

First Thoughts and Observations from the 2019 ISC World

By Bob Tomlinson - Publisher

While attending the International Softball Congress World Tournament in Denmark, Wisconsin and out at Hebels Corners where Circle Tap is located It was easy to note and observe the happenings taking place at those two sites.

Actually there were three sites. There is one field at Circle Tap and two fields at Memorial Park in Denmark. Like Kimberly there is an upper diamond referred to as the Upper Diamond and a Lower Diamond. Opposite that of Kimberly, the Upper Diamond is labeled Diamond #1 on the schedules and the Lower Diamond is labeled Diamond #2.

The field at Circle Tap has had a lot of work and money “thrown at it.” Owner Darren Derricks simply loves fastpitch softball and not just the boys’ and mens’ games. He loves the girls games as well. He sponsors a youth boys team, a Legends or Masters team and one of the top five teams in the mens’ game. The improvements at Circle Tap since the first time I ever walked in to play a game are immense.

To borrow a promotional line my good friend Steve Schmidt at the Shoe Box in Black Earth, Wisconsin and owner of the Madison Mallards Northwoods League baseball team, Circle Tap is “The Way Fastpitch Softball Ought To Be.”

First, fastpitch at Circle Tap is truly fastpitch at its grass roots. It is at a place called Hebels Corners about three miles west of Denmark. It’s at the junction of County Highway X and County Highway NN. It’s in the country.

Denmark has a population of approximately 2500. Historically, the top level teams in the United States and Canada were partially made up of players that started their fastpitch/fastball playing days on 4-H teams along with players in the cities who played on a “church league” team. As they grew older they played on either a local, small-town team or on a team sponsored by a country tavern that offered a ball diamond out back or across the road. Their mens’ team was a member of a small, highly organized “Travel League” meaning they traveled to another tavern’s ball yard to play their games on the road and hosted other teams coming to their sponsor’s ball yard. It was a “hey I’ll scratch your back if you scratch mine” proposition. The host team paid the umpires, provided the game ball or perhaps two and sold the food and beverages to cover the costs and more. The better players rose the the top and eventually many wound up getting jobs with teams that were in larger city leagues whether Industrial or Open level leagues.

It was easy for a longtime fastpitch player and fan of the game to feel like they have been tossed back in time when you get to the field at Circle Tap. Sure the buildings are all modern but the field still has that throwback feel. There are corn fields across Highway X and cheese plants beyond the trees in right field and across the street from the Bar and playing

field. Cheese plants were located in the country the only corn one can find in a city is in an occasional back yard garden. Circle Tap is Country Style Fastpitch Softball.

The playing surface is no longer just sand dumped then dragged around on a base of the Niagara Escarpment clay to make it look playable. It's a scientifically improved surface. The grass in the outfield is plush and kept well groomed. To hit a home run at Circle Tap takes some doing. You won't get many line-drive home runs there. The fence is about 12 feet high from the left field corner to the right field corner. To use today's baseball talk, "you have to get some launch angle on it to get it out." It's like I tell my high school fastpitch players, "hit it hard somewhere and hit it high!"

The new restroom/storage/concessions/media center building is fantastic with a spacious concession stand area complete with those windows that look out from behind the umpire, catcher and batters. A person working in the concessions stand can look directly into the pitcher's eyes and gloves. There are no bleachers directly behind home plate and there never has been. The original Circle Tap building was on that very spot.

A look at Some Numbers from the Three Tournaments

There were many home runs. A total of 167 in the ISC portion of the tournament alone. Add in the 45 during the games that became the ISC 2 and the 25 hit during the Legends and there were 300 home runs in all. A few of the home runs were hit as inside the park homers but mostly in the Legends Tournament. I also saw one what was in reality a triple with a one base error on a terrible throw from an outfielder to a cutoff second basemen that was way off line and allowed the batter-runner to score. The official scorekeeper ruled it a home run but it was truly a triple. Four home runs in the ISC bracket was the most hit by any single player, that being Francisco Lombardo of the Kitchener Hallman Cubs. Eight other players hit three home runs. There were 33 players who hit two home runs and 73 players that hit one home run.

Home Run Hitters with 3 or More Home Runs

Francisco	Lombardo	-	4	Home	Runs	-	Kitchener	Hallman	Cubs
Nick	Potskin	-	3	Home	Runs	-	Grande	Prairie	Pirates
B	Arcand	-	3	Home	Runs	-	Grande	Prairie	Pirates
J	Baker	-	3	Home	Runs	-	Nith	River	
M	Palazzo	-	3	Home	Runs	-	New	York	Gremlins
R Boland - 3 Home Runs - Kitchener Hallman Twins									
T	Jones	-	3	Home	Runs	-	Toronto	Batmen	
M	Garrity	-	3	Home	Runs	-	N	S	
C Schiller - 3 Home Runs - Kitchener Hallman Twins									

How about Triples?
Throughout the ISC World Tournament part of the event the players hit a total of 44 triples and 121 doubles.

Keep checking the fastpitchchronicle.net site for more Thoughts and Observations from the ISC World Tournaments in Denmark and Circle Tap.

Have a great day and as always,
Keep it Rising!
Bob