

ASA

Posted by Big Bash on 7/30/2008, 12:46 pm

My condolences go out to the New Jersey Coach who passed away after our game. I sometimes wonder why it has to be that way. I hope the best for his family and the New Jersey Outlaws. Amen

Didi Wins Opener

Posted by JR on 7/30/2008, 3:20 pm

Didi's team won the opener 2-0 against the OC.

Jim

Posted by Someone who liked him on 7/30/2008, 4:43 pm

May God rest his soul.

Posted by The Ely Family on 7/30/2008, 8:36 pm, in reply to "Jim"

Our sincere and heartfelt condolences to the family of Jim DiGregorio, the Rocker family, and to the greater softball family. He will be missed.

Posted by Raelle on 7/30/2008, 7:47 pm, in reply to "Jim"

Didi, You will always be remembered as a caring, kind and sweet man who would do anything for his girls. You opened a door for me and many others out there and you will always be missed and remembered by everyone who has ever known you. You were true and honest and always cared about everyone and everything. Your time spent here on earth will always be remembered and was well worth for everything you did for us. Thank you for everything. You will always be in my prayers. <3Raelle Harmon P.s didi from now on the games i play will be for you.

Posted by Sosa on 7/30/2008, 5:51 pm, in reply to "Jim"

Rest in Peace coach. You forever changed the game. We love and miss you.

Posted by Worstmom on 7/30/2008, 5:17 pm, in reply to "Jim"

The McGuire family will keep his family in our prayers.

Posted by fan on 7/30/2008, 5:19 pm, in reply to "Re: Jim"

The McNellis family will keep his family in our prayers as well.

Posted by DD 'sTEAM on 7/30/2008, 5:04 pm, in reply to "Jim"

RIP Didi we love and miss you...For the love of the Game we play FOR YOU!
Rockers DD Team

Posted by rockerfan on 7/30/2008, 10:23 pm, in reply to "Re: Jim"

Way to go girls. We know you made the big guy proud. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all.

Posted by old rocker on 7/30/2008, 9:20 pm, in reply to "Re: Jim"

DD's Team - You go girls - that's what he would of wanted.

Posted by Player on 7/30/2008, 5:40 pm, in reply to "Re: Jim"

out of all the coaches ive ever played for. ive never wanted to play for anyone else but him. he is an amazing coach and out of all of this a very very wonderful man that would give his soul away to make his players happy . he truly loved the sport and coached with his heart and truly cared about the people around him. i miss him so much and i love him very much. Didi i miss you . please rest in peace. you'll be our angle in the outfield!

Posted by Didi Fan on 7/30/2008, 5:11 pm, in reply to "Re: Jim"

You will forever be missed Didi. We love you.

Posted by Richie C on 7/30/2008, 5:11 pm, in reply to "Re: Jim"

Love him or hate him he was a GREAT man who did A LOT for the girls. To his family if u need anything, just ask. We are ALL here for you. May god rest his sole. Richie Costante, Rockers MP

Posted by Kaffenberger-Rone family on 7/30/2008, 5:33 pm, in reply to "Re: Jim"

Please know that our thoughts and prayers are with the family. Life is a game, play it well and God knows he did. Sudden death is tragic, but it marks the beginning of a new life, which We are sure that Jim will embrace with the same tenacity that he is always known. Our Love, Kaffenberger-Rone family.

Posted by south side softball fan on 7/30/2008, 6:12 pm, in reply to "(no subject)"

Our thoughts and prayers are with you Didi. You did your girls proud. Peace be with you.

Posted by Betsy on 7/30/2008, 6:15 pm, in reply to "Re: (no subject)"

Our thoughts and prayers are with Jim and his family.

Posted by Touched By An Angel on 7/30/2008, 6:56 pm, in reply to "Re: (no subject)"

Our family sends our condolences and our prayers to the Family of Jim Didi. Didi was Special, he not only touched the hearts of his own beloved players, but he acknowledged and recognized the Hearts of All. My daughter did not play for Didi, but he always acknowledged her every time he seen her. He was very inspirational, encouraging, kind, and was someone she looked up too. His words of support have always, and will always be with her. Thank you Didi for what you have given her. Your actions have always rang loud, and her sadness is a sign of what you meant.

Posted by Brianna Meath & Family on 7/30/2008, 6:47 pm, in reply to "Re: (no subject)"

Our condolences to the Didi family. We will have you in our thoughts and prayers.

Posted by Mags on 7/30/2008, 7:08 pm, in reply to "Re: (no subject)"

Didi, you are still my hero even though you're gone, i will miss you always. You were an inspiration to everyone especially me. You will always be remembered and never forgotton. Love you always, Mags <3

Posted by Mel Early on 7/30/2008, 7:34 pm, in reply to "Re: (no subject)"

Coach Didi, You are truly a beautiful soul. Thank you for helping the past two years. You made me a better player. I'll miss you and play my heart out for you. Mel

Posted by Coffee Can on 7/30/2008, 7:22 pm, in reply to "Re: (no subject)"

You will be deeply missed. Our condolences to your family. ALWAYS A ROCKER!!!! Loved ya Big guy

Posted by player on 7/30/2008, 7:46 pm, in reply to "Re: (no subject)"

didi its not going to be the same wearing a rocker jersey... rest in peace coach

Jim Didi

Posted by Sparks on 7/30/2008, 5:15 pm

Sparks sends prayers, best wishes to Evans, Didi families - The Orland Park Sparks (www.ilsparks.com) send condolences to the families of Glenn Evans and Jim Didi, who both experienced sudden and untimely deaths this week. Former Sparks parent and longtime softball supporter and father of Marian Catholic coaches Kerri and Cristin Evans, Glenn Evans passed away on Sunday and Lemont Rockers CEO Jim Didi passed away Wednesday while at the ASA Nationals in Moline, IL.

R.I.P-we'll miss you

Posted by Z on 7/30/2008, 5:17 pm

R.I.P Big Bash Jim Didi, You've done so much for the girls and softball. You will be missed and forever remembered. Wont be the same with out you.

Posted by Meister on 7/30/2008, 6:19 pm, in reply to "R.I.P-we'll miss you"

No words can possibly describe the type of father, coach, and friend this man was. For those of you who didn't have the chance to meet him, this man was the most genuine man I've ever met. As a Coach, this guy was tough, but never once gave up on anything or anyone. I will be forever thankful for all the opportunity Didi provided for me. Didi, I can't thank you enough, I'll always love you big guy, watch over us.

Posted by sheridan on 7/30/2008, 5:26 pm, in reply to "R.I.P-we'll miss you"

R.I.P JIM DIDI Our thoughts and prayers are with your family! -John Sheridan family

Posted by Britt LeBeau on 7/30/2008, 6:45 pm, in reply to "Re: R.I.P-we'll miss you"

Didi.. Even though things didn't exactly end well for us.. I had some amazing times and learned alot on your team.. I will never forget the car rides Me, you, suzie, and mr. rock making fun of everyone.. You will be greatly missed.. Thanks for everything. Love, Britt (Blue)

Posted by E Kuschel on 7/30/2008, 6:35 pm, in reply to "Re: R.I.P-we'll miss you"

Coach, You have forever changed the game of softball for all those who have crossed your paths. You are one of the best coaches I have ever been able to experience. The game will now be played for you. You're a great man. Love Always and Forever :
ROCKER ALUMNI -Erica Kuschel ps- you've tought my dad a lot and he is now the coach he is today for the Rockers because

of you. he will keep your rockers going hard and tough. thank you for everything.

Posted by The Behrens Family on 7/30/2008, 10:01 pm, in reply to "Re: R.I.P-we'll miss you"

You have touched our hearts and you will be dearly missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with your family.

To My Friend - May You Rest in Peace

Posted by Ed Serdar on 7/30/2008, 5:24 pm

My condolences to Kathy, Joey, and the girls. Jim and I competed with each other for many years. We fought, argued, and shared together and did business transactions all the time. Just last week Jim and I, and two of his players, Dee and Caitlin, had dinner. We talked about our plans for this fall and next year. He spent his life helping young boys and girls in wrestling and then softball. He touched thousands of youngsters lives, and gave them all of himself. I will forever remember his as one of my best friends. We not only competed with each other, but we loved each other. Good Bye my friend, and do a good job starting up the Rockers Angels for the the Big Guy up there.

Posted by New Lenox Lightning on 7/31/2008, 2:21 am, in reply to "To My Friend - May You Rest in Peace"

To Coach Jim DiGregorio and his family..... I can't begin to tell you how sickened and saddened we all are by the passing of our friend. Thank you for giving so many girls the opportunity to play not only for you but against you! You seemed to push all of us to become better coaches and better players. We are all better people from knowing you Coach! Thank you for the time you gave us here in this realm! It is our pleasure to have known such a giving man! Gentleman Jim and The New Lenox Lightning

Posted by gtq on 7/30/2008, 6:58 pm, in reply to "To My Friend - May You Rest in Peace"

Absolutely stunning and sad news. A great contributor to the Chicago area softball scene. It was clear that his players and their families loved him and his teams just kept getting better with each passing year. On a personal note, I will always be thankful to Jim for providing a venue for fall softball before it became fashionable to play in the fall. People like Jim laid the groundwork for the expanding passion for softball here in the Chicago area. In reading the other testimonies posted here you can tell he leaves quite a legacy. That is all any of us can hope for. God bless his family and all the Rockers families.

Posted by K Money on 7/30/2008, 6:39 pm, in reply to "To My Friend - May You Rest in Peace"

My condolences to Didi's family. Didi was like a second dad to me. He welcomed me into his family 4 years ago and has treated me like one of his own ever since then. He has touched the lives of so many young girls and only wanted the best for each and every one of them. One thing i will always remember about Didi is the look on his face when he was either making a joke or playing a joke on someone. He would get this silly little grin on his face and would look at me like he was the funniest guy in the world. He would get me to laugh everytime. Thats one thing Didi could always do was get me to laugh. He loved goofing around and acting like a big kid. Didi has made such an impact on my life and i will remember him forever. Love always, Money

Posted by The Colosimo Family on 7/30/2008, 6:29 pm, in reply to "To My Friend - May You Rest in Peace"

Our condolences to Didi's family. Didi welcomed our family into the Rocker family and he will be forever in our hearts.

Posted by 10 fan on 7/30/2008, 6:26 pm, in reply to "To My Friend - May You Rest in Peace"

May Didi rest in peace. I only met him once and he was very nice and I appreciated all he did for girls softball. I hope his organization continues to make him proud. My condolences to his family.

Posted by ancient observer on 7/30/2008, 5:31 pm, in reply to "To My Friend - May You Rest in Peace"

I may not have always agreed with his coaching methods but I always knew he coached because he loved the game and most of all the players. He and Ed Sedar are softball in this area and DD will be missed. Hope all jump in and keep the neon going. We pray for his family and wish them well.

Posted by Mr T on 7/30/2008, 6:12 pm, in reply to "Re: To My Friend - May You Rest in Peace"

A Picture Says A Thousand Words. DiDi Loved To Have Fun. He Will Be Missed By Many

My Family Has Fond Memories Of The Time We Spent With The Rockers.
DiDi Was The Source Of The Good Times.

We Will Miss Him Dearly
REST IN PEACE COACH.



Posted by Chi-Town Express on 7/30/2008, 6:24 pm, in reply to "Re: To My Friend - May You Rest in Peace"

Coach, You leave an awfully big void in Chicago softball, there was no one like you before and there will be no one like you in the

future. Thank you for your friendship, knowledge and support. You will be missed. No one will ever truly know what you did for so many young people and your life will be carried on in all of the lives you helped shape. There is no greater gift. To Coach's Family, God bless you. To Coach's players, We know you will play with the passion and heart the Big Guy instilled in you. We know this is a very difficult time but we hope you know that you have the Coach on your shoulders and more fans than you could imagine rooting for you. God Bless all of you, stay strong for Didi.

Rest In Peace

Posted by Lite on 7/30/2008, 6:35 pm

Rest in Peace Didi, you had one of the biggest hearts I know and will truly be missed. I recently just found out you helped me again with softball and thank you for that. You are always helping someone. Thank you for everything you have done, everyone will miss you dearly.

Posted by Bill Spittal on 7/30/2008, 6:41 pm, in reply to "Rest In Peace"

We are deeply sorrowed by the news of Jim's passing. The 12U Napervillains (Naperville Diamonds) send our deepest sympathies to the family.

RIP DiDi

Posted by OC on 7/30/2008, 6:54 pm

Didi, You were truly one of the best coaches I've ever had. Without you I would not be the ball player I am today. You will be missed more than anything. You had the biggest heart out of anyone in the game and you always wanted what was best for your girls. There will never be another coach like you, Didi. Love, OC

Posted by Chi-town player on 7/30/2008, 11:20 pm, in reply to "RIP DiDi"

I only met him once, but he made me laugh and I could tell he was a great guy! Thanks for everything he did for travel softball. He changed this sport and he will never be forgotten! R.I.P. a Chi-town Express player

Posted by The Vojiks on 7/30/2008, 10:45 pm, in reply to "RIP DiDi"

Didi brought so much light into this world that even now that he is gone the light remains. Chicagoland Softball lost a great leader, coach and a friend. He will be greatly missed. Thank you Big Guy! Our deepest condolences to the DeGregorio Family. Respectfully, The Vojiks - Sandy, Ron and Anna

Posted by KIX on 7/30/2008, 9:42 pm, in reply to "RIP DiDi"

My prayers are with Didi and his family through this terrible loss. I stuck with the Rockers from beginning to end. You have truly believed in me from the start, and I could never express enough how much you have impacted my life as a player and a person. As we all have grown and move on to still play after travel, you big guy, have made us all into the athletes that we are today. Let the BATMAN live on forever. Love ya coach! Steph Kix

DD ... MY FRIEND

Posted by HR Productions aka Hawkeye on 7/30/2008, 7:07 pm

It is with great pain and a heavy heart that I bid farewell today to my partner and one of my best friends in this world, Jim "Didi" DeGregorio. He went out the way we often joked, at a softball game, doing what he did best, coaching and leading his girls. The words are not within me at this time to express what a true friend and person Jim is. I remember the words he spoke at his daughter's wedding about wishing his father were still there to share the memories with him and his family. I know I will look back many a time now and wish Jim were still by my side to share moments and memories. Jim is like my brother, like another father to my children, and I will always speak of him in present tense. A man like DD does not leave your life, nor do the lessons he has taught me. I will always remember MY FRIEND - MY BUDDY - THE COACH ... someone who can never be replaced or forgotten. DD - we shared so many laughs and so many battles ... and each one brought us that much closer. My prayers, and those of the Hawks, will always be upon you AND your family and friends, for with you my pal, friends and family are always one ... and we will always be HRP!

Posted by Hawks 16U Purple on 7/30/2008, 7:16 pm, in reply to "DD ... MY FRIEND"

Jim - We met only briefly on a couple occasions. I know enough to know that the Chicago softball community will sorely miss your heart, your will and your willingness to give of yourself for many years to come. Ted Jankowski

Posted by Jim Goranson on 7/30/2008, 9:15 pm, in reply to "Re: DD ... MY FRIEND"

Didi...I want to thank you and your family for all that you have done for softball...your contributions, sacrifices and time devoted to providing great opportunities in softball has made an impact on so many girls....I remember reading your post prior to leaving for Nationals that you wished all of the Chicagoland teams well as they went to Nationals...to represent the Chicagoland softball

community....that shows your concern was much more than just for the Rockers but for all of the softball community....thank you for your sacrifices and we will remember you and what you said while in KY May God Bless You and Your Family....
Jim Goranson & all of the Homer Hawks 16U Black Family

The Day Softball Stood Still

Posted by Kim Widup, Diamonds President on 7/30/2008, 7:28 pm

To Didi's family and the Rockers Organization, please know that the Naperville Diamonds have you in our thoughts and prayers with the passing of Northern Illinois softball icon Jim Didi. We join the many that feel the loss and know this game we all love will not be the same as he moves on to a higher calling. You will be missed by friends and opponents alike as you brought so much to the game. Semper Fi.

A Man Who Will Always Be Remembered

Posted by Mooch on 7/30/2008, 7:51 pm

Coach DiDi, You have touched myself and my family for many years. You believed in a girl from a small town who wanted to be a pitcher. You started a travel ball team for girls to play and it was one of the best times in my life. You opened the door for me to become the player I am today. You have always believed in me and I never forgot that. You have touched so many young girls lives and changed them. Made them strong, determined, and grow as wonderful individuals, including mine. We will never forget the man who gave up a lot for many young woman. You will always be missed. Sincerely, The McFadden Family - Sue, Mike, and Katie

We love you

Posted by the Harmon family on 7/30/2008, 7:58 pm

Didi, We want to thank you for giving our daughter a chance to be a neon fighter and learn the Rockers great ways of playing the game. You will always be missed and we love you dearly. P.s You are now truly in the land of milk and honey. God Bless and Amen Love, The Harmon family

Didi

Posted by Sue on 7/30/2008, 8:07 pm

I truly want to extend my deepest sympathy to his family. Didi was one of the greatest men I have ever known in my life, he gave so much of himself to the people in his life. Thank you my friend for everything you gave to this world and I will miss you. Love, Sue McFadden

DiDi

Posted by storck on 7/30/2008, 8:16 pm

My condolences to DiDi family and the Rockers organization. Your honesty and knowledge was well respected. You will be missed not only as a Softball Icon but as a man of integrity. You have built a solid organization and they will go on as strong as there leader was. They will make you proud! You will be missed by all the lifes you have touched.

COACH DIDIS' FAMILY

Posted by DIG DADDY on 7/30/2008, 8:28 pm

I MET COACH DIDI ONCE BECAUSE I HAVE VERY GOOD FRIENDS WHO HAVE DAUGHTERS THAT PLAY ON THE 12U TEAM. I AM SO SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS AND WISH THE BEST FOR YOUR FAMILY. I WILL PRAY FOR YOU. BIG DADDY

Playing for DiDi

Posted by Rockers GK on 7/30/2008, 8:39 pm

The Rockers GK team send their condolences to DiDi's family. Your heart and passion for the game both improved and inspired our love for the game and our ability to play it. Thank you for all you've done; you will be greatly missed. This week in Kansas, we'll leave it all out on the field for you, DiDi.

Rest in Peace

Posted by Oak Lawn ICE on 7/30/2008, 8:51 pm

From the Oak Lawn ICE organization, our condolences to the family of Jim DeGregorio. Our thoughts and prayers will be with the family during this trying time. Mike Veen, Oak Lawn ICE

RIP Coach DiDi

Posted by Cindy & Christina Roesel on 7/30/2008, 9:30 pm

May you rest in peace. Thank you so much for all that you have done for me. You were a great person and enjoyed the game of softball very much! You will be missed by many many people. Love always, Cindy and Christina Roesel

May God Rest Your Soul

Posted by Andy Pacyga on 7/30/2008, 9:58 pm

May god rest your soul DiDi. You are an icon and legend in the sport of life and fastpitch softball. Your passion, heart and desire brought people around you to new levels. You are one that truly understood the meaning of helping people and applying it to every part of your life. I am going to miss the softball phone calls, message board postings and holdem tourneys. It's tough to bring a grown man to tears. I'm glad to have known you. It's still your world baby and we just live in it. Andy Pacyga - Illinois Bandits

R.I.P Coach

Posted by Lanphier Family on 7/30/2008, 10:31 pm

Didi was an incredible influence on the girls, the coaches, and the parents he had a chance to teach his wisdom too! He will be missed by all that had the privilege to socialize and work with him. Whitney is especially saddened as we all are by his premature passing. Our condolences to his family. Rest In Peace Coach!

DD's Team and the BIG DANCE

Posted by Rocker Fan on 7/30/2008, 10:38 pm

DD's team takes it over Eastside Elite - 6-0. Next game tomorrow at 8:00 p.m. versus Bad to the Bone. !!!GO ROCKERS!!! We are all proud of you!!!

Didi

Posted by Cats Softball on 7/30/2008, 10:39 pm

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Didi's family at this time of sorrow. It was truly an honor to know him and call him a friend. He will be remembered fondly by all of us.

My Father

Posted by Joey DiGregorio on 7/30/2008, 10:54 pm

On behalf of my family, i would like to thank you all for your prayers. The Rockers were my dads life. He cared about every girl in the organization, and wanted nothing more than his girls to go to college for free on a softball scholarship. It wasnt about the money or fame, he just wanted to see those girls succeed and achieve a free education. To anyone who really knew my dad, he was a big teddy bear. He could light up a room. He was the essence of loyalty, he would go to war for any of his friends. He fought for this country in vietnam, and i know he fought as long as he could today. I will miss my dad more than anyone can imagine. He was not only my dad but my best friend. I love you dad or should i say Big Bash cause i know you are reading this board from up stairs. Thank you, Joey DiGregorio

Posted by Sue on 7/31/2008, 6:44 pm, in reply to "My Father"

Kathy, Amy, Krissy, Jenny and Joe: My deepest sympathy to all of you. Didi was indeed a big teddy bear who inspired so many people and changed the course of their lives. Didi spirit will be carried on in the hearts and minds of everyone he ever came in contact with. He will be missed and remembered by so many. Thank you sharing your DiDi with all of us, I think at times that might have been difficult. He gave so much of himself to others and we never heard him complain. He was very proud of his family and always talked with pride about all of you. If you need anything please do not hesitate. My thoughts are with you all, Sue McFadden 708-902-3621

DiDi passing

Posted by Brian-Elk Grove heat on 7/30/2008, 11:02 pm

Did not know him personally, but heard much about his legacy. Someone will now be called upon to continue where he left off. Keep the passion. He had it...now all in the Rockers organization need to see to it that it stays alive. The Elk Grove Heat program extends our sincere condolences to a guy that had the fire....

Our Sympathies

Posted by TGW on 7/30/2008, 11:05 pm

On behalf of the Outlaws our deepest sympathies go out to Didi's family. From myself, I will miss a good friend who taught me more than he could ever know. TGW

Coach Didi

Posted by Nowdomski Family on 7/30/2008, 11:11 pm

Our daughter joined the Rocker organization last August and we were immediately touched by how much Coach Didi cared about these players. From the first day of her tryout, we knew that Ashley had found the perfect softball organization. We will never forget Coach Didi for the valuable skills he taught her about softball. Coach Didi, we will cherish your humor, your love and passion for the

game and most of all for always being there to help. My daughter will miss having you as a coach, but we know that you will be with her in every game she plays. Our thoughts and prayers are with Coach Didi and his family. He was an incredible person! He will be missed and he will never be forgotten. Love, Jeff, Gia and Ashley Nowdomski

Sympathy

Posted by Bartlett Silver Hawks on 7/30/2008, 11:23 pm

We wish to extend our deepest sympathy to DiDi's family and Team. We are very saddened by the news. Our thoughts and prayers are with you during this time.

LEGEND

Posted by BEANTOWN on 7/30/2008, 11:29 pm

MY DEEPEST SYMPATHIES TO DD'S FAMILY, FRIENDS AND THE ENTIRE ROCKERS NATION. BIG BASH'S LEGACY WILL LIVE ON AS WE ALL REMEMBER THE VALUED LESSONS HE TAUGHT. MAYBE MOST IMPORTANTLY: "IT'S ALL ABOUT THE GIRLS." DEFENDING AND FIGHTING FOR WHAT HE FELT TO HIS CORE WAS IN THEIR BEST INTEREST. I'LL MISS THE POSTING DEBATES AND EMAIL BANTER BACK AND FORTH. TO BE SURE, AN HONORABLE MAN AND AMERICAN. REST IN PEACE ETERNALLY ROBERT CALL, 14U BARTLETT SILVERHAWKS

Coach, I miss you

Posted by Dee on 7/30/2008, 11:31 pm

First I send my condolences to the DiGregorio family. You all are in my prayers. Big Guy, I can't thank you enough for everything you have done for me. You believed in me when sometimes I couldn't even believe in myself. You developed me into the player that I am today, and you got me to college because you believed in me. You're my second father, the one who would give me the shirt off your back if you had to. The biggest heart I've ever seen. I miss you so much already, I can't thank you enough for everything you've done for me. Everything Didi did he did it for the girls, and it showed. I will miss you more and more each day. I'll miss walking up to the fields and getting a big hug from you while saying "Hey Kiddo" with the biggest smile on your face. Didi gave a piece of his heart to everyone that he met, he just ran out of heart. I love you and Miss you so much. Keep watching down over us. Keep the neons alive, because we all know he wouldn't want all his hard work to go away now. GO ROCKERS!!!! Denee' Menzione P.S. I'll get that coach pin hanging somewhere, so you can stop calling me a stiff!

Posted by The Menzione Family on 7/30/2008, 11:48 pm, in reply to "Coach, I miss you"

Our condolences to the DiGregorio family--You shared your life and love together. We were all lucky you shared your gentle giant with all of us, in the softball community. Our family holds a heavy heart for all the pain your family is experiencing and for the loss of a true hero. Didi is known not only as a coach, a role model, a father figure and a friend. He taught respect, and the importance of hard work on the field and off. Didi is a man our family will never forget with his big smile and big heart. He gave a piece of his heart to so many until he ran out. We love you and will forever miss you Big Guy, The Menzione Family

Coach

Posted by OUTLAW1 on 7/31/2008, 12:02 am

Jim, I will miss you. Thank you for all your help and guidance. But most of all- Thank you for the laughs. You made my day a little more fun. God Bless Rick Minardi

Posted by The Wesley's on 7/31/2008, 12:26 am

DiDi; Thank you for allowing me to coach your three beautiful daughters! They are a wonderful example of both your persona and character. Kathy and you did a wonderful job in raising them and your son, and that should be your greatest legacy! They say if a man or a woman can influence just one persons life, then they have served their purpose here on earth. You influenced so many, and so many shall miss you! Scott and Donna Wesley, Queen Creek, Az

Newspaper Article

Posted by From the Quad City Times on 7/31/2008, 12:57 am

Second coach passes away

Less than 48 hours after Jersey Outlaws assistant coach Tom Tobin passed away from an apparent heart attack, Lemont Rockers DD head coach Jim Didi died shortly after his team defeated Orange County Dynasty 2-0 in the first round of the championship bracket Wednesday afternoon. Didi, who had just left Moline's Greenvally Park with his team, was an active booster of high school sports teams in the Chicago suburbs as well as an ASA coach, working closely with softball and wrestling teams in the suburbs. The Rockers continued playing Wednesday night at Campbell Complex, reaching the third round of the championship bracket, defeating Eastside Elite 6-0 in the second round. The Rockers will play Bad to the Bone at 6 p.m. tonight.

Take notice

Posted by JC on 7/31/2008, 1:38 am

Who saw it coming? No one ever does, or one never takes a minute to think of what could be. Friends and foes will mourn and remember a man that chose his legacy to be written by how he served his time. His professional success gave him the tools to play out his passion in sports and in life. Again we are reminded when we least expect it "Life is precious!" God, continue to bless the trail of what he left behind! prayers to the family.

Posted by Annette on 7/31/2008, 12:37 pm, in reply to "Take notice"

I listened to the Dennis Miller radio show today and I swear, he must have known what happened yesterday. Dennis said we have only so many days on earth, and since none of us know how many, we must make them count. Certainly Didi did. May Jim Didi rest in peace. Amen.

Thank You!!!!!!

Posted by P.O.D. Robert Becker on 7/31/2008, 4:15 am

Coooooaaaaach, I really don't know where to begin. I guess I'll start at the beginning. I got this call to come umpire girls softball 15yrs ago. Easy money my buddy said. I said I don't know anything about girls softball. Anyways I came and boy was I arrogant. No one could tell me anything. Didi asked me to come back, I guess he saw something in me. Not sure what. So I came back, worked the North diamond like it was my second home. Took tons of shit but I didn't care because I knew I was calling the game fair. So after 15yrs and many coaches tossed, they didn't call me easy hook for nothing. I find myself umpiring Division 1 college girls softball and the National Pro Fastpitch League. Sure I have worked my butt off, studied hard, learned the rules, learned the mechanics and gotten to where I am because of my hard work. That's only part of the reason I'm where I am today, If that Big Guy with the Big Heart would have given up on me I would have never been where I am today. Thanks Coach. Thanks for seeing something in me. Thanks for steering me in the right direction. Thanks for being my friend. I still get my balls busted and you always told to get rid of my rabbit ears. I still gottem coach but their only remembering what you told me know. I'll never forget you as I sit here in front of my computer and tears well in my eyes. Your a great man, a great friend, a great father, a great husband and a great coach. My personal prayers as well as the entire Bash organization go out to your family. So while your up in that better place, please take it easy on the umpires, they make mistakes too. Love ya Coach. The one and only!!!

The Dash

Posted by Richie C- Sleepless in MN on 7/31/2008, 6:50 am

As someone told me after my father passed away almost 10 years ago . . . It's not the dates on the headstone that matter. It's the dash in the middle. The dash is all of our GREAT memories of this GREAT man. What he did for the game and OUR organization can only now begin to sink in to many. I regret not going to dinner with the group on Saturday night. Since 98 when my father passed, I have tried to live my life with no regrets. Unfortunately I have a big one again. Many people teased me as being a little Didi (Mayor, MP, JC, Feds etc . . .) To be honest, Thanks!!! That's a GREAT honor. I will do everything in my power to the Rockers on track the way he wanted. I may be new to the Rocker family, but I can never say it enough, Thanks Didi for welcoming me in. I will march on in your shadow with my Pink Boombah's. God rest your soul. The thing I will miss most is his genuine laugh. I know my girls will remember the laughs we had last Saturday when we were playing Oz and you were in our dugout. I know I am rambling on, but I am at a loss for words. What were seeing on this board is only half of his reach. Lets not forget all the people in the wrestling community who loved and cherished him. My prayers go out to his family and ALL of his friends. TO ALL ROCKER TEAMS- Remember Play for the love of the game, Leave it ALL out on the field, and DON'T GIVE UP, DON'T EVER GIVE UP!!!! Win whatever tournament your in. The Big Guy would have wanted it that way!!!!!! Richie Costante, Rockers MP

Rip DiDi

Posted by A rokers player on 7/31/2008, 7:26 am

Didi you were always great to our family and you were a great coach so ill miss u so much RIP. A Rockers player

R.I.P.

Posted by Zero Carats on 7/31/2008, 7:40 am

I'm at a loss for words - we lost one of the truly good guys. My prayers are with his family.

Quad-Cities Online Press Release

Posted by Jonathan Turner on 7/31/2008, 7:44 am

ROCK ISLAND – A second Amateur Softball Association (ASA) coach has died during this week's 18-Under National Tournament. Jim Didi, 59, head coach of the Lemont (Ill.) Rockers DD, suffered a fatal heart attack about 3:45 p.m. Wednesday on John Deere Road after a game at Moline's Greenvally Sports Complex, according to Mo Hohman, head coach of the Rockers' team of 14-year-

olds. On Tuesday, New Jersey Outlaws assistant coach Tom Tobin, 54, died after suffering a heart attack in his Quad-Cities hotel room at 11 p.m. Monday. The Outlaws chose to play Tuesday morning, as did the Rockers DD Wednesday night. Ms. Hohman said there never was a question whether the 18-year-old girls team would compete in the 8 p.m. game. The team unanimously decided to continue on in the tournament that the Rockers DD have qualified for each of the 12 years Mr. Didi led the program, she said. "The girls voted we were going to win it all for the big guy," Ms. Hohman said. "He has done more for the softball world than you can imagine," she said during Wednesday night's game against the East Side Elite (of Washington State) at the Campbell Sports Complex in Rock Island. The 14 players wrote "For Didi" on the back of their uniforms and shut out East Side Elite, 6-0, Wednesday night. "He loved the game," said Tod Osborne, head coach of the Lemont Rockers Oz team. "He did everything he could for the kids. He got a lot of them college scholarships. Everybody learned from him. "When you played against him, you played your hardest," Mr. Osborne said. "He demanded it of you. He demanded 100 percent of you all the time." "Some of these kids have been involved in it since they were babies," he said. On Wednesday afternoon, Ms. Hohman was in the car behind the one driven by Rockers assistant coach Al Liermann, in which Mr. Didi was riding. They were headed to Panera Bread, Ms. Hohman said, and Mr. Didi was on his cell phone when "all of a sudden, he dropped the phone." Mr. Liermann pulled to the side of the road and Ms. Hohman performed CPR on Mr. Didi. But he had no pulse. Paramedics quickly arrived to transport him to Illini Hospital in Silvis, she said, where he was pronounced dead. Although Mr. Didi had no previous heart problems, he had high blood pressure and weighed about 280 pounds, Ms. Hohman said. "We call him 'The Big Guy,'" she said. Besides his wife, Mr. Didi leaves three daughters and one son who live in the Chicago area. <http://qconline.com/archives/qco/display.php?id=397816>

did

Posted by homer hawk-kat on 7/31/2008, 7:46 am

Our sympathies go out to the entire organization and family. God Bless!!!

With Deepest Regrets

Posted by Steve Verive on 7/31/2008, 8:41 am

DD has been an icon in the softball community for 15 years. His absence from the game of softball around the country will be deeply missed. I wish to extend my deepest and heartfelt sympathy to the family of Jim, and the Lemont Rockers organization. I know I will personally miss his humor and his commitment to the ASA and to softball as a whole. Steven L. Verive, ASA Chicago Metro FP Umpire-In-Chief

DEVASTATED

Posted by THE WIZARD on 7/31/2008, 8:43 am

WHERE DOES ONE EVEN START-FIRST OF ALL MY DEEPEST CONDOLENCES TO KATHY,AMY,KRISSY,JENNY AND JOE-I MET DIDI ALMOST 16 YEARS AGO WHILE UMPIRING A LITTLE LEAGUE GAME-THE FOLLOWING YEAR DIDI,BILL AND JIM ROSS HAD A VISION TO MOVE FORWARD FROM LITTLE LEAGUE AND JOIN THE RANKS OF TRAVELING SOFTBALL-THEY DIDN'T HAVE A CLUE AT THE TIME- DIRT POOR NO FUNDS-UGLY PURPLE T-SHIRT UNIFORMS-THE VISION THEN WAS WHAT IT STILL IS TODAY- A ORGANIZATION FOR THE GIRLS-I GOT HEAVILY INVOLVED CAUSE I FELT THE SAME WAY THOSE GENTLEMEN DID-BETTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG LADIES IN SPORTS-THE NEXT 13 OR SO YEARS WOULD BECOME SOME OF THE BEST TIMES OF MY LIFE-THE ORGANIZATION GREW TO WHAT YOU ALL SEE TODAY-- A MAJOR FORCE IN GIRLS SOFTBALL AND STILL FOR THE BETTER GOOD OF THE GIRLS-THE VISION NEVER CHANGED--MANY HAVE COME AND GONE OVER THE YEARS-MYSELF INCLUDED AS I HAVE NOT BEEN AS INVOLVED THE PAST FEW YEARS AS MUCH AS I WAS EARLY ON-IT WAS ALWAYS STATED THE WIZARD WAS THE ONLY ONE THAT WOULD FIRE BACK AT COACH-ARGUE WITH HIM-TRUST ME IT WASN'T FOR A LACK OF RESPECT EVER-THE CAMARADERIE I HAD THE PEOPLE I MET THE GIRLS I HAVE HAD THE PLEASURE TO DEAL WITH WERE ALL BECAUSE OF DIDI-THE SOFTBALL WORLD HAS LOST A GREAT FRIEND-A FAMILY HAS LOST A GREAT HUSBAND AND FATHER- HOW IRONIC THAT IN HIS LAST POST HE OFFERED CONDOLENCES TO ANOTHER FALLEN COACH AND WONDERED WHY IT HAS TO BE THAT WAY-TRUST ME COACH WE ALL IN ROCKER LAND ARE NOW WONDERING THE SAME THING- GOD BLESS EVERYONES PRAYERS ARE WITH YOU-IF THERE IS ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP THE VISION KEEP GOING PLEASE LET ME KNOW- AS ALWAYS GO ROCKERSSSSSSSSSSSSS THE ONE AND ONLY WIZARD, STEVE TYK

Our Sympathy

Posted by Halper Family on 7/31/2008, 8:48 am

Mrs. D - I started out playing volleyball and you were a big influence on me - pushing me harder and harder. After a few years, I decided my heart was in softball and I ended up playing for the Rockers. That's when I met Coach Didi. He had a heart of gold just like you and always looked out for me. Our sympathies go out to you and your family. His legacy will live on. Thanks so much for sharing him with us. Love, Mark, Lynne, & Jenna (Jackrabbit) Halper

RIP

Posted by Anonymous on 7/31/2008, 8:50 am

A sad day for softball and my deepest and heartfelt sympathy goes out to DD's family. Friend or foe - he brought out the most in all around him and was a special man. Coachie-you made me bring my A game for that and all you have touched we will miss you. It is a sad day but also celebrate his life as I am sure he would want you to. This is also a time that helps us all realize how precious life is and it is not certain or promised to us. Each day is a gift so make the most of your time and hug and kiss those around you and let them know they are special. Didi was special. RIP. Anonymous

Posted by softball junkie on 7/31/2008, 9:10 am, in reply to "RIP "

Mr. Didi will be missed! A zealot who gave everything he had for this sport and it's players. Thank you!! May God give peace and comfort to his family during this difficult time. Our days are numbered here on earth, but look forward to eternity. Trust the lord Jesus with all your heart, soul & mind and your paths will be made straight. Once again, thanks Big Bash.

Didi

Posted by The Maas Family on 7/31/2008, 8:56 am

Our hearts are saddened by the loss of Didi. He was God's gift to softball. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and all who loved him.

you will be missed DIDI

Posted by Nicole Gervasio on 7/31/2008, 8:57 am

My thoughts and prayers are with the DiGregorio Family. Love, Ng #00

To my dearest family, some things I'd like to say...
but first of all, to let you know, that I arrived okay.
I'm writing this from heaven. Here I dwell with God above.
Here, there's no more tears of sadness; here is just eternal love.

Please do not be unhappy just because I'm out of sight.
Remember that I'm with you every morning, noon and night.
That day I had to leave you when my life on earth was through,
God picked me up and hugged me and He said, "I welcome you."

It's good to have you back again; you were missed while you were gone.
As for your dearest family, they'll be here later on.
I need you here badly; you're part of my plan.
There's so much that we have to do, to help our mortal man."

God gave me a list of things, that he wished for me to do.
And foremost on the list, was to watch and care for you.
And when you lie in bed at night, the day's chores put to flight.
God and I are closest to you....in the middle of the night.

When you think of my life on earth, and all those loving years
because you are only human, they are bound to bring you tears.
But do not be afraid to cry; it does relieve the pain.
Remember there would be no flowers, unless there was some rain.

I wish that I could tell you all that God has planned.
But if I were to tell you, you wouldn't understand.
But one thing is for certain, though my life on earth is o'er.
I'm closer to you now, than I ever was before.

There are many rocky roads ahead of you and many hills to climb;
but together we can do it by taking one day at a time.

It was always my philosophy and I'd like it for you too...
that as you give unto the world, the world will give to you.

If you can help somebody who's in sorrow and pain,
then you can say to God at night....."My day was not in vain."
And now I am contented....that my life has been worthwhile,
knowing as I passed along the way, I made somebody smile.

So if you meet somebody who is sad and feeling low,
just lend a hand to pick him up, as on your way you go.
When you're walking down the street, and you've got me on your mind;
I'm walking in your footsteps only half a step behind.

And when it's time for you to go.... from that body to be free,
remember you're not going.....you're coming here to me.

Ruth Ann Mahaffey (author)
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Thanks Didi

Posted by Vanessa on 7/31/2008, 9:05 am

Words don't even describe what Didi means to people. I have had the pleasure of knowing Didi for the past 10 plus years. He has been a great friend to my family, a mentor to my sister Macry and I, and a person who loves the game of softball. Travel softball will not be the same without Didi. My heart goes out to Didi's family. He will surely be missed but never be forgotten. Thanks Didi for all that you brought for me and for all those that you touched. You truly are what makes softball happen! I am so sad to see such a great person gone.

(no subject)

Posted by GQ 12u Softball Dad on 7/31/2008, 9:26 am

What a great guy. You meant so much to everyone. Soo many kind words to the players. How much you loved this game. My daughter learned alot from your program. May you rest in peace now! Our sympathy to the entire DiDi family! GQ

My New Friend

Posted by Lady in White on 7/31/2008, 9:30 am

You will be missed!!!! My sympathy to your family. We all know that you are watching from up above. Sincerely hope that your teams continue to prosper and do you proud. You are an icon and your legacy will continue. I am glad that I had the honor of meeting you this past year and becoming a friend of yours!

To The Man

Posted by steve on 7/31/2008, 9:42 am

Jim, your going to be missed. You are one of the best. You'll always be one of the BEST.

Posted by Ball Park Sports Academy on 8/3/2008, 12:06 am, in reply to "To The Man"

Our condolences go out to the family, players, and friends of Jim "Didi". The Chicagoland softball community has lost one of it's leading citizens. You will be missed by all. Best of Luck to the Rockers tomorrow! Skip Ball ... Blain Ruby

Sympathy

Posted by Jen Amato on 7/31/2008, 9:54 am

I've known Didi ever since he started the Rockers Organization. We had so much fun playing on the field. He truely taught me alot about life and wasn't only just a coach to me, he was a father figure during the summers. He really took care of all the girls, and will truely be missed! Love ya Big Guy!

Condolences

Posted by Windmills on 7/31/2008, 9:56 am

The the players and families of the Windmills organization wish to offer their condolences to the family of Jim DiGregorio on your loss.

Blg Guy I will miss you my friend

Posted by Billy the KID on 7/31/2008, 10:10 am

I want to send my deepest condolences to The ENTIRE Rocker family, and especially DIDI's family. DIDI was an icon, a guru, a brash, and well loved man. I will miss him as will the entire softball world. The DIAMONDS family's prayers are with you all. We will look out for your bretheren with MIKEY P's team here in Rochester.

Condolences

Posted by Di Mags on 7/31/2008, 10:12 am

It hurts a lot when a good person has left us, especially one that went above and beyond for our country and our children. My condolences to the DiGregorio family and friends. Diane Magallanes

So Long My Friend

Posted by Feds on 7/31/2008, 10:17 am

I'm typing this message through tear filled eyes. The entire softball world is mourning the loss of its well loved leader. I am personally grieving the loss of a wonderful and close friend. My thoughts go out to Didi's wife and children. Also to the entire Rocker family. We will all truly miss you my friend. I hope you're having a big plate of fried calamarie....just the rings. Your buddy, Feds.

coach Didi

Posted by stull family on 7/31/2008, 10:31 am

Words seem to be inadequate to express the sadness we feel about the passing of coach Didi. We extend our thoughts and prayers to the DiGregorio family, friends and co-workers. Didi we will miss your smile, your bark, your love and passion for the player and the game. We love you and will miss you.

With Sympathy

Posted by IL Outlaws on 7/31/2008, 10:36 am

On behalf of Chuck Shoemake and the entire Illinois Outlaws 16U team and families, our sincere condolences to the family of Jim DiGregorio and all the Rocker families.

Sympathy

Posted by Bash Family on 7/31/2008, 10:49 am

The Berwyn Bash family would like to extend our deepest sympathies to the Degregorio Family. The softball world has lost one of the best. You will be missed and celebrated. Tears will be shed both in sadness and thoughts of our good buddy. Thank you for all you did.

Posted by The Koechlings on 7/31/2008, 1:11 pm, in reply to "Sympathy"

We were so saddened to hear about Jim this morning. Even in the midst of many Bash vs. Rockers hard-fought battles we always knew that Didi's goals were to help his girls and make better the game of softball. He succeeded at both at the highest level. Our prayers and sincerest thoughts are with Jim's family. Bill, Cindy and Katie Koechling

DIDI

Posted by BRAD KAEMMERER/BRUTE WRESTLING on 7/31/2008, 11:00 am

JIM, YOU WILL BE MISSED. YOU WERE AN OUTSTANDING PERSON. I THANK YOU FOR THE TIMES WE HAVE HAD TOGETHER! OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS GO OUT TO YOUR FAMILY AND EVERYONE YOU HAVE TOUCHED.

Coachy

Posted by Tori Shipbaugh on 7/31/2008, 11:15 am

Didi, I can honestly say that I am one of the luckiest girls ever. Being coached by one of the greatest is really an honor. All the advice you have given me, really made me a better player, and it always will. Your discipline and support is what helped me the most. Thanks for believing in me. There's a place in my heart that will never be filled, but also NEVER ever forgotten. This game is not played for us girls anymore, its played for you. I will give 200% at every game and practice, just for you. You will always be known as a coach of the Rockers, but in my heart, your known as the man who made me the player I am. You are greatly missed. Rest In Peace Coachy. My prayers are with you and your family. Love, Tori p.s. I will still have diet pepsi in my cooler for you!

Deepest Sympathy

Posted by Marilyn on 7/31/2008, 11:48 am

My deepest sympathy to all of you who have been in contact either on the field or off the field with Coach Didi. I never had the pleasure to meet Coach but have heard wonderful things about him from girls that play in Lisle who live in Lemont and Melanie who plays for the Rockers. It is a sad time for everyone to lose someone as dedicated as he was to the game and to the girls. Girls,

remember him always and make him proud.
Sincerely, Marilyn

Coach Didi<3

Posted by Emily Lejman on 7/31/2008, 12:10 pm

Coach Didi, Thank you for helping me out during the 2 years. You really were an awesome coach. My goal for the Rockers was to be able to play on your 18u team someday, but that's ok because just being a part of the rockers is a huge achievement. I will miss you and how you always used to mess around with my dad. You were a great coach and hero. Love, Emily Lejman

Posted by Tommy on 7/31/2008, 1:47 pm, in reply to "Coach Didi<3"

Mess with me? His day wasn't complete until he got me going. How about the day he threw me out of his practice at USA, only afterwards to boast and laugh about it at dinner! I was just picking up a jersey. Remember the \$578 toilet fiasco? The time I'd call him asking for an update for the uniform delivery. Only to realize he hung up on me 30 seconds ago. The time Di Mags asked him about spiritwear and he saidski, "One more time, and you're goneski." Two years ago, Joe Pa and Steve Fischer introduced me to DD. I joined forces. His way was to let YOU know that you could do better. But, behind the scenes, he'd tell others what a great job you were doing. You couldn't rest on your past accomplishments. He made you move forward and get better. This upcoming season is not going to be an easy one. I did not realize all the things what one man has done to make the Rockers work. But if your daughter has become a better player, a better person because of him...we owe him the time and dedication he showed all of us. Let's make this work!

Sympathy

Posted by Coach Patti 16U Sparks on 7/31/2008, 12:30 pm

On behalf of the 16U Sparks, we would like to pass along our deepest sympathy to DiDi's family and the entire Rockers organization. DiDi will be missed by all of us. RIP coach!

Posted by Coach Dave of 12U Windmills on 7/31/2008, 2:26 pm, in reply to "Sympathy"

From our families, coaches and players of the 12U Windmills we also would like to express our sympathies for DiDi's family and to the rest of the Rockers organization. DiDi's love for the game preparation for his players and his renowned intensity during games will always come through in the girls that come through your respected program. Dave G

DiDi

Posted by From The Chicago ASA Webpage on 7/31/2008, 12:35 pm

It is with an extremely saddened heart that I must report the passing of our friend, ASA supporter, and Lemont Rockers 18U Head Coach, Jim (DiDi) DiGregorio. On July 30, 2008, DiDi suffered a heart attack, just outside the Green Valley Complex, in Moline, directly after his team had won a game at the 18U "A" National Championship Finals. Some can say he spent his last hours doing what he loved most, but the void that has been left will never be filled. Good-Bye, My Friend! You truly will be missed by so many!
Joe

Re: DiDi

Posted by Lemont Boys Baseball on 7/31/2008, 12:37 pm, in reply to "DiDi"

We have lost a great friend.

MY FRIEND

Posted by LIL' BASH on 7/31/2008, 12:37 pm

I want to extend my deepest sympathy to the whole ROCKER NATION, I know if you are part of his world that you are there for a reason I am deeply saddened by the passing of my partner and best friend DiDi; DiDi and I shared moments, and memories that most only dream about. They ranged from our 1st ever win as The Rocker Organization, to the first ever AFA State title, to the first ever win of a qualifying tournament, to what he has created today. The Rockers organization started with 3 disgruntled competitive fathers that loved kids and wanted something better than a 12 game rec ball season, we sat in DiDi's kitchen and put the Rockers together. That was 1994, we fielded two teams that year, had no idea what we were doing, but moved forward. We took our lumps but learned a lot, made a lot of friends and it all led to what you see today; One of the most respected and highly regarded softball programs in the nation. You should all feel proud to belong to a program that has made the mark that DiDi has made in this softball world. He was truly the best thing to happen to softball in our area, and possibly the softball nation as a whole. DiDi and I shared many great times, and I have many good memories; the man was my very best friend and yet at times he was almost like a father figure. I will cherish those times for as long as I physically am able. DiDi made marks on people's lives, too many to try and mention, but none the less he was the reason that a large number of young adults are where they are today. He was the true definition of a

coach, he coached kids, people, and situations in life; that's what he knew how to do and he did it. I learned many things from my friend, both in coaching kids, and in life. We didn't always agree, but that was the beauty of our friendship, we would always remain best friends. When I decided to leave the Rockers he was my biggest supporter. He knew in his heart where i was in my life, and that my true passion was create something for the girls who wanted to play after college. I wasn't leaving him, i was creating something for the future of the game. I will always bleed the neon colors, i will always root for any Rocker team i see. I will always be a Rocker at heart, even more now that my friend is gone. Didi and i remained best of friends. In closing I would like to say that the Big Guy filled alot of peoples lives; and as Dee Menz stated he gave every person a little piece of his heart; he finally ran out of heart. I look forward to the day that i will meet up with my Big Bash in heaven once more. I loved the Big Guy and I am hurting deeply, but I am thankful because i know the Lord had a spot for him to coach in heaven, so he wont miss a beat. Make it your mission girls to play for the Big Guy; it doesn't matter where you end up in the standings as long as you brought it all and dedicated it to his memory. I wish all of you nothing but success; I will miss my friend, and partner. May he rest in peace. LIL' BASH

Posted by A Hawk on 7/31/2008, 3:08 pm, in reply to "MY FRIEND"

Very moving. We've lost a great soul. GO ROCKERS!

Coach DiDi

Posted by COS on 7/31/2008, 12:49 pm

Sad news to hear about DiDi who gave so much to youth sports. His enthusiasm, charm, knowledge, and innovative ideas brought sports from the vacant lots and playgroud to youth organizations and athletic complexes. He made the players not only learn the game but looked great with their uniforms and shirts. Those may know him from softball but I had the honor of being coached by him not only in softball but in football too. I remember watching him play 16" slow pitch softball. To this day, noone has mastered his "under the legs" or "behind the back" pick off at first when he was pitching. Or the innovative moves he taught his wrestlers "Bobcats" to make them champions. His postiveness was catching as when Chicago S & L started we sold only 3 shirts out of 2000 for a Rolling Stones concert back in 1977 but had the foresight so say "It is a start. Things will get better as we improve." He continued this method and has touched so many lives, careers, and friendships in an enhancing manner.

DiDi

Posted by Danielle White on 7/31/2008, 1:18 pm

I was deeply saddened to hear of Didi's passing. When I was fourteen Didi took me on in the Rockers program...playing for him for the following 5 years were some of the greatest times playing softball I ever had. Thank you to him not only for what he did for me but for every girl he brought through this program. You will be missed. My prayers and thoughts with the family. -Danielle White or as Didi affectionately called me "Big Shooter"

Article from Illinoismatmen.com

Posted by Didi Fan on 7/31/2008, 1:31 pm

Today, July 30, 2008, Illinois wrestling lost a friend when Jim DiGregorio (59) passed away. While in Moline with his nationally recognized girls softball team, Rockers Fast Pitch, Jim was driving to celebrate with them after a tournament victory when he suffered a fatal heart attack. Affectionally know as Big Bash, the Wizard or Didi, Jim was a fixture in Illinois wrestling. He was the owner of a northside Chicago sporting goods company that provide the IKWF with dual team singlets and the now famous "State Jackets". In addition Jim created the Midget State Championship and hosted it in Danville every year. www.bigbashwrestling.com One of the best coaches around Jim was a very popular coach for the nationally ranked Montini Catholic Broncos. He coached the lower levels for the Broncos and could be found in the front row for any big Bronco varsity match (with that big state champ ring on, always smiling) cheering his team on. His knowledge of every teams opponent became a valuable aid to the Bronco's coaching staff. Jim also helped to introduce many young wrestlers to the sport through his IKWF coaching affiliation with the Vittum Cats wrestling program. Anytime a Cat wrestler would get a pin Jim had no problem reminding in a friendly way the domination of the Cat's Cradle. www.eteamz.com/VITTUMCATS In recent years Jim had manifested his love of softball through his Rocker's softball team. With ASA state and national championships the last 3 of 4 years Jim sponsored age group teams from 10 to 18. www.rockerssoftball.org A Vietnam veteran, Jim was a large man with an even larger personality. You could always count on a friendly "Hi" and a pat on the back from Jim when ever he saw you. Always willing to make a friendly bet that his Broncos, Cats or Rockers would win, Jim never wavered in his love of Illinois wrestling. Jim's generosity is legendary and there was never a young wrestler that he would not help. Jim you will be missed but not forgotten. Jim's son Joey (Ace) a frequent poster to this site and himself a former college wrestler and current h.s. coach asked me to pass this message along to the wrestling community: "I didnt only lose my father today, but my best friend. I thank everyone who has called, e-mailed, texted, and posted their condolences. My family will get through this tragedy, but his memory will never be forgotten. My father loved Illinois wrestling, especially the IKWF, which he helped get to the status that it is today. He was a modest man of his generosity, and I will miss him everyday for the rest of my life." God Bless, Joey

DiGregorio

Funeral Arrangements

Posted by Didi's FAMILY on 7/31/2008, 1:40 pm

Funeral Information

WAKE: Sunday and Monday from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00p.m.

Petkus & Sons Funeral Home, 12401 South Archer Avenue, Lemont, IL 60439

FUNERAL: Tuesday 10:00 a.m.

St. Cyril Parish , 607 Sobieski Street , Lemont, IL 60439

Thank you all for your prayers. My Dad will forever be in all of our hearts. Love , Didi's Daughter Krissy

Posted by Brenda Paulson IL USSSA on 8/1/2008, 8:43 am, in reply to "Funeral Arrangements"

Dear Krissy & family - I'm saddened to hear the loss of your Dad and an intrumental force in Fast Pitch softball. My heart goes out to you and your family. Didi will always be remembered by me as one of the greatest promoters of the game. My deepest sympathies to your family and all his Rocker players, past and present. Didi will be truly missed. Brenda Paulson, IL USSSA.

DIDI

Posted by Marcy on 7/31/2008, 1:48 pm

My deepest condolences to Mrs D, Joey, Jenny, Krissy and Amy. He was a great man and coach who will be forever missed. I came to the program when I was 10 years old and had no clue what travel softball was. I just loved the game and wanted to get more experience playing. As I got older, DIDI guided me through the game of softball and those times were the best years of my life. DIDI held me at a high standard, which allowed me to develop into the player I am today. DIDI was the reason why I went to College and gain the best experiences of my life. He believed and encouraged me every step of the way in my journey. I am honored to have played for him and proud to learn from the best coach in softball. Thank you DIDI for everything you have done for me and for other people throughout the years. You truly are an angel. Now GOD has called upon you and its time to make your mark in heaven. Go get them Big Guy. I love you and R.I.P. Marcy..AKA by DIDI..Bash Sister #88

Sympathy

Posted by John Radtke on 7/31/2008, 1:52 pm

I did not know Didi as well as most of you but I know the passion he had for the sport of softball and for the girls in the Rockers organization. On behalf of the Northern Illinois Lightning, I send my deepest sympathies to the family and all of Didi's wonderful friends. He will be missed. John Radtke, Northern Illinois Lightning

DiDi

Posted by Kelli Morgan on 7/31/2008, 2:34 pm

My condolenses to DiDi and his family through these tough times. I remeber DiDi as being the kindest most caring man that many have met. Always witha smile did he give all of us encouragment and support no matter what. I played for DiDi when I was in high school (1997 - 1999). He took me from a tean where I was unhappy and gave me the BEST few years of my softball career. He was always at our games for support and treated all of us girls as if we were his own. He will be mised by many.

The Coach

Posted by Whitney on 7/31/2008, 2:38 pm

Didi was by far the greatest coach any of us could ask for. Not only did he really truly care about everyone of us, but without him I know I wouldn't have made it to where I am today. I am extremely glad the rockers took me in 5 years ago, and love the friends I have made. We will all miss you Didi. - Whitney aka "the home run queen"

Link to Lemont Reporter Article

Posted by Rocker Fan on 7/31/2008, 3:35 pm

<http://www.mysuburbanlife.com/lemont/homepage/x223020585>

Posted by Bolingbrook Rage 12U Gold on 7/31/2008, 3:43 pm, in reply to "Link to Lemont Reporter Article"

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Didi's family and the entire Rocker organization!

1 ump that will surely miss him

Posted by jimmy jamin jones on 7/31/2008, 3:54 pm

this the hay hay hay lets play ball guy. I'm not good at this kind of thing, so here, I know there's alot of umps out there that are going to miss him alot. my condolences go out to the family, he will surely be missed, those uniforms flouriesent colors nobody has ever seen before. you knew walking up to a field and seeing those colors that you better be on your game, or you would hear it from him ,

thats the respect that was demanded, and HE DEFINETLY got my respect. what he did for the game will never be matched by anyone, sending so many kids to college ball. DIDI r.i.p.

In Our Prayers

Posted by A Bandit on 7/31/2008, 4:18 pm

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Didi's family and the entire Rocker program. We have many Rocker friends and know what a loss this is to softball throughout the Chicago region. God Bless and continued good luck to you girls still out on the field!

Love, #21

Posted by April on 7/31/2008, 4:33 pm

Didi was a great man with a big heart may he rest in peace. He will be missed by so many. his love for the game and players will not be replaced. i love you and miss you.

Coach Didi

Posted by Bill Monaco on 7/31/2008, 4:44 pm

Our deepest sympathy to the DiGregoria Family and to Didi's softball family. Didi was remembered with a moment of silence with the 18U Windmills at Nationals in Moline today. Our prayers are with you, The Monaco family.

With Great Respect

Posted by Bulls Sox on 7/31/2008, 4:51 pm

The Travel Team program at the White Sox Training Academy extends our prayers and deepest sympathy for the DIDI family, coaches, parents, players and the entire softball community.

An Interview the Mayor gave the Suburban Life about DiDi

Posted by The Mayor on 7/31/2008, 6:33 pm

Beloved Lemont softball coach, "great man," dies during tournament

By Jessica Sabbah, jsabbah@mysuburbanlife.com

GateHouse News Service Thu Jul 31, 2008, 10:04 AM CDT

Lemont, IL - A beloved Lemont girls softball coach died suddenly Wednesday after a championship game his team played during a tournament in western Illinois. Jim "Didi" DiGregorio, 59, a head coach with the Lemont Rockers Girls Softball Club and president of the Lemont Rockers Travel Organization (LRTO), died after suffering a fatal heart attack at about 3:45 p.m. Wednesday. DiGregorio was traveling with his team at the USA Amateur Softball Association Girls' Class A 18-Under Fast Pitch National Championship Tournament in Moline at the time of his death. DiGregorio has worked with young athletes for over 30 years in both softball and wrestling. He founded the traveling softball team organization 15 years ago, and since has worked to improve players so they could advance and to help them obtain athletic scholarships. Jim Giancana, who worked alongside DiGregorio as a coach for the Lemont Rockers, said the two had been lifelong friends since they met in their teen years. Giancana referred to DiGregorio as "Coachey" and described him as his "bestest friend in the world." Giancana said he struggled to find the words to describe such an irreplaceable man who he loved so much and who had such an impact in his life and the lives of others. "He was just a unique person that you come across in life. Just all the good things in a human being. He was just that type of guy; he would help everybody," Giancana said. "He was just a great man." Giancana said DiGregorio's smile and laughter drew a person in and made them feel at ease. He said DiGregorio truly cared for his players, touching the hearts of many in the game and being what every coach should be. There are five age brackets of teams represented in the Lemont Rockers club, with participating girls ranging in age from about 10 to 18. DiGregorio's other love was wrestling, having won six state wrestling tournaments in high school. He was also the former assistant coach for wrestling at Montini Catholic High School, having led the team to win five state wrestling titles. He was also the former president of the Illinois Kids Wrestling Federation and a previous coach for club wrestling. "He was a guy that was bigger than life. He loved to laugh," Giancana said. "The softball players and wrestlers that he trained, he cared for them like they were his own." Other coaches echoed memories of DiGregorio's immense investment in the players with whom he worked. "He came across as a tough, hard-nosed guy, but when you got to know him, everything was about the girls," said Tom Lejman, manager of a team with the Lemont Rockers. "He had a soft, soft heart. He was a great man." DiGregorio, who was also a Marine and Vietnam veteran, is survived by his wife, Kathy, and four children, Amy, Chrissy, Jenny and Joey. The team will continue to participate in the championship tournament games, and even played one Wednesday night just hours after their coach's death, reports said. The tournament began July 27 and runs through Sunday. "He was an icon in the game," Giancana said. "Not because he was my friend. Everyone knew Didi."

COACH - YOU ARE THE GREATEST!

Posted by HRP on 7/31/2008, 7:32 pm

DD - my pal ... can't stop waiting for my phone to ring one more time and your voice to boom out "COACH!".... TELL ME IT'S NOT TRUE!

THANK YOU ALL!

Posted by Kathy DiGregorio on 7/31/2008, 8:30 pm

I would like to thank all for your kind and meaningful posts. It means a lot to my children and I to read how much their father and my husband was loved. With Love, Kathy DiGregorio

Posted by Paul Grabstanowicz on 7/31/2008, 8:49 pm, in reply to "THANK YOU ALL!"

I let Stan Karthan know. As an umpire and a father I want to say that Coach was the class act. I am so very sorry for the family lose and the lose to girls softball. I will always remember his wonderful approach to winning and his competitive nature but yet always a gentleman. Thank you to the family for allowing him to make girls softball special and wonderful

Dear Coach

Posted by A Rocker Parent on 7/31/2008, 8:33 pm

Dear Coach, Most outside of the Rocker family, unfortunately, will never understand. Before my daughter came to play for the Rockers, I heard you running a practice. I naively said "There's no way I'd let my kid play for that guy." But now, I'd never let her play for anyone else. What they don't get is what you're true motivation's are. It's not about winning. It's about helping the girls to be the best they can be. Those looking in more than likely only saw a ranting, pitcher changing drill sergeant. We, your Rocker family, know the truth. Semper Fidelis - the motto of The United States Marine Corp. Its translation is "Always Faithful". That's what the outsiders don't get. While you may yell and holler at them, every young woman in the Rocker program now and those that have worn the uniform in the past, they all know that you simply want them to be their personal best. And they all also know that if they were to need some kind of help outside of the softball world, you would do what ever you could to help them. Yesterday as I talked to my daughter after getting the news, through her tears she said "He was the one coach I've ever had that all he wanted was for me to be my best." I remember listening to a former Bear player giving a eulogy for Walter Payton. In it he said that the thing that truly matters, the single most important thing is the small dash that separates our birth date and the date of our passing on our head stone. That dash represents our life and what we accomplished with our time. Your dash is one that we all should aspire to have. Being a Marine during war time already puts you ahead of most. But then adding in the many young people's lives that you've touched places you well above the majority of us. The evidence to that can be seen here across this message board.

To your wife and children, I'd like to say thank you for sharing with all of us and our children. Thank you Coach. With more gratitude than you can know, thank you for making a difference in my daughter's life that she will carry forever. A Rocker Parent

Best Wishes

Posted by Paul Grabstanowicz on 7/31/2008, 8:41 pm

Thank you for allowing my daughter to play for the best coach I ever met

we will always miss you

Posted by erin hohman on 7/31/2008, 9:20 pm

i remember the first time i ever saw Didi, i was scared out of my mind. But as the days have passed i have learned that all he wants is for us to succeed. He has taught me so much about the game and about heart. He befriended my mom and she seemed to always be on the phone with him. She really cared for him and i know she is having a hard time dealing with this. My dream was always to play on Didi's team and although i wont have the chance i will cherish everything he has taught me. Didi was a fantastic man and i will never forget him.

The Big Bash

Posted by The Daly Fam on 7/31/2008, 9:21 pm

We have only known Didi for such a short time and have seen his love for his family and all his girls. The man was a true Gentle Giant. The world is a better place because of Didi. His family will be in our prayers forever . The Daly's

2nd to NONE

Posted by Zoro on 7/31/2008, 9:43 pm

Dearest Didi - "Once a Rocker, Always a Rocker." Your dedication is and always will be 2nd to NONE. Can't thank you enough for the memories. Our deepest sympathy and love always. Britney Kendzora & Family.

Words are Inadequate

Posted by Rocker Alumni on 7/31/2008, 10:06 pm

Didi, you were a very special person, and I'll echo what every other person on the board has posted so far. You will be greatly

missed, and your influence will continue to live on. Thank you for everything you've done. –Lea, Rocker Alumni

To the DiGregorio Family

Posted by Kendzora Family on 7/31/2008, 10:10 pm

We are deeply saddened upon hearing about Didi. He made Britney a Rocker at 9 years old. We credit a lot of her success today to him. We will never forget you. Rockers Forever. Jeff & Stephanie Kendzora

CONDOLENCES

Posted by BARGES FAMILY on 7/31/2008, 10:37 pm

We would like to send our condolences to DIDI'S family. He will be deeply missed.

Coach DiDi

Posted by GenuWin Sports Training on 7/31/2008, 10:38 pm

Though we only knew DiDi a short while, our staff was deeply saddened to hear of his passing. We all send our condolences to his family and the entire Rockers Organization. May he rest in peace. The staff at GenuWin Sports Training

Quad City Times Article

Posted by In Honor of DiDi on 8/1/2008, 1:08 am

Lemont Rockers DD players — mourning the death of their coach — had a difficult choice to make at the ASA 18-under national tournament, and their decision was unanimous. Play on. Rockers coach Jim Didi, 59, died Wednesday of a heart attack on the way to a post-game meal. After a unanimous vote by the team's athletes, the Rockers continued with their march toward a national championship in his honor. Thursday night's game against Bad to the Bone of Taylorsville, Utah, began with an emotional moment of silence. The game ended with the Rockers rallying from a 4-2 deficit to win 6-5 and advance another day as winners. Bad to the Bone coach Karl Huntsman said it has been really difficult for all involved at the tournament, which has been overshadowed by the death of two coaches. New Jersey's Outlaws assistant coach Tom Tobin died of a heart attack Tuesday night in a Quad-Cities hotel room. "It is tough and really puts into perspective what we are doing," Huntsman said. "At this age, the coaches get really close to the kids, and the kids get really close to the coaches. I have talked with the Rockers' coaches, and we agree that in the world of softball, we are very tight and feel compassion that spreads beyond the individual teams. "This loss is really tough for me, too. It takes some serious strength for these girls to keep playing and doing what their coach would want them to do." Michelle Bates had two doubles and drove in two runs for the Rockers, while pitcher Suzie Rzegocki entered in relief and held Bad to the Bone scoreless in the middle innings to keep the Rockers in the game. "This is amazing," Rzegocki said after the win. "We had great defense and pitching. Everything worked spot on. I know coach Didi would be very proud of how we played. We are advancing further than we ever have in this tournament, and we did it just for him." Rockers players had "For Didi" written on the back of their jerseys and "For the Big Guy" written on their batting helmets. Colleen Hohman of Naperville said that once the team got through the emotions from the moment of silence, they were able to settle down and play the way Didi had taught. "We know he is there on our shoulder," Hohman said. "For some of us it is still sinking in. We just had to get it out of our system that first inning and come back. We know he would be really proud of us." The Rockers DD next play the Cole Minnows of Lonoke, Ark., today at 4 p.m.

Posted by Rocker Tifoso on 8/1/2008, 9:34 am, in reply to "Quad City Times Article"

Way to go Didi's team!!!! We are all pulling for ya!!!! PROUD TO BE A ROCKER!!! GO ROCKERS!!!

Posted by 10 fan on 8/1/2008, 10:15 am, in reply to "Re: Quad City Times Article"

We are not part of the Rocker family but hope the girls play great this afternoon! Good Luck!

Coach DiDi

Posted by The Amram Family on 8/1/2008, 6:00 am

Jim, Thanks for going above and beyond the call of duty. You've touched the lives of so many and made the world a better place by doing so. Your presence will surely be missed but your memory will never fade! Jaci, Kristin, Kim, and Jack Amram and the rest of the Quest family

DIDI

Posted by HUTCH on 8/1/2008, 9:01 am

Thanks for all the advise and being so good to our girls we will all miss you greatly.

To Didi

Posted by Hletko on 8/1/2008, 11:33 am

Didi, Although I never had the opportunity to play for you, you still were always looking out for me, supporting me, and making me laugh whenever we'd run into each other at tournaments. Thank you so much for everything. You will always be remembered for

your innumerable contributions to the softball world and we will always be grateful for all you have done. You will be greatly missed.
Michelle Hletko, Westmont Phillies Alumni

Condolences

Posted by The Granata Family. aka Lefty on 8/1/2008, 11:36 am

We would like to extend our sympathy to DIDI's family. We will truly miss him. Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this difficult time.

Condolences

Posted by Eve on 8/1/2008, 12:42 pm

I knew Didi through his work and I will miss him. My thoughts and prayers are with all of his many friends and family. Does anyone have more information on the Joseph DiGregorio Scholarship Fund . An address is what is needed so we can send a memorial. Stay strong, keep playing Rockers! Didi would have wanted it that way!

Deepest Sympathy

Posted by Lady Tigers on 8/1/2008, 12:44 pm

The Elmwood Park Lady Tigers would like to extend their sympathys to the Didi family and the whole Rocker organization. Our prayers are with you all.

Coachie

Posted by Old Rocker Parent on 8/1/2008, 1:34 pm

Just heard one of your favorite songs - The Lion Sleeps Tonight. It made me cry again.

DiDi

Posted by Masny / Rapp Family on 8/1/2008, 2:02 pm

Our condolences, and prayers go out to Jim's family. Touched by an Angel, is what Didi did for many. Didi was one of a kind, and he was the greatest when it came to supporting the girls of softball. My daughter only filled in for two games for him, but Didi was always supporting her. Everytime he seen her, he would talk to her. Your encouraging words will stay with her forever. Didi you were always a mentor, and always had positive things to say to her. Thank you!! You will be Missed!

Coach DiDi

Posted by Regi Kobela-Rodriguez on 8/1/2008, 3:32 pm

Mrs. D, Krissy, Amy, Jenny & Joey Our condolences to your family. Didi will always be remembered. Love Always, The Kobela Family

Rockers Do it Again!

Posted by Friend on 8/1/2008, 6:07 pm

Didi's 18U Rockers won again this afternoon.....Final 8 of Winners Bracket!

Posted by Rocker Fan on 8/1/2008, 8:50 pm, in reply to "Rockers Do it Again!"

You go Didi's Team!!!! We are all pulling for ya!!! Woohoo!!! Woohoo!!!

Posted by Bandit Mom on 8/1/2008, 8:18 pm, in reply to "Rockers Do it Again!"

Way to go girls! Pull together and make Didi proud! The entire Chicago Metro area is behind you! All the way to #1!!!

Posted by Rocker Family on 8/1/2008, 8:36 pm, in reply to "Re: Rockers Do it Again!"

Girls-- We are extremely proud of you for pulling together and playing your hearts out. We all know that Didi wouldn't have wanted it any other way. Please know that we are all rooting for you back home!

Posted by Walsh Family on 8/1/2008, 10:12 pm, in reply to "Re: Rockers Do it Again!"

Girls....Way to go!!!! We got the privilege to watch and admire you on Wednesday night as you beat The Elite. You are a stand up group of girls....you made the whole Chicago Metro area proud!!!! We know your angle in the outfield will be with you as you endure the rest of the tournament. We are all pulling for you back here at home. Go Rockers!

Posted by Feds on 8/1/2008, 10:08 pm, in reply to "Re: Rockers Do it Again!"

C'mon Rockers. Git'r done.

Posted by Berwyn Bash on 8/2/2008, 3:01 am, in reply to "Re: Rockers Do it Again!"

Geter done Rockers. DIDI! wouldn't have wanted it any other way. The persurverence that you are showing is awe inspiring. Way to go ladies we are proud of you!!!!

Re: FALL LEAGUE

Posted by 10 fan on 8/2/2008, 2:50 pm, in reply to "FALL LEAGUE"

Sounds like a great name for the fall league!

DiDi

Posted by Little Red rock on 8/2/2008, 9:33 am

thank you so much for helping me do things that i never thought were possible. you also helped me follow my dreams by putting my name on the roster. you believed in me when i was struggling and you and other coaches delved me into a great Athleat. Its gonna be veary hard to forget you and ill never will. Always and forever, Little red rock (alli)

Coach Didi

Posted by Anita Voss on 8/2/2008, 11:26 am

Just wanted to say Thank you Didi for being there for my Daughter-Danielle White, you were a great coach! My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

The Big Guy

Posted by Sandy Voj on 8/2/2008, 12:19 pm

I learned about Didi's passing in the clubhouse before our game in Akron. I was devastated and could not believe it. DiDi took me on his team after my sophomore year of high school and made me feel like I had been on the team for years. I'll never forget how he knew every rule in every league better than any umpire or screamed "touch 'em all, touch 'em all, touch 'em all" from the dugout if you drove a pitch into the gap or how he would play Enrique Iglesias in his car after a game or how he took us to go see Batman Begins after we beat a Texas powerhouse team. I have so many fond memories. Playing for the Rockers was a great experience and it got me to where I am today. I'm proud to be a Rocker for life and not for another team. My condolences go out to DiDi's family. I'll miss you, Big Guy. ~To DiDi's team playing: Go out and win it for him!!! Play like how he wanted you guys to play. Remember why he yelled and screamed at you at every practice and why he pushed you so hard and go dominate!!! ~ Sandy Vojik #40, AKA Konerko, AKA Bash Sister

Da Big Guy

Posted by Tough Judge of Character on 8/2/2008, 2:07 pm

Coach Didi was a man not just determined to win this particular game but to win this game because it could lead to another game and then another and then another with the primary end result and goal being to win a tournament and a trophy? Not really, it was because winning this game or this tournament might lead to a greater opportunity for his girls to develop their skills and showcase their talents to college scouts and thus increase the possibility that they might have a chance to go to college on a softball scholarship. Or, (and this is what really sets him apart from so many other coaches) for the less talented girls, who might never play in college the goal was to give them a chance to shine, to challenge themselves, to excel, to do something that they might be proud of, something that might be very memorable to them or enhance their self-esteem. So much riding on those games for Didi. He felt such a responsibility to his girls. Not to get them a trophy but to help them win an education, to cope with adversity, and to grow as people. My daughter played for Coach Didi for a number of years. My family spent many weeks and weekends with the team and The Coach in Lemont, at national tournaments as well as middle-of-nowhere games in and out of Illinois. I had the opportunity and pleasure of sitting back and watching my daughter practice with and play for the Rockers' Organization. From that same seat I was also able to be a spectator to the drama that often unfolded right in front of me involving the coaches of opposing teams; often at crucial moments of a game or tournament. Coach Didi was such a passionate man. It would have been so easy at those crucial moments for that passion to interfere with his judgment and have something inappropriate slip out of his mouth. We have all done it and regretted it later. I know that I am a very Tough Judge of Character. At my age I have been around the block more than once and I sometimes feel like I have seen it all. I have witnessed human beings exhibit outrageous cruelty and others uncommon generosity and decency. When I think back to all of the countless number of times that I saw Didi interact with his players, the players of the opposing team or the opposing coaches I can not remember ONE TIME being uncomfortable or embarrassed with being associated with Didi or The Rockers. Quite the opposite. It was common for me to be impressed by his character and how he conducted himself at difficult times. How he would be chatting with someone in the dugout or on his ubiquitous cellphone and then spring (well, maybe not spring) onto the field and be right on top of the situation and often more informed than the other coaches or some of the umpires. On an ongoing basis he demonstrated to his girls how they might deal with conflict and frustration in a straightforward assertive way. I am very pleased to have known Coach Didi. In retrospect, I wish that I had made even more of an effort to spend time with him and I'm sure that I am not alone in that wish. I will miss him and feel badly for the young girls who are coming up through the system; that they will not have a chance to play for and learn from him.

Rockers DD in Moline do it again!

Posted by For DiDi on 8/2/2008, 2:13 pm

According to the latest posting on the ASA Nationals site, they did it again winning 5-4 vs. NC Lady Blues. They are now in the semis of the winners bracket!!! Next up, Elyria Sun Dogs at 6pm.

Posted by Didi's Team Fan on 8/2/2008, 3:05 pm, in reply to "Rockers DD in Moline do it again!"

Hey Didi's team, we all are lovin it here at home!! Cheering, rooting and pulling for ya!! GO ROCKERS!!!

Posted by Kankatucky on 8/3/2008, 10:32 am, in reply to "Re: Rockers DD in Moline do it again!"

We're pulling for you in Kankatuckyland. What a great tribute to Didi! GO DIDI'S ROCKERS!!!

From Moline

Posted by Scoreboard on 8/2/2008, 2:21 pm

The 18U Rockers continue their "FOR DIDI" campaign, as they won this afternoon, 5-4, and now are one of only four undefeated teams. They play again at 6PM.

COACH

Posted by ex rocker coach on 8/2/2008, 2:51 pm

COACH everytime i saw you at a tourney you would say hi coach to me,i always enjoyed watching you coach,i got to see you coach your last game this week in moline and it has always amazed me at what a master field coach you were,you put most umps and coaches to shame with your knowledge of the game.i was involved many yrs with the rocker program and enjoyed every minute of it,i got to coach with you 1 of those yrs and what an experience it was ,you were there for the kids and always very generous to everyone else,i still have a closet full of rocker apperral that you so freely handed out.all 3 of my daughters played for the rocker program and had some of the best expiences of thier lives,our whole family thanks you for what you have provided for us over the yrs and what you have done for the game that we love,our family will truly miss you and what you gave to softball ,you will never be forgotten,our prayers are with you and your family
carl brewer

Update from MN

Posted by Richie C on 8/2/2008, 3:25 pm

Rockers MP are 2-0 in tournament play. Beat the Lakeland Hawkeyes 8-5. Play at 6 PM for a birth in the Winners final four vs the Elk Grove Heat. I would like to wish DD's team in Moline a BIG GOOD LUCK! Were all pulling for you. As the big guy would say, ALL YOU STIFFS IN CHICAGO READING THIS BOARD TO SEE HOW SUZIE AND CO. ARE DOING, GET IN YOUR CAR AND DRIVE TO MOLINE AND CHEER THE GIRLS ON! Girls- go win the whole f-ing thing!!!! Richie C, Rockers MP

Rest in Peace "Coach "

Posted by Jeff Mersch on 8/2/2008, 5:20 pm

Our deepest sympathy goes out to the Digregorio family for their loss of a great man who had such a positive influence on the lives of many young people . Didi coached me in football 35 years ago at St. Frances of Rome grammar school in Cicero . He had a heart of gold back then while being tough on us , always teaching discipline and teamwork . Two years ago my daughter's softball team was looking for a home after leaving another organization . I met with Didi after not seeing him for about 20 years.He said bring the whole team over to the Rockers , nobody will be left out . We became good friends since that day and I got to know him again as a grown man .Nancy (aka coffee can) ,Marissa , and myself will truly miss him . Rest in Peace " Coach" .

Moline

Posted by Didi Fan on 8/2/2008, 8:00 pm

The Didi team moves on 2-0

Posted by Dream on 8/2/2008, 8:05 pm, in reply to "Moline"

Keeping the Dream Alive.

DD Wins Again!

Posted by Batman on 8/2/2008, 8:00 pm

2-0 Winners - Final two teams

Re: DD Wins Again!

Posted by Rainman on 8/2/2008, 8:33 pm, in reply to "DD Wins Again!"

Next game is at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday 8/3/2008 at the Greenvally Softball Complex in Moline - Field #5. It is only about 145 miles

from Lemont. 1/2 mi. south of John Deere Expressway on 60th street. If you can, drive down and support DD's team.

Re: DD Wins Again!

Posted by neonfan on 8/2/2008, 8:04 pm, in reply to "DD Wins Again!"

Wow! What a story! these girls are phenominal! Way to pull together during a tough time! We are all behind you! Keep up the great work. Didi has to be so proud.

Posted by Moline on 8/2/2008, 8:04 pm, in reply to "DD Wins Again!"

Are we witnessing a Miracle?

Posted by storck on 8/2/2008, 8:24 pm, in reply to "Re: DD Wins Again!"

More like a DiDiacle! Great story, great job. Good Luck tomorrow!

Posted by Old Flames Coach on 8/3/2008, 12:23 am, in reply to "Re: DD Wins Again!"

I have been around this game for many years and have won State ,Metro and a National Championship, but this is the most impressive run I have ever seen. This is very special. Keep it up ladies, Win it for your great Coach. Also win it for yourselves for all the years of hard work you put this great game.

You will be missed

Posted by Marissa on 8/2/2008, 8:11 pm

Coach, You were truly a great man who did absolutely everything for his girls. I don't think you ever realized how many people you truly helped. I know you have even helped my dad in middle school. You will be missed greatly. I also would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to play with you in the St. Louis exposure tournament last year. You will always be remembered. Love, Marissa Mersch

Didi

Posted by Yanii on 8/2/2008, 8:38 pm

You will be miss Didi. I still can't believe your gone. Even though I never played for you you were always so welcoming and friendly towards my family and I. I will always remember a game i was watching and all your girls were popping up and you came back with a comment "Your all like damn dippin dots" to this day it still makes me laugh! You should be so proud of all the things you have done for all of us in the Rocker Organization, words don't explain how much you will be missed around here. Thank you for everything! You and your family are in my prayers. RIP DIDI<3
Ariana Challenger- RockersOZ

softball nationals

Posted by kelcy on 8/2/2008, 8:43 pm

heyy rockers nice job so far at nationals!!!!!! Sorry about your coach! I was watching your team play you guys are very good and you guys have the fastest pitcher I have ever seen!! Well good luck championship sunday!! I kno u guys can make it all the way!! Good LUCK!! KELCY- qc blast elite 14u

DD's team

Posted by Hawk Coach on 8/2/2008, 9:19 pm

DD's team, You girls are truly an inspiration to all softball players. When the going gets tough - the tough get going and you have shown us all a new meaning to this phrase. The entire Chicagoland area couldn't be more proud of how you all pulled together to play like champions. I know Didi is up there watching his girls go all the way! We are all behind you girls - bring it home!!

Didi Passing Away

Posted by Kelly Sheridan on 8/2/2008, 9:45 pm

Didi, I was devastated on Wednesday to discover that you had passed away that day. After our games, my dad mentioned it to me. You will be truly missed and you were a great coach. You may have screamed a bunch but it is alright. Rest in Peace. -Kelly Sheridan

ASA 18u Nationals

Posted by Rockermania on 8/2/2008, 10:03 pm

Let's really see who are the true rocker fans. Get in your car, head to Moline, and root on these girl's incredible accomplishment. Game time is 11am Field #5 at GreenValley Complex in Moline. The coach would want everyone there to root on his beloved rockers.

GOD BLESS

Posted by Fanning Family on 8/2/2008, 10:47 pm

our family prays for you and yours.GOD BLESS

A GREAT FRIEND TO MANY

Posted by SUDS on 8/3/2008, 12:09 am

DIDI, My thoughts and prayers go out to Kathy and the kids. Although you were taken from us way to early, it is evident how many lives you have touched. In the 10 yrs. that I have known you, I consider you a true friend, just as many others do. The laughs we shared will never be forgotten. For the girls on the flagship, keep playing with the BIG GUYS spirit in your hearts and you will be champions. Good Luck on Sunday. REST IN PEACE . SUDS

COACH

Posted by The Builder on 8/3/2008, 9:34 am

You will be deeply missed by all who new you coachee.I still cant believe you're gone I will miss the phone calls and the excitement in you're voice when you talked about you're Rocker girls but most of all i will miss you as my friend who truly cared about everyone.Thanks coach i will never forget the great times we shared your friend always,Mike Friscia/aka The Builder.

DiDi THE MAN

Posted by JACK BOGUMIL UMPIRE on 8/3/2008, 10:50 am

IT WAS WITH GREAT SADNESS THAT THIS WEEK I FOUND OUT BY THE PASSING OF DiDi. I HAVEN'T DONE GAMES FOR THE ROCKERS AT THEIR TOURNAMENTS FOR A COUPLE OF YRS BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER. WHAT HE DID FOR BOYS AND GIRLS IN SPORTS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS. THE MAN WAS ALWAYS CORDIAL WITH ME AND THE GAME OF SOFTBALL AND WRESTLING WILL MISS HIM. THE LAST TIME I SEEN DI DI WAS AT A ANDREW GAME DURING THE HIGH SCHOOL SEASON WE GREETED HE ALWAYS CALLED ME COACH MAYBE HE CALLED ALOT OF PEOPLE THAT BUT THAT DIDN'T BOTHER ME BECAUSE HE ALWAYS HAD SOMETHING INTELLIGENT TO SAY TO YOU. YOU FELLOW UMPIRES OUT THERE YOU'LL MISS HIM TOO, HE ALWAYS KEPT US ON OUR TOES OR YOU'LL HEAR ABOUT IT. REST IN PEACE SIR AT 59 YOU WERE MUCH TO YOUNG TO LEAVE US.

My Coach

Posted by LIA on 8/3/2008, 12:40 pm

Coming home from Northern Nationals in Topeka Kansas yesterday my parents and I were discussing a play that had happened earlier that day. I was catching and I could see the runner on second get a bigger and bigger lead each pitch. One of my teammates had told me that the team likes to delay steal, and then I had remembered one play Didi taught me that will now stay with me forever. I faked the throw down to second and sure enough the runner broke to third. I threw down to third and the girl was out. Immediately after that play I broke down in tears giving the sign to my pitcher. I can still hear Didi's voice in my head yelling at practice. He told me don't be stupid, fake the throw and then pick off the runner.

You're to good of a player not to be making those plays, come on use your head. Didi pushed me every practice to be the best I could be. He yelled and screamed at me, but yesterday by making that play I finally was able to understand and appreciate it. Without having him as a coach I would have never have made the play, and I would not be the player I am today. Thank you DiGregorio family for allowing me to have such a wonderful coach, but even more then that a wonderful person in my life. With Love, Lia Romeo



Rockers Win

Posted by Congrats on 8/3/2008, 12:46 pm

5-3 Winners

Posted by rocker fan on 8/3/2008, 10:24 pm, in reply to "Rockers Win"

congratulations girls! Now the hard part starts,let's make sure we support the girls in the upcoming weeks. Once the season ends, they will have time to reflect. A future without their coach will cause anxiety. everyone will have to step up.

Posted by Feds on 8/3/2008, 3:44 pm, in reply to "Rockers Win"

Congratulations to ROCKERS/DD on winning the National Championship. We'd also like to congratulate all Rocker players and thier families on what I'm sure will always be remembered as your organization's proudest moment. I'm quite sure The Boss is looking down from heaven at his girls right now with that great big grin on his face that we've all come to know and love. The Oak Lawn

DIAMONDS , Feds and The Kidd

Posted by storck on 8/3/2008, 1:10 pm, in reply to "Rockers Win"

Congratulations ROCKERS DIDI! Good Luck! One more time!

Posted by hawk fan on 8/3/2008, 2:10 pm, in reply to "Re: Rockers Win"

The emotion on display is causing goose bumps for all involved. What a great ending watching the teams gather and pray after the game. You should all be here.

Game score

Posted by Didi fan on 8/3/2008, 3:55 pm

Hey fans 3-1 Rockers

3rd inning

Posted by buckeye on 8/3/2008, 4:36 pm, in reply to "Game score"

thanks for all the updates for those sitting at home. its greatly appreciated. lets win this

Posted by Didi fan on 8/3/2008, 4:03 pm, in reply to "Game score"

4-1 4th

Posted by Didi fan on 8/3/2008, 4:08 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

5-1 bottom 4th

Posted by A Fan on 8/3/2008, 4:27 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

Please keep us posted...all over the country!

Posted by Fan at home on 8/3/2008, 4:29 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

Tears running down my face and goose bumps galore! Please keep us posted as we pray and wish we were there.

Posted by Didi fan on 8/3/2008, 4:37 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

Foul ball injury to Minn player delayed action

5-1 bottom 6th 2 outs

Posted by Didi fan on 8/3/2008, 4:12 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

The place is packed Bleachers full, fans in all of the outfield waiting for it to happen

Score 5-1 5th inning

Posted by wondering on 8/3/2008, 4:34 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

score?...inning?.....update?...please...this is awesome

Posted by A fan on 8/3/2008, 4:45 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

Not all of us are back home... some of us are a long ways away... but damn interested...Get us a score ASAP!

Posted by Didi fan on 8/3/2008, 4:42 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

I can't tell you how hard it is to sit here without crying. Everyone is waiting to see if miracles do come true

5-1 top of 7th

Posted by WONDERING ALSO on 8/3/2008, 4:41 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

SCORE? INNING?? WE ARE ALL ON THE EDGE OF OUR SEATS BACK HOME

Posted by Didi fan on 8/3/2008, 4:50 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

Here we go bottom 7

5-1

3 outs away

Posted by WONDERING ALSO on 8/3/2008, 4:44 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

thanks for keeping us posted!!! GO ROCKERS!!!! WIN IT ALL FOR DIDI

Posted by please on 8/3/2008, 4:48 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

didi fan-was it going on????

Posted by Didi fan on 8/3/2008, 4:52 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

Its getting louder one out

Posted by Didi fan on 8/3/2008, 4:54 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

2 outs

Posted by Didi fan on 8/3/2008, 4:55 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

National champs

Posted by awesome on 8/3/2008, 4:59 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

thanks for the updates...there are Angels in the Outfield...Thx Didi...

Posted by FAN on 8/3/2008, 5:02 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

WAY TO GO GIRLS WAY TO WIN IT ALL FOR DIDI!!!!!! HE IS SMILING DOWN ON ALL OF YOU....WAY TO GO!!!! EVERYONE BACK HOME IS SO PROUD OF YOU....

Posted by Dee on 8/3/2008, 5:01 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

I remember a few weeks ago the words that came out of Didi's mouth..."We will never win a national championship, and that's fine, I want to see them improve." The girls just proved it wrong and they did it for the big guy. It is a miracle, and he was the "angel in the outfield." Congrats girls, thats a dream come true. He's upstairs and the happiest he could ever be with you guys. Way to hang in there strong. Congrats again.

Posted by Fan on 8/3/2008, 5:38 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

Your exactly right

Posted by Didi fan on 8/3/2008, 4:57 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

All the players parents n fans in circle

Yelling Didi Didi

Yoooo

Awesome

Posted by buckeye on 8/3/2008, 4:57 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

CONGRADULATIONS ROCKERS WE ARE ALL PROUD OF YOU

Posted by Fan at home on 8/3/2008, 4:57 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

Thank you DiDi Fan for the play by play. You have no idea what your play by play has meant to many of us. May the girls emotions run free. There are miracles but most important an "angel in the outfield".

Posted by A fan on 8/3/2008, 5:01 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

Awesome...! Sometimes unbelievable things happen.

Posted by Hawks on 8/3/2008, 5:09 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

CONGRATULATIONS ROCKERS. What a wonderful tribute to your coach and the entire Rocker organization.

Posted by ROCKER PARENT on 8/3/2008, 5:14 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

Congratulations Rockers...Didi was with you girls every step of the way as were we!!!! We are so proud of you!!!!!!!

Posted by A Rocker on 8/3/2008, 9:56 pm, in reply to "Re: Game score"

Congrats Ladies - he is so proud of you.

Posted by mcnellis on 8/3/2008, 5:01 pm

congrats to the asa national champs

Posted by 10 fan on 8/3/2008, 5:14 pm, in reply to "tourny"

Way to go girls, not only did you make Didi proud you made all of chicagoland softball proud. Way to represent your coach and our region!!!!!! Unbelievable!

ASA CHAMPS

Posted by PITTER PATTERSON on 8/3/2008, 5:09 pm

CONGRATS ROCKERS THE ASA NATIONAL CHAMPS. WE KNEW YOU COULD DO IT.DIDI THIS ONE'S FOR YOU. YOUR FRIEND, RAY PATTERSON

Posted by Rocker on 8/3/2008, 5:27 pm, in reply to "ASA CHAMPS"

Didi's team CONGRATULATIONS on your NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP!!!! Didi's team is awe-inspiring to everyone!!! Harrah for

Didi and his team

Posted by Joe C on 8/3/2008, 5:14 pm, in reply to "ASA CHAMPS"

CONGRATS GIRLS! WE ALL BELIEVED IN YOU!!!! THATS AWESOME I CAN JUST HEAR THE BIG GUY WOOOOOOOOOOO"!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! THE BEST!!!!!!!!!!

Posted by Chi-Town Express on 8/3/2008, 5:12 pm, in reply to "ASA CHAMPS"

On behalf of the Chi-Town Express we salute the Rocker players, coaches and parents on an incredible and unbelievable accomplishment. This is a testament and a beautiful celebration of the power of the Human Spirit. Great job Rockers!

Posted by Rockers Fan on 8/3/2008, 5:34 pm, in reply to "Re: ASA CHAMPS"

Great job girls, Congrats!!!! We know the big guy was watching over you. He loved you all and you know from his heart that he would do anything he could do for each one of you.

GO ROCKERS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Posted by Rocker Fan on 8/3/2008, 5:24 pm, in reply to "Re: ASA CHAMPS"

Congratulations Didi's Team. In this very sad time you gave us something to cheer about.

Posted by Feds on 8/3/2008, 5:30 pm, in reply to "Re: ASA CHAMPS"

Congratulations to DiDi's team on their National Championship. This will undoubtedly go down as one of the organization's defining moments. Congrats also to all of the Rocker players, coaches and families. I'm sure The Big Guy is smiling down on all of you right now. Your friends, The Oak Lawn Diamonds, Feds & The Kid

Posted by Fan on 8/3/2008, 5:42 pm, in reply to "Re: ASA CHAMPS"

Wow, what a great inspiration story and an unbelievable tribute to Didi himself. Neither of my daughters had the privilege of wearing the Rockers uniform, but that doesn't mean that they haven't benefited from Didi's hard work and dedication to the sport.

There are few men who should be credited with raising the level of fastpitch play in the midwest, and Didi is one that deserves the credit. I just want to say thank you to Didi's family for sharing him with us. We are all better for having known him.

God bless Jim Didi's family.

Posted by Another Fan on 8/3/2008, 6:15 pm, in reply to "Re: ASA CHAMPS"

CONGRATS players, coaches, and parents. Truly an awe- inspiring accomplishment! The angel in softball heaven saw it all you can be sure of that!

Posted by Mama West on 8/3/2008, 6:40 pm, in reply to "Re: ASA CHAMPS"

Girls I am so proud of you. What a way to pay tribute to a Great Man. You did Illinois proud. Lexi and Julie I'm so proud of you two, you carried on and did exactly what DiDi would have wanted you to do you are my heroes! Congrats to DiDi and the Rocker organization. And DiDi thank you for being so good to Rikki, and Cristian I appreciate everything you did for us you will always be remebered. Love The Alcaraz/West Family

Tribute To Coach DiDi

Posted by Grabowski Mom on 8/3/2008, 5:35 pm

Coach DiDi

The crowd is gone, the cheers have stopped, and the equipment is stored away.

The team is standing on the field because the coach is leaving today.

He led them through the hardest times, and was proud the times they won.

But now the season's over and his time as coach is done.

The team will go on without him, will perform at the usual pace.

But though another coach comes in, there'll be a void in this place.

Today when the field is emptied and the team has met the test,

The coach can feel certain that he will be remembered as simply the best.

Congratulations Rockers DD the 2008 ASA National Champions. DiDi, Thank you for all you have done. Your legacy lives on within all us left behind. Carol Grabstanowicz, aka Grabowski Mom - Mother of Rocker Alumni Lauren #55

Posted by Mary on 8/3/2008, 10:20 pm, in reply to "Tribute To Coach DiDi"

I am so very sorry to hear what happend to one of your coaches. I have two daughters that play asa ball but their team was not qualified this year to play in the nationals. I can only imagine how those girls truly had to suck it up and go as they say when the devastation hit the team. I know he is smiling from above on your win. Sorry for your loss!

A TOAST TO THE COACH

Posted by MIKE'S BIKER BAR on 8/3/2008, 6:26 pm

Coach DD, Coach in honor of your lifetime contributions to children all us kids on the 12U Mike's Biker Bar Team are giving up smoking for one month. Furthermore and herewith we promise to not steal hub caps at next years ASA nationals in Las Vegas. We love you coach

Congrats Rockers DD 18U ASA National Champions

Posted by Hawkeye on 8/3/2008, 6:34 pm

Congratulations to DD and his wonderful program on your National Championship. We couldn't be prouder of your accomplishments or your friendship. Love, The Homer Hawks

Posted by storck on 8/3/2008, 8:37 pm, in reply to "Congrats Rockers DD 18U ASA National Champions"

Congratulations DIDI ROCKERS! Most impressive display of heart and determination I've ever heard of. No wonder he picked you as his team!

National championship

Posted by wow on 8/3/2008, 6:54 pm

Wow that amazing and such a hard time. I was never a rocker but DD did inspire me and wen i went to his wake today he was in a rocker coaching shirt smiling

Posted by Don't Forget on 8/3/2008, 6:59 pm, in reply to "National championship"

The Rockers lineup card he held in his hand!! Great smile he had on, I agree!

Congratulations

Posted by Zero Carats on 8/3/2008, 7:10 pm

Congratulations to the Rockers on their amazing run. A true reflection of the man who guided them down the right paths - both in softball but more important in life.

Posted by new fan on 8/3/2008, 10:54 pm, in reply to "ASA NATIONAL CHAMPS!"

from one of your biggest rivals way to goo!!! everyone here in chicagoland was cheering for u, waiting for the play by play to get updated!! i cracked the biggest smile when i saw national champs!! your coach was one of the greatest softball coaches around and he will be missed greatly by all. rip didi. softball tournaments wil never be the same. ps. could we see some pictures from the national champs!?! congrats!!

Condolences

Posted by Mike Elgin Sports Complex on 8/3/2008, 7:48 pm

To Team Rockers, Our deepest condolences to you from the Elgin Sports Complex on your loss of a GREAT Coach from us I will always remember the Photo of Didi and myself and the Trophy photo. My Boss Mike told me on the other day and I was deeply saddened. We hope to see the tourney back and have a Didi memorial one at our place. Sincerely, Mikey

Didi

Posted by Jeff Cordova on 8/3/2008, 8:36 pm

I am the 12U Coach for the New Lenox Power and what your 18U team did at ASA Nationals was truly AMAZING! I remember Didi from the Vitum Cats Wrestling Days , because I wrestled for my dad on the Lockport Graplers. I will always remember Didi as a man who devoted his life to kids weather it was wrestling or softball . Our loss is heavans gain, I am certain he is starting a Wrestling or Softball program up there as we speak. He will truly be missed!!!!

Congrats to the Rockers

Posted by fast eddie on 8/3/2008, 8:55 pm

This one of the most beautiful stories in ASA softball history. How soon can we get the "Big Guy" into the ASA Hall of Fame? Joe, start to get that ball rolling. Congrats to the girls and the coaches who stepped up to fill the shoes of our friend. Ed Heineman, Angels from Bloomington

Dear DiGregorio Family

Posted by Rob Smith-Shockers 18 over on 8/3/2008, 9:01 pm

DiDi, You were absolutely the best. You always made time for everyone. You truly had a huge impact on me to keep the girls playing even after college. What a tribute to you. You have made fastpitch softball in this area what it is today. FUN and Exciting. All your hardwork and dedication was truly for the Love of the Game. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the DiGregorio family. With Sincere

sympathy, Rob Smith & Family,
Southside Shockers Fastpitch

Sympathy

Posted by Me on 8/3/2008, 9:18 pm

My deepest sympathy to your family. I didn't know him well but, I did see how much the girls loved to play for him at Nationals both good and bad times. The strength that they put out there on the field, let you know how much they loved him. May he rest in peace knowing that his girls loved him so much to bring him the Championship Title. "Tough Love"
God Bless you & Your Rocker Girls

Please read for Didi

Posted by Giana M. #12. on 8/3/2008, 10:18 pm

R.I.P Jim "Didi" Digregorio February 27,1940-July 30,2008.

~ Dear Didi, We were at the hotel getting ready for our game that day when we found out you have passed away. it was so hard hearing it because we couldn't believe you were gone. you were the greatest coach that i have ever had. i also had learned so much from you and the rocker coaches these past two years i have been on the Rockers. i have known you before i even came to the rockers because of you coming into falco's. i just want to say your my inspiration to keep on playing and play with heart and passion for the game and to bust my butt no matter how hard things get. your screaming and yelling at practice made me a tough person mentally to prepare me for games i never realized it before but i appreciate it. didi your love for the girls will stay with everyone for ever. today when i saw you in that casket and you had the biggest smile on your face it brought the most tears to my eyes because you always said that this is how you wanted to go. you have so many people that was there tonight at your wake. you have touched so many lives. you have made a huge impact on my life and will never forget the memories i had with you. you left on a great note and your team won it all for you. may you rest in peace and be in our hearts forever. your my shining star and our angel in the outfield. i wish you were here one more day so i can just tell you how much i appreciate how much you have done for me as a player and a person and just to tell you i love you.. R.I.P Didi aka Big Bash...i will play with my head up and play like that d1 player you said i played like and my potential will shine from this point on...everything i do on the field will be in respect for you and what you have taught me..this is for you big guy. we love and miss you always and forever! may you rest in peace. R.I.P Didi love Giana Montalbano #12

Posted by giana m on 8/3/2008, 10:43 pm, in reply to "Please read for Didi"

it will not be the same with out you but we will carry on because that is how you would have wanted it. to all Rockers Didi was the heart and soul the back bone to this organization we have to continue this with everything we have and every heart and soul will be needed. the big guy will be with us when we put those jerseys on and step between those white lines. he was not only a coach but a friend and leader a good guy to look up to. He is here with all of us..our angel on our shoulder.. and is here to get us through those tough times..lets be strong for him. he would never want to see us sad.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN MIRACLES!

Posted by Joey DiGregorio on 8/3/2008, 11:38 pm

First off, I just want to thank everyone who came to the wake today. Next, i want to thank My dad's teams for completing the dream. It is a true inspiration and really could be made into a movie, thats how incredible the story is. My dad surely gave out a few of his Rick Flair WOOOOOOOOO'S after that win today. Awesome job girls, you have no idea how special this really was. Thanks, Joey DiGregorio

Posted by Fan on 8/3/2008, 11:47 pm

go to qconline.com and click on moline wraps up asa tourney. they have some pictures from the game under see more photos from this shoot. GREAT JOB GIRLS!!!!!! You made The Big Guy and all of Chicagoland proud..

DiDi Remembered

Posted by Tom Webb on 8/4/2008, 7:33 am

1940-2008. There is a saying that what a person does in the time frame represented by the line between those two dates is what is most important. In DiDi's case this line will never be long enough. Marine, loving husband and father, good friend to many, founder of two athletic associations for youths, and a mentor and guide to hundreds of young athletes. Jim was a person who always expected the best from his players and who drove them to understand what that level truly was. But it was the lessons beyond the ball fields and mats that he should most be remembered for. His drive to get scholarships for as many of his athletes as he could so all would realize an excellent education to give them a jump start on their futures. His ability to light up a room with his smile - and to be able to call someone a "stiff" and have that person not take it as an insult. Jim brought a zest to living that was contagious and

made people feel better to be around him. I didn't know him well, but when my daughter got hurt playing softball - even though we were not part of the Rockers - DiDi was one of the first to reach out to make sure she was ok. We always loved playing his teams - as much for the entertainment he brought to the field as knowing that our team needed to have their A game on because the Rockers always had theirs going. I will miss him. But if I ever need to smile memories of conversations with Jim will be one of the first things I will think of. TEW

Posted by DD left a HUGE Legacy on 8/4/2008, 2:56 pm, in reply to "DiDi Remembered"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pA5-wMCR3aQ&feature=related> The chorus of the song, Legacy, by Nicole Nordeman, encapsulates what was truly special about DiDi ... if you have ever seen and heard a Rocker game or practice...you know what I mean; and we know that is just the tip of the iceberg. CHORUS: I want to leave a legacy. How will they remember me? Did I choose to love? Did I point to You enough to make a mark on things? I want to leave an offering. A child of mercy and grace who blessed Your Name unapologetically and leave that kind of legacy

Congrats!!!

Posted by Stone City Rep on 8/4/2008, 8:35 am

So we decided to make the drive to Moline at 8:30 yesterday morning to support the Rockers. What a truly exciting and emotional time! Congrats on taking it all girls! You have made your coach very proud. He will be missed by all - R.I.P DIDI!!

Amazed

Posted by Amazed on 8/4/2008, 11:18 am

I knew of Big Bash thru youth wrestling ... didnt know him personally. After reading this board for a few days, I am blown away!! For someone who had such an impact on our youth, in TWO sports, like he did is just amazing!! Most amazing to me is how coach took that extra step to try and make sure his girls knew that college was equally as important as softball. Maybe we can take a little something away from Coach Didi's early and untimely passing. Let's start embracing our coaches and volunteers in all of our kids' sports a little more and have a lot less feuding. We all say its about the kids but we all don't act like it at times. In closing, its kind of weird the timing. My daughter is right now in the other room, in her own little world, playing the Miley Cyrus song "I miss you". Just brought chills to me. One of the saddest things in life is someone that dies and has nobody shed a tear for them, so to the Didi extended family ... you can be strong and still shed a tear. It's obvious you lost a great man! -Anonymous

nationals

Posted by kari dorle on 8/4/2008, 11:45 am

hello my name is kari dorle i was the catcher for the minnesota sting elite. i was number 31. i just wanted to say again congrats on your win, you guys are a great team. and again very sorry for the loss. you guys truly needed this for your coach. good luck in the future and with everything. and again congrats

Posted by M Halper on 8/4/2008, 5:11 pm, in reply to "nationals"

This whole team was a class act. My daughter and I attended the games yesterday and after Didi's team had just beaten them after the first game and the girls had gone out & made the circle out around the mound to say the Lord's prayer as Didi always led, the whole Sting Elite team and the coaches came out and asked to join them in prayer. It was really an act of sportsmanship and class that I was so glad my daughter witnessed.

Posted by Attendee on 8/4/2008, 4:55 pm, in reply to "nationals"

I was wondering about the Sting's player that got hit in the ankle while in the on-deck circle in the championship game? Someone said that they thought she broke her ankle? She looked like she was in a great deal of pain. Just wondering how she is doing . . .

Posted by kari dorle on 8/5/2008, 3:29 pm, in reply to "Re: nationals"

yes the girl who got hit by the ball went to the doctor right after she left the fields and nothing is broken and fractured just really badly bruised and swollen. thanks for your concern

Posted by rocker fan on 8/4/2008, 3:51 pm, in reply to "nationals"

you are a class act.

Posted by Zero Carats on 8/4/2008, 12:05 pm, in reply to "nationals"

This is what the sport should be about - everyone can learn what true class is from Ms. Dorles post.

Posted by Joe Pa on 8/4/2008, 12:32 pm, in reply to "Re: nationals"

Zero Carats: I couldn't agree with you more! The positive comments, by this young lady, even in defeat, are indicative of her character, maturity and respect, as well as a being suggestive of her parents and coaching staff.

coach didi

Posted by Bridget #15- hawks 14u black on 8/4/2008, 12:27 pm

Coach didi was the heart of softball throughout Chicago. He is such an inspiration to me and my fellow hawks, to play for the love of the game. We appreciate all that he has done for us. He was an amazing man who can't be replaced, Didi will be greatly missed. ps. we will be wearing our black sweatbands for you coach...)

Posted by Tierney #9 Hawks 14U Black on 8/4/2008, 1:01 pm, in reply to "coach didi"

I second everything Bridget just said. He was a great coach and will be missed. I will wear my "DD" armband each and every game.

softball

Posted by fan on 8/4/2008, 12:51 pm

condolences

Rockers DiDi

Posted by Joe Pa on 8/4/2008, 12:54 pm

All Rockers and supporters, please go to: <http://www.molineasa.com>, and click the following link: 2008 USA/ASA Girls' 18U Class A Fastpitch National Champions: Lemont Rockers DD

Congratulations to the Lemont Rockers DD, 2008 USA/ASA Girls' 18U Class A Fastpitch National Champs! The Rockers took the championship in a 5 to 1 game against the Minnesota Sting Elite. In memory of Coach Jim Didi...They did it for the Big Guy!



Posted by Midwest Farmer's Daughter on 8/5/2008, 12:15 pm, in reply to "Rockers DiDi"

Congratulations! It is amazing to me that of the "Top 10" teams--7 out of the 12 are from cold weather mid-western states. Good for all of them.

Lemont Sizzle

Posted by Steven Ball on 8/4/2008, 1:18 pm

It has been hard for me since I first heard the news last week. I have known Didi for 8 years. I gave his daughter Jenny hitting lessons. In that time he went overboard to help me out when I relocated my business to Romeoville. He treated me like a little brother. He always made me feel like part of the Rocker family. I would sometimes have students and parents overhear him yelling at his team during my lessons and they'd say I could never play for that guy. I'd reply YES! you would because I'd play for that guy. He sounded like a big mean spirited guy but those who know him knew of his gentle soul when it came to his girls. Didi was old school. It breaks my heart to see him go because I think this whole softball world has already gotten too ugly and full of charlatans. He understood it was just a game. Have fun, life is short. I will miss him as much as anybody. I also think if they don't dedicate the Lemont Park District fields to him then someone has dropped the ball. Good-bye Didi. God bless you and your family.

DiDi & Nationals

Posted by Betty Dunker on 8/4/2008, 1:57 pm

Hi All, My husband, daughter Courtney, and I would like to congratulate all of the 18's on a terrific win at Nationals. How proud DiDi must be looking down on all of you!!!! That is a tremendous accomplishment. Enjoy it forever!!!

Posted by Coach Rock on 8/4/2008, 4:35 pm, in reply to "DiDi & Nationals"

Thanks for all the kind words about our championship. But the truth is, those girls did not need coaches since Didi left us. They played for him and him only. They were 15 girls playing as one complete unit. It was a great thing to experience and I'll never forget it. He taught them well and he really believed that they were the best. As for Didi I want to thank him for allowing me and my family into his life. There has been a fantastic amount of great things said about Didi and they are all true. I just feel sad for the people that didn't get to know him like Suzie, Paulette and I did. With what happened to Coach it made me think about the people in my life and the choices I made. I should have been in Moline, to shake the man's hand after his last victory. To here his big wooooo. So Please don't hesitate to tell the people close to you that you love them. Didi was truly a great man and I will miss him very much. Love you Didi. Rest in peace big guy. Your friend Coach Rock

It was an honor

Posted by Eastside Elite Parent on 8/4/2008, 7:38 pm

Congratulations! We were so happy to hear that your team won the Championship! It was an honor to play such an amazing team of young ladies who were dealing with such great tragedy. You were truly Champions the day we played, not only on the field, but off. The way that you honored your beloved coach will forever be in our hearts. We will continue to follow your success here in Seattle. Thanks again for the incredible competition!!! Debbie, Eastside Elite

Posted by Rocker Parent on 8/4/2008, 10:51 pm, in reply to "It was an honor"

Your players, coaches and parents were truly a class act. I will never forget your players handing out roses to our team at the end of the game and giving them the much needed hugs.

Quad Cities TV Coverage

Posted by News Wires on 8/4/2008, 10:36 pm

<http://www.kwqc.com> for Quad City Television Report on ASA Championship

didi--thanks

Posted by jerry mucha on 8/5/2008, 8:33 am

didi, to the best guy i have ever met—THANK YOU FOR BEING MY FRIEND JERRY J MUCHA

Thanks Again.

Posted by Joey DiGregorio on 8/5/2008, 9:00 pm

On behalf of my family i would like to thank everyones support and prayers for my Father these past 3 days. It is truly amazing how many people he knew and touched. Almost everyone has some inspirational or funny story involving the Big Guy. It takes the pain of losing him away a little, knowing he meant so much to so many. I only wish i could become half as influential as my father someday. Go ROOOOOCKERSSSSSSSSS! WOooooOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO! God Bless, The Italian Stallion, Joey DiGregorio

Posted by Rocker Parent from the past on 8/5/2008, 9:49 pm, in reply to "Thanks Again."

Could you please state the name of the Scholarship again--if one wanted to contribute in DiDi's honor. Thank you.

My Bestest Friend

Posted by The Mayor on 8/6/2008, 8:16 am

It is difficult for me to describe in words what Didi meant to me. He was more then a softball coach to me, he was my bestest friend, my coachie, my hero. As a man he had few equals, he cared so much for others, we were his family and he made me feel that way every day of his life. The last several years, we spoke on the phone about 3 to 4 times a day, had dinner about 3 to 4 times a week, we laughed and joked. The laughter we had was indescribable. Where ever your at Coachie and you can hear me, I love you, your spirit will live within me everyday of my life! Being Coachie's friend PRICELESS! I want to thank the many people who called and sent me emails, voicing there concern about my well being. PS We will continue the Rocker tradition... Humbly yours, The Mayor XOXO

Posted by Joey D on 8/6/2008, 10:06 am, in reply to "My Bestest Friend"

Thanks Mayor..... dont forget we gotta go golfing sometime remember. and if you guys need my help at try outs let me know. but i sure hope so cause you stiffs couldnt spot talent with a microscope.

Posted by The Mayor on 8/6/2008, 12:24 pm, in reply to "Re: My Bestest Friend"

Joey Jags, I would love to have you out at tryouts today. Will make plans on golf once tryouts are over. Humbly yours, The Mayor XOXO

Posted by A Coach on 8/6/2008, 9:12 am, in reply to "My Bestest Friend"

Mayor, God Bless you and the Rockers. Best of luck at tryouts this week, they will be great. We will be rooting for you but will always continue to try to beat you on the fields. Keep up the spirit and see you in the fall.

THE JIM "DIDI" MEMORIAL FALL LEAGUE

Posted by HRP Productions on 8/6/2008, 8:29 am

"Didi" lives within in all of us ... and what he loved was the game. The COACH will always be with us all, attending every high school game, travel game and sometimes I think he recruited at the preschools as well! In his HONOR and MEMORY ... HRP will continue on and carry forward the work and the pleasure he offered to so many. Forever forward, the fall league will be known as "THE JIM "DIDI" MEMORIAL FALL LEAGUE". In his memory and honor, this years first day of games September 7th, will be played back at the Lemont Park District, in the hub, where it all started. Make this day special, depending on the number of teams, we will have either 1 or 2 games per team. I am also asking that each attendee donate to the Joey DiGregorio Scholarship Fund as they enter the park. The final game slot on the NORTH FIELD will be held open, in Didi's honor.

Posted by Didi fan on 8/6/2008, 7:06 pm, in reply to "THE JIM "DIDI" MEMORIAL FALL LEAGUE"

Where can you send contributions to for the fund and who do you make the check out to?

Watching over all of you

Posted by Coachies Corner on 8/6/2008, 1:08 pm

Well I got here to heaven ok Saint Peter greeted me at the pearly gates and asked my name I told him James Anthony DiGregorio he said are you the man that goes by "DiDi" I responded yes I am !! Saint Peter said we are sorry to have taken you so soon from all your wonderful family and friends below but welcome DiDi we already have a place and job for you up here in heaven . You see, Saint Peter said, God needs a great coach for all his wrestling teams and girls softball teams and we havent had anyone come our way yet that can handle the job. Now that you are here we dont have anything to worry about anymore!! Wow I wondered whats this going to be all about?? God said you can have your choice of wresliling coaches we have Cliff Keen,Dave Schultz or Robin Reed here to choose from. Wow again I said those are great teachers this should be easy. Then he said for softball we have Leo Durocher, Billy Martin and Casey Stengel I scratched my head and said but God those are baseball coaches those "stiffs" won't have a clue. I was amazed at his response!! God said, DiDi, you taught all those stiffs on earth what they know so I am confident you will be able to teach these great coaches about the girls game also. God also promised me no rain, perfect manicured fields to play on,no AKP's and no DDT's up here. It is your program to run for us DiDi, God said. With all that you accomplished on earth we know now our children here in heaven are in the best of hands. So while I miss all my family and great friends be assured while I will be busy helping and mntoring all of these poor children up here in heaven I will be watching over all of you always. Miss you all
THE COACHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

Tribute to a fine man.

Posted by Don Clouston on 8/6/2008, 3:15 pm

From those of us on the outside of the Rocker Family, please let us extend our condolences to Coach Didi's family, all of his friends and coaches. For those who played for him, it has always been said a team is a reflection of their coach. Nothing could have been more evident in Moline this past weekend. Congratulations on an accomplishment many could not have been able to carry through. Coach Didi will not be forgotten. His legacy will live with Chicago area women's softball and mats. Proof of the caring for his teams can be seen on many college rosters along with the development of fine citizens. He will be missed. We are all sorry we did not get to know him better or take more time to have the pleasure of his company.

Too soon

Posted by DiDi's daughters boyfriend on 8/6/2008, 4:15 pm

To everyone who has been touched by DiDi, Although I only knew him personally for almost a year now, I was heartbroken with the loss of The Coach. DiDi's daughter, Jenny, and myself have been dating for 11 months now. Our short 11 month anniversary landed on the day we buried her hero. I knew how much he loved her and I knew he cared about me because he made me feel comfortable around him everytime I was in his presence. In this last year I had the privilege to see how dedicated he was to his family and to everyone he coached.Unfortunetly, I wasn't able to be a witness to some of the hundreds of amazing stories I have heard, but they live on through everyone that has told them to me, and now they live on through me. His legacy will never be forgotten. I can still picture him coming in to the DiGregorio house through the garage late at night and give Jenny and I a big "hey buddies." I can remember all the dinners we had together and him giving me tips while we played Texas Hold'em. I can remember renting movies for him from blockbuster and going to Sprint to get his phone fixed. I remember him introducing me to some of his coaches as "the stiff" but I never took offence to it because I figured he must of liked me...he actually introduced me. I remember going out to buy him new shoes with Jenny, she always knew what he liked.I remember celebrating the new year with him. There are so many good memories of him in the last year that I will never ever forget. I want to thank the entire DiGregorio family for embracing me and making me feel like I belonged. Thank you Mr. D. for always treating me with respect and kindness. You will be missed Big Guy and I'll take care of Jenny as much as humanly possible, just the way you would have wanted. With Love, Dan Las

condolence from wisconsin

Posted by Mario on 8/6/2008, 7:27 pm

i would like to say i met Jim Didi three years ago at a restaurant by the max. i saw he had his coaches shirt on and i introduced myself to him. we talked a little bit and said he would be in a tournament in Wisconsin which i attended to. we met again, talked for a while, and he always told me to never forget the rockers. this summer, we had our own tournament up in Wisconsin and we really weren't sure if we could get a lot of teams to attend. i called Jim Didi to see if he could come and he sent three teams. i belong to the lightning organization and myself and a few others do go to his web page. we have learned a lot from the website. i just want to say our prayers will be with the family, friends, and players. he was a true legend. - Mario Camalieri

Let's Go Sally!!

Posted by Salazar on 8/6/2008, 10:27 pm

I know I've only known DD for the 07-08 season but it feels like I've known him forever - excuse my French - but he got in my ass EVERY practice - even at my younger sisters practice - I'd be the bystander getting yelled at - And today at tryouts - First time the whole year - didn't miss a ground ball accomplishment? probably shouldn't be lol - I wanted to let one go through my legs just so I can imagine him screaming at me. I never thanked him for the free lessons with coach all he gave me. Thanks Coach... I've never heard my last name so many times in an hour...practice.. or season! Maybe it's a bad thing... but I'll always remember. He made me remember Rest In Peace DD . Sincerely, Britt (SALAZAR)

coach

Posted by shannon on 8/7/2008, 11:06 am

Yesterdays tryouts were missing something. All the coaches stepped up to fill DiDis spot, but there was always one voice that everyone missed. When I went through the whole tryout without getting yelled at for being a cheerleading, it made me break down crying. I have only been in the rocker organization for one year, but it has seem like a life. Last year at tryouts, I had to talk to DiDi about what I would do for spring, when the girls are in high school if I went to 16s. I was so nervous talking to him and a little scared lol. I will always remember everything he told me that day and all the practices after that. He was the best coach anyone could ask for. No matter how much he yelled, he still cared about you. At Julie Love's high school softball games I remember him talking to me and being really nice to me lol. The last time I saw him before the horrible incident we were out to eat after a 14u softball with some coaches and girls. I thought I would see him in like a week or two and I did, but in a casket. The wake was the saddest thing in my life, and I couldn't even make it to him without shedding tears. All I could hear was him yelling pom pom girl in my head. He is forever loved and will always stay in my heart when I play a game. Thanks coach for everything. Love, Shannon Rust (pom pom girl)

18u teams- 1st and 5th at ASA NATIONALS

Posted by reporter from tryouts on 8/7/2008, 11:24 am

Congratulations to ROCKERS DD- Asa National Champs at 18u and Rockers MP - 5TH pl. Asa northern national at 18u. DIDI would be so proud of everyone. What an accomplishment for this great organization headed up by the great Jim Didi.

Pride

Posted by STORCKjr on 8/7/2008, 6:01 pm

It's wonderful the way DD's team won nationals. I'm sure he's proud of the players, coaches, and fans. But even more so to see the overwhelming support people have put forth in his honor. Whether it be at his wake, on the message board, or at a bandits game. That's how you know he was loved, and respected. It must give him a tremendous amount of pride, even in heaven.

Heavy Heart

Posted by Curran on 8/7/2008, 8:53 pm

The Curran's all have a sadness in their hearts with the loss of Didi. My husband Tim has known Didi since he was 13 years old back in Cicero playing football and softball for Didi and that friendship continued over 30 years. I was lucky enough to meet Didi many years ago through my husband and by doing business with him at Chicago Shirt but he also became a friend that I talked to quite often and I am surely going to miss calling the Big Guy. He even met our boys when they started in IKWF and went onto high school wrestling and was always ready to talk wrestling with them and give them a few pointers! He was a great man, a fun loving guy with a big heart...quite obvious by this website which is an amazing tribute to him and his legacy. Didi you lived all your minutes in life to the fullest...it just wasn't long enough for us to be with you. God bless you DiGregorio family. Tim, Gigi, Matt and Eric Curran

SouthTown Star/DiDi

Posted by Rocker Fan on 8/8/2008, 3:36 pm

http://www.southtownstar.com/sports/baranek/1097751_080808spttonybaranek.article

Defining 'DiDi': A softball coach — and so much more By Tony Baranek

It was a pep assembly in an e-mail. It was a thank you. More than anything else, the words Jim "DiDi" DiGregorio wrote to his Lemont Rockers players before they embarked on their trip to Moline for the Amateur Softball Association Nationals were a challenge. "Let's go out on top ... Thanks for a great year ... I'm ready to coach to the best of my ability, so help me God ... I'm asking that you play to the best of your ability and will be in Moline 'til Sunday ... Thanks. The Big Guy." "Coach DiDi" would not be with them on Sunday. On July 30, he suffered a fatal heart attack after one of the Rockers' early round victories. He was 59. He sure did get his wish, though. The Rockers went out on top, winning the 18-and-under ASA national championship for the first time in the organization's history. What a scene it must have been after the Rockers' 5-1 title-game victory over Sting Elite of Minnesota. "After the game, when we got that last out, we were all cheering and jumping up and down," Rockers player Andrea Colosimo said.

"But then, we got our prayer circle together, and the other team and coaches and a couple of our parents joined the circle. "It was really powerful. The other team, it was awesome for them to do that. We honored coach DiDi, and gave a little cheer up to him." Up? Oh, yeah. He's gotta be up there. I never met the man they simply called "coach DiDi." But it was obvious he must have been one amazing person to instill in his kids the mettle to not only carry on after his tragic and sudden passing, but stand tall. Talking with his fellow coaches and some of his players, I came to find out Jim "DiDi" DiGregorio was all about kids. He taught young women to be softball players, and was so popular that he drew kids from Orland Park to Beecher to Burlington to Griffith, Ind. He taught young men to be wrestlers, and was so good at it on the club level he was hired as an assistant coach at Montini High School. DiGregorio was a Vietnam veteran, a U.S. Marine. "He never let anyone say the words, 'I can't,' " fellow Rockers coach Dan Bryant said. "He was a tough man, but he was a second father to every kid who played for him." On the softball side, we're talking 14 years' worth of kids here since DiDi and friends Bill Sokolis and Jim Ross founded the Lemont Rockers as one team, and built the program to where it has 12 in various age groups. DiDi's No. 1 goal as a softball coach (other than helping kids get college scholarships) was to win the ASA National Tournament, which annually draws more than 100 teams from across the nation. "He'd had some teams that had been in the top 50 percent, but the last two years he hadn't fared as well," Bryant said. This year, however, DiDi was brimming with confidence about a squad that included Southland stars Colosimo, Jessica Roche and Lexi Bryant (Sandburg); Suzie Rzegocki and Megan Jones (Lemont); Julie Love (Andrew); Liz Payonk (Stagg) and Alex Lagesse (Beecher). He coached what would be his final game on the afternoon of July 30. The Rockers defeated a team from California. DiGregorio suffered a heart attack while riding in a car that was headed to a local restaurant. "We were all together at the hospital when we found out (he had died)," Colosimo said. "One of our coaches got us all together in a circle and asked if we wanted to play or back out of the tournament." Colosimo was the first to speak up and say they should play. "Didi would have wanted it," Colosimo said. "He loved to watch us play, and he was all about this tournament. He wouldn't have wanted us to back out. So we decided to keep playing for him." They couldn't have done him prouder. Tony Baranek can be reached at tbaranek@southtownstar.com or (708) 633-5947

DiDi, My Friend

Posted by Lt. Dan on 8/9/2008, 11:34 pm

Coach, words can't describe the emotions that flow through my mind in the last week, and even now. DiDi you took a small town coach, and turned him into a real coach. You were responsible for my changes in thought process while coaching softball. I used to argue, and test your brain for information on the master. You were the only one who had an answer for all the questions. I thank your family for letting me be with you for three years of enjoyment. You not only taught me softball, but fatherhood, you used to praise me to keep family first, and everything is second. The road trips, food, Cub and Bear games, practices, HS softball games, watching the sport we loved so much. I was truly blessed to meet you, and learn from the best. One time you sent me on a college recruiting trip, and told me quote "one coach has to be with a player" only to get to the college and I was the only coach there. I called you right away, and quote you said "Have you learned anything yet". You were still teaching the pupil that day, I thank you. The stories of us talking about our first girls, you holding Amy and I, Alexis. You never let me lose my focus, on or off the field, I thank you. You taught me to keep my mind on the game, and not the distractions. You believed in my abilities, when I had hard times. Coach, you were a Marine, and I was your soldier. I will always be your loyal soldier. I miss your daily conversations, the gossip, and your talents on and off the fields. You always were so proud of your wife and kids. You would be so proud of BEST BUDDY, I know he will be a great coach as you were in wrestling. I will never let him lose focus. I will always keep your Rockers going strong, as you did. Every day I look for that 3pm phone conversation with you. Every day I wait for you to scream out LT. lets GO! Every day I wish you were still here. Coach, Monday I wrote a check for \$25,000. I wrote out that check to God, it wasn't to make out the line-up. It was to spend one last hour of your presence teaching me the life lessons. My daughter #25 will wear her number in honor of you the rest of her softball career. You were her second father, her coach, and a person she can talk to when her father wouldn't listen. I always drove that stake in her to push her, and you were the one that talked BOYS with her and told her she was beautiful. She is what she is because of you, and your trust in her abilities. When you left us for heaven, all she said is coach won't be here when I graduate High School. I said your wrong, he will be right in the front row, with a big smile on his face, and proud as a peacock. I miss you, and will cherish you forever coach. I know your teaching the DP and Flex rules to all those softball gods in heaven. So long old friend, I know God took you from everyone for a reason. That reason is you were the best, and I'm proud to have known the best. May you rest in peace, Lt. Dan My Favorite Quote from the COACH: Say your prayers, take your vitamins, and Listen to Big Bash. I'm glad I did, coach. I love you.

The Love Of My Life, Coach Didi

Posted by Lexi Bryant #25 Forever on 8/10/2008, 11:25 pm

Coach, just dropping in to tell you that i love you and that i Hope your having a great time in heaven. With some new knees i suppose??.Well i just wanted to also tell you how THANKFUL i am for everyday i spent with you, playing for you, going on late

night dinner trips, HS games, or even little road trips. Those memories will last me a lifetime. I also thank you for being there for me when me and my dad got into little arguments. I always knew you were there to help me out. Even with the BOYS. you always told me "your dad knows nothing yet, I have been through that stage already with these boys, i do have 3 girls of my own". i would always laugh at that because i knew you cared and knew a lot more about them. In the softball world you did tremendous things for me. Thank you so much for believing in me even as a freshman. Thanks for contacting coaches for me and making little tweaks. I remember when you got me my first DeMarini bat. I was so excited because i knew all the older girls used them and i thought it was the world when you gave me that bat. Not only have you CHANGED my life you put life in me also. YOU REALLY ARE AND WERE MY SECOND DAD. You were the sparkle in my eye from the time i stepped on the field I PLAY FOR YOU! now and forever! When i hit a homer or a base hit. All for you big guy. You know why. Because you loved the game and so do I. When i get into college promise me you will watch over me. even now i know your there. No one will ever replace you in my heart Coach. Every night i blow you a kiss and kiss you picture and pray to you and talk to you. Hopefully you hear me. Again thanks Coach for teaching me numerous things about life and softball. From this day on I PLAY FOR YOU. Love you big guy, Lexi Bryant #25 I'll wear my number high and proud. The name on the front is who i play for. Rocker For Life.