

SPORTS

# Grand slam

Not even Dubya could rain on the World Series parade

BY COURTNEY PERKINS

Complete with sunshine and clear blue skies, the 26th annual North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance's Gay Softball World Series from Aug. 18 to 24 in Portland was like hitting a grand slam in the bottom of the ninth with two outs and one to go—it just doesn't get any better than that.

"I heard from hundreds of people that it was the best World Series ever," exclaims Tim Bias, activities director for the Rose City Softball Association. "It made me proud because the committee and everyone who helped put their hearts and souls into this. I really can't describe how perfect it was. It was the highlight of my life."

According to Roy Melani, RCSA and World Series director, approximately 2,500 queer softball players and 1,000 queer-friendlies participated in the weeklong string of events and activities. In addition to rounds of grueling head-to-head competition, the World Series played host to a bunch of other stuff such as the Miss Gay Softball World Series Pageant, Spirit Mountain Casino Trip, Girls Night Out and Twisted Talent Show—all of which seemed to be a hit.

"Outside of the games themselves, which went beautifully," says Bias, "everything was a success. I had high expectations, and everything far exceeded them."

In fact, nothing seemed to be able to rain on this big, gay parade. Not even a visit from the Village Idiot.

When the Bush administration asked Melani to move the ballplayers and talent show from the Hilton to another hotel, he says it wasn't a big deal when he declined to do so. "They asked me, and I said 'No.' It didn't seem to be a problem."

According to Bias, not only were they treated with the utmost respect from FBI agents loitering around the hotel, but he thinks the president's witness of the most joyous of gay festivities was advantageous.



Mixed Fruit wins the Women's Competitive division. Was there ever any doubt?

"I think it was a big coup for the gay community," he says. "Here were a bunch of homosexuals in the same hotel as the Bush administration, sleeping, eating, talking—showing that we're just human, just the same. I think it put the gay community in a better light. Outside there were a bunch of protesters...fighting and causing trouble, and here we were...just going about our own business, just being human. It opened some eyes; that's my personal feeling."

What's more is the fact that Mayor Vera Katz, a staunch supporter of the sexual minorities community, made it a point to check in with the softballers to see how they were doing in light of the Bush protests.

"The mayor's office was glad to learn that the series was such a success," communications director Sarah Bott says, "and appreciates the players' patience with the traffic tie-

ups and extra security procedures at the hotel during the president's visit."

Despite what could have been potential disasters, the World Series ran as smoothly as an Indy 500 race car and, according to Bias, could be headed back to the Rose City next year. "People were utterly amazed at what a great city we have," he beams.

In softball action at the World Series, the strongest showing for Portland came from Mixed Fruit, the only local Women's Competi-

tive team to participate in the tourney. They cleaned up over the Atlanta Blaze for the championship ring in their division. The other most notable finish for Portland came from the Silverado Titans, who took third in the D division.



Activities director Tim Bias: "It was the highlight of my life"

In the Open division, the Los Angeles Stray Cats took the crown over the Los Angeles Fever at the A level; the Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Alibi Demons dominated over the Seattle R Place Monarchs in the B division; the Norfolk (Va.) Cavaliers beat the Boston Fritz Southenders in the C division; and in the D division the Chicago MSA Little Dog Properties hounded the San Francisco Comets.

The San Francisco Pilsner Panthers defeated the San Diego Powerhouse Gym in the Women's Alternative division.

For softball buffs who just can't get enough, the RCSA has scheduled a fall season. For complete details, visit [www.portlandgaysoftball.com](http://www.portlandgaysoftball.com).

In other softball news, the Lesbian Community Project's tournament in Bush Prairie, Wash., also went off without a hitch last month as 32 teams competed for the title.

"The campground was full to overflowing with lesbians," says Kristan Aspen, LCP staff organizer. "A good time was had by all, as far as we could tell." □

COURTNEY PERKINS is a Portland free-lance writer.



Some World Series committee members can be so hard to get in a picture



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