



HEADER

Fundraising champs undefeated

The Lightning Bugs were undefeated in this year's 16-team Hittin' for Hooters and Duders Slo-Pitch Tournament! This marks the second year this Manitoba Hydro team competes in the comically (though topically) named CancerCare fundraising event. The team brought in \$1,630 in donations, exceeding last year's fundraising totals.



The Lightning Bugs letting loose on the field after winning 3 games and losing none.

Alt-text: Manitoba Hydro staff posing for a softball team photo. Everyone is posing in a silly manner.

The Hittin' for Hooters and Duders tournament started in 2019 to raise funds for breast and prostate cancer research in Manitoba. The grand total raised this year was \$22,102. Prizes were allotted to the five teams who fundraised the most, but also to the Best Dressed and Best Team Name — of which there were many, some a tad too risqué for Hydrogram!

“We won a Goldeyes Skysuite certificate at Blue Cross Park for coming in 3rd for most funds raised,” said **Lisa Jennings** (Asset Planning & Delivery). “I’m sure we’ll be celebrating, wind-up style, when we attend the Goldeyes game together.

“This tournament is a fun way to get to know people you may not work with on a daily basis. I made new friends and had lots of laughs!”

Despite being rained out for the A side Final, team members had a blast overall.



Charlene Copet, Yvonne Grenier (Operations) and Lisa Jennings take a break between games while Amanda Fraser (Asset Planning & Delivery) and Leanne Amos (Operations) snap a group selfie.

Alt-text: Charlene, Yvonne and Lisa appear in the back row while Amanda and Leanne are up front. All are seated at a picnic table at a baseball field.



Mike Macario (Operations) and Brady Gmiterek (Asset Planning & Delivery) share a laugh together in the dugout.

Alt-text: Mike and Brady laugh for the camera. Mike is holding the scorecard.

To the benefit of The Lightning Bugs, a Slo-Pitch pro was on the team! **Kenneth Blue** (Distribution Operations & Maintenance) has been playing softball for over 30 years and will be inducted to the 2024 SPN Manitoba Field of Dreams Hall of Fame this fall.

“Kenny asked to join the team after last year’s tournament, but I had no idea he was a Hall of Famer until about two weeks before the tournament,” said Lisa. “Very exciting!”

Hydrogram reached out to Ken to hear his thoughts on the tournament and his contribution to Slo-Pitch Manitoba history.

Q. This tournament raises funds for breast and prostate cancer – do you have a personal connection to this cause?

I have family members who have had both breast and prostate cancer, as well as other cancers throughout my extended family. My mother-in-law had breast cancer and is now cancer free! We are grateful for events such as this that provide awareness to breast and prostate cancer and help with raising funds for this cause.

Q. You’ll be inducted to the Slo-Pitch National Hall of Fame this fall, when did you hear the news and how did you feel?

An SPN board member made a special trip out to one of my Hitmen slo-pitch games in Beausejour to announce that I would be inducted into the SPN Manitoba Field of Dreams Hall of Fame. I was shocked and humbled by this honour. I had no idea this was in the works, so it was a real surprise!



SPN Manitoba

Barry Black · 45m · 🌐

Our next inductee into the 2024 SPN Manitoba Field of Dreams Hall of Fame is Ken Blue.

Ken has played the game at an exceptional level for 30+ years and currently plays with The Hitmen out of the Beausejour Slo Pitch League and Teekay Mens League.

Ken is the definition of class, sportsmanship and professionalism!

Congrats Ken!

Alt-text: SPN Manitoba facebook post reads: Our next inductee into the 2024 SPN Manitoba Field of Dreams Hall of Fame is Ken Blue. Ken has played the game at an exceptional level for 30+ years and currently plays with The Hitmen out of the Beausejour Slo Pitch League and Teekay Men's League. Ken is the definition of class, sportsmanship and professionalism! Congrats Ken!

Q. Were your Lightning Bug teammates surprised to hear you’re a seasoned pro?

I have been participating in slo-pitch for close to 40 years now and played in so many leagues around the city and province that many of my teammates already knew me. As for knowing me as a ‘seasoned pro’,

I couldn't say, but I'm pretty sure they were happy to have me on their team. I'm just grateful to continue to be welcomed to play with my co-workers and friends.

Q. How long have you been playing softball and what do you love most about the sport?

I have been playing for very long time. One of my oldest memories of the sport is when I played in our family yard with my brothers and sister. We didn't have a bat, so we used an old table leg or broom handle instead! I built a small backstop in the yard to practice on. Hitting was a lot easier once we got a real bat, though! The best thing to come out of slo-pitch are the lifelong friends I have made and the places it has taken me. I've been lucky to play in slo-pitch or softball national tournaments in almost every province and even in the World Series of Slo-pitch in Panama City, Florida in 2003. I have met so many wonderful people from coast to coast!

Q. Is there anything else you'd like to say to Hydrogram?

I'm grateful my health is good enough to be able to continue to play this sport at my age, and at a competitive level. I currently play on five teams, one of which is a 55+ team called "Fossilized". We will be representing Manitoba in the 55+ Canada Games in August in Quebec City. I think I'm playing as much now as I did in my 20s! I hope to play for many more years and continue to share my passion for the sport with not only my teammates, but also my opponents, umpires and anyone who also loves the sport.

Want to play?

Lisa plans to continue to organize a Manitoba Hydro team for this event — next year's is on June 21, 2025 — but also hopes to put a team together for Country radio station QX104's *Slo-Pitch 4 a Wish*. If you'd like to join the team, please reach out to Lisa via Teams or email at