

Al Woods

Youth Team Manager/Coach

It's a tremendous honor to be inducted into a Hall of Fame, such as the Memphis Amateur Athletic Hall of Fame. And, as a coach, to be able to witness a former player being inducted in the same year. Well, Al Woods is doing that tonight.

Woods saw his former student and player, Ben Johnson, get honored earlier. And now it's Al's turn.

Local researchers and historians would be hard-pressed to find anyone tied to Memphis and its amateur baseball scene for as long as Al. For nearly four decades, Al has devoted his energy and effort to developing the next generation of baseball players in Memphis.

Al's time on the amateur baseball scene began in the late 1980s, when he served on the coaching staff of the Memphis Boys Athletic Association and assisted with the Memphis Tigers under-8 squad. Success quickly followed. His first team placed runner-up at the AABC Roberto Clemente World Series in Georgia. Al's teams continued to perform at a high level, assisting the Tigers' under-10 team to the 1990 AABC Willie Mays Southeast Regional title and advancing to the Pee Wee World Series.

Al moved up to head coach in 1993, and the wins kept coming. His under-13 squad placed third in the Dizzy Dean World Series. Two years later, Al's under-14 team won the Sandy Koufax Tennessee state tournament and Southeast Regional and placed fourth in the World Series.

Al hit the proverbial grand slam in 1997 and 2002 with his under-14 teams. In 1997, Al's Tigers posted an incredible 77-8 record and won the Sandy Koufax World Series title. Five years later, Al did it again, winning the World Series and having an impressive 74-2 overall record.

In between and around those two national titles, Al continued to coach — both as a head and an assistant — and led teams to several state and regional titles. The Tigers also advanced to national tournaments almost yearly. From 2004-06, the Ridgeway High School graduate served as an assistant coach at Southwest Tennessee Community College.

In addition to winning championships, Al passed along his love for the game, helping develop future Major League Baseball players Jacob Wilson and Ben Johnson.

In 2007, Al set aside his coaching hat and assumed the role of Director of Baseball Operations at the University of Memphis, a position he still holds to this day. In his first season on staff at Memphis, the Tigers earned an NCAA Regional bid.

Please welcome to the Hall of Fame, as a youth team manager/coach — Al Woods.