

Nicholls State A were primed for the competition, bringing their matching jerseys and their softball prowess to the field.

2009 SIGMA ALPHA EPSILON
SUMMER
EVENTS



BRINGING HOME THE WINS:

THE 2009 ΣAE WORLD SERIES

by Geary Mason, featured writer
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Despite months of preparation, sometimes Mother Nature forces a change in plans at the last minute. This year's ΣAE World Series, the 24th time the event has been held, was slated to take place in conjunction with the 153rd Anniversary Convention — as both events would be in New Orleans in late July. The convention, which started on the evening of July 30, featured a kickoff ceremony to get the attendees ready for the Fraternity's annual softball tournament. But heavy rains took their toll on the playing fields, forcing the tournament's host committee to switch to a different venue — the sports complex's adjacent soccer fields.

Ron Rigamer and Geary Mason, the tournament's directors, had to make the last-minute preparations. Players from more than 20 teams from around the country pitched in to move the soccer goals and to set up bases and infield lines on the wet-grass fields. With such a difficult start, play did not finish that evening until well after 11 p.m., but the late

hour gave the convention attendees something to cheer about after sitting in meetings and sessions all day.

A group of middle-aged alumni who compete in the tournament year after year entered their team, the Rejects II — named for their previous incarnation, the Rejects — which is the only team to compete in each of the 24 years. While the Rejects II would lose two games that first eve-

ning, 6–2 to the Cal State-Northridge Alums and 10–0 to South Florida, other newcomers would fare better. The active members of the Birmingham-Southern chapter showed the Tulane Old Alums who was in better shape, trouncing the older members 26–2 before defeating the Louisiana Tech Alums 9–2 — placing Birmingham in the winners' bracket. But it was the defending champion, the Nicholls State A team, who would post the most impressive scores. The men thrashed South Florida 22–6 before hitting even harder against in-state rival LSU, winning 30–1. The Nicholls State B team turned in opposite results, however. In a game where active members faced their own alumni, the B team lost 27–12 and then continued that negative streak,



dropping the game to the Southern Mississippi Alums 20–3. Their less-than-impressive showing earned the members the tournament’s Last Place Award for the fourth year in a row.

Across the fields, the group of Southern Mississippi Throwback Alums, who had won the tournament over a decade ago, came back to compete. The members showed that age was not a factor, defeating the Tulane Alums 7–0 and then beating eight-time winner South Florida

Alums 9–7 in a nail-biter that saw the lead change three times. Meanwhile, a strong alumni team from Troy University in Alabama defeated the Nicholls State Alums 23–8 as well as the second-seeded Christian Brothers Alums 16–8 to advance to the quarterfinals.

The event continued Saturday in the much-needed sunshine, but the competition only became more intense. The Southwest Texas Alums beat the top-seeded defending champion Nicholls State A team 13–4 to advance in the winner’s bracket. The Troy University Alums continued to turn heads as they drummed the Southern Miss Throwbacks 12–1 and needed only one more win to advance to the championship game. The most exciting game of the tournament, though, saw Southwest Texas leading the Troy Alums 11–10 in the bottom of the seventh and last inning. With so much on the line, Ricky Ibarz of the Troy squad hit a solo homer, sending the game into extra innings. While neither team could score in the eighth, the Southwest Texas Alums added two in the ninth to pull ahead

13–11. In the bottom of the ninth inning, Troy loaded the bases with no outs. Team captain Hunter Rolling hit a grand slam for a 15–13 final score, advancing his squad to the championship game.

Geoff Harris, captain of the Southwest Texas Alums, was leading his team in their 13th straight competition, so the squad was ready for a fight. In the finals of the consolation round, with a berth in the championship game at stake, the team was down 10–5 to the Nicholls State A team. But in the bottom of the last inning, the Texas boys rallied to score seven runs and steal a 12–10 come-from-behind victory, which earned them a rematch against the Troy Alums in the championship game.

Because of the tournament’s double-elimination format, the Southwest Texas Alums would have to defeat the Troy Alums twice because Troy had not yet lost a game. With a huge crowd on hand for the final game, Rolling led his team to a 3–0 lead with a homer in the top of the first inning, but the opposition belted two solo home runs in the

FINAL STANDINGS

1ST PLACE:

Southwest Texas Alums

2ND PLACE:

Troy University Alums

3RD PLACE:

Nicholls State Alums

4TH PLACE:

South Florida Alums



Clockwise from top left: While the heavy rains put a damper – literally – on the competition, players lent a hand to get the infields ready for ball. A member of the Cal Nu Alumni team slides into a makeshift home plate. Players wore their Fraternity pride on their jerseys, on their caps and yes, on their faces. Past Eminent Supreme Archon Todd Buchanan gets ready for the pitch. Supporters were out in full force, including (from left) Rick Goodwin (Cal State-Fullerton '75), Dick Thompson (Oregon State '73), Charlie Boyd (Mississippi State '65) and John Bulcock (Wichita State '02).





Clockwise from top left: It's a close call as the runner is out at first. The lights illuminate a grass field — the dirt was too wet for tournament play — but the action wasn't dampened. A member of the Nicholls State Alums gives the thumbs-up after a tough inning.

bottom of the second to close the gap, 3–2. Three-time tournament MVP Adrian Castilleja of Southwest Texas also hit a solo shot in the fourth to tie the score 3–3. After the teams entered the seventh tied at 7–7, Jason Harris became a hero by smashing a solo homer to win the game for the Southwest Texas Alums, 8–7. After a 15 minute break, both teams would play for the third time in the day — but this time, it would be for the tournament title. The tired but still determined Southwest Texas Alums would play their fifth game in a row with only 10 minutes of rest between games.

The team needed little rest, apparently, as the men exploded to a 9–0 lead in the top of the first inning. In the top of the second, five members of the Southwest Texas team set a record as the first five at-bats — Marcus Smith, Adrian Castilleja, Noel Zoepada, Geoff Harris and Rick

Maynard — all hit solo home runs to jump to a 14–0 lead with no outs. After two more runs, Marcus Smith homered again with two runners on base to extend the lead to 19–0 in only the top of the second inning. The Troy Alums never quit, scratching out nine runs during the game, but the damage was done. The Southwest Texas Alums cruised to a 19–9 victory and their third Σ AE World Series championship, after taking the big prize in both 2002 and 2003.

The post-tournament party in New Orleans' French Quarter went strong, as both conventioners and World Series participants came together to celebrate their shared brotherhood. *The New Orleans Alumni Association will be hosting the 25th annual Σ AE World Series again in 2010, and check www.sae.worldseries.com for more details.*

SPECIAL AWARDS

MOST IMPROVED:

Southern Miss Throwbacks

FARTHEST DISTANCE TRAVELED:

Cal State-Northridge

Σ AE SPIRIT:

Nicholls State A,
Nicholls State B,
Nicholls State Alums

BEST DRESSED:

Nicholls State A

LAST PLACE:

Nicholls State B

TOURNAMENT MVP:

Geoff Harris,
Southwest Texas Alums

STEVE BIRK DEDICATION AWARD:

Southwest Texas Alums