ASA/USA Softball hosts the 24th Biennial UIC Clinic

Hundreds of all ages came to Midwest City, Okla. February 5-8 to learn and improve their umpiring skills at the 2015 Biennial Umpire-In-Chief Clinic. Turn to page 9 to learn more about the Clinic and to see who was recognized at the awards banquet.

IN THIS ISSUE

12  Special Olympics
    Kansas to host Special Olympics North American Softball Invitational

17  Mary Nutter Collegiate Classic
    Thirty-Five NCAA Division I teams in attendance

22  Tips for your Association
    Follow these guidelines to help your Association grow
Greetings everyone and thank you for taking time from your busy schedules to read this letter and to review our Inside Pitch publication, the official newsletter of ASA/USA Softball.

ASA/USA Softball continued the very impressive beginning to our 2015 softball year in February with the hosting the Biennial National Umpire-in-Chief Clinic at the Sheraton Midwest City, Okla. The clinic, titled “ASA Pride Starts with YOU, BLUE”, was attended by a record setting number of attendees, all passionate for our sport, enthusiastic about the training, eager to participate in the interactive presentations, excited to see old friends as well as making new friends, and to celebrate the many umpires who received awards for their accomplishments. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, attendees of the Clinic were noticeably younger than we had ever seen. Our umpire program is the best in the world and the Clinic is an asset that improves it tremendously. Congratulations to Kevin Ryan, ASA/USA Softball Director of Umpires and his staff, especially Jim Craig, National UIC Clinic Committee Chair, for the success of the clinic, which was accomplished through extensive planning and flawless execution. A huge thank you and job well done to Executive Director Craig Cress and his National Office Staff, especially Chris Sebren and Debbie Ford, for their tremendous support of this fantastic event.

As we did during the JO Workshop last year, our Immediate Past President, President Elect, Executive Director and I offered the Commissioners attending the National UIC Clinic, about 40, to join us for a briefing by National Office Department Directors as well as a roundtable discussion on several topics. At the conclusion of the meeting several attendees expressed their desire to continue the meetings as they found them informative, improving Commissioner relationships and important for the betterment of our sport. The most vocal recommendation from these meetings was that ASA/USA Softball should hold our Annual Commissioners Meeting at the Council Meeting in the same “roundtable” manner as this meeting was held.

Although some associations are having difficulties with very harsh winter weather, the spring softball season is only a few weeks away for all of us. Now is the time to visit with your leagues and teams, both fast pitch and slow pitch, to ensure they have everything needed, including registration, to begin play at their first opportunity. Please ensure that all umpires used by your association are properly registered prior to stepping on the field to umpire a game, for their injury and liability protection. Also, remember to send all your registrations to the National Office as soon as possible. Speaking of the National Office, please remember that National Office personnel are available to answer any questions you may have and to assist you with any problems which may arise that cannot be handled by you locally.

Lastly, as I’ve done in past letters, I ask that you visit our website often for information that is important to you, regardless of your affiliation to ASA/USA Softball or to your local program.

Your membership and participation in our softball program is appreciated. Have a wonderful and safe softball year.
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Georgia ASA recently held their inductions for umpires into the Georgia Hall of Fame. Gene Dunmon, Dennis Stanford, and Jim Heitt were inducted into the Hall of Fame, while Lee Folsom was presented the Graybill Daniel Memorial Award, Jimmy Derrick was also honored for his lifetime dedication to Georgia ASA while Shane Head and James Warren Edlen received their ASA Elite Umpire distinction. Shane Head was also named the 2014 Georgia ASA Umpire of the Year. Congrats to all the umpire who were honored for 2014 or lifetime achievements during the awards ceremony at the 2015 Georgia ASA Umpire Clinic.

Submitted by Brian Crane, Georgia ASA Webmaster and Social Media administrator

Do you have a photo you’d like to submit for the Inside Pitch? Submit your photos to ndorety@softball.org by the 20th of each month and you could be featured!

Three ASA/USA Umpires were present and working hard at the Mary Nutter Collegiate Classic in Palm Springs, Calif. February 19-22. From Left to Right: Megan Rabin (Seattle ASA), Sue Sawyer (So Cal ASA), and Chris Drumm (So Cal ASA).
ASA/USA Softball Around the Country

The top softball teams in the world will once again return to Bill Barber Park in Irvine, Calif. for the World Cup of Softball X. Hosted by Southern California ASA/USA Softball, the World Cup, a World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) sanctioned event, will be played June 29-July 5. Top teams will be competing for the Gold medal, including Team USA, Japan, Canada, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and the USA Softball Junior Women’s National Team for the first time ever.

Fans attending the World Cup of Softball X can have a chance to view the best softball in the world from the best seats in the house by purchasing Super Fan tickets. Super Fan tickets will be available by emailing WorldCupXlriv@aol.com with you inquiries or by clicking here.

The Super Fan ticket ($250) includes premium, stadium seating for all seven days of the World Cup with Super Fans receiving a USA Softball “Fan Pack”, which includes a VIP parking pass, a World Cup X t-shirt, program, souvenir ticket, and more! The ticket also includes a private meet and greet with the 2015 USA Softball Women’s National Teams during the World Cup.

The World Cup schedule as well as the dates and times for Super Fan events, including the meet and greet, are not yet finalized. For updates, including the game schedule, check USASoftball.com. Fans can also visit www.socalasa.org for more information or email WorldCupXlriv@aol.com with any questions.

Congrats to the 2015 Michigan ASA Hall of Fame inductees. From left to right: Chuck Birch, Ralph Munger, Rich Leonard, Bruce Streelman, Laura Jackson, Gerry Sakoski, Tom Rasmer, Bill Liphard, Scott Kelly.

With these new inductees, there are now 320 members in the Michigan ASA Hall of Fame. Congrats!

Submitted by Debbie Sherwood, Michigan ASA
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**THREE EASY WAYS TO INSURE SOFTBALL:**

1. Contact your ASA Commissioner. Visit www.ASASoftball.com for contact info
2. Contact RPS Bollinger Sports—ASA Department. Ph: 800-446-5311 • ASA@RPSins.com
Hello and welcome to the February 2015 issue of The Inside Pitch, the official newsletter of ASA/USA Softball!

This has been an exciting month at the National Office for ASA/USA Softball.

February 5-8, we hosted the 2015 Biennial UIC Clinic in Midwest City, Okla. at the Sheraton Hotel. Over 400 umpires were in attendance for the clinic. It was great for me personally to be able to put faces to names and meet the people who work tirelessly in their communities to make ASA/USA Softball so great. My favorite moment from the event has to be the awards banquet that concluded the Clinic. The steak was great and many awards were given out to umpires from all across the country.

February 13-14, ASA/USA Softball was a part of the Bart & Nadia Sports Experience, a sports expo promoting healthy living and fitness for kids. On Friday the 13th, over 300 inner-city fourth graders came out to the Cox Convention Center to listen to motivational talks from athletes, including former OU football player J.D. Runnels, two-time Olympic Gold Medalist gymnast Bart Connor, nine-time Olympic Gold Medalist Nadia Comaneci, and our very own, former USA Softball player Destinee Martinez. Some of these kids had never picked up a softball bat or ball in their lives. They were introduced to other sports, such as tennis, rowing and soccer. Believe it or not, Julie Bartel, Director of Marketing and Communications for ASA/USA Softball, Destinee and I matched their energy! Saturday the 14th, over 8,000 came through our space to bat, pitch or toss balls and to learn more about our organization. Some people had not ever heard of ASA/USA Softball or even knew about the ASA Hall of Fame Complex despite living in Oklahoma City. We had a giant jar filled with candy, with the closest guess winning a Team USA jersey and two tickets to the 2015 WBSC Junior Women’s World Championship in August.

Anytime your association has an opportunity to get out into the community to let them know about ASA/USA Softball, try to take that and run with it. It’s a great way to get the word out that anyone can play and to promote the sport of softball. Also, it’s a blast!

Please remember that I would love to hear feedback from you. Whether you have a comment about The Inside Pitch or anything else regarding ASA/USA Softball, I am open to talking to you.

Hope you enjoy the newsletter!

PICTURED ABOVE: Left to right: Two-time Olympic Gold Medalist gymnast Bart Connor, his son Dylan, Nick Dorety and Destinee Martinez at the Bart & Nadia Sports Experience. PICTURED LEFT: Nick Dorety testing out a Tesla car.
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Over 450 umpires came to Oklahoma, where ASA/USA Softball hosted the 24th Biennial Umpire-in-Chief Clinic, February 5-8 at the Sheraton Hotel in Midwest City.

Highlighting the Awards Banquet, where over 40 umpires were honored for years of service and excellence in umpiring. Fifteen Regional Awards of Excellence, 28 years of service awards and the Merle O. Butler National Award of Excellence were among the awards given out. The Merle O. Butler Award of Excellence was given to Walt Sparks (San Antonio, Texas). ASA/USA Softball also awarded the inaugural Tom Mason Award of Excellence to Henry Pollard (Mechanicsville, Va.), which honors excellence in rule knowledge and application. The ASA/USA Softball family also honored Dave Maudsley (Citrus Heights, Calif.), who will be retiring from the National Umpire Staff. Kinard Latham, Les Novak, and Henry Pollard were also recognized for attending all 24 UIC Clinics.

The following individuals received Awards of Excellence for their respective regions:
Region 1 New England – Jim Fanning (Saugus, Mass.)
Region 2 Mid Atlantic – Kathleen Zifchock (Bloomingburg, N.Y.)
Region 3 Central Atlantic – Steve Huskin (Madison Heights, Va.)
Region 4 South Atlantic – Rick Hearp (Loganville, Ga.)
Region 5 Southern – Steve Seither (Winter Garden, Fla.)
Region 6 Southwestern – Perry Henley, Jr. (Hope, Ark.)
Region 7 Texas – Dora Martinez (San Antonio, Texas)
Region 8 Great Lakes – Dennis Troshak (Howell, Mich.)
Region 9 East Central – Jerry Selmon (Dayton, Ohio)
Region 10 Mid West – Steve Verive (Aurora, Ill.)
Region 11 Northern – Leroy Zafft (Sioux Falls, S.D.)
Region 12 Mid America – Tim Watts (Lincoln, Neb.)
Region 13 Rocky Mountain – Andy Williams (Glendale, Ariz.)
Region 14 Pacific Coast – Stan Finch (Honolulu, Hawaii)
Region 15 Northwest – Steve Demeyer (Richland, Wash.)

The following individuals were recognized for their years of service:
Rick Hearp - Georgia ASA/USA - 15 Years
Matt Dunbar - Florida ASA/USA - 20 Years
Steve Verive - Chicago ASA/USA - 20 Years
Steve Zawierucha - Maryland - DC ASA/USA - 20 Years
Tom Keller - Minnesota ASA/USA - 20 Years
Paul Kramer - Minneapolis ASA/USA - 20 Years
Mike Adams - Arkansas ASA/USA - 25 Years
Susan Johnson - Rhode Island ASA/USA - 25 Years
Steve McKeown - Dallas ASA/USA - 25 Years
Brian Mount - Houston ASA/USA - 25 Years
Steve Huskins - Piedmont Va. ASA/USA - 25 Years
Chris Drumm - Southern California ASA/USA - 25 Years
Sean Barel - Detroit ASA/USA - 25 Years
William Martin - New Hampshire ASA/USA - 30 Years
Paul Drake - Ohio ASA/USA - 30 Years
Dave Christiansen - Vermont ASA/USA - 30 Year
Richard Crocker - Texas ASA/USA - 30 Years
Chuck Brabac - Sacramento ASA/USA - 35 Years
Rick Petty - Missouri ASA/USA - 35 Years
John Gino - Southern New York ASA/USA - 35 Years
Dan Duffy - Portland ASA/USA - 35 Years
Joe McGeever - Philadelphia ASA/USA - 35 Years
Ed Murphy - Iowa ASA/USA - 40 Years
Julie Johnson - Indiana ASA/USA - 40 Years
Larry Montgomery - Mississippi ASA/USA - 40 Years
Malcolm Boyles - Seattle ASA/USA - 40 Years
Mike De Leo - Michigan ASA/USA - 45 Years
Bill Silves - Washington ASA/USA - 45 Years
Softball crossword puzzle
Test your knowledge on softball terminology

Across
1. Player that may appear at more than one fielding position or strictly as a designated hitter (TIP: two words, no spaces)
2. Point scored when a base runner advances to home plate
3. Defensive player behind home plate
4. Performed mostly by left-handed batters; an attempt to hit a ground ball with a controlled short, chopping motion (rather than a full swing)

Down
1. A safe hit, when no error or putout results, which allows the batter to reach all four bases and score a run; a fly ball that goes over the outfield fence
2. Player that throws the ball to the batter
3. When a batter advances to first base after the pitcher delivers four ‘balls’
4. A pitcher’s fastest pitch
5. A pitch thrown with a rotation that makes the ball curve
6. A baserunner’s successful advance from one base to the next during a pitch that is not hit

ANSWERS ON THE BOTTOM RIGHT CORNER OF PAGE 28
Being a family member of Team USA has its benefits.

Take advantage of partnership travel discounts.

United has flown Team USA for over 30 years, and we strive to be the airline of choice for Olympic family members as well. That’s why we offer discounted fares for USOC/NGB associated events. Go to united.com/USOC to book your flight, or to learn more.
Submitted by Amie Dugan, Director of Marketing and Communications, North America Special Olympics

Thirty-two softball teams from across the United States as well as international delegations from Canada, the Caribbean and Latin America will travel to Wichita, Kan. this September for the 2015 Special Olympics North America Softball Invitational. An anticipated 360 athletes and 100 coaches will participate in this annual tournament.

The Opening Ceremony will be held at Lawrence Dumont Stadium on Thursday, September 24 and competition will be held throughout the weekend at the South Lakes Softball Complex, with medal rounds concluding on Sunday, September 27.

Both traditional Special Olympics teams and Special Olympics Unified Sports teams (people with and without intellectual disabilities playing on the same team) will be represented throughout the weekend and medals will be awarded for each division. The Tournament is made possible by presenting sponsor Moose International, as well as ASA/USA Softball, High Touch Technologies, and the Coca-Cola Company.

“Softball emphasizes team work, physical fitness and strategic thinking - benefits and skills found on the playing field that our athletes use as part of being active, contributing members of their communities,” said Craig Pippert, Sports Director for Special Olympics North America, “We see continued growth in softball, with more than 94,000 Special Olympics athletes participating in the sport globally – 65,000 of whom participate in North America.”
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VIEW ALL OTHER FUNDRAISING OPTIONS
(OH YEAH... THERE'S MORE!)
Jerry Ray Stephens passed away on Tuesday, February 17, 2015 after lengthy a battle with bone cancer and leukemia. Stephens was very involved with softball for several decades. He umpired for many years and was a delegate to the ASA Council as President of the Sports Advisory Council of Fort Worth. Stephens also served for several terms as the President of Metro Fort Worth Umpire Association and was the original assignor for the Fort Worth High School Softball Umpire Association. Stephens was a tournament director for several ASA National Tournaments in Fort Worth and sponsored both Varsity and Junior Varsity softball tournaments for over twenty years. Softball was his passion.

Stephens is survived by his wife, Emma Stephens Coffman.

Brockey Brock passed away on Saturday, February 21, 2015 after a lengthy battle with cancer. Brock was 60 years old.

Brock attended college at Albany State University. He began his 38 year career at the Recreation and Parks Department in Albany, Georgia at the age of 17. Brock learned from Albany legend, Paul Eames, who became his lifelong mentor and friend. Brock was named the Director of the Albany Recreation and Parks Department after Eames retirement in 1996.

He was the first Georgia ASA umpire to receive an International Softball Federation Certification. He was a Chairman on the ASA National Umpire Committee. During his umpiring career, he officiated 15 ASA/USA National Championships, 16 Georgia high school baseball Championships, the first World Championship for adult slow pitch, and even numerous Georgia high school state football playoff games.

Brock was the former Georgia ASA Commissioner and had served as the South Atlantic Regional Director. Brock also served on the ASA/USA Softball Board of Directors. He is initiated in the Georgia ASA Hall of Fame.

Brock is survived by his wife of almost 40 years, Debbie and three sons, Brandon, Brent, and Brockey.
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Submitted by Heidi Wells, Oregon ASA Executive Assistant & Communications Director

Oregon ASA is excited for the 2015 Senior Men’s Slow Pitch Western National Championship at Hood View Sports Complex in Happy Valley, Ore.

Over 50 teams are expected to be in attendance for the second annual Championship. Attendance is expected to double after the first Championship last year was a huge success.

Family members Mike Wells, Oregon ASA/USA Softball Commissioner and Heidi Wells, Oregon ASA/USA Softball Executive Assistant and Communications Director, are working tirelessly together on helping build this tournament into being one of the top Senior events in the nation.

Hood View Sports Complex is one of the premier ballfields in Oregon with a view that is one of the best out there. Visitors may enjoy a rural view of the northern district, Mt. Hood and Mt. St. Helens.

The National Championship will be held September 2-7, with ages 65, 70, 75 and over on September 2-4 and ages 50, 55, and 60 from the 5th to 7th.

For more information, email Mike or Heidi.
February 19-23, 35 NCAA Division I softball teams came out to The Mary Nutter Collegiate Classic in Palm Springs, Calif. The ESPN.com/USA Softball Collegiate Top 25 Poll was well represented with No. 3 Oklahoma, No. 7 Georgia, No. 8 Florida State, No. 9 Kentucky, No. 10 Arizona, No. 12 UCLA, No. 13 Tennessee, No. 15 LSU, No. 18 Missouri, No. 20 California, No. 22 Texas A&M, and No. 23 Notre Dame all competing at the Classic.

The Classic is named after Mary Nutter, who had a successful eight-year career as head coach at Pittsburg State (Kan.) after an outstanding softball career for the Lansing Laurels, an ASA women’s fastpitch team.

Since the inaugural event in 2004, the tournament has evolved into one of the top weekends in NCAA Division I softball, with 35 teams playing 86 games in four days. This year’s classic featured 16 games of Top 25 showdowns. The premier matchup was No. 3 Oklahoma and No. 9 Kentucky, a 7-3 Oklahoma win.

The tournament is expected to grow to two weekends next year. The tournament will feature 55 to 70 teams and feature some of the great programs in Division I, as No. 2 Oregon and No. 1 Florida are scheduled to compete in next year’s Classic.
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For Your Budget
For The Environment
Submitted by Matthew J. Pfeifer, Greater San Joaquin ASA/USA Commissioner

It was an extraordinary and emotional evening at the Greater San Joaquin Hall of Fame on Saturday, February 14, 2015 at the Grape Festival Grounds in Lodi, Calif.

Commissioner Matt Pfeifer served as the Master of Ceremonies for this event with 130 people in attendance. "It gives me great pleasure to see the past inductees sharing stories and reminiscing on their softball days", said Pfeifer.

Fourteen umpires were recognized for being selected for National Championships in 2014. Greater San Joaquin’s Umpire in Chief, Ron Adkins (Modesto, Calif.) was recognized to be the Umpire in Chief at the Men’s 60 & Over Fast Pitch National Championships held in Lodi, Calif.

Mike Reese, Recreation Superintendent for the City of Lodi was awarded the James Farrell Award. This comes from the ASA/USA National Office for one of the highest rated National Tournaments in 2014. With a score of over 98 out of 100, Greater San Joaquin was one of a few organizations across the country that received this award. Cindy Blanchard was recognized for her service and dedication to the umpire program as Volunteer of the Year.

The following individuals were honored and inducted into the Hall of Fame.

**Henry “Sonny” Garcia** coached and managed softball teams from the late 70’s to the mid 1990’s. He had a knack for developing ball players and molding a team into being one of the best in the state. Garcia was actually elected in 2014, but was unable to attend the ceremony. Therefore, he was inducted this year so he could be honored publicly.

**Howard Smith** has played softball for over 57 years and is still going strong. He currently plays shortstop on a 75 Over competitive tournament team. Howard has won 10 Championship rings, as well as numerous MVP and All Tournament Team Awards.

**Bucky Layland** played in the 1970’s for an open division fast pitch team called M & R Packing. They were considered the best women’s fast pitch team in Northern California for many years. Nicknamed “Roadrunner” for her speed on the base paths, Bucky had a lifetime batting average of .457. She began her tenure as the Head Coach at Pacific University as a 24 year old. Despite her young age, she did not lack leadership, bringing the Tigers to a 220-119-3 record over seven seasons. She then left to coach at San Joaquin Delta College where she coached for over 30 years. She was honored as National Jr. College Coach of the Year in 2002. She is inducted into the Lodi Hall of Fame as well as the Stockton Athletic Hall of Fame.

**Danny Caruso** has played softball for over 50 years. He started by playing fast pitch locally until he began playing slow pitch for several tournament teams. Danny also has been involved as an administrator for over 30 years. Danny was a founding member for the Stockton Softball Board of Directors, Cal Mex Board of Directors, The Greater San Joaquin Senior Representative, and The Greater San Joaquin Hall of Fame Committee. Danny has also been the President of the Big Valley Seniors for 11 years. Danny was inducted into the Senior Softball Hall of Fame in 2014.

**Dennis “Boomer” Brownfield** not only plays, but also teaches young athletes the fundamentals. A first baseman and catcher, Dennis was a power hitter, hence his nickname “Boomer”. Dennis has 10 First Team All American honors, two MVP titles, two Batting Champion honors, and two Home Run Champion awards. Dennis has been a huge part in the 13 National Championships won by Airtronics, Nor Cal Merchants and Painters Masters Softball teams.

PICTURED ABOVE: Left to right, 2015 HOF Inductees: Bucky Layland, Dennis Brownfield, Howard Smith Danny Caruso, Sonny Garcia and ASA Commissioner, Matt Pfeifer
These Top Ten flyers are a great way to get out the word of ASA/USA Softball. They are very handy to give to parents, coaches, or umpires. Email Nick Dorety if you would like one made for your Association.
The World Cup of Softball is Back in Irvine, CA!

JUNE 29 THROUGH JULY 5
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- Canada
- Japan
- USA
- USA Juniors
- Argentina

*Potential for additional teams

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Tips for your association

Follow these guidelines to help your association grow

As mentioned earlier in Nick Dorety’s editor letter, on Friday the 13th, over 300 inner-city fourth graders came out to the Cox Convention Center for the Bart & Nadia Sports Experience to listen to motivational talks from athletes, including former OU football player J.D. Runnels, two-time Olympic Gold Medalist gymnast Bart Connor, nine-time Olympic Gold Medalist Nadia Comaneci, and our very own, former USA Softball player Destinee Martinez. Many local news outlets were on site composing interviews and stories. This was a fantastic opportunity for some free press. Check out the video below.

Click here to see the Daily Oklahoma video on the 2015 Bart & Nadia Sports Experience.

We’d strongly like to encourage you to try to find opportunities in your community to help spread the word of ASA/USA Softball. There are many events like this that happen every weekend all across the nation. Whether it may be a trade show, sports expo or some festival going on in your town, think outside of the box to help your association and the sport grow. If it’s not something as elaborate as a full display at a weekend event, try to find other opportunities, such as setting up an information table at a large youth or church event. Think of low cost, high visibility opportunities in your community. It is critical to get youth exposed at an early age to our softball and its basics. After learning the basics from our local Associations at a promotional event, this can be a catalyst for future team registrations. Learn the basics is just the first step to getting them hooked on softball!

We found the Bart & Nadia Sports Experience by networking within our own Oklahoma City community. Use your personal network from church, friends, family, and co-workers to see if they know of any city festivals or events going on in the near future. Just be bold and not afraid to get out there. People may not register immediately at your promotional event, but investing in raising awareness is key and it will pay off in time.
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NEW MEMBERS CAN JOIN ANYTIME THROUGHOUT THE YEAR AND START TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE MANY BENEFITS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE USA SOFTBALL LEGACY CLUB.

TO FIND OUT MORE OR TO JOIN FOR JUST $100, CONTACT US AT (405) 425-3422, LegacyClub@softball.org OR VISIT USASoftball.com AND SELECT LEGACY CLUB UNDER THE TEAM USA.
Gold Pass, all-session tickets for the 2015 WBSC Junior Women's World Championship (JWWC), which will be held August 9-15 in Oklahoma City, Okla., are still available for purchase online. This is the first time this Championship has been held in the USA since 1987 at Wheeler Park in Oklahoma City.

The Gold Pass includes All-session tickets for the seven day event, official event t-shirt, and program for the international event. The Gold Pass will provide you with the best seats at the OGE Energy Field and the best fan experience at the 2015 JWWC.

Come see the following countries that are scheduled to appear: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chinese Taipei, Columbia, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, United States and Venezuela.

Click here to place your order or CALL 1-800-654-8337 (8 am-4 pm CST Monday-Friday). Gold Pass Tickets will be shipped out in July and Single Day tickets will go on sale April 1.

To coincide with the JWWC, Jennie Finch, two-time USA Softball Olympian, will be hosting a stop on her softball camp tour. The camp will last for two full days, featuring instruction covering all aspects of softball and is open to girls third grade and up. Advanced registration is required and participation is limited. Sign up now to learn from the best softball players in the world and discover what it takes to be a Champion on and off the field.

Camp attendees of the Aug. 15-16 session will also receive two tickets to the 2015 WBSC JWWC.

For more information, visit JennieFinch.com.
STAY CONNECTED WITH US ONLINE

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Meet The Team
Learn more about the new kids on the block for the Junior Women’s National Team!

Learn more about the members of the 2015 USA Softball Junior Women’s National Team, the faces of tomorrow!

Kelly Barnhill, Pitcher, Florida Signee

Welcome to Team USA! When you heard the news, what was your reaction?

KB- Excited, honored, and humbled all at once when I found out that I was chosen to represent my country on the softball field and to wear Team USA on my chest. Since I was eight years old, my goal has been to make the Women’s National Team and play in the Olympics. Being selected to the Junior National Team brings me one giant step closer to fulfilling the dream.

Can you describe your game to softball fans?

KB- I’m a hard throwing pitcher who works up and down in the zone. The ‘riseball’ is my go to pitch, but I throw enough drops, changes, and screwballs to keep batters off balance. I occasionally like to bring the heater and dust batters in on the hands.

What was the most memorable experience you’ve ever had on the softball field?

KB- On November 2, 2014, my High School softball team, the Pope High School Greyhounds, won the 6A Georgia State Championship. In that game, I pitched a no-hitter while my teammates played a great offensive and defensive game. It was an amazing day for all of us.

Johanna Grauer, Pitcher, UCLA Freshman

Welcome to Team USA! When you heard the news, what was your reaction?

JG- I was pretty shocked and told my family immediately.

What was the most memorable experience you’ve ever had on the softball field?

JG- It was my senior year in high school and my team went undefeated. That whole season was just special.

Funniest thing that happened to you recently?

JG- I was walking to practice alone and as I’m walking up these stairs I completely ate it in front of a huge crowd of people. I just sat on the ground laughing and embarrassed for a few minutes.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE KEY

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LEFT: Kelly Barnhill pitching at the 2015 Selection camp for the Junior Women’s National Team.

RIGHT: Johanna Grauer pitching at the 2015 Selection camp for the Junior Women’s National Team.
Just as it is important to be physically prepared to play youth sports it is equally important for youth athletes to be mentally prepared to handle the pressure. No one can predict exactly how a game will play out, but you can arm your athlete with techniques to overcome pressure from the competition. Here are some methods for overcoming challenges during a game.

First, teach your athletes to reframe bad situations — transforming their negative emotions into positive ones.

Next, arm your youth athletes with tools to control their emotions. A key to being a better player is learning how to use those emotions constructively. Control your emotions, rather than letting them control you.

A bad call, cheap shot from an opponent or noise from hostile spectators may increase pressure and negative emotions, but encouraging players to experience those emotions as a fun part of the challenge and thrill of competition can keep things from getting worse. One way athletes can do this is by allowing themselves a moment to refocus. Take deep breaths, or use encouraging self-talk phrases like “let it go” or “it’s ok.” Be in charge of your emotions.

Help your youth athlete beat stress and overcome pressure with this helpful tool from Liberty Mutual Insurance Play Positive™. Learn more.

Visit PlayPositive.com for helpful advice, tools and resources you can use on and off the field.
PUTTING SPORTSMANSHIP BACK INTO YOUTH SPORTS

Liberty Mutual Insurance started the Play Positive™ program to encourage good sportsmanship and help parents and coaches promote a better youth sports experience.

Visit PlayPositive.com for helpful advice, tools, and resources you can use on and off the field.

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Expert advice and resources for parents  
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