



SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: DUANE KRAMER

-by Larry Wolfe

Duane Kramer grew up on a farm in Klemme, Iowa. He graduated from Klemme Community School where he was a star on the Shamrocks' baseball, basketball and track teams. Duane then earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Buena Vista College in Storm Lake, Iowa and a Master of Science in Education from Drake University. While at Buena Vista he played on the Beavers' baseball, basketball and track teams.

Duane's first job after college was as a teacher-basketball coach at LaSalle High School in Cedar Rapids. He later became Associate Principal at Marion High School, then Associate Principal at Washington High School in Cedar Rapids. He then held several administrative posts, culminating in his serving as District Director for the entire 18,000-student Cedar Rapids School System.

Duane's resume reads like a "Who's Who in Iowa Sports!" Here are some samples: Metro Basketball Coach-of-the-Year, NE Iowa Basketball Coach-of-the-Year, National Athletic Director-of-the-Year, Member of the LaSalle and Washington High School Halls of Fame, Cedar Rapids Softball Hall of Fame (as a player), and National Athletic Director-of-the-Year. In 2002, the Mayor of Cedar Rapids declared "Duane Kramer Day" to recognize his achievements and in 2004 he was inducted into the Iowa High School Athletic Directors Hall of Fame.

Duane still works part-time for ASU as a Supervisor of Student Teachers and conducts training courses for the National Interscholastic Athletic Association, but does find time to play softball where he was the league's leading hitter this past season. Duane's participation in Sun Lakes Softball was the first time he'd played with the "small ball." In Iowa, "Chicago Style" softball is played using a much larger 16-inch ball. Duane hasn't had any trouble adapting to "small ball" as is witnessed by his league-leading batting average and his exceptional fielding around the first base bag.

Duane's best life memories center upon his family. He cites his marriage to his lovely wife, Gini, as "all time best." (That should earn him some points at home!) He is extremely proud of his daughters and grandkids, especially his youngest daughter, who overcame the challenges of being a two-pound preemie who spent the first 89 days of her life hospitalized, but is now a successful senior at ASU.

When asked if there was anything about him that his softball buddies might be surprised to learn, he mentioned his eclectic taste in music, loving everything from opera to hard rock...and that while District Director in Cedar Rapids his nickname was "Nando," a shortened version of Fernando, as in Fernando Lamas....remember the impeccably dressed and suave spokesman for Chrysler Cordoba's "soft Corinthian leather?" Well, it turns out that it wasn't Fernando Lamas in those commercials...it was Ricardo Montalban....but the nickname stuck anyhow. Also, did you know that there's no such thing as Corinthian leather, but the advertisers liked the way it sounded; it exuded luxury....and class. That is one thing that Duane does have in common with Fernando...or Ricardo....class, lots of class.