

Hail the queens

A complete turnaround puts Scandals in the World Series

BY COURTNEY PERKINS

Let's face it, among hardcore sports fans slow-pitch softball has always been considered kind of a joke.

Compared to the prestigious baseball—hailed as the king of sports, the great American pastime—slow-pitch is better known as the tagalong kid sister. But just like any sport, competitive slow-pitch not only requires time, skill and dedication but a drive to be the best.

Really, all gay softball teams aren't like *The Broken Hearts Club*, we promise (good movie, bad stereotypes). But as slow-pitch teams like Scandals are showing us, it's time for the boys of baseball to move over because the queens are in town.

The Scandals slow-pitch team will compete in the 26th annual North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance softball World Series. Given the C division team's natural fire and flair for the game, it should be one of the most exciting to watch as they step up to the plate and vie for the championship.

A Cinderella story, the once overlooked Scandals labored throughout the season to prove themselves a top contender in their league and secure a spot in the series. Their success, however, should not be mistakenly attributed to luck but rather careful planning and intentional molding of a winning team.

"From the very get-go this was set up to be a competitive team," head coach Dawn Henley says. "The World Series was definitely a goal."

While Scandals has had teams in the past, what makes this year's contingent so remarkable is that it's made up of mostly new players, many of whom had never played softball before.



The Scandals Team has gone straight to the top this season thanks to new coach Dawn Henley (kneeling, right)

PHOTO BY JOE FERRELLSON

According to team managers and slow-pitch stars Victor Nunez and J.R. Perez, they contrived to start from scratch. "We're looking for a lot of people that were athletic," Perez explains. "Anyone that's a good athlete should be good at softball."

Nunez also thought that a new start might be better for building a strong team. "There weren't a lot of male egos to get in the way," he says. "We started from ground zero, and it's really worked out."

After recruiting enough people, Nunez and Perez's mission was only half over. In addition to signing on some new faces, they also wanted a team that would put the Yankees to shame. So the pair sought out Henley.

"Dawn has been there before," Perez comments. "We knew that she was really good."

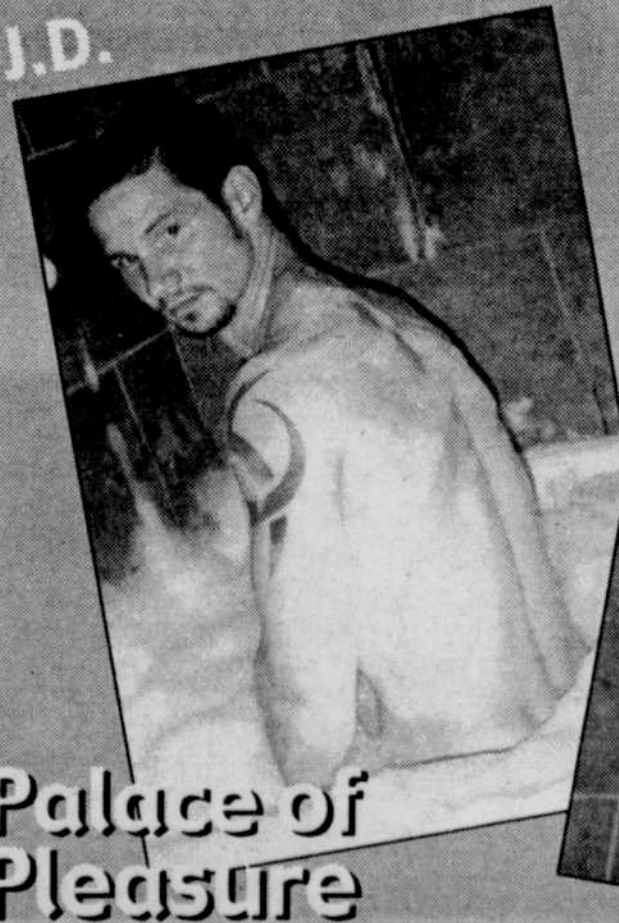
Perez and Nunez originally wanted Henley to play on the

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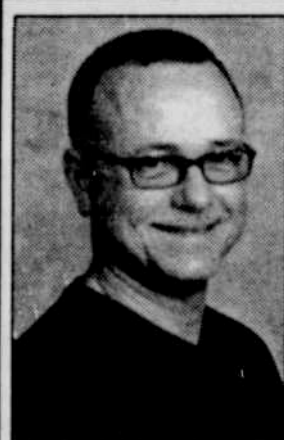


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