

Playing all night

By Don Cameron

The July tournament scene in Nevada offers a much-needed reminder why we lace up the cleats, stock up on bandages, put off that vacation. Nevada in July reminds us that softball is fun. Round-the-clock competition, unique formats and a heavy dose of tailgating highlight the annual Nevada tourney scene in July.

Dynasty rolls to Henderson title

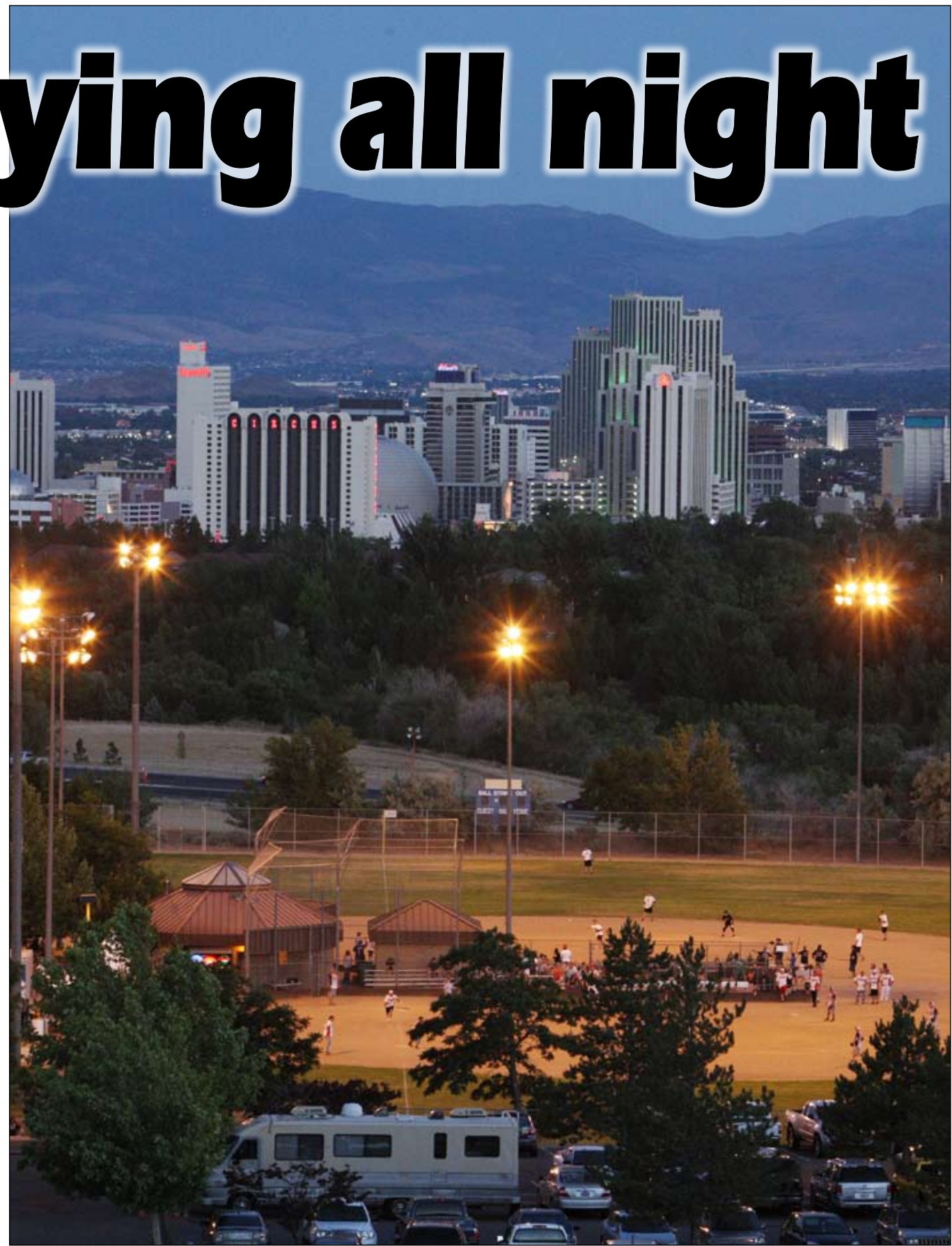
With a record number of teams in each division, the 22nd annual Midnite Madness 1-Pitch Softball Tournament in Henderson drew 86 entries. The July 9-11 USSSA event attracted teams from Nevada, California, Utah and Arizona, with more than \$6,000 in prizes awarded, including gift certificates for Miken and Sportco, DriFit jerseys, T-shirts and plaques.

“One of the best aspects of Midnite Mad-

ness is that teams rarely leave the complex areas, instead staying and tailgating in the parking lots,” said tourney director Ted Lockamon of the City of Henderson. “There were numerous RVs and grills throughout the complexes, with the smell of food and music in the air. It is a festive

atmosphere to say the least.”

First-year tournament team Dynasty, out of Las Vegas, rolled to the men’s championship, defeating Inglewood, Calif.’s CMD/Quickseat 11-4 in the finals. “This season’s been kind of hectic as far as tourneys go, but we came into it pretty confident,”



Teams play late in the night during the Boneyard Blast tournament at the Reno Sports Complex at Rancho San Rafael Park. Smedes photo.

Dynasty manager Jeff Dreikosen said. “We have a lot of good guys on the team, and we have learned to play together as a team. We’ve always been real competitive with everyone locally in Las Vegas. Our goal is to go out to Colorado in September and win the Super World Series of Softball.”

Dynasty went 6-0 to dominate its bracket, getting key performances from shortstop Cameron Brown, second baseman Chris Ortiz, right center fielder Brian Sette and left center fielder Sean Havens. Sette and Havens are former baseball players with College World Series experience.

“We got on a roll and we just didn’t stop,” Dreikosen said. “By about our fourth game, the whole mentality of the team was, ‘We are gonna win this thing. There’s nobody that’s gonna stop us.’ ... It was a big accomplishment. Winning money for uniforms has put this team on a whole other level now.”

Dreikosen also noted the stellar pitching of Tommy Winnett, a key in the pitch-to-own-team format. “He was pitching real good pitches for strikes that we could hit the crap out of. And he was being consistent, so that allowed us to get on base and be able to hit good pitches.”

CMD settled for second place with an 8-2 record. After losing the second game of the tourney, the team battled through the loser’s bracket with seven straight wins. Two Henderson teams — CRL/Auto Glass and Team Barrachos — placed third and fourth, respectively.

In coed action, Arriba Cinco (Sun Valley, Calif.) went 7-0 to grab the championship. Las Vegas’ Z Squad went 6-2 for runner-up status, with Going Commando third and Jaeger Bombs fourth.

Tommy Marquez, who stars for the Somebody from Nowhere team out of Alhambra, Calif., won the home-run contest ahead of 16 other challengers, earning a Miken Psycho Denny Crine signature bat.

Midnite Madness is a bat-provided event, with Miken and Easton providing the sticks. The format also featured round-the-clock play.

“Playing at night was definitely a lot nicer as far as being cooler, but playing until five or six in the morning was mentally trying and physically trying,” Dreikosen said. “It was definitely a challenge. When you’re winning, a lot of that stuff goes out the window. You’re happy and you tend to focus on the next game, not think about how late it is or how tired you are.”

FDI leads the charge at Boneyard Blast

The Coors Light 48-Hour Boneyard Blast IV in Reno July 9-11 attracted 112 teams from Nevada, California, Utah, Oregon, Washington and Idaho. FDI out of Reno took home its third tournament championship, winning the men’s D bracket ahead of Team Impact, an Eagle, Idaho, entry. D12 from Sparks, Nev., took third.

PerfectGame.net out of Nevada City, Calif., took the men’s E title, besting FTW (Windsor, Calif.) in the championship game. Reno’s Dirt Merchants placed third and Snappy Tees

from Redding, Calif., took fourth. Smack That from Citrus Heights, Calif., won the coed event, besting DOA from Valencia, Calif.

The event featured more than \$20,000 in prizes from DeMarini and other sponsors.

“What we pride ourselves on is we make sure we try to include everyone from the last-place teams, players that strike out, beer-belly champions, to best dressed and much more,” said tournament promoter Jess Horning. “We truly try to do our best to award the teams and players that don’t normally win or the ones that are in it to have the most fun. This year more than ever, teams really got into the spirit of what this event is all about — having a blast. We had a beer pong tournament, a party at Bully’s, live DJ ... and who can forget the Boneyard Girls. It didn’t matter what time of day — night or morning — it was it was packed and the energy was incredible.”

Aftermath avenges ‘09 loss to Gary’s Carpets

Nevada’s Aftermath team turned the tables on rival Gary’s Carpets, claiming the men’s title at the 30th annual 44-Hour Paradise Valley Volunteer Fire Department Softball Tournament in Winnemucca.

In 2009, Gary’s, based in Idaho, claimed the trophy by dispatching Aftermath in the title game. This summer, Aftermath exacted revenge, keyed by the efforts of all-tournament players Brian Dudley, Angel Olvera and Aaron Gonsalves.

Gary’s Carpets placed four players — Mike Cenusus, Tim Penberton, Rob Chris and Silya Hoshaw — on the all-tourney team, while Nevada team Bucks Softball placed third, with Ben White, Kyle Waiter and Brock Kyler earning all-tourney nods.

FDI, out of Nevada, placed fourth, followed by four Idaho teams — Top Shelf, Team Reload, Better Than Nothing and Stingers. The Bomb Droppin’ Bettys from Nevada won the women’s championship. Ball Sharks placed second, Dirt Divas third and B.A.M. fourth.

Dennis Deputy, the longtime event director, said the tournament is a must-attend festivity of the region’s summer. “We like to call it the Mardi Gras of the West,” Deputy said. “We see it as more of a party. A lot of made-up teams come here just to have fun. It’s not a blood and guts tourney.

“After all these years, we’re about in the third generation of people playing,” Deputy said. “Ninety percent of people playing in the tourney say they’re old friends. That has a lot to do with why the tournament keeps going. We’ve gotten to know a lot of these teams over the years. They’ve had kids and their kids have had kids. It’s like a bunch of friends getting together.”

For 28 of the 30 years of tournament history, Deputy has served as tourney director. Next season, Deputy will step aside, handing the director reins to his son, Jason. “Next year, I’ll help drag the fields and enjoy a cold beer,” Deputy said.