

Brent Stevenson, Decatur, IL



Brent Stevenson was born in Wellington New Zealand in 1960. He grew up being an avid rugby and softball player that represented Wellington at Nationals in multiple age groups. Brent played youth softball for the Johnsonville Club for 10 years. The club dates back to 1938 and at its peak had about 35 teams (ranging from kids to adults). Gordon Billings (coach) and Robin Cutting (pitcher) were two individuals from the club who nurtured and mentored him. His parents Pat & Tom Stevenson were club members and attended every game regardless of location and conditions.

Brent started as a 2nd baseman but started pitching at age 12, when the current pitcher walked 10 in a row and coaches asked if anyone else could pitch. With older brother Dean Stevenson, a third baseman, he spent many hours pitching & catching by the side of our house. Brent made the Major A team at age 17 and went on to win the Schoolboys (U18) and Colts (U21) National softball titles with Wellington on a very good team that included Michael White and Don Tricker.

Brent grew up idolizing NZ pitching ace Kevin Herlihy. He was privileged to watch in person the 1976 NZ-USA Stofflet organization in softball during the 1980's. Herlihy 21 inning game that many considered the best game ever. At the time, NZ pitchers were just beginning to go to the USA and he started to believe maybe he could do so also. His big break when competing in Auckland NZ at the prestigious Vic Guth tournament at age 19. The best teams in NZ and a visiting American team, the Southern Truck Raiders from Phoenix were participating. While playing the host team, Auckland United, and not expecting to win the team decided to pitch Brent in order to save their Ace.

After a 1-0 shutout win, the Southern Truck Raiders Manager approached Brent when he came out of the dugout and who asked if he wanted to come to the USA. In May of 1980 Brent went to Phoenix, AZ for six months and played with the Southern Truck Raiders sponsored by Pony Wood. He lived with the Manager, Mark Rice and his family. He had a job driving a pickup truck around Phoenix picking up spare truck parts. He played in the Arizona ISC Travel league and the first weekend was in Yuma AZ where he pitched at noon and it was 110 degrees. He only lasted a few innings in the heat and wondered what he'd gotten himself into. That year he played against the Lakewood Jets and Long

Beach Nighthawks in the Bakersfield tournament and then on to a NW tour of Vancouver and Victoria before playing in the 1980 ISC World tourney in Tempe AZ.

Brent went back to the USA in July 1981 for a 2-month trip after getting a call from the Midwest Gallery team in Cedar Rapids, IA. The ISC was in Saginaw MI that year and it was the site of the Farm-Midland Finn-Meredith 34 inning 7-hour marathon. The end of that season he started fielding offers from various teams and was fortunate to join the ADM powerhouse from Decatur, IL in October of 1981. The offer of a job and a career was too good to pass up. He was hired by the President of the company Jim Randle, an avid softball fan who helped put Decatur softball on the map.

Decatur also had the best booster club in the country, a 100 strong group of volunteers led by Dr Randy Van Alstine, that made the Decatur the best Brent played for ADM/Decatur from 1982 until 1993. Brent competed in 10 straight ISC World tournaments and had 23 wins. ADM won the 1984 ISC in Allentown PA and came in 2nd twice, 1985 in Appleton WI and 1987 in Saskatoon CA. Known as a control pitcher who was very consistent and always kept his team in the game. Brent won First Team All-World Pitcher designation in both 1984 and 1985 while pitching for ADM and the won a Second Team All-World Pitcher designation in 1987 while pitching for Decatur.

After being retired for 12 years, Brent was lured back into the game as the Masters circuit was booming. Along the way he played for Villa Grove, Cerro Gordo, Plangger's Furniture, Eagle Pack and Ohio Battery. With the legendary Nick McCurry at the helm, Ohio Battery dominated the Masters circuit. They won 2 ISC Legends, 6 USA 50+/60+ championships and 15 NAFA titles. Brent currently holds the most wins in Legends play with 20. Brent and his wife Becky have three grown children (Ben, Chelsea, Derek) and three grandchildren (Samuel, Hannah, Kate).