (712) 470-5711

Email Address _____

Seconding Nomination Name Travis Folkens, MSF Fastpitch Committee Member/Border League President

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LeRoy Van Wyke

In a league largely dominated by MSF Hall of Famers pitcher Dan Huisman, utility player Marlin Boom and their Ellsworth Town team, one other pitcher/hitter stood tall above the Border League completion in the 80s and 90s; LeRoy Van Wyke. After moving to Hills, MN in 1967 when he was 10 years old, LeRoy would start playing little league fastpitch for Hills Christian and become a staple of the Border League for the next 30+ years. In addition to playing for Hills Christian (1975-1983) with a rotating combination of his 5 brothers, he would later go on to play for the Hills Town (1984-87 and 1992-2000) team along with his younger brothers Howard and Greg forming an imposing middle of the batting order with LeRoy being the primary pitcher.

His pitching and hitting prowess made him a coveted pickup player in the area including for regional powerhouse Borchers Supply from Hawarden, IA that picked him up to play in tournaments in Rock Valley and Sioux Center, Iowa as well as at Penn Corp Park in Sioux City against an early 80s version of the team that would go on to become multiple time ISC world champions.

After playing 50-60 games per year with Hills Christian (a team that didn't play on Sundays due to religious reasons and thus didn't play in districts or state) and winning at an over 75% clip, LeRoy would move on to play for the Hills Town team. Hills Town was a "bunch of farm kids" that relied largely on LeRoy's pitching and grit to carry them to the State tourney in 1986 after going 5-0 in District play. They would later go on to play in 10 state tournaments after the end of the district qualifying system.

LeRoy's greatest team successes would come with the Morrell Federal Credit Union team from Sioux Falls, SD from 1988-91. With LeRoy as the primary pitcher and clean-up hitter, Morrell's won the South Dakota State Open division tourney in 1988 and finished 2nd in 1990 while making regionals each year playing the likes of the Fargo Knights, Duluth and Twin Cities powerhouses of the day. In 1990, they became the first South Dakota team to ever go to a major national tourney when they played in the ASA "AA" Nationals held in Mankato. They finished 1-2 tied with the likes of the Des Moines Metros, Midland Explorers and Mankato Happy Chef. Morrell's lost

their first game 1-0 to a New York team and then provided an eye opening moment of the tournament when they beat the Aurora, IL Dolan & Murphy Shamrocks 2-1 in 9 innings in a game that was tied 0-0 for the first 8 innings. While the tournament was won by Penn Corp of Sioux City, IA; the game caught the attention of one of their pitchers, Steve Schultz. When sitting in the hot tub at the hotel with a teammate Schultz said "did you see that Morrell Credit Union knocked off Dolan & Murphy last night?!" Little did he know that the two other occupants of the hot tub were LeRoy and a Morrell's teammate who just gave each other a knowing grin and nod.

Being humble and not one to seek attention, statistics were not important to LeRoy; however, he did provide stats for 3 years in his career that he recorded that demonstrate his immense skill:

- In 1981, the Hills Christian team went 52-8 on the season with LeRoy's individual pitching record of 46-5. He pitched 327 innings with 485 strikeouts and a 1.63 ERA. He also batted .335 with 15 HRs.
- In 1985, LeRoy's pitching record with Hills Town was 27-12. He pitched 242 innings with 340 strikeouts and a 1.68 ERA.
- In 1990 with Morrell Credit Union, LeRoy's pitching record was 32-14. He pitched 314 innings with 317 strikeouts and a 2.11 ERA and batted .363.
- LeRoy played in approximately 800 games in his career while pitching 4,500 innings and averaging 1 strikeout per inning pitched

Top area players at the time included Marlin and Chad Boom; Dan Huisman; Shane Bouman; Rick Lang; Mike Ferrie and Joe Steever with the top teams being Ellsworth Town; Holland; Ruthton; Empire Realty; Drake Orthodontics and Nite City. In 1992, LeRoy was honored by being selected to a Sioux Falls All-Star team that played against Penn Corp with LeRoy getting to pitch 2 innings.

While LeRoy was dominant for 3 decades, his career was cut short due to back and knee injuries that impacted his overall productivity and longevity including multiple back surgeries and a knee

replacement at age 39. LeRoy reports that his first knee replacement only lasted 7 years; however, believes that his playing softball for 5-6 years after the initial replacement may have had something to do with that! LeRoy is remembered by teammates as a fierce competitor and "top shelf person" who never said much or showed much emotion on the field but could always be counted on to answer the bell and give his teams their best chance to win through his pitching and hitting.