

George Nunes

Growing up on a dairy farm with parents of Portuguese descent meant that playing sports was not a high priority. My final year of high school I was allowed to play football. After graduation I was off to college at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo to pursue my dream as a career dairy farmer. After completing a two year degree, I married the love of my life Mary (Mimi) Baccaglio. We began dairying in Santa Rosa and seven years later in October of 1971 we moved to our current dairy farm in Atwater, California. Mimi and I are the proud parents of six children, 18 grandchildren and 1 great granddaughter. Mimi and I celebrate 55 years of marriage in January of 2019.

Playing sports again never crossed my mind until our Veterinarian invited me to play on his county league slow pitch team. So at the age of 30 I was back on the field playing for a team named the Milkmaids - yes, the Milkmaids. The scores of the County league's mens' division were posted in the newspaper and opponents were extremely embarrassed when beaten by a team named the Milkmaids. I wanted more softball so a couple of years later I started my own team called the Misfits which played in the Atwater City League. Several years later in 1983 I talked the city into a 40 year old and over division but it unfortunately fizzled out after two years. My playing days were over once again at the age of 42.

Fast forward 9 years to 1994 and I am now at the age of 51. At this time Bernard Souza and John Lema encouraged me to join the Stanislaus Senior Softball Association which played at Beyer Park in Modesto. I was flabbergasted by a league with a 26-week schedule. 2019 marks my 26th consecutive season of active participation with the Stanislaus Senior Softball Association. I have served the league as a team sponsor, team manager, assistant league commissioner and board of director for one 3-year term. In 2007 I was inducted into the Stanislaus Senior Softball Hall of Fame.

During tryouts for the Modesto league in 1994 I was invited to play tournament ball with the Modesto Rangers. The following year I formed my own tournament team named the Stanislaus Giants. After nine years of managing this team I decided it was time for me to just be a player - no more managing.

Primary teams I played for include:

- 1) Central Valley Legends

- 2) Sharks
- 3) Physiotion
- 4) California Oaks
- 5) Sonoma Fog which transitioned to Valley Fog in 2018. Because of my managerial history I was encouraged to manage again so in 2016 I took over the "Fog".

Other teams I've enjoyed playing for include:

- 1) Al's Grading
- 2) Modesto O's
- 3) Triple P Lay
- 4) Gamblers
- 5) Redwood City Blues
- 6) Raptors.

Tournaments I played include Nor-Cal circuit, SSUSA, and Huntsman at St. George, Utah.

Team accomplishments include:

- 1) Cal-Cup- one 1st place win and one 2nd place win
- 2) Western National - one 1st place win and one 2nd place win
- 3) Reno games (one of the most memorable) - 2nd place finish with 7 Wins and 3 Losses
- 4) The World Championships in Las Vegas where we finished with 6 Wins and 3 Losses

My individual awards include 3 All-tourneys and 9 medals out of 22 years of competition at St. George, Utah. My proudest moment ever was at the World Championships in Las Vegas, when my teammates honored me with the medal designating me as the Most Valuable Player of our team.

For me, playing senior softball is one of life's greatest joys. Every time I arrive to the field the clock turns back. I become a kid again playing with kids my own age, working together to achieve success. After every game we celebrate with teammates, win or lose, and enjoy life in general! I have become an advocate and ambassador for the game. I am constantly soliciting players for our league and/or tournaments whenever an opportunity presents itself. This happened in 2008 when the 50 Year Old League of Modesto had a lot of talent not playing tournaments. I agreed to organize and manage

a team for a year in order to model how it is done. They became the Stanislaus Sluggers and are now in their 11th season.

My first year of tournament ball made me acutely aware of how important a good bat is for success. Yes, I became a "bat addict". Each year the new hot bat is in my bag. I would encourage players with an inferior bat to try one of mine. People came to me for advice on bats and suddenly I was buying and delivering them. Just one year alone totaled 70 bats. I continue to still help players buy bats.

A few years ago I was introduced to the Joe Brockoff Hitting technique. Studying and practicing his technique became an obsession. Improvement was obvious to me and others. I printed the 32 page cut down version hand book and gave it to baseball coaches, youth coaches, baseball players, grandkids and softball players. Extra copies are on hand ready to give out. Three days each week, year round, I run a practice on a field near my home where as many as 12 players will show up to participate. This serves as a perfect place to implement Brockoff's system and work on self improvement. A growing number of players can testify to the value of this program.

Summarizing senior softball has become my second occupation. I'm motivated to stay competitive by working out at our local gym, eating a more nutritious diet and monitoring my weight on a regular basis. The joy of playing this game is very satisfying. Fulfillment is achieved by the camaraderie and friendships I have developed through this sport.