

Le Roy; this is Larry Svoboda's bio from his career as a player and as an umpire.
A great career!

Larry Svoboda
512 Lexington Dr.
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1957-1959 Played for the Protivin, IA Merchants and competed in the Cresco Softball League.

1960-1962 Enlisted in the US Army and played both stateside and in Europe as a shortstop for baseteams.

1963-1965 Resumed playing for the Protivin Merchants, competing in the Cresco Softball League. Teammates included Sonny Kalishek and Bob Howard, both members of the Iowa Fast Pitch Hall of Fame (HOF). A competitor in the league was pitcher Jim Soverign, another member of the HOF. In 1963, we played in the State Tournament at Birdland in Des Moines. In 1965, we again played in the State Tournament at Birdland and finished 3rd, losing to Leroy Carlson and Jerry Raifs, pitchers that are both in the HOF. I played shortstop those 3 years for Protivin.

1965-1967 Played for the Ames Merchants as a shortstop and we had 2 HOFer's, Gene Olson and David Temple as teammates.

1968-1969 Played for the Danbury Shamrocks. In those 2 years, I played shortstop and 2nd base and our pitcher was Gene Knop (HOF).

1970-1974 Upon moving to Clear Lake, I played for Butt'r Topp. We played in the State Tournament each of those 5 years, and in 1972 we won the tournament at Birdland in

Des

Moines and advanced to the Regionals in Topeka, Kansas. I played mostly shortstop

and

occasionally 2ndbase and 3rd base during those 5 years. I also scheduled most of the

home

and away games and many of the Invitational Tournaments we competed in.

Featured top

line teammates included Tom Busch, Bob Sturges, Dallas Slagle and Lance Dreesman,

all

HOF members.

In late 1974, I had back surgery for a herniated disc. As a result, my playing days were very limited. Since I wanted to continue being active in the fast pitch softball, I took up umpiring and became an ASA certified umpire. In the mid to later years of the 1970's and early 1980's, I worked many Fast Pitch Invitational Tournaments. During those years, I also had the opportunity to work a number of State Tournaments at the invite from Mark Jennings, State ASA Softball Commissioner and Walt Kaiser, who was State Umpire-In-Chief. Additionally, I umpired most all of the Clear Lake Butt'r Topp home games for those years. A highlight for me was when Butt'r Topp hosted Reading, PA and I umpired the plate with Ty Stofflet pitching. I also worked a number of North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC) home games. Another highlight for me was when Dean Williams (HOF) of Fort Dodge, asked me to umpire the Big 8 College Softball Tournament at Harlan Rogers Park that was hosted by Iowa State University.

Unfortunately, in 1984 I again had back surgery, which in all practical purposes, ended my involvement in fast pitch softball. For those 25+ years, I truly enjoyed being a part of the game. Looking back, the acquaintances I gained and the fond memories I have, in both playing and umpiring, I can feel very fortunate and blessed for being a part of this great game.
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