

Mike Madril
Mesa Sports
Hal of Fame
2018



By Jason P. Skoda

Long before Kurt Warner used the fast-paced, smaller fields of the Arena Football League to excel in the National Football League on the way to a Hall of Fame career, Mike Madril did something similar on his way to a collegiate and pro baseball career.

Warner, who had circuitous route to the NFL, has credited his time in the AFL as one of the reasons he was able to make quick decisions and deliver the ball in tight places in the NFL. The AFL is a much-quicker game and decisions have to come even faster than what a quarterback has to do in the NFL.

Like Warner, Madril had a unique route in continuing his baseball career after starting for two years at shortstop for Mesa before graduating in 1974.

He didn't get a baseball scholarship offer after his senior year, but he still found himself on a diamond.

It just wasn't baseball.

He joined a fast-pitch softball league where the pitching circle was much closer (46 feet) than in baseball (60-feet, 6-inches).

"I muddled around for a while before finding fast pitch," he said. "I think it really helped my pro career because your swing has to be so much quicker. You have to be ready to swing as soon as you get in the box. Once I got back to baseball, I felt like I had a lot more time to read the pitch and react."

The ability to put the bat on the ball is one of the reasons Madril is one of eight inductees for the 2018 Mesa City Hall of Fame and will be honored on Nov. 19 at Red Mountain High.

"It's a special thing and I appreciate it," Madril said. "I am thankful to be inducted and it is nice, but nothing tops actually getting paid to play baseball."

Before getting drafted in the 19th round in 1982 in the by the Anaheim Angels, Madril had an All-American career at Grand Canyon University starting in 1980, six years after graduating from Mesa.

In between Madril was getting better playing fast pitch softball, which has mostly died out, at a high level. He was a two-time Arizona Player of the Year and in 1981 was selected for the International Softball Congress All-World team.

After five years in the pros where he reached Triple-A, he was released by the Angels and had a decision to make. He had a chance to head to the Mexican League but instead chose a teaching career and has been at Mesa High for 30 years.

Over the years he has coached softball, soccer and baseball for the Jackrabbits including being the boys soccer head coach (1990-92) and softball head coach(2009-2017).

“It was one of those forks in the road,” said Madril, who has been married to Lisa for 35 years with two children. “I was just released from the Angels and felt like I had more to give and would have liked to see what I could do, but we had a young daughter and the teaching job came along.”

He has been at Mesa ever since and proud to remain a Jackrabbit.

“Mesa is all about the traditions and the feeling of belonging to some place,” he said. “Everyone is so proud of Mesa. It’s like a college in that way. Everyone is proud of being from Mesa like others are of their universities.”

And come Monday, Madril will find himself in a new fraternity because of his time at Mesa as he prepares to join the Hall of Fame.

“It’s a huge honor,” said Madril, who was nominated by Hall of Famer Mark Grant. “Mark told me he nominated me, but I didn’t really think about getting in. It’s a special thing.”