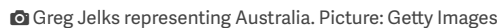


# Greg Jelks death devastates Carine Cats

January 6th, 2017, 04:30PM | Written by Mark Donaldson | [Joondalup Times \(http://www.communitynews.com.au/joondalup-times/\)](http://www.communitynews.com.au/joondalup-times/)

[SPORT \(/JOONDALUP-TIMES/SPORT/\)](#)

 Greg Jelks representing Australia. Picture: Getty Images

 (HTTPS://TWITTER.COM/HOME?STATUS=HTTP://WWW.COMMUNITYNEWS.COM. WA baseball great Greg Jelks returned home to Alabama to visit his elderly mother at Christmas time.

 (HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SHARER/SHARER.PHP?U=HTTP://WWW.COMM Sped had told him he needed to visit because she was not sure how many more Christmases they would spend together

 (HTTPS://PLUS.GOOGLE.COM/SHARE?URL=HTTP://WWW.COMMUNITYNEWS.CO It would be the last time they would see her.

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(<http://www.communitynews.com.au/comment/news/perth-heat-baseball-legend-greg-jelks-dies-aged-55/>.)

Jelks (55) fell asleep on the flight back to Australia and could not be woken when the plane arrived in Sydney this morning.

The cause of his death is not yet known.

The former Philadelphia Phillies pinch hitter's latest contribution to WA baseball was his push to build the young Carine Cats from State League easy beats into a competitive unit as head coach.

The Olympian, who represented Australia at the Sydney Games, signed with the club at the end of 2013.

An emotional Cats chairman Rob Goodin described the club's devastation at losing the popular mentor in such jarring circumstances.

He explained Jelks had checked it was OK to return home to the US for Christmas to see his mother.

Jelks was returning to Australia in time to coach the Cats on Sunday.



"He was developing some really good young kids that hopefully in the next 12 months will be heading to Greg's homeland to play ball over there.

"He's going to be sadly missed and our condolences go to his family in the US and friends here in baseball."

Goodin described the Perth Heat legend as a great influence on the up-and-coming ball players, who noticeably improved under his tutelage.

Through Jelks' contacts, Carine was able to push the "kids" beyond their perceived capabilities.

The Cats had struggled since earning promotion to Baseball WA's State League in 2012.

"We are a very young club, we don't have too many senior guys of such a high standard," Goodin said.

"We've sat on the bottom since our inception... and this year things were starting to come to fruition.

"We've won more games this year than we have in the last two.

"Everything was starting to click and now it's been put on hold."

Goodin would ask the team members whether they wanted to play this weekend given the circumstances, but he expected they would take to the diamond against Perth Baseball Club.

Assistant coach Evan Stewart will take the reins as head coach with the support of Goodin and the side's two American imports.

They are discussing plans for a club tribute.



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