

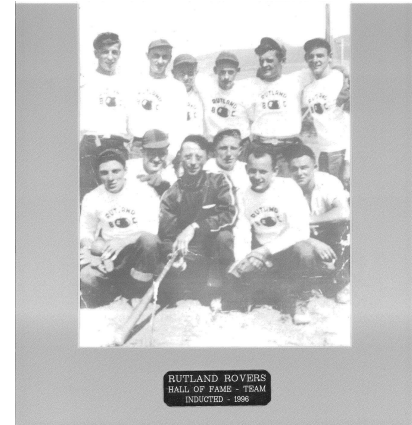
Rutland Rovers

1996 Inductee - Team Category



The Rutland Rovers Senior Men's Fastball Club from Kelowna, BC, has been in existence for over 50 years. From 1946 through 1996, this team was dominating District, Provincial and Western Championships.

- 1985 – Inter. A Provincials Gold Medal Champions
- 1985 – Inter. A Western Canadians Gold Medal Champions
- 1991 – Senior B Provincials Gold Medal Champions
- 1991 – Senior B Western Canadians Silver Medal Champions
- 1992 – Senior B Provincials Gold Medal Champions
- 1992 – Senior B Western Canadians Bronze Medal Champions
- 1993 – Senior B Provincials Silver Medal Champions
- 1994 – Senior B Provincials Silver Medal Champions
- 1995 – Masters Provincials Bronze Medal Champions



Starting in 1946, The Rutland Rovers played under the Pro-Rec League, eventually competing in the BC Softball Amateur Association. The original Rutland Rovers roster of the late forties included the following athletes:

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| ➤ Blaskovits, Robert – SS | ➤ Reiger, Henry – 2B |
| ➤ Flegel, Adam – Player | ➤ Reiger, Peter – CF |
| ➤ Graf, Otto – Player | ➤ Runzer, Jake Runzer – P |
| ➤ Hartman, Andy – Coach | ➤ Runzer, Rudy – Player |
| ➤ Husch, Nick – Player | ➤ Sali, Ray – Player |
| ➤ Reiger, Adam – 1B | ➤ Smith, Harry – RF |
| ➤ Reiger, Frank – LF | ➤ Stremel, George – Catcher |
| ➤ Reiger, Fred – Pitcher & 3B | ➤ Suzuki, Tosh – Player |

Shortly after, Paul Sedlack took over coaching in 1948. In 1946/47 the Rutland Rovers had no available home field so they practiced on schoolgrounds and cow pastures. With no funding available, the Rovers built their own fastball field at what is now Centennial Park, completing the project in 1948.

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During the 1950's, the Rutland Rovers supported local sport within the community sponsoring three local teams: Rutland Rovers Fastball Team, Rutland Rovers Commercial Hockey Team and the Rutland Rovettes, a girls' fastball team. The Rutland Rovers were led by several coaches throughout the 1950s and 1960s, including Adam Rieger, Paul Bach (1951–52), Henry Wostradowski (1953), Jack Biechel (1954–55), Fred Rieger (1956–57 and 1960–65), Earl Fortney (1958–59), and Al Volk (1965–66). Finally in 1950, they earned a spot in the BC finals, competing in Prince George, BC. They won their first game of the tournament before poor weather interrupted play and ultimately ended their championship run. Throughout the 1960s, they fielded a strong team and advanced to the Provincial Finals in Vancouver, finishing as runners-up after weather-related interruptions. The competitive strength of the Senior "B" league led to the establishment of the Senior "C" league in 1962.

1969 was one of the Rovers best seasons', collecting five trophies throughout their season. They took the Fred Weston Trophy for the May Days Tournament, the Legion Trophy for winning the league, the George Rieger Trophy for winning the Kelowna and District Softball Championship and the Valley Championships and the runner up trophy in the Provincials.

The Rovers began the 70s on a high note by taking the Kelowna and District Championship. In 1985, the Rovers captured the Senior Men's Intermediate "A" Provincial Championship and went on to win the Western Canadian Championship in Calgary, Alberta. This team was coached by Hank Siegmann and included:

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|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ➤ Abercrombie, Ted – Player | ➤ Page, Denby – Player |
| ➤ Bauer, Bruce – Player | ➤ Pachenski, Phil – Player |
| ➤ Bigler, Ron – Player | ➤ Robinson, Jim – Player |
| ➤ Buchner, Don – Player | ➤ Shemley, Bill – Player |
| ➤ Casato, Tom – Player | ➤ Showler, Denis – Player |
| ➤ Fenton, Bart – Player | ➤ Siegmann, Hank – Coach |
| ➤ Goodin, Brett – Player | ➤ Siegmann, Mike – Player |
| ➤ Knorr, Cory – Player | ➤ Weninger, Wayne – Player |
| ➤ Kroschinsky, Mickey – Player | ➤ Whitfield, Clay – Player |

Denis Showler began his involvement with the Rovers as a batboy, before progressing to a player, later becoming a pitcher in Inter. A Western tournament. In the early 1980s, he

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transitioned into coaching and led the team to Senior B Provincial victories in 1991 and 1992, where they represented B.C. strongly despite not capturing gold. Denis remained with the team, later coaching the Masters team. In 1995, the Rutland Rovers moved into the Masters division and captured the bronze medal at the Masters Provincial Championship in Vernon, BC.

Ultimately, the Rutland Rovers built a decades-long legacy of competitive success and community involvement, earning their induction into the Softball BC Hall of Fame.