

# Washington Adult Softball Loses One of Their Own

By Russell Vera

Michael Allen Ford of Kirkland, Washington passed away on March 15<sup>th</sup> at the age of 32 from a sudden illness. Mike was an avid softball player and well known throughout the Washington softball community. He started playing softball while serving in the military as an Army Ranger. He proudly served his country for six years and earned many service medals during that time. Mike played on many military teams over the years and in 2001 he lead his Next Card/ROW men's



Left: Mike and his son Keith and above, with wife Karen.



On the field with C-Town.

team to three "D" state titles (NSA, USSSA and ASA) and to top off this great season he was named MVP of the ASA State Championship.

Just by watching Mike play you could tell that he was a natural who would succeed in softball at any level. His athleticism started to shine while he was attending high school in Sacramento, California. Mike  
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was the first athlete in school history to be named MVP in four sports during the same year, so it was only natural that Mike took his love of sports and put that into playing softball. Over the years some of the upper level softball teams in Washington had noticed his skills and offers to play started to pour in. Mike decided to play with one of the up and coming Washington "C" teams, Doerflinger Software and it was a perfect match. The team did a lot of traveling during the season and Mike really enjoyed this. He was a major contributor in helping Doerflinger win an USSSA "C" Northwest Regional Championship and a 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish at the USSSA "C" Worlds. After four years with Doerflinger Mike was asked to join C-Town Softball, a fully sponsored Idaho team in 2006. This team was well known throughout the Pacific Northwest and they attended all of the big tournaments and this excited Mike a lot. With the addition of Mike, C-Town was able to place 2<sup>nd</sup> at the USSSA "C" Worlds and they could not have accomplished this without his hard nosed style of play. In 2007 C-Town moved up to the "B" level and Mike's role on the team changed and he never complained once. All he wanted to do was help his team win a world championship. He was a true team player. They did not win a USSSA world championship but they did win the ASA "B" Western National Championship. Mike had accomplished a lot over the years and the time he was

traveling to all of these tournaments was taking its toll.

He wanted to find a team closer to home this year, so he could spend time with the two most important people in his life, his wife Karen and his 15 month old son, Keith. Mike was not only a great softball player and teammate but he really excelled at being a husband and father. It got to the point that softball was becoming second when it came time to be with his son.

Over the years he made many friends through softball and anyone who had the chance to meet him never had a bad thing to say about him. Mike was the type of person that would go out of his way to say hi to someone he had never met or offer some advice about softball to anyone who would ask. One of Mike's friends and former teammate, Jon Oram, said "anytime we were traveling to a tournament and Mike had a chance to watch a DVD he always pulled out his favorite movie, Band of Brothers. Anytime we got the chance to talk about life and family, Mike's eyes would light up. Any chance he got to talk about his wife and son, it was non stop. He adored the two of them."

The Washington softball community has come together and rallied around Karen and Keith to offer their support. Washington area teams have started putting Mike's number on their jerseys to honor him and tournaments are being started in his honor. This really shows how much Mike meant to his friends and teammates. He will truly be missed.

A wise man once said "Any man can be a father; it takes someone special to be a dad." According to Mike's family and friends he was this special someone.