

### Softball Team Brings Home Victory

Some of the top ballplayers from across the country recently learned the hard way just what happens when you mess with New Jersey's best.

In September, traveling senior softball team Jersey Pride took first place in the Senior Softball World Series in Palm Beach, California, winning seven games with a total of 112 runs, and clinching the victory in the 70+ division.

"It's rewarding to see all the hard work paid off," said team manager Sam Hanson, of Brielle. "We're all grateful that we can still get out there and do this at our age."

For Jersey Pride, a Class AAA team comprised of players mostly from New Jersey, the triumph in Palm Springs is the latest in a line of hard fought victories and accolades.

The team, which includes several players from Monmouth County, came in forth place at last year's Senior World Series in Phoenix, Arizona, and won the NCS (North Coast Section) Championship in Virginia in 2002 and the Senior Games in St. George, Utah in 2003.

The winning pitchers for the team were Bill Stiffler of Middletown and Dick Cero of Deal.

"Our toughest game was with Camero, a California Super Major team that we defeated by only one run, 13-12," said Cero, 71. "We played against some of the best teams in the country, any one of them could have won this."

"Sam (Hanson) did an excellent job of running the team and leading us to victory," Cero said. "I guess you could say we're just a group of old guys who refuse to grow old."

"A lot of people don't even know leagues like this exist," Hanson said. "It would mean a lot to us if coming home with this victory draws some attention to senior softball and senior sports leagues in general."

Outfielder Frank Haviland of Wall said he encounters many people who are shocked to see guys his age and older who are still athletic and active.

"Most don't realize that people in their 70's and 80's can still function on a ball field," Haviland, 71, said.

"From that first inning of that first game, I knew that this was going to be our year," he said.

Haviland added that, without Hanson as manager, Jersey Pride would never have made it to Palm Springs.

"He did it all, took care of all the necessary paperwork, set up hotel arrangements, made sure everyone's certifications were in order, and on top of all that he coached the team," Haviland said.

By Stephen Bove



Standing L-R: Fred DeMartino, Bob Nami, Duke Hand, Dick Cero, Frank Haviland, Dave Meads, Mickey McNicholas, Bob Pizzuti & Lionel Bannister, sponsor.  
Kneeling L-R: Bill Stiffler, Sam Hanson, Don Cherim, Bob Haugstetter & Al Lombardo.



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# Extra Innings

