

## **KEITH MACKINTOSH AROUND THE WORLD AND BACK WITH SOFTBALL**



Sometimes great things happen with a simple phone call. In 1990 Keith Mackintosh was sitting at home in Melfort, pondering his softball future. Back then he was far from the admired national team veteran he is now, but he enjoyed a lot of success leading up to the Senior ranks. In Melfort playing under Doug Holoien, he won a Bantam Western Canadian Championship, as well as Midget and Junior National Championships. He remembers Doug pitching and hitting ground balls to the likes of, Dean Holoien, Keith's brother Pat, Jim Clemenhagen and Dwayne Dyke, until his hands would bleed. His days in Melfort taught him a lot, but Senior mens was a whole new world. After considering going to Saskatoon to play for Rempel Brothers, Keith got a call from Doug Arnett to go to play in Camrose. That call led him directly to Physical Education Degree at Augustana University in Camrose and nineteen year career in senior men's softball. A career that took him literally around the world and back

After moving into the Senior Mens category Keith was part of four national championship teams: two in Victoria, one in Owen Sound and one in Saskatoon. In one stretch from 1997 – 2002, he had what he describes as "a pretty good run" where he played in the final of every Canadian Championship but one. This year Keith will play in what might be his last Canadian Championship, right here in Saskatoon August 24- 31. He also played the role of hired gun for a while, as he took part numerous ISC championships with such U.S. based teams as: Broken Bow Nebraska, New Jersey Windmillers, and the Farm, as well as Canadian teams like Owen Sound, Victoria and Saskatoon. He is now back in Saskatoon playing for Aspen Interiors, North America 7<sup>th</sup> ranked club team and is enjoying playing all the big tournaments while spending a little less time on the road and a lot more time with his family.

Internationally Keith's career has also come full circle. He has been part of the National Team program since 1996, playing in Pan Am Qualifiers in 1998 and 2002, the 2003 Pan Am Games and the 10<sup>th</sup> ISF Worlds Mens Softball Championship in South Africa in 2000. His most memorable moment wearing the maple leaf came when he had just finished playing short shop for Canada in a thrilling 4-2 win over the U.S to claim the Pan American gold medal in 2003. Keith was co-captain with Craig Crawford of a team that was not supposed to win, as they were a team made up of "lesser knowns" as many other players were playing for their club teams at the ISC's. However, with the help his leadership they stuck together right up to the seventh inning of the final when Ron White drove a one hopper through the first baseman legs so hard it went all the way to the fence to score the two eventual winning runs. Nick Underhill came in throwing harder than anyone around that team could have imagined and got the American side in order to claim the victory. Winning was great but Keith proudest moment as a Canadian took place during the playing of the national anthem to acknowledge the gold medal winners. About half way through the recording for the anthem died, but Keith and the boys belted out the rest of O Canada on their own in front of a very appreciative crowd.

Keith is living in Saskatoon and will be wearing the maple leaf in the 3 Nation's Challenge and is finally able to show it off to his family. This will be his first national team event where his whole family can see him in uniform. His children have heard stories and have seen pictures of Keith playing for Canada, but will be able see him first hand this weekend. The exhibition series in Melfort prior to this event has allowed Keith to return to his hometown to show everyone how far he has come. Keith has enjoyed a great career so far with success on the National, North American and World stage. After nineteen years he is playing in what he feels will be his last three major events right here in the province where it all started. He is looking forward to going out in style, winning a 3 Nation Challenge title as well a Canadian and World Championship gold medal, back home for all his friends and family to see.