

JUMPING UP AND DOWN

The Danville, Virginia fastpitch softball team won its' fifth straight Virginia Championship. It qualified the team to participate in the Regionals in Dover, Delaware on Labor Day weekend in 1977

The team had played in Regionals in Washington D.C., Philadelphia and twice in Winchester, Virginia.

In Dover on Saturday afternoon they won and were to play the home team Dover on Saturday night.

Dover had picked Bill Dudley one of the great pitchers of all time. The softball was named after him. He was a slingshot pitcher. He is noted for pitching for the Clearwater Florida Bombers to World Series Championships.

It was suspected Dover had paid him to travel and pitch for them even although this was an amateur event.

Bill Dudley was a Mormon and would not pitch on Sundays. Dover had scheduled the games if they won would not play on Sundays.

They anticipated they would win on Saturday night and play in the Championship on Monday.

Some of us had faced many great pitchers such as Mel Stofflett, Joe Lewis Abney, Sea Biscuit Simmons, Eddie Faintner the King and His Court and Bob Sanders who threw a perfect game against us striking out nineteen and two of us bunted for outs. He was the best. All were windmill style pitchers.

Danville and Dover played a fast game with Dover Leading 4-1 in the bottom of the seventh inning. In the beginning of the seventh Danville had runner on first with one out. The second out came after a single and a walk. Bases were loaded with David Crawford at bat. There was a long fly to leftfield. Wow! It went over the fence for a grand slam home run giving Danville an unbelievable victory. It was the only time in my athletic career I jumped around hugging my teammates as we were so excited.

This placed us in the finals against Rising Sun from Pennsylvania. We had faced their pitcher Mel Stofflett before. The winner would qualify for the World Series in Dallas, Texas. Unfortunately We were defeated in thirteen innings 2-1. It was my final fastpitch game.