

World Series 2002

Portland promises to take the biggest queer sporting event in the nation "to the top"

BY MELISSA SAYLER
PHOTOS BY MARTY DAVIS



Portland's Gay Yellow Pages and Boxxes Storm like each other now, but how will they feel when they face off in the World Series?

You know it's a big deal when the winning team members get rings—not cherry sucker rings or hot pink plastic ones from the novelty store but real live engraved, 100 percent silver, bejeweled rings. And there's trophies, too.

Such will be the material rewards for the six champion softball teams coming to Portland to play in the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance's 26th annual Softball World Series (presented by Miller Light!).

Of course, those rewards might not match up to the worth of the great stories and sense of pride any team earns for making it all the way to the top softball tournament.

Jake Packer of Portland's Gay Yellow Pages team says: "For us, it's not about holding up a trophy, it's about helping ourselves be better players and better people. I learn something every time I step on the field with these guys. They are my idols, my teachers, but most of all, they are my friends. Holding up the World Series trophy would just be icing on the big ol' cake!"

The cake being a season that begins in April and runs through the end of July. Portland's league is divided into an Open division—teams with both men and women playing on them—and a Women's division. The Open division has teams categorized as A, B, C or D level (A being the most competitive), and the Women's division teams are categorized as either Competitive or Alternative.

This year no local teams were signed up as A level in the

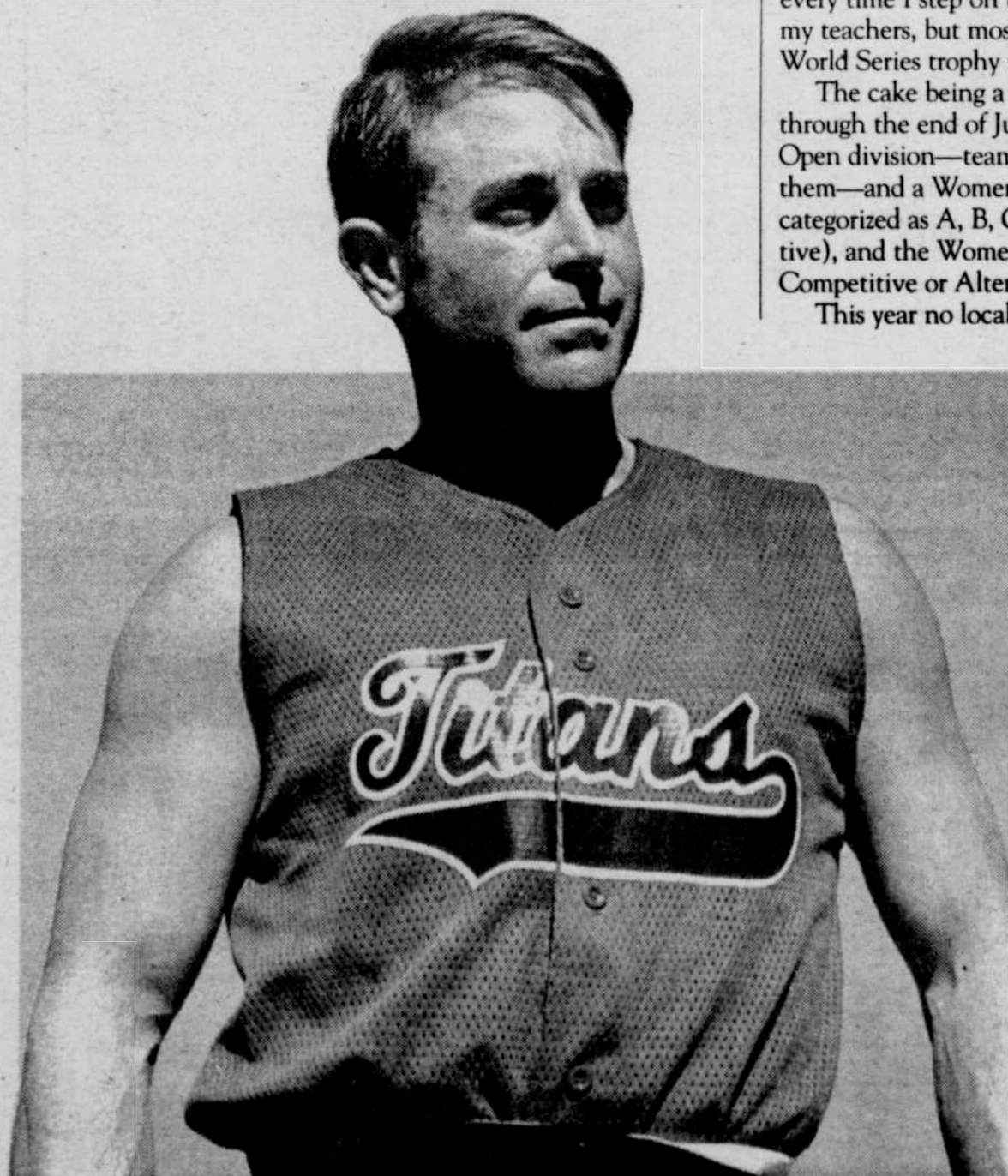
Open division. Only two teams played in the B level, both of which are headed to the World Series (Boxxes Storm and Portland's Gay Yellow Pages). Also headed to the tournament are two C level teams (JOQ's and Scandals), one D level team (Silverado Titans), one Women's Competitive team (Mixed Fruit) and three Women's Alternative teams (Egyptian Club's Mad Dogs, Unleash Yourself and Just Out/Sensory Perception's Team Betty).

The C and D Open divisions had the fiercest competition for winning one of Portland's nine berths in the World Series. Six teams competed to represent Portland in the D division, and four teams competed for one of two spots on the C division. Portland is bringing the second-largest contingent of teams to this year's event, with San Francisco bringing the most at 10.

Although a schedule of games will not be available for the women's division until Aug. 18 and for the open division until Aug. 19, you can check www.portlandgaysoftball.com throughout the week to check the status as teams head toward those ultimate championship games.

Confused yet? If you're a fan rather than a player, don't worry about the logistics. Just make your way to a field and watch hoties play ball. There's no charge for any of the games, and you won't be alone; word has it ESPN and *Sports Illustrated* will be in the crowd, too.

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Our cover boy

Just Out World Series 2002 cover boy Aaron Hornstein has been playing softball with the Embers Redwings for four years now, but you can bet the talented little gay boy defected mighty quick when the Silverado Titans asked him to play on their team for the World Series.

"I am a softballaholic," Hornstein admits. He's also the sponsorship and fund-raising chairman for the World Series.

Hornstein's guess, though, is that the Titans just wanted more pretty boys on their team rather than talent and connections.

But that doesn't mean he can't bat. When asked his stats, he hedges, "I would put 700."

Does that mean it's really 700? "I talked to my coach, and he said...put 700 because people who know you will laugh and peo-

ple who don't will be impressed."

When not tripping around a softball field, Hornstein hikes, climbs mountains, plays the piano and hangs out at home in Southeast Portland. He's also training to be a group therapist, which he says would help players during softball matches except "they're all really, really fucked up. They're beyond group therapy."

Although Hornstein doesn't have a cool softball nickname like "Lefty" or "Bulldog," he is relatively well known for his oft-used phrase "More of everything!" mostly employed while jumping up and down and clapping his hands.

In any case, the second baseman and sometimes shortstop is looking forward to the series, as evidenced by punctuating any and all conversations about it with "Yaaaaay!"

—Lisa Bradshaw