

Curt Hollis Reebok Senior Softball

Curt Hollis, all 6'3", 285 pounds is 54 and resides in Jacksonville, Florida. He is the only sponsored Reebok senior player in the country. Curt has been playing senior softball for the past 5 years with the major plus, Hollis Appraisals team. He is Reebok's "Ambassador to Senior Softball" and heads up the marketing for the new Reebok Melee Legend bat that is taking the country by storm.



"I have thoroughly enjoyed my senior softball career as I have met some wonderful people throughout the country and been fortunate enough to win a national tournament here and there. The competition level and abilities of seniors is phenomenal. There are excellent players in every section of the country and most of them are just fantastic people. I enjoy the camaraderie more than the actual playing."

Curt was part of the group that started a "get together" or spring training event ten years ago to provide an avenue for northern message board friends to have an outlet to hit while the snow was on the ground up north. "This started out as hey guys, come down and I'll rent a field and we'll spend a few days hitting and telling stories. Well, it didn't take long for that to develop into a full fledged, once a year, Classic Spring Training event with well over 120 participants from every corner of the country. I would reserve four fields and starting Thursday night we would beginning hitting and wrap up on Sunday afternoon. I added in pitching, hitting and fielding instructions, a homerun derby and base running event, a banquet, etc. I've brought in some of the best hitters on the planet like Hank Garris and Johnny McCraw to help with instructions. However, most of our campers are just average players that want to learn some new techniques and sharpen their game. We always have a large contingency of seniors and usually send a group on Friday to play in front of 1,100 prisoners over at the New River Correctional Facility to take on the inmates. This is usually the highlight for the seniors, and for most, it is their first time inside of prison walls. We use this as an out reach and donate various softball items to the prison. Last year, the Warden put together an "A" team of inmates and had them ready for us. I think we lost one and won one last year. That was the first game we have ever lost to them! This year, I plan on opening a "Can of Whoop XXX" on them! LOL. Spring training has grown each year and we have had people travel all the way from Asia and Europe to attend."

I understand that you were instrumental in the development and marketing of the new Reebok senior bat. Can you briefly tell us how all that came about?

"I don't know about instrumental but one day my brother, Audie, and I were hitting with one of the top pitchers in "flat belly ball", Johnny Dykes who plays on the Suncoast Reebok team. He was impressed with our ability to hit the long ball but surprised at how quick we broke the senior bats. Johnny told us of his connections with the Reebok brass and that they were interested in the senior



market. We had Johnny invite them to attend last year's Classic Spring Training event. Reebok came in force with the John Loairs, the Director of Research & Development and Tom Woods, the Director of Marketing from Reebok International leading the way. I was very impressed with the commitment these guys had to developing the senior bat. They had worked up a prototype senior bat and asked if our campers could swing it and provide them some feedback. I pointed them to Davie Reed, an awesome 60 major plus player who was our guest senior hitting instructor for the event. Davie put on an incredible hitting display and pronounced the bat, "the best he has ever hit." At that point, Reebok knew they were on to something! However, that prototype bat had a serious durability problem and John asked me if I would help him in the development of the senior bat. Of course I agreed.

After spring training, I worked closely with John to meet our goal, which was to develop a senior bat that would perform like an Ultra, be more durable than anything on the market and be competitively priced. We spent the next few months building, testing and destroying bats over and over again until we finally came up with a bat that was ready for the BPF testing. I held my breath until the test results came back and Then, it passed!

What we came up with exceeded our wildest expectations. Shortly after getting the bat approved Reebok ask me to become Reebok's Ambassador to Senior Softball. That's an honor I don't deserve. But I accepted anyway!!!

Reebok's plan was to release the new Melee Legend at the Classic Spring Training event in 2011. I suggested we release a few bats on the market in October, 2010 just to create a little "Buzz". Reebok gave me the approval and so I put my secret marketing plan into action.

The response was unbelievable and everybody to a man believes the Reebok senior bat is the best bat on the market. It has fabulous pop and incredible durability. I am really excited about this bat and thankful that Reebok has allowed me to become part of their team. Finally, there is a high performance bat on the market that has durability that you can use in the game as well as batting practice."

Well, Curt that is a unique story. I am happy to hear of a major global company that took the time and expense to come down to ground level to get input from seniors who are playing the game. What are your softball plans for the future and how is the best way to order one of these new Reebok senior bats?

“It’s funny you say that, major global company. There is a reason these guys are so good at what they do. They are truly committed to developing the best softball equipment on the market. You don’t usually find that in a company the size of Reebok. There were many 11:30 pm text messages between me and John Loairs during the bat’s development. That’s a commitment level you won’t see from many directors. John looked me in the eye and said *“Curt, we are here for the duration. No one even knows we make softball bats, but mark my word, within the next year or two, we will dominate this industry”*.

I expect to continue playing with the Hollis Appraisals team as long as I enjoy it and can physically play. After those days are done I can see myself involved in some facet of softball. Currently, I am serving on Florida First Coast’ Softball Metro Board which oversees softball in Duval County. I plan to continue to hold the Classic Spring Training and hope to develop my relationship with Reebok into more areas of senior softball.

If you are interested in purchasing the new Reebok Melee Legend, look on the internet at www.reebokseniorbat.com or www.seniorsoftballbat.com.