OKC WELCOMES THE WORLD

ISF Women’s Fast Pitch World Championship

ASA Hall of Fame Complex • Oklahoma City • July 16-26, 2010

Teams already qualified include:
USA, Canada, Venezuela, Cuba, Argentina, Dominican Republic,
Netherlands, Great Britain and Czech Republic.
CUSTOM FULL DYE-SUBLIMATION PERFORMANCE SHIRTS

PRICES STARTING AT $34.99
Take your team to the next level with Boombah’s custom Full Dye-Sublimation performance shirts. Custom colors, custom logos, and custom designs delivered to you at the best prices in the industry.

NOW AVAILABLE
TORVA Series
YOUR CHOICE $19.99

TS-1210
Traction Divots in palm
Maximum breathability
Bottom-side fastener

TS-1220
Additional Palm padding
Traction Divots in palm
Maximum ventilation
Top-side Velcro fastener

TS-1230
Traction Divots in palm
Maximum breathability
Top-side Velcro fastener

VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.BOOMBBAH.COM
ASSOCIATION PROFILE
ILLINOIS ASA

Don Brewer is in his eighth season as commissioner for the Illinois ASA. Brewer has been part of the ASA family since 1961, when the former player and team manager, had an interest in the other side of ASA. He contacted Chuck McCord who was commissioner and so began a relationship that would eventually lead to Brewer replacing McCord as commissioner. Brewer took some time to talk with B&S about what makes Illinois ASA so successful.

B&S: “How have the people in Illinois responded to ASA and the programs it offers?”
DB: “I think we are going to be a little down in registrations this year for the first time since I have come on board and I think that mostly has to do with the economy. In the past eight years, we have had increases every year except this year, although this year our umpire registration is at about the same level. I think our history of increased registrations shows that softball participants in Illinois have really accepted ASA. Just the other day I received two emails, one from a manager and one from a player, saying how much they appreciated what ASA was doing for men’s fast pitch. Those types of reminders make it all worth it.

B&S: “What program do you feel is most successful in Illinois ASA?”
DB: “In Illinois our Junior Olympic program has grown by leaps and bounds. We have a great team who works exclusively with our Junior Olympic program to grow it so our registration always goes up. There has been a tremendously interest in our JO program as we have hosted a national tournament every year for the past eight years. We have two great facilities, in Normal and Moline, who have both had a tournament every alternating year. The administration of these tournaments has been at the highest level and teams like to come to Illinois because we put on a good tournament.”

B&S: “What are some best practices that Illinois ASA implements?”
DB: “We really put an emphasis on communication and service. One of the things we started which is fantastic in popularity is the hall of fame banquet. We have had more than 500 people attend some years and we think it’s just fantastic for public relations.

We have also have a lot of our meetings at the Holiday Inn in Decatur so there we put up a big plaque with names of people who have served ASA. Honoring that service is key to success. We are also working on putting up another hall of fame in Casey, Ill. As far as communications we put out a 50 page booklet once a year that goes out to team managers, coaches and media which has a great amount of information including past championships, tournament sites, rules and other things. We also publish a newsletter twice a year that goes out to coaches and managers. They are all great public relations vehicles that help us to succeed. Finally is our Web site which is crucial to success. We keep it up to date with schedules, results and info so that our people always know what’s going on. People expect a good, up-to-date website so you have to give that to them.”
On August 13, just a little over a year after the completion of the 2008 Olympic Games, millions of hearts were broken as it was announced that softball, already cut from the 2012 Olympic Games, will not be included in the programme for the 2016 Games. The 15 members of the International Olympic Committee’s (IOC) Executive Board made the decision not to reinstate softball at a closed meeting in Berlin. One of the seven sports in contention for the 2016 Games, softball was passed over in favor of golf and rugby as the list of possible additions was narrowed down to the final two candidates. Also eliminated from contention were baseball, karate, roller sports and squash.

“Obviously, we’re very disappointed by the IOC decision today as we were hoping for softball to be considered for inclusion in 2016,” said Ron Radigonda, the Executive Director of the Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA)/USA Softball. “However, softball is still an international sport power as we have always been. We have to continue to focus on the World Championships next July here in Oklahoma City and future international events. Despite today’s announcement, softball will continue and move on and work to be stronger than ever.”

In October at a meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark, that will also decide the host of the 2016 Olympic Games between four candidate cities, golf and rugby are being put forward by the Executive Board for an entire vote of the IOC. Both sports must be approved by the majority of 107 IOC members in order to be added to the Olympic Programme starting with the 2016 Games.

“The (International Softball Federation) and the wider softball family is certainly disappointed by today’s decision by the IOC Executive Board not to recommend softball for reinstatement onto the Olympic Games Programme in 2016,” ISF President Don Porter said in a statement. “However, we respect the IOC’s decision and I tip my cap to golf and rugby for getting recommended and offer my sentiments to the other four sports that were not successful today.”

The Olympic Games have been the marquee event of the sport since softball joined the programme at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. Falling one vote short necessary of the majority, softball was eliminated from 2012 London Games programme following a vote of the entire IOC in 2005. With no reinstatement for 2016, the Olympic future remains unclear for softball, which has approximately 9 million players across the world, according to the ISF.

Back Softball, a worldwide initiative the ISF started to support the reinstatement of the sport for 2016, was successful in increasing the reach of the sport to African and Middle Eastern countries, including Jordan and Sierra Leone, each which started national federations. The campaign also brought more than $250,000 worth of softball equipment to almost two-dozen developing nations, almost $3 million since 2002, and has started wheelchair softball programmes for the disabled in others.

The United States won the first of three consecutive Olympic Gold Medals in Atlanta, Sydney, and Athens. At the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, China, the Japanese women took home the Gold Medal, with the USA (silver) and Australia (bronze) joining Japan on the podium.

With close to 180,000 spectators in Beijing and a continuation of the sport’s excellent record of no positive doping tests at any of the four Olympic Games that the sport has been a part of, the 2008 Games proved to be another success for the growing sport that now looks toward events, like the 2010 ISF World Championships in Oklahoma City, in the absence of the Olympics.
PITCH, HIT AND RUN

The Major League Baseball (MLB) All-Star game is one of the hottest tickets on the market, nearly impossible to get even if you have a spare couple thousand dollars lying around. However, some Amateur Softball Association (ASA) athletes not only received the opportunity to attend the All-Star Game, but to also take part in the Aquafina MLB Pitch, Hit & Run (PHR) on July 13 during the 2009 MLB All-Star Week at Busch Stadium in St. Louis.

The athletes not only competed on one of MLB’s greatest fields but also took part in a magical week rubbing elbows with baseball’s greatest and receiving VIP treatment all the way. Each of the 12 athletes qualified through 10 Super Regionals hosted exclusively by ASA local associations including Arizona, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, Oregon, Sacramento, Southern California, Texas, and west and central Florida.

“We (Texas ASA) are excited about the Aquafina/MLB Pitch, Hit and Run program,” said Texas ASA Commissioner Glenn Morrison. “It has been well received as our numbers have tripled from last year’s participation. It is great to see MLB partner with local associations across the Nation to make this program possible. It is just one more tool for all of us within the ASA organization to promote our sport and take it to new heights.”

PHR boy and girl finalists advanced through several levels of competition, including over 4,000 local competitions hosted by civic youth organizations and volunteers, and have outscored over 600,000 youngsters. All 30 MLB clubs hosted team competitions at their ballparks from May 30-June 28.

The participants took care of business the first day they got to St. Louis with competition. The PITCH portion of the program tested how accurately a competitor can throw strikes from 45 feet to a designated “Strike Zone” target. A pitch hitting any portion of the target was deemed a strike. The HIT portion of the program tested the competitor’s ability to hit a softball from a stationary tee, along a tape measure from home plate, toward straight-away centerfield. Hits were measured for distance and accuracy. The RUN portion of the program measured a competitor’s speed in a sprint from second base, touch third, and across home plate.

After the competition was completed, the athletes were able to enjoy the week. They attended fan fest, shagged balls during home run derby and had front row seats to the All-Star Game. Annie Tarte of Valrico, Fla., who finished first in the 11/12 year old division, shared her experience in a blog. Click here to read all about the once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Aquafina Major League Baseball Pitch, Hit & Run is a grassroots program that was initiated in 1996 to provide youth across North America with an integrated competition that recognizes individual excellence in core baseball and softball skills. Free to boys and girls between the ages of 7-14, the program features local, sectional and team championship competitions, culminating at the National Finals. For more information on this program, please log onto www.mlb.com/phr.

2009 NATIONAL FINALS
ORDER OF FINISH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7/8 YEAR OLD DIVISION</th>
<th>9/10 YEAR OLD DIVISION</th>
<th>11/12 YEAR OLD DIVISION</th>
<th>13/14 YEAR OLD DIVISION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lorena Vasquez-Inzunza</td>
<td>Alyssa Lindemann</td>
<td>Annie Tarte</td>
<td>Jeanie Marie Perrucci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Chandler, Ariz.)</td>
<td>(Stayton, Ore.)</td>
<td>(Valrico, Fla.)</td>
<td>(Duluth, Ga.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maddy Braz</td>
<td>Alissa Hiener</td>
<td>Tailor Goods</td>
<td>Jasmin Gipson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Citrus Heights, Calif.)</td>
<td>(Ramona, Calif.)</td>
<td>(Maricopa, Ariz.)</td>
<td>(Van, Texas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia Mooney</td>
<td>Elena Hipp</td>
<td>Hannah Spacek</td>
<td>Erieka Burke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Lawrenceville, Ga.)</td>
<td>(Chesterfield, Mo.)</td>
<td>(College Station, Texas)</td>
<td>(Elk Grove, Calif.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona Diamondbacks</td>
<td>Seattle Mariners</td>
<td>Tampa Bay Rays</td>
<td>Atlanta Braves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco Giants</td>
<td></td>
<td>Arizona Diamondbacks</td>
<td>Texas Rangers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta Braves</td>
<td></td>
<td>Houston Astros</td>
<td>San Francisco Giants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Joey Rich with ASA participants

The PHR girl participants received jerseys signed by the 2009 USA softball women’s national team.
If there was an event this year that gave men’s top-level slow pitch attention, it was the inaugural Border Battle between the national teams of the USA and Canada, shown on July 14 on ESPN live from the Amateur Softball Association’s (ASA) Hall of Fame Complex.

The Border Battle was not the first time that the ASA helped boost the popularity of top-level men’s slow pitch. The organization previously held the ASA-Winston Slow Pitch All-Star Series in Nashville, Tenn., in 1982 and again a year later in Oklahoma City. In the 1982 series, the Major All-Stars played national champion Howard’s Western Steer of Denver, N.C. The Super Division champion Jerry’s Catering of Miami, Fla. and Triangle Sports of Minneapolis, Minn., played against All-Star teams from the Super and Major Divisions of play in 1983.

Since then, the top-level men’s slow pitch game has changed considerably, along with the equipment as well. And the athletes who play slow pitch today are five-tool players.

Bobby Lutz, who was a member of the Howard’s team and participated in the ASA-Winston Slow Pitch All-Star Series, served as the color analyst for the Border Battle. Alongside Lutz was Eric Collins, the play-by-play announcer for the Los Angeles Dodgers. Lutz is beginning his 12th year as head basketball coach at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte.

If it was not for softball, Lutz might have remained a high school basketball coach. But H.T. Waller, a former teammate and ASA Softball Hall of Famer, convinced Clemson Head Coach Cliff Ellis to give Lutz a chance at Clemson as an assistant coach. Lutz stayed at Clemson two years before getting the head basketball job at Pfeiffer College (High Point, N.C.) before going to UNC Charlotte.

Lutz, who played and later coached the All-Americans in the Winston All-Star Series, enjoyed the Border Battle and a chance to get reacquainted with a game that was a big part of his life growing up in North Carolina. Of course, the game of slow pitch that Lutz and Howard’s played 20 plus years ago and the game of slow pitch now are different.

“Today’s players are more sophisticated, more athletic,” Lutz said. “There’s a balance between speed and power, but I still believe our Howard’s team of 1981 could have adapted to today’s style of play. Some of the teams back then, however, would struggle in today’s game.”

Unlike years ago, when teams would rely on the home run, teams of today cannot hide a player who is only one dimensional because slow pitch is now played on larger fields with fences considerably farther from home plate than before. Today’s players have to have the ability to make long throws and also have the speed afoot to run down well hit softballs. Players who do not have those abilities now stand out like a sore thumb.

Adoption of new rules has also helped speed up the slow pitch game. Border Battle players started their at-bats with a one-and-one count, which unfortunately for Lutz and Collins, did not allow a lot of time for commentary and analysis. “He (Eric) said it was the fastest bat and ball game he’s ever called,” said Lutz. “He was amazed at the athleticism of the athletes.

Besides being a success on the field for Team USA, which came behind to win an exciting game 30-23, the Border Battle recorded a 0.70 ESPN rating as a standalone game reaching over 650,000 households across America. "The increases in our audience demonstrates that softball has a dedicated and passionate fan base that continues to grow," said Carol Stiff, senior director, ESPN programming and acquisitions. "We are proud to be partners in such an exciting sport."

Although the Border Battle was a joint effort between the ASA and Softball Canada, Don Cooper, vice president of marketing for Combat Sports, felt the event was more than just an international showcase of slow pitch.

“The on-field product was awesome and I think the boys from the north are highly skilled and in the future will win some of these events,” said Cooper. “On my flight home from the event the gentleman sitting next to me noticed the event shirt I was wearing and said he was in his hotel room and found himself watching the entire game. He stated that sure was not the slow pitch he had played as a younger man. It would be wonderful to get additional countries and Armed Forces teams involved in the event. I truly look forward to the 2010 event.”

Cooper, who years ago played big-time slow pitch, is not only person who will be looking forward to another slow pitch event like the Borer Battle. Fans across the world expressed on the ASA Facebook and Twitter that they hope the event returns in 2010.

While future Border Battles are uncertain, one thing is for sure. The inaugural Border Battle showed how slow pitch has grown and transformed since the days of the ASA-Winston Slow Pitch All-Star Series.
THOUGHTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

SEPTEMBER 17, 2009

Joey Rich throws out the ceremonial first pitch of USA vs. Netherlands at the KFC World Cup of Softball. Photo from Dutch softball website

“It’s great to be a part of ASA!” I hear this all over the country, and I say it myself often. In the midst of the IOC vote to not include softball in the Olympics, ASA is working to keep the National Teams and International play alive. ASA will host the 2010 Women’s Fast Pitch ISF World Championships at the Hall of Fame Complex next summer which will see 16 teams from all over the World convene on Oklahoma City.

With our championship play for adult teams nearing completion, this is a great time for ALL team managers, players, umpires and others involved in the game to make suggestions and provide input for changes to the game. Our Board of Directors will meet on Sept. 17-20 to discuss a very lengthy agenda. The 78th annual ASA National Council Meeting is Nov. 7-14 in Reno, Nev., and both rules and code changes will be considered as part of those proceedings. Contact your local association commissioner, UIC, players reps and other leaders with you suggestions for changes to both the national, regional, and state/metro operations.

I was proud to be able to represent you at the World Cup of Softball in Oklahoma City in July. What a fun moment for me to throw out the first pitch for the first game of Team USA on ESPN! I also attended the Men’s Fast Pitch World Championships in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada in late July, plus the Special Olympics Nationals in Lincoln, Neb., July 31-Aug. 1. My travels during my two-year term as President have taken me around the country and around the globe, and I have maintained a positive attitude everywhere in support of our great game.

I trust each and every one of you had a successful, enjoyable season, and I wish for you great softball experiences in the future! Yours for softball,

Joey Rich, ASA President
PLUMMER RETIRES AFTER 30 YEARS OF SERVICE

By Julie Bartel

Bill Plummer is a true ASA pioneer. His legacy to the nation’s top softball association will forever be remembered as he has been a pillar to the sport and the membership. After over 30 years of service, he will retire effective December 31, 2009 leaving behind a pair of shoes that will be hard to fill.

“I am concluding my career with ASA with 30 1/2 years and it has been really enjoyable,” said the 1999 ASA Hall of Famer for meritorious service. “I’ve traveled to the far corners of the world plus visited many of the U.S. cities in the best interest of the ASA. Along the way I’ve worked with some of the best and most dedicated people of this organization who have spent countless hours and effort to move the ASA forward.”

“Bill is ASA and we can’t thank him enough for his countless hours and dedication to this organization and sport,” said ASA Executive Director Ron Ragondola. “The ASA is a better place because of Bill and he is and always will be the true historian of ASA.”

Plummer joined the ASA National Office in May of 1979 and currently serves as the Hall of Fame manager, editor of the Inside Pitch Newsletter, historian, author, and trade show manager. From 1979 to 1996 he served as the Director of Public and Media Relations for the ASA and prior to that he worked as a sports writer at the New York Herald Journal.

“I have some great memories,” added Plummer. “I’ll never forget the pageantry and excitement of the debut of softball in the Olympics in 1996. That will be a memory that I will always cherish. I’ve been fortunate to travel to different countries to help promote softball. My trip to the Czech Republic a couple years ago with our USA National Men’s Team will always be No. 1 on my list of trip memories. Also celebrating the 75th anniversary last year will always hold a soft spot in my heart. It was a gala celebration and having the book (THE GAME AMERICA PLAYS: CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF THE AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION) there was an added benefit.”

A 1973 graduate of Indiana University, Plummer was born and raised in Liverpool, New York and served four years in the United States Air Force while working as a sports writer for newspapers in Syracuse, N.Y. and Riverside, Calif. A decorated author and writer, Plummer has been honored by countless ASA Association Hall of Fames and is an active freelance writer for sport specific publications, the Associated Press and the NCAA.

Plummer also served as an ASA player and coach and was an umpire for 15 years before retiring in July of 2005. He also served as district commissioner in New York State and Riverside, Calif.

Well Wishes and Memories from the ASA Membership

Congratulations from the ASA of Pennsylvania on your retirement. It is a pleasure for Pennsylvania to have you as a great friend and to have had your acquaintance over the many years. We thank you for all the support you have given us, especially in regards to submitting personnel to the Hall of Fame, in helping establishing our first state/metro newspaper, Pennsylvania Softball News, and other general information that we have relied on you for. We always knew if we needed to know where to find information, etc. that we could count on you to give us direction. Thanks again Bill, we will miss you, your years of knowledge and helpfulness when you retire in December, but we, the ASA of PA, wish you the best of luck in all the endeavors that you pursue and wish you a healthy retirement.

ASA of Pennsylvania

I had the privilege of working along side Bill Plummer in one way or another for almost thirty years and Bill, you were always available to assist with what ever I needed. You have always been a great resource of information and for the most part it was not necessary for you to look up the facts I wanted, it was all in your head. You were like a walking encyclopedia. There are many memories I could share or stories of that I could tell, but I will just send along my best wishes to you. For those that read this and may not know, you have had a very distinguished career; a district commissioner, softball player, manager and umpire. The manager of the ASA of National Softball Hall of Fame, editor of THE INSIDE PITCH, Trade Show Manager and ASA Historian, sports writer, baseball scout and author of your own book... THE GAME AMERICA PLAYS: CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF THE AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION, O.W. “Bill” Smith Past ASA President

Who is Bill Plummer? He is a man who takes his position very seriously, loves what he does and knows more about softball than anyone I have ever known. He has a good sense of humor and is always willing to help you when needed. Bill was the best person to write the history of the Amateur Softball Association. I once attended a national tournament where Bill was in attendance and found him busy with stats and following what was taking place on the field while having a conversation with me. Bill will be missed by many in the ASA when he retires this fall. I only hope that he will continue in some small way with ASA. We wish him good luck and happiness in his retirement years. There is only one Bill Plummer and I will always remember our talks over the years. He will always be my friend.

Doug Dicey, NHASA Commissioner Emeritus

I was always impressed with Bill’s irresistible enthusiasm for whatever he did. If it was a game he umpired, ASA history or the Hall of Fame banquet, he bubbled over every moment. I shall miss that joy when he leaves us. I wish him every success and happiness in his “retired” life, if he really retires.

Bob Savoie
National Umpire Staff (Retired) Hall of Fame 2005

I just want to wish Bill the best in his retirement. Bill has always been there for me as the Director of the ASA of Pa. Hall of Fame Building. His desire and dedication to work with individuals to promote ASA Softball and our Hall of Fame has been above the call of duty. Many times I have contacted him for information as to our organization and timelines throughout our development. Bill always had an answer for me. We will miss his dedication to our organization and his impact on our ASA Hall of Fame, that we should all be very proud of, thanks to Mr. Plummer.

David L Persing, ASA of Pa Deputy State Commissioner & Hall of Fame Director

I wish Bill all the best! Bill did a tremendous job on the Hall of Fame Museum, and most of all I admired how he would interact with visitors to the Hall of Fame and answer any questions they had. He has a wealth of knowledge, and I admired the dedication and commitment he had for his job. Outside of the office, softball was a big part of his life as well. Thank you Bill. It was a pleasure working with you.

Lu (Williams) Jones (Retired National Office Umpire assistant)

I have only worked with Bill at the National Office for a few months but he has certainly been very welcoming and wealth of knowledge. We sit right next to each other so it has been fun to hear the stories of old and new and also see the impact he has made to this place. I know all of us here in the office will miss him and wish him the very best in his future endeavors.

Nancy Techee, ASA Stadium Events Coordinator

Bill is one of the last people I can sit down with and talk about the “glory” years of men’s slow pitch. Bill along with Bernie Profato are the two historians of this era of softball. Bill’s knowledge of the game and the contacts he has made over the years can’t be replaced. A person has to truly love the sport of softball to have taken the time to learn the game and meet the people; that is Bill Plummer.

E.T. Colvin, Commissioner, Mississippi ASA

My best memories of Bill are anytime that I would ask a question about a particular player or team from the Men’s Super or Major level, he always would provide me with a lot more details than just what I asked for as he knew everyone in the program. Bill totally amazes me with the vast amount of knowledge about the history of the ASA program. He will be greatly missed by many. I hope he keeps his personal telephone number published!

James Ellis, Commissioner, Tennessee ASA
NEED AN EASIER WAY TO MANAGE YOUR LEAGUE?

CLUBSPACES IS YOUR BEST SOLUTION! Clubspaces is the Official League Website & Online Management System of ASA. Our tools are designed to help you easily manage your league and increase communications between players, parents and coaches. And it gets better – this program is FREE to all ASA Leagues.

- League and Team Websites
- Professionally Designed ASA Website Templates
- Online Registration
- Auto Game Scheduler
- Central Calendar
- Group Email
- 24/7 Customer Support & No Hosting Fees

“ASA is thrilled to offer Clubspaces to all of our ASA members. We truly believe that leagues that use Clubspaces will find it dramatically easier to manage their league, saving time and resources, and increase communication between players, parents, volunteers and coaches.”

Ron Radigonda, Executive Director of ASA

Get Started Today!

www.clubspaces.com/asa
Softball league scores with balanced schedules published in real time

The Challenge
Phil Freeman is a longtime volunteer with the Prince Williams Girls Fastpitch Softball League. He coached his daughters through high school and now that they’re grown, coaches several teams of younger players. For the past four years Phil has also taken on the role of scheduler. Twice a year he would create a large grid with a matrix on a spreadsheet, and just start plugging in games, hoping it all worked out.

The biggest problem was he couldn’t quite get a good balance in the schedule with the tedious manual process. “I’d constantly have to plug things in, get feedback from people, then go back and move things around,” said Phil.

When scheduling was finally completed, Phil would send an email with the team’s schedule to each coach, and then coaches would send an email to parents. The webmaster would manually post the schedules on the league’s website.

Whenever there was a change to the schedule, Phil would email or even call the coaches, who in turn would contact parents. The webmaster would go back and update the website.

Because the schedule published on the website couldn’t reflect changes in real time, parents just relied on the coaches for any updates.

The Solution
Phil tried the Clubspaces Scheduler and found it made the entire process much easier. He simply had to enter teams, fields, dates, times between games, and hit ‘Generate.’ The system automatically generated the entire season’s schedule.

The time savings were immediately apparent, and Phil discovered two additional benefits. “The biggest plus is because it’s integrated into our league and team websites, we can publish to those sites immediately,” Phil said. “Now instead of waiting to hear from coaches, parents and players go right to the website knowing that the information is reliable because it’s updated in real time.”

A second benefit was a feeling of relief knowing the schedules were truly balanced. Phil no longer worried that he had overscheduled or underscheduled any team. “Now I know the schedules are balanced,” said Phil.

Using the Clubspaces Scheduler, Phil eliminated the need for each webmaster to upload schedules. “It was a hassle for the webmaster,” Phil said. “Now the webmaster doesn’t even need to deal with it.”

Club Win
Since the Clubspaces Automatic Game Scheduler is completely integrated with the league’s public website and its network of team sites, schedules are immediately published to the entire league. Any schedule changes are available in real time. “Everyone knows to go to the website for the latest information,” said Phil. “It’s important for us to handle schedule through our website. Everything is perfectly integrated – and done right away.”

Learn more: www.clubspaces.com
ASK THE EXPERTS

You asked and we answered! See below some of our top questions submitted to our ASA experts through our Facebook and Twitter accounts. Stay plugged into all things USA and ASA softball related by becoming our friend.

Why is softball not in the Olympics? — Submitted by Mallory Elizabeth via Facebook

Softball did not receive the majority necessary vote of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to remain in the Olympic Games for 2012. In August, the International Olympic Committee’s Executive Board voted to propose the addition of golf and rugby to the Olympic Programme for 2016. Although softball is not in the Games, we believe it is an international sport and it will prevail through events like the International Softball Federation (ISF) Women’s World Championships and the 2011 Pan American Games.

Now that softball is out of the Olympics, will there still be a Women’s National Team? — Submitted by various people

Yes, there will still be Women’s National Teams because softball is still an international sport even without the Olympic Games. In fact, USA Softball is currently taking applications from qualified candidates for the 2009-12 Men’s National Team and Women’s National Team Selection Committees.

How can I be selected for a national team? — Submitted by various people

You can get information on the National Team selection procedures at www.usasoftball.com/folders.asp?fid=11. Although it is not a requirement, most of our women’s players are standout players in Division 1 ball.

Will Team USA play in the International Softball Federation Women’s World Fast Pitch Championships next summer? — Submitted by crossman27 via Twitter

Not only will the United States be one of the 16 teams vying for the World Championship Gold Medal, the competition will take place July 16-28, 2010, at the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) Hall of Fame Complex in Oklahoma City, Okla. Ticket information will be posted later this year on www.usasoftball.com. The tickets will be sold at www.softballoutlet.com.

With the great success of the Border Battle are their plans to make it a permanent part of the KFC World Cup of Softball? If so, are there plans to invite more countries to participate? — Submitted by Matthew via Facebook

The Border Battle slow pitch showcase proved to be a hit with both fans in the stadium and at home, drawing a record audience for the live broadcast on ESPN. We are trying to integrate a similar exhibition into the schedule for July’s World Championships. Keep checking www.usasoftball.com for information on future Men’s National Slow Pitch Teams and events.

Where are the different ASA National Championships being held next year? — Submitted by various people

The deadline to submit the fact sheets on 2010 ASA National Championships was August 31. Now that the information has been submitted, the National Office is working on posting it on our Web site at www.asasoftball.com/tournaments/future_nationals.asp.

I saw members of the Women’s National Team wearing an item at the KFC World Cup of Softball that I liked. Where can I buy one? — Submitted by various people

USA Softball sells official merchandise including headbands and jerseys at www.softballoutlet.com. Currently the pink jerseys and items are being auctioned for a charity on www.eBay.com.

How can I tell if a certain Women’s National Team player on Twitter is the real player? — Submitted by various people

Any player that the ASA/USA Softball is following on our official Twitter, www.twitter.com/asausasoftball/, has confirmed that the Twitter is authentic, not a fake. Some of the players who are on Twitter include Jennie Finch (#JFinch27) and Cat Osterman (#CatOsterman).

There is a growing trend on “Bat Shaving” at all levels of softball which ranges from youth tourney ball to college ranks and in especially in men’s softball. What is the ASA doing in order to deter this and what are the consequences? — Submitted by Chris via Facebook

When these issues are brought to ASA’s attention, there is a letter sent to the people who are doing these things and a request is made for them to stop because they are in violation of Trademark infringement.

Now that High Schools are going to 43 feet from the mound, will ASA change the 16U to 43 feet in the very near future? — Submitted by John via Facebook

All Rule Proposals are due to the ASA by Sept. 23, 2009, and these proposals will be reviewed and voted on at the ASA Annual Meeting in November and the ASA Council – 284 voting members will decide on these matters.

Will the bases ever be moved back a few feet? — Submitted by Chris via Facebook

All Rule Proposals are due to the ASA by Sept. 23, 2009, and these proposals will be reviewed and voted on at the ASA Annual Meeting in November and the ASA Council – 284 voting members will decide on these matters.

I would love to be able to help work some of the big softball tournaments that are held at the ASA Softball Hall of Fame. Is that a possibility? — Submitted by Sheelah via Facebook

Thanks for your interest in volunteering with ASA! If you are interested in volunteering at one of our many events please contact Events Coordinator Nancy Teehee at nteehee@softball.org.
AGE FOR MANY HAS NO EFFECT ON LOVE OF THE GAME; BURLINGTON GREAT HOST FOR SENIOR NATIONALS

By Bill Plummer III

Burlington, N.C., has become known for hosting phenomenal Senior Major Slow Pitch National Championships and this year was no different as Burlington hosted 18 divisions of the ASA Senior Slow Pitch competition from 50-years of age to 75-years-of-age over the Labor Day weekend.

“Burlington is very fortunate to host the Senior Nationals because it brings many people to town and helps our local economy greatly,” said Tony Laws, North Carolina ASA commissioner. “The Senior Nationals are very challenging to host because there are 18 different divisions of play. It is like hosting 18 national tournaments at once. We will use nine fields at two complexes (Burlington City Park and Springwood Park).”

While Laws, who is a tournament veteran, was on hand, Mark Cryan of the Burlington Recreation and Parks Department was the tournament director. Cryan is the athletic director for the Burlington Recreation and Parks Department.

“We have great restaurants, nice hotels and everything is easy to get to,” said Cryan. “Our convention and visitors bureau does a great job coordinating housing for players, umpires and ASA officials. There’s also a multitude of great golf courses, Elon University’s beautiful campus and we have a great convenient location. Many of the teams return year after year from as far away as Indiana and New Jersey.”

Although the people playing are all over 50 years old, they haven’t lost their enthusiasm and desire to play softball, which is a lifetime sport, and that brings players back year after year to play. It also is a time to visit with the friends they’ve made through the years or to establish new friendships.

“It is very enjoyable to see the seniors play because it is older adults playing the game at 50, 60 and 70 years old,” said Laws. “Softball is unique in that it is for all ages and it is most gratifying to see these long time players still playing.”

Each team got to play in two pool games for each bracket before the double elimination started Saturday morning. All the action wasn’t between the lines as there was a kick-off dinner for one team official as well as a pre-tournament social with all players and team personnel invited to attend. The final tally was 55 teams in 10 divisions of play, ranging from 50 years-old to 70 years-of-age.

The champions in each of the divisions included: Carpenter’s Legends, Youngsville, N.C. (50 Major Division); Eagle Tile/Who’s On First, Stevensville, Md. (50 AAA Division); Helwigs, Milford, Conn. (50 AA Division); Sportsman Shop/Elite/Spicers, Richmond, Va. (55 Major Division); High Street Bucs, Baltimore, Md. (55 AAA Division); Spring Ford, Birdsboro, Pa. (55 AA Division); Tidewater 60’s, Portsmouth, Va. (60 Major Division); Express, Carrollton, Ga. (60 AAA Division); Great Lakes Financial, Midland, Mich. (60 AA Division); Blaze, Burlington, N.C. (65 AAA Division); Burlington Classic, Burlington, N.C. (65 AA Division) and Burlington Classic II, Burlington, N.C. (70 AAA Division).

In the future, senior softball is expected to grow with more and more baby boomers coming into the market. The seniors competing in Burlington are part of the more than 1.5 million active senior softball players (over 40) in the United States.

Although the tourney didn’t exceed 60 teams, Laws was pleased with the event.

“We had a great tournament,” said Laws. “It was one of the smoothest we have ever had. We were down a bit in teams but 55 is still a good number for the current economy. We got many compliments from the teams and umpires and we look forward to hosting it again in 2010.”

"Many of the teams return year after year from as far away as Indiana and New Jersey."
Every day, millions of lives are shaped with a softball and a little open space.

There’s an insurance company that understands the value of those lessons.

Far from the stadium lights and the roar of the crowd come the moments when youth sports matters. These opportunities help form bonds that enrich the game and enhance the lives and life skills of young players. That’s why Liberty Mutual and our partners are proud to bring you the Responsible Sports™ program – offering educational resources, training tips and teaching tools for youth sports parents and coaches, plus coaching awards and valuable community grants.

Memorable youth sports moments are waiting for you. Visit ResponsibleSports.com/Softball today.
Twenty $2,500 grants are up for grabs this Fall! What would your league do with $2,500?

The Fall 2009 Responsible Sports Community Grant period is now open! From September 2nd to November 30th, you can help your organization earn $2,500 for demonstrating your responsibility in youth sports. Since 2007 Liberty Mutual has awarded 80 youth sport organizations a total of $200,000, and you can be a part of the action.

It’s simple and easy to support your organization. Go to ResponsibleSports.com/Grant to get started today!

With financial resources tight in today’s slow economy, youth sport organizations are at the heart of the local communities being pinched for extra dollars. The goal of the Liberty Mutual Community Grant program is to make sure communities have available financial resources to continue to teach our kids life lessons, on and off the field. Join the movement!

Nominations are currently being accepted for the 2010 Positive Coaching Alliance Double-Goal Coach® Awards, presented by Liberty Mutual. Double-Goal Coaches want to win (goal #1) but have a second, more important goal – to help players develop positive character traits that will help them be successful in life (goal #2).

For more information, and to nominate your favorite coach, visit ResponsibleSports.com/Award today!
PARTICIPANTS PUT AWAY COMPETITIVE SPIRIT FOR A MOMENT TO MAKE A DREAM COME TRUE

By Bill Plummer III

Throughout their careers players, umpires and coaches have unforgettable experiences.

Umpire Mike Baker, 48, of the Michigan ASA (Portage, Mich.) had one after he was assigned to work the 2009 ASA Girls’ 14-under Class A Fast Pitch National Championship in Marietta, Ga., July 27-August 2. Mike was one of 65 umpires assigned to work the championship, with 122 teams entered.

Pool play started on Monday, July 27, and Mike was assigned to work the game between the Atlanta Vipers (Dean) and the Southern California Hurricanes. The Vipers won the game, 3-1, and Mike worked the plate in the game. The base umpire was Steve Tate of Fairbanks, Alaska.

At the plate conference and after receiving the lineup cards from both coaches, Mike told the coaches the “lineups were now official” and asked if they wanted to make any substitutions at that time. Chris Dean of the Vipers asked if it would be OK to make a substitution for the third baseman for only the first pitch of the game, and then replace that player.

Baker thought that was an odd request, but then Dean told him why he wanted to do this. One of Dean’s players, Abby Allen, had been diagnosed in March with bone cancer, Osteosarcoma, and had undergone 10 weeks of chemotherapy, followed by total knee replacement and an additional 18 weeks of chemotherapy. Dean had promised Abby that if she was at the national championship, he somehow would get her into a game.

“I stood there listening to the coach tell this story while choking back a tear,” said Baker. “Of course we were going to make that substitution happen.” Baker then turned to the California coach and asked him, “You’re going to help me out with that pitch, too, aren’t you coach?” They finished covering the ground rules and broke from the conference at home plate.

After warm-up pitches, Baker pointed to the Viper pitcher and said “Play ball.” The Vipers’ catcher stood and held her left arm out, indicating a pitch-out, which Baker called a ball. Coach Dean then stepped out of the dugout to request time and both stands erupted in applause and cheers for Abby.

“It was one of those moments that, as an umpire, you’re glad you were there to be part of it. At the end of that great game, I tossed the ball used for first pitch to Coach Dean so he could present it to Abby,” said Baker.

Baker worked third base for the Vipers’ final game on Saturday where Coach Dean recognized him and thanked him again for what he did in the opening game making that substitution happen for Abby, then giving him the game ball. He asked if Abby was able to make the game, but she wasn’t because she had undergone another chemotherapy treatment and wasn’t feeling well.

The Vipers ended up fifth out of 122 teams with the Vipers’ players each wearing No. 24 on their sleeves.

“That one pitch was the most emotional pitch I have ever experienced. It was a moment that I, my daughter or anyone who was present at that game may never forget,” said Mia Allen, Abby’s mother. “The softball world has been so amazing, since Abby’s diagnosis with cancer. Very supportive and full of love, which is not surprising since for so many years softball was Abby’s life.”

Mia said that Abby’s cancer was detected when Abby had what she thought was a sore knee. “We went to the doctor praying it would not be a torn ACL, because that at time, March 23, 2009, she (Abby) was running track for Northgate High School. At the end of the day, we heard the worst news any parents could ever expect to hear—it was a cancerous tumor.”

A biopsy two days later confirmed it was Osteosarcoma. Doctor appointments followed and within two weeks, Abby started the first of her chemo treatments, which was 10 weeks followed by total knee replacement surgery, followed by 18 weeks of additional chemo, then 12 more weeks of treatment. Throughout this ordeal Abby has worked hard at keeping her chin up, according to her mother, and has worked hard with the physical therapy. “Abby is not quite sure what the future holds as far as sports are concerned,” said her mother Mia. “Her orthopedic oncologist has told her that she will not be able to return again. We as a family feel sure God will open another door for her. We will get through this journey and then just wait and watch to see which door will open.”
ASA’S 78TH COUNCIL MEETING
LESS THAN TWO MONTHS AWAY

By Bill Plummer III

For the second time in less than a decade, the Amateur Softball Association will hold its annual National Council Meeting in Reno, Nevada. The 78th annual ASA National Council meeting is scheduled Nov. 7-14 at the Peppermill Resort Spa & Casino, located just minutes from the Reno-Tahoe International Airport, Reno-Sparks Convention Center and downtown Reno.

“We are really looking forward to a great Council Meeting in Reno. The hotel and meeting facilities are outstanding and will be very conducive for a very productive meeting,” said ASA Executive Director Ron Radigonda. “Although we are all there to take care of business, I think our members will find the hotel has everything they will need and the area a great one to explore during down time.”

Prior to the start of the Council meeting, the annual Swing with the Legends Golf Tournament will be held November 6 at the D’Andrea Golf Club, one of Reno’s best public courses. The cost is $350 for a team which is comprised of three people and $125 per individual. If you don’t want to play golf, you can attend the dinner for $35 and bid on items signed by the former Major League baseball legends. The golf will begin with a shotgun start at 11:30 a.m. with the dinner/auction that evening at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting will begin with the annual ASA Trade Show on Saturday, Nov. 7 from 5-9 p.m., inside the Tuscany Tower with more than 60 cities and sporting goods manufacturers from throughout the United States attending.

Throughout the week, the schedule will be packed with a variety of agenda items including various committee meetings, bidding on and awarding of various ASA National Championships and honoring people for their service to the ASA. There will also be regional meetings, association recognition for team and umpire production in 2009, the adoption of playing rules, election of new members to the ASA National Softball Hall of Fame, presentation of the James Farrell Award to those cities who excelled in hosting ASA National Championships in 2009, election of a new president-elect and the awarding of the 2011 Annual Council Meeting.

The 79th Annual Council Meeting will be held in Shreveport-Bossier City, La., November 6-13, 2010.

“I really look forward to returning to Reno,” said ASA President Joey Rich of Springfield, Mo. who will turn over the leadership of the ASA to president-elect Andy Dooley while in Reno. “When our previous Council meeting was there, the rooms we stayed in and arrangements for our meetings were just outstanding. I am certain that will be the case this November,” said Rich. In 2002, the ASA Council Meeting was held at the Silver Legacy Hotel.

One of the highlights of the meeting will be on Wednesday, Nov. 11, with induction of the eight members of the Hall of Fame Class of 2009. The inductees are Tony Walsh, umpire; R.B. Thomas, manager; Newton Buchner, umpire; Jeff Seip, player; Allyson Rioux, posthumously, player; Benny Bunch, meritorious service; Allan Vae ger, player; and Leah O’Brien-Amico, player. This will be the 29th annual formal induction ceremony for the ASA National Softball Hall of Fame, which was established in 1957.

Coming away from the meeting, ASA will be at a better place to continue to serve its members by providing the best level of softball available. Be sure to check out www.asasoftware.com.
As we are more than half way through ASA National Championship season, we would like to congratulate all the National Champions crowned so far. See below for some National Championship photos submitted to the ASA National Office. Check out www.asasoftball.com for a complete list of results and standings. Thanks for playing ASA Softball!

If your National Championship photo is missing, please submit to Jamie Blanchard at jblanchard@softball.org so that it can be published in our next magazine as well as at the ASA Hall of Fame museum in Oklahoma City, Okla.
Girls’ B 14-Under Fast Pitch Northern, Club Elite, Jefferson City, MO

Men’s Church Slow Pitch, Holy Family Church, Lawton, OK

Girls’ B 16-Under Fast Pitch Northern, Seymour Flames Red, Eau Claire, WI

Men’s Class A Fast Pitch, Lightning, Marshall, MI

Girls’ B 16-Under Fast Pitch Southern, Southern Force, Auburn, AL

Men’s Class C Slow Pitch Western, West Coast Dynasty, Culver, CA

ASA/USA Softball Girl’s Class A 18-Under Fast Pitch Tampa Mustangs-Weir, Tampa, FL

Men’s East Class C Fast Pitch, Blue Lake Builders, Adamstown, PA

Girls’ Gold 18-Under Fast Pitch, Sorcerer Gold Phil, Concord, CA

Men’s Major Fast Pitch, Farm Tavern, Madison, WI

ASA/USA Softball Girl’s Class A 16-Under Fast Pitch Northern Blaze, Beaverton, OR

Men’s Masters 40 Over Fast Pitch, Miller Lite, Springfield, MO

Men’s Masters 40 Over Slow Pitch Fence Brokers/Team Kitty/Club Z/ Romeo Sports, Birmingham, AL

Women’s Masters 35-Over Slow Pitch, Iowa Alliance, Urbandale, IA

Women’s Class C Slow Pitch West, Springfield Crush, Springfield, MO
Pink eBay Auction Live NOW!
Goals were met for the USA Softball program this summer with the team earning three Gold Medal finishes at tournaments around the world with a 35-1 record, outscoring opponents 304-19. However, there is one more goal — to surpass the $25,000 donated to the Central Oklahoma Susan G. Komen for the Cure in 2008. The pink uniforms and equipment used for the pink out game against Canada during the Round 4 Beijing Tour were autographed and auctioned off on eBay with the proceeds totaling $25,000. The 2009 Women’s National Team has set the goal to surpass the 2008 total with the auction of this year’s items from the pink out game against Canada at the KFC World Cup of Softball. The eBay auction, which features 18 jerseys and over 20 equipment items, is going on NOW with a signed pink jersey from the 2008 Olympic Team also up for grabs. BID TODAY at www.usasoftball.com.

Watley Named July USOC Athlete of Month
Shortstop Natasha Watley (Irvine, Calif.) was selected as the U.S. Olympic Committee’s (USOC) Female Athlete of the Month for her impressive performances with the USA Softball Women’s National Team in July 2009. She led the team in several categories including hits, RBI and stolen bases.

“I am truly honored and excited to receive the USOC July Athlete of the Month as I know I was on a list of highly talented individuals. This summer was a great one for USA Softball and I, as always, am honored to be a part of this team,” said Watley.

The year after the Olympics is always a tough year because you are training nonstop before the Games and then the letdown after it is tough. It can be hard to come back out and get back in the training mode, but I am happy with the success USA Softball has had this summer.”

Watley started all of the games at shortstop. She led the team at the plate, going 25 for 47 at the two events with 20 of the team’s 116 RBI. Among the highlights at the plate for Watley were two doubles and two home runs, including a grand slam against Canada in a 14-0 win at the World Cup. She also went 8 for 8 in stolen bases, another category in which she led the team.

Olympic gold and silver medalist Watley ended the month with a solid performance against Australia on July 31 at the Japan Cup in Sendai City, Japan, which Team USA would go on to win on Aug. 2. In the Australia game, Watley went 2-for-4, including one double, with three RBI.

USA Softball to Debut on Big Screen
It is typical for USA Softball to take over the sports screen every summer with the World Cup of Softball, but fans will have the chance to catch a glimpse of USA Softball on the movie screen next year. Currently in production, the James Brooks movie “How Do You Know?” features Reese Witherspoon as a former USA Softball player. To prepare for the role, Witherspoon has been training with several USA Softball athletes including Jennie Finch, Andrea Duran and Tairia Flowers, who are also lending words of advice to the Academy Award winner. The movie, which also stars Paul Rudd and Owen Wilson, is scheduled to be released in 2010.

KFC World Cup of Softball TV Ratings
The Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA) recently announced the ratings for the 2009 World Cup of Softball increased 9 percent from the 2007 World Cup broadcasts. The Beijing Rematch between the USA and Japan on ESPN saw the highest single game rating, 0.8, of the 17 telecasts that provided more than 34 hours of softball coverage. While all seven USA games were broadcast and also streamed online, selected games from ESPN’s coverage were televised globally to 146 countries across ESPN International networks including Atlantic, Pacific Rim, Australia HD, Brazil HD, Israel, Middle East, ESPN Caribbean, ESPN2 Caribbean, and ESPN America.

National Coaching School Scheduled For November
The Nor Cal and Oakland chapters of the Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA) will host the 2009 USA Softball National Coaching School presented by Liberty Mutual in
Livermore, Calif., the ASA and USA Softball announced today. It is scheduled for Nov. 20-22 at the Robert Livermore Community Center.

The USA Softball National Coaching School, which is limited to 250 participants, is offered at a cost of $175 per-coach. Coaches who register before Oct. 1 will also receive a commemorative shirt.

The school will feature first hand instruction from members of the 2009 USA Softball Women’s National Team coaching staff including Head Coach Jay Miller (Mississippi State) and Assistant Coach Ken Erikson (University of South Florida). Former USA Softball Head Coach turned USA Softball Director of Coaching Education Mike Candrea (University of Arizona), who led the program to gold and silver medals at the Olympic Games as well as numerous other medals in international competition, will also instruct portions of the National Coaching School. For more info please click here.

**WCWS, ISSA Worlds Nominated for Numerous SportsTravel Awards**

The 2009 NCAA Women’s College World Series, hosted at the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) Hall of Fame Complex in Oklahoma City, Okla., has been nominated by the readers of SportsTravel magazine for the “Collegiate Sporting Events — Best Sports Event Series or Circuit” and the “Sports Event of the Year” 2009 SportsTravel Awards. The International Senior Softball Association (ISSA) World Championship was also nominated for two awards.

“Since the location of the event is a major part of the criteria for being nominated, the people of Oklahoma City should take great pride in knowing that an event held in their city is being recognized for its excellence,” said Timothy Schneider, publisher of SportsTravel magazine.

Criteria for nomination and voting include superior organization of and attendance at the event, a superior experience for the competitors and/or spectators at the event, and how the site or venue served to enhance the event. The voting closed September 14 and winners will be announced at the TEAMS 2009 Conference & Expo, October 13-17, 2009, in New Orleans.

2 Weeks Out of ASA Hooters Championship Series

Fourteen teams have advanced from the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) Hooters Championship Series events across the country to the National Championship final Oct. 1-4 in Oklahoma City, Okla. The event is being held at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex, which recently hosted the KFC World Cup of Softball and the inaugural Border Battle. The ASA Men’s Class A Slow Pitch and ASA Women’s Open Slow Pitch National Championships will also be held Oct. 1-4 at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex in Oklahoma City. Teams interested in participating in the Men’s Class A Slow Pitch and Women’s Open Slow Pitch tournaments should contact a local ASA commissioner for more information. During the event head to www.asasoftball.com for complete coverage of the event.

USA Softball Finishes Fourth at ISF Men’s Fast Pitch World Championships

The USA Softball Men’s Fast Pitch National Team fell one game short of a medal as they lost 7-3 to New Zealand at the ISF World Men’s Championship in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan on Saturday, July 25. With the loss to the Kiwis, the USA finished with a 7-3 record and fourth place among the 16 teams entered.

“I’m proud of this team and the guys they showed this week. We’ve got a really good core of guys to build this team around,” said Head Coach Pete Turner (Stockton, Calif.) of the team. Team USA fell in the opening game of pool play 15-0 to New Zealand but went on to win the next six games to finish up pool play 6-1. The Americans lost the first medal round game, 6-4 to Canada before defeating Venezuela 8-1. A loss to the strong New Zealand squad put the red, white and blue out of medal contention.

New Zealand later defeated Canada in the bronze medal game and then lost to Australia 2-0 in the Gold Medal Game on Sunday afternoon. Matt Palazzo (Des Moines, Iowa) led the USA with a .438 batting average including three home runs, six runs scored and seven RBIs.
Keilani Ricketts (San Jose, Calif.) was more than an ace for Sorcerer Gold-Phil of Vallejo, Calif. The left-hander led Sorcerer Gold to the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) 18-under Girls’ GOLD National Championship at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex in Oklahoma City, Okla., with power hitting as well.

With help from Ricketts on both offense and defense, the Sorcerer Gold (7-0) overtook the 2008 GOLD National Champion Gold Coast Hurricanes 3-1 in the Championship Game to secure the prestigious 18-under Girls’ GOLD National Championship title with an undefeated performance. It is the first GOLD national title for the program.

Ricketts, who is now in her freshman year at the University of Oklahoma, limited the defending champions to only three hits and one run while striking out eight in going the distance in a 97-pitch performance. She issued only one walk in the Championship Game, which like all GOLD games played on the Stadium Field, was webcast live at http://gold.asasoftball.com.

Her performance was impressive throughout the 64-team tournament, which included hundreds of premier fast pitch players-including Arizona State’s starting pitcher Hillary Bach (Tulsa, Okla.) and the two-time Gatorade Player of the Year Kenzie Fowler (Tucson, Ariz.). Ricketts won all of her team’s seven games and fanned 58 batters in 47 innings, allowing 15 hits while only walking eight batters. She also drove in six runs while batting .444 (8-for-18).

In the Championship Game, Ricketts also had three of her team’s nine hits—which came off four Gold Coast pitchers—including a single in the second and a double to left center leading off the top of the fourth. Ricketts eventually scored on a bloop single by Shenise Cox, making the Sorcerer lead 2-0.

Then the Hurricanes fought back and scored their lone run in the bottom of the fifth to cut the deficit to 2-1 on Michelle Moutrie’s (Plantation, Fla.) RBI single. But in the seventh, the Sorcerer’s Tylyn Wells’ (Concord, Calif.) got her second RBI of the game, a single scoring Jessica Vest (Hollister, Calif.), who had singled to open the inning and was sacrificed to second.

The Championship Game was one of the many highlights of an action packed tournament which had several elimination games decided by one run. On Saturday alone, Wagners Gold (Arnold, Md.) eliminated Georgia Elite (Douglasville, Ga.) 3-2; Valley Breeze (Granada Hills, Calif.) eliminated Texas Glory Shelton (McKinney, Texas) 6-5; New Jersey Intensity (Farmingdale, N.J.) eliminated Arizona Desert Thunder (Tucson, Ariz.) 1-0; and Gulf Coast Hurricanes eliminated Team North Florida (Wewahitchka, Fla.) 2-1 in 10 innings.

The Worth Firecrackers (Huntington Beach, Calif.) also won four consecutive games by a one-run margin, going eight innings to drop the Northwest Bullets (Tualatin, Ore.) into the losers bracket with a 5-4 victory Saturday. But the luck ran out for the Firecrackers on Sunday as they dropped a 3-1 game to the Hurricanes, a loss that earned them third place overall in the tournament.

Rounding out the other top teams were So Cal Athletics (Upland, Calif.) fourth place; Team North Florida and Northwest Bullets, tied for fifth place; California Cruisers (Mission Viejo, Calif.) and New Jersey Intensity, tied for seventh; and the So Cal Pumas (Ventura, Calif.) and Wagners Gold, Arizona Desert Thunder and Valley Breeze tied for ninth.

**FAST FACT**

You can relive the 2009 GOLD National Championship online at http://gold.asasoftball.com. Not only is there on demand webcast coverage of several games, there are also photos, stats and more from hundreds of GOLD games played throughout the week.
FORMER PLAYER AND COACH MAKES NATURAL TRANSITION INTO UMPIRE

By Holly Knokapich

Erin Peterson (Seattle, Wash.) has spent time behind the plate as an NAIA All-American catcher at Puget Sound-Tacoma and in the dugout as a coach for her alma mater. These days, however, Peterson is representing the other role needed for a successful game as an Amateur Softball Association (ASA) umpire in the Seattle Tacoma ASA.

Peterson just finished her second year of umpiring where she worked between 100-125 games between Washington high school softball and summer ball. Outside of her job as a physical therapist, Peterson found time to umpire about three weekends a month. Becoming an umpire seemed like the next step for a woman who has spent the majority of her life around softball.

“I played softball in college and then coached collegiately. It seemed like a very natural transition. I have a friend who is a basketball referee and she pushed me some to get involved. What really got me moving was that there was a commercial on NPR (National Public Radio) for the local Seattle ASA Association,” said Peterson. “I sent an email out and at that point they were a couple weeks into training but they were so welcoming in getting me involved. I sent the e-mail on a Friday, attended a meeting the next Wednesday and was on the field three weeks later.”

Going from a player to a coach is a natural transition. What is always not so easy is the player/coach to umpire as the storied history between the three groups is not always one of agreement. This however was not the case as Peterson’s history as a player and coach with umpires was positive.

“I had no qualms in becoming an umpire. To be honest when I was a player I didn’t really notice them all that much and couldn’t tell you who they were, which to me is a sign of a good umpire,” said Peterson. “Softball is really about the athletes playing and not the umpires. If I can walk away from a game, after doing my best every day, with the athletes not remembering me then I think I have done my job. It’s about allowing the kids to play the game and that’s what I think about before I start a game.”

Along with many ASA events, Peterson has extended her resume with the Washington State High School Championship. On July 14, Peterson reached a milestone as an umpire working the Western A National Championships where she was rewarded for her umpiring ability by umpiring at the plate in the title game.

“It was an amazing experience. I was able to learn from umpires from all over the country and the UIC’s were phenomenal. The talent I was able to witness and the instruction I received was great. I have been fortunate to work with very successful umpires who have been very open to teaching me, watching me work and helping me through it all. The ASA does a good job of partnering young umpires with veterans to help you get started.”

In her brief two years of umpiring, Peterson has moved through the ranks quickly but believes the best is yet to come as she has set her sights on many more achievements. She has a five year goal of knocking on the door of the Pac-10 as well as working the ASA Girls’ 18-Under Gold Nationals and Womens Major. She would also like to earn her ASA Elite certification and if the future of softball changes on the international front, becoming an International Softball Federation (ISF) certified umpire.

“To me being an ASA umpire means you represent the best umpires anywhere in the country. When I think about the organization I think about integrity, respect for the game and fairness. It means providing a safe and fair opportunity to let kids play the sport they love.”

If the future of the umpire world is in the hands of young up and coming umpires like Peterson, the ASA should be proud to know that the legacy of excellence will continue for many years to come.
For your official source for softball merchandise, visit:

softballoutlet.com

or call

800-654-8337
If you have either purchased umpire gear or visited one of four ASA sites, it’s on behalf of the efforts of ASA Staff Cindi Bent hall and Steve Walker that you have been able to do so. With a staff of over 30 employees, part-time and full-time, the ASA National Office Staff works tirelessly to promote and support the sport of softball. Get to know two of these employees, Cindi and Steve!

**B&S: What do you do on a daily basis?**

SW: "Well usually, because of the nature of the computer field, almost every day is different. Walking in the door in the morning I expect the unexpected and go from there. I love to program and work with databases and try to spend time doing that. Lately my time is taken up by meetings, planning, developing and helping our local association staff with their computer issues.”

**B&S: What is your favorite part of your job?**

SW: "Helping people and solving issues. Getting assigned a new, challenging task and being able to think through the process to reach the desired result and then doing it is a great accomplishment.”

**B&S: What is your favorite memory or experience at the Amateur Softball Association (ASA)/USA Softball?**

SW: "I would have to say the first World Cup of Softball we hosted here at the Hall of Fame complex. Due to the amount of time and effort that was put in by the entire staff at the national office, it was really rewarding to see the results and to know that teams enjoyed playing in the event and that the fans got to see the best competition the world can offer. That was definitely one of the proudest moments I've had during my 20 years at ASA.”

**B&S: Are you a softball player?**

SW: "Not necessarily a softball player, but did play whenever I could. I usually played basketball, football and tennis at a neighborhood park. I did play organized softball twice, both times ASA teams. The first time was in 1982 when I was in the military and then again in 1989 on a COED team with the national office staff.”

**B&S: What do you like to do when you're not working?**

SW: "I've been watching a lot of the Food Network with my kids lately and sometimes I try to surprise them with dishes we saw on TV. I also like to play tennis, fish and take naps, but don't get to do that too often.”

**B&S: What do you do on a daily basis?**

CB: "I take and process phone orders for umpire merchandise (www.officialgear.com), including equipment and uniforms. I also do the same for items from the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) Hall of Fame Complex gift shop (www.softballoutlet.com), including apparel and posters. I also ship orders.”

**B&S: What is your favorite part of your job?**

CB: "I enjoy meeting ASA commissioners and umpires when they come to Oklahoma City for their meetings.”

**B&S: What is your favorite memory or experience at ASA/USA Softball?**

CB: "I enjoyed seeing the Olympic torch when the relay came into our stadium.”

**B&S: Are you a softball player?**

CB: "No, I have never played softball.”

**B&S: What do you like to do when you're not working?**

CB: "I enjoy reading and taking walks with my dog 'Little Bit.”"
USA WOMEN TAKE TITLE IN ALL FOUR SUMMER EVENTS

By Jamie M. Blanchard

It was another summer of gold for the women of USA Softball. The team picked up four titles in four countries, winning the World Cup in Surrey, British Columbia; the KFC World Cup of Softball presented by Six Flags in Oklahoma City, Okla.; the Japan Cup in Sendai, Japan; and lastly the Pan American Qualifier in Maracay, Venezuela. The team outscored opponents 300-19 en route to a 35-1 overall record, with the only loss coming in Pan Am Qualifier pool play against Canada.

The most prestigious win for the program came at the World Cup against 2008 Olympic Champions Japan, bronze medalists Australia and fourth place finisher Canada. The Women’s National Team secured six consecutive victories, starting with a 7-2 victory over the Netherlands. The team then topped Italy 12-0 in five innings, Canada 40-0 in four innings, Japan 6-5, and Australia 8-0 in five innings.

The red, white and blue also won the Championship Game against Australia 3-1 with the team striking in the third with a Lauren Lappin (Anaheim, Calif.) homerun sparking the offense for two more runs to take a 3-0 lead. In the top of the fourth, Aussie Stacey Porter cut the USA lead to 3-1 with a home run to right field. In the top of the sixth, it looked like the lead could be threatened again when two runners reached. Porter again singled and then Tracey Mosley was hit by a pitch. This brought in an USA pitching change as Cat Osterman (Houston, Texas) entered the circle for Monica Abbott (Salina, Calif.) to work the final one and 2/3 innings. Osterman would go on to throw three strikeouts to earn her second save of the season.

Stacey Nelson (Los Alamitos, Calif.) started the Netherlands game in the circle. Although rookie Nelson was steady, allowing the Dutch batters only two hits while striking out one in three innings of work, veteran Jennie Finch (La Mirada, Calif.), who started the game in the designated player position, replaced the rookie right hander. Finch kept the defense on track, striking out 11 of the 13 batters she faced. Finch also went 3-for-3 with a walk and two stolen bases in the first inning. Also highlighting the inning was a two-run home run by Finch who blasted a shot over left field. After going up 12-0 in the third, the USA maintained the lead to end the game in five.

Katie Burkart (San Luis Obispo, Calif.) worked three complete innings with four strikeouts and allowed one hit for her first win in the Team USA uniform.

Watley made softball look pretty during the 15-0 four inning victory over Canada. Wearing a pink jersey that is currently being auctioned to raise money for the Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Watley cleared the bases in the third inning with a sky-high, grand slam over the right center field wall. “That’s called one piece of power. Coming in with runners in scoring position,” said Watley, who went 1-for-2 at the plate. “In that situation, I’m just looking for a good pitch to hit and get it on the green. Fortunately I got a great pitch and was able to get a good piece of it. It felt really good.” Andrea Durán (Selma, Calif.) and Leles also had three run homers.

In front of a sold out crowd of 6,196, the Americans got revenge against a Japan team that ended the quest for the USA’s fourth straight Olympic Gold at the 2008 Olympic Games. Rookie Alissa Haber (Newark, Calif.), who went 3-for-3 with two RBI, hit a home run in the bottom of the fifth to break a 1-1 tie. Durán (Selma, Calif.) secured the win with her own two-run home run later in the inning.

In the first game against Australia, Ashley Hansen (Chandler, Ariz.) broke the game open in the third with a grand slam to right field, making the first home run with the Women’s National Team a big one. Haber hit a solo shot to centerfield for the needed run to end the game in five innings. “At Stanford, we have that big 1-2 punch joke so it definitely wasn’t our first winner appearance but it was nice. We’re joking about that during the game,” Hansen said.

The World Cup of Softball, held at the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) Hall of Fame Complex, was a success with over 20,000 fans attending the five-day event with the final standings as follows: United States (gold), Australia (silver), Canada (bronze), Japan (fourth), Netherlands (fifth) and Italy (sixth).

Canada Cup

The 2009 Women’s National Team made their debut by going 12-0 at the annual Canada Cup. While the USA was in command for most of the tournament, Canada came close to playing spoiler in the Championship Game. With Canada just two outs away from winning in front of an enthusiastic home crowd, a sac fly by Kaitlin Cochran (Yorba Linda, Calif.) and a walk-off single by Finch that plated Caitlin Lowe (Tustin, Calif.) gave Team USA the run it needed to take a 3-2 decision over Canada for the Gold Medal. Cat Osterman (Houston, Texas) earned the win, allowing no earned runs with 14 strikeouts.

Japan Cup

Although Team USA was out hit in the opening game of the Japan Cup, the team still picked up an 11-8 win over Australia in five innings, thanks to homers from Leles and Haber. “In my entire career, this is the first time I’ve ever coached a team that won a game by the run-rule after the losing team out hit us,” said USA Head Coach Jay Miller (Starkville, Miss.).

Team USA went on to beat Chinese Taipei 10-2 in five, Japan 3-0 and again 2-0 in the Championship Game. In the Championship game Finch, who doubled to drive in the game’s only two runs in the first inning, had a no-hitter going until the top of the seventh before leadoff batter Rei Nishiyama hit a change-up for a single. Finch got the next three batters to clinch the win for her team and earn Most Valuable Player honors individually.

Pan American Qualifier

Team USA had big wins at the Pan American Qualifier including a 21-0 win over Ecuador in five innings, 22-0 win over Panama in three innings and 15-0 victories over Dominican Republic (four innings), Belize (four innings) and Argentina (five innings).

And the squad even had two combined perfect games, with Brandice Balschmiter (Newark, N.Y.) and Nikki Nemitz (St. Clair Shores, Mich.) pitching against Colombia, and with Abbott and Balschmiter in the second matchup with Cuba, but it was not all a celebration in Maracay, Venezuela. At the bat of a Canada team that threatened all season, the Americans lost for the first time since the Gold Medal Game at the 2008 Olympic Games, 3-1. Team USA came back in the Gold Medal game with a 3-1 victory over the Canadians. At the tournament, the U.S. qualified for the 2010 International Softball Federation (ISF) Women’s World Fast Pitch Championships and the 2013 Pan American Games.
LOOKING FOR A NEW IDEA FOR YOUR NEXT FUNDRAISER?

If you need to raise extra funds this season for your team or league and are running out of ideas, here are a few unique ideas that are sure to guarantee the success of your fundraising campaign.

SHOW YOUR TEAM SPIRIT WITH CUSTOMIZED TEES!

A customized tee shirt fundraiser with your team or league’s logo is a great way to get your supporters behind you. Not only will they be willing to make a donation in return for a team shirt, but they’ll also be giving your team extra exposure every time they wear the shirt!

EARN HIGH PROFIT WITH SCRATCH CARDS!

Scratch cards have always been an easy way for teams and leagues to raise a lot of money in little time. It’s now even easier with customized scratch cards, where you can include your team photo right on the cover! And with great coupon offers, your supporters will love them as well!

OTHER GREAT SPORTS FUNDRAISING IDEAS!

Restaurant gift cards offer $50 meals for just $20 at thousands of restaurants nation-wide, which is the kind of added value supporters are always on the look-out for! Another unique idea is an online fundraising campaign, which allows your team or league to reach supporters across the nation with a helpful email tool.

Call now for more information and to get your free fundraising guide at 1.866.830.5014!
ASAFundraising.com
Big profits • Little effort • Personalized products & service
Call now at 1.866.830.5014!

Featured fundraiser: Scratchcards
• Add your team name & photo
• Raise up to $100 per card
• Great coupon offers

Other fundraisers also available:
• Cookie Dough
• Chocolate
• Online
• Tee shirts
• Lollipops
• And more!

Get your free fundraising guide today!
1.866.830.5014

Up to 90% profit!