The Amateur Softball Association (ASA)/USA Softball has announced the 2016 rosters for both the USA Softball Men’s Slow Pitch National Team and USA Softball Slow Pitch Futures Team. Ten National Team veterans and five rookies will wear the Red, White and Blue this summer as members of the 2016 USA Softball Men’s Slow Pitch National Team roster while seven Futures Team veterans and eight rookies comprise the 2016 USA Softball Slow Pitch Futures Team. Both teams will take part in a series of exhibition games at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex – OGE Energy Field – INTEGRIS Field in Oklahoma City and the Slow Pitch Showdown. The Slow Pitch National Team will also face off against Canada in Border Battle VIII on July 6.

“The excitement and honor to have this opportunity is the same for me today as it was in 2009,” said Head Coach Steve Shortland. “Being retired military, putting on a uniform to represent my nation is a responsibility I never took lightly and I approach my Team USA coaching duties the same way. The talent and character of the athletes selected each year embody that same spirit and being able to share the field with them is always a true pleasure. My thanks to the ASA/USA Softball leadership and everyone involved for making our National Team and the Border Battle events possible. Although our last host (Michigan ASA/USA Softball) was phenomenal, I look forward to being back at OGE Energy Field to defend our title. I trust Canada will represent well and we hope the fans enjoy the event.”

Highlighting this year’s Slow Pitch National Team roster are first-time National Team members...
Hello and welcome to the March, 2016 edition of the Inside Pitch, the official newsletter of ASA/USA Softball. For most of you around the country, spring has arrived and as the weather grows warmer, more and more are getting out to the ballpark. As we gear up for the 2016 Championship Season, I want to encourage our local association Commissioners and Junior Olympic (JO) Commissioners to ensure that all necessary paperwork and information is readily available for the teams and players who are looking to compete at an ASA/USA Softball Championship event. As the National Governing Body of Softball in the U.S., we are proud to put on the best-of-the-best at all levels of play, and it is up to us to demonstrate and explain to our members the many benefits of playing ASA/USA Softball.

This summer, five of our USA Softball National Teams will take to the field in a variety of events, both nationally and internationally. Our Women’s National Team will head to Surrey, B.C., Canada for the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Women’s World Championship while our Junior Men’s National Team will be competing on home soil in the WBSC Junior Men’s World Championship in Midland, Mich. We’re also proud to have the World Cup of Softball XI and Border Battle VIII return to Oklahoma City to be played at the historic ASA Hall of Fame Complex this July. In addition to the Women’s National Team, our Women’s Elite Team will be competing in the World Cup, which will have a record-13 countries represented. Our Slow Pitch National Teams will also take the field during the Border Battle and Slow Pitch Showdown.

A lot of important dates are coming up in April, including our spring Board of Directors meeting at the National Office headquarters. A lot of important discussions will occur regarding the direction of our great organization, so if you haven’t already, please reach out to your Territory Vice Presidents to voice any questions, comments or concerns as they can share those with their fellow Board members when we meet. We encourage each of you to attend Board of Directors meetings as often as possible, but for those of you unable to attend we’re offering a free live stream for the meeting, with the exception of when the Board enters into executive session.

In the coming months, let’s make it our goal to get more people involved in ASA/USA Softball. Whether as a coach, player, umpire or administrator, there are numerous ways people can become involved in the sport of softball. We offer several educational programs, including the ACE (Achieve, Certify, Educate) Coaching Certification Program, our National Umpire Schools and USA Softball National Coaching Schools, which demonstrate our commitment to the safety and education of our participants. If you need any help in getting the message out, or just needing some helpful tips in marketing you’re local association, please don’t hesitate to reach out to the Marketing staff at the ASA/USA Softball National Office. They offer sales kits and other materials which can help you in recruiting new members.

Best of luck to all of you in the remainder of the 2016 season, and thank you for playing ASA/USA Softball!

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...Ryan Parfitt (East Norriton, Pa.), Mike Umscheid (Kenosha, Wis.) and Brian Zirkle (Bourbonnais, Ill.), who were members of last year’s Futures National Team. Also returning to the roster are eight-time Men’s Slow Pitch National Team members Brett Helmer (Cicero, N.Y.) and Brian Wegman (Hamilton, Ohio), who were both on the inaugural squad in 2009 and have continued to represent the United States each year since. Joining the roster for their first time as a member of Team USA are Filip Washington (Las Vegas, Nev.) and Steve Whaley (Richardson, Texas).

“It’s a great honor to be selected for the USA Softball Men’s Slow Pitch National Team,” said Parfitt. “I’m really excited to go back and play at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex in Oklahoma City. Last year, representing the USA Futures was without a doubt the most fun I’ve had playing and I’m blessed for the opportunity to come back and represent ASA/USA Softball for another year.”

The team will be coached by Steve Shortland (Converse, Texas), who is making his eighth-consecutive appearance as the Head Coach of Team USA.

Created in conjunction with the inaugural Border Battle slow pitch competition against Canada in 2009, the Men’s Slow Pitch National Team program is now in its eighth season. Last year, Team USA captured their sixth Border Battle title with a 22-7 win over Canada in Midland, Mich. The Americans won the inaugural Border Battle 30-23 but Canada evened the series in 2010 with a 30-29 win. The USA men rebounded in 2011 with a dominating 25-3 performance, a 32-21 victory in 2012, a 25-10 win in 2013 and an 18-9 win over Canada in 2014.

PHOTOS ABOVE: (Top - Bottom) Dale Brungardt, Mike Umscheid, Travis Clark and Brian Wegman will all suit up for Team USA this summer.

Click here to see the entire rosters for the 2016 USA Softball Men’s Slow Pitch National Team and 2016 USA Softball Slow Pitch Futures Team!
MISSOURI ASA CONDUCTS ANNUAL STATE CONVENTION
Submitted by Joey Rich, Missouri ASA

Over 20 district and state personnel met on February 19-20 at the Lakewood Resort in Osage Beach for Missouri ASA’s (MASA) 32nd Annual State Convention. Craig Cress was the featured speaker and conducted 3-of-7 educational sessions. Friday night Frog Races were a big hit with $250 raised for MASA charities.

The Awards Banquet was held on Feb. 20 at Seven Springs Winery with 60 people in attendance. Shown left to right: SLOW PITCH IMPACT Award winners Jason Bax (Loose Creek), Randy Gresham (Rolla), Don and Elsie Punzo (St. Joseph) and Jack McCracken (Springfield). In front of Executive Director Cress is Gail Owens who was given the SPONSOR OF THE YEAR Award. Continuing to the right, Pat Hagan (Cape Girardeau) (HALL OF BLUE) and three HALL OF FAME Inductees, Tim Glascock (Hannibal) for Meritorious Service; and players G. SCOTT HUFF (Slow Pitch) (Farmington) and CHRIS MILJAVAC (Fast Pitch) (Easton).

Pictured to the left:
Portland ASA/USA Softball, who partnered with the Blazers NBA Team, held an autograph session with members of the USA Softball Women’s National Team (WNT) and Elite Teams. Former USA Softball WNT Coach Mike White, Jenna Lilley and Cheridan Hawkins pose with Dan Bennett of Portland ASA.
National Senior Games Association (NSGA) and Senior Olympics Arizona sanctioned with Arizona ASA/USA Softball to put on a National Qualifying Women’s Senior Slow Pitch Tournament. It was held March 4-6, 2016 at Rio Vista Softball Fields in Peoria.
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Highlighting this year’s Slow Pitch Futures Team roster are three-time Futures Team members Neil Haglund (Stony Brook, N.Y.) and Cory Large (Bedford, Texas), who have been on the Futures roster since 2013. Eight athletes will also join the roster for their first time as a member of Team USA.

The team will be coached by Rob Humphrey (Burlington, Iowa), who is making his third-consecutive appearance on the coaching staff of Team USA.

In addition to participating in Border Battle VIII, the 2016 Slow Pitch National Team will take on the 2016 USA Softball Men’s Slow Pitch Futures Team in the Slow Pitch Showdown on July 5. Both U.S. Slow Pitch teams will also compete against Canada and local slow pitch teams in a series of exhibition games July 4-6. A complete schedule for the Men’s Slow Pitch National Teams will be released at a later date.

All-session tickets are now on sale for Border Battle VIII and the World Cup of Softball XI. Tickets, which are $175 for Gold Pass reserved seating and $60 for general admission seating, can be purchased by phone at 800-654-8337 or online at ASAUSASoftball.com. Gold Pass all-session tickets include a USA Softball hat, World Cup XI program, a personalized name slide on the scoreboard at OGE Energy Field, exclusive parking and advanced autograph sessions. Fans that hold the Gold Pass all-session ticket will have open seating in the Gold Pass section. Single-session Gold Pass and general admission tickets will go on sale in early June.

Hello! Thanks for taking the time to read this month’s edition of The Inside Pitch. I hope you as a reader enjoy the content shared through this newsletter.

Inside the National Office: We have already kicked things off here at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex, hosting events like the ASA Friendly, the annual Bedlam game featuring OSU vs. OU, the Combat Capital City Classic and more! At the same time, we are also gearing up for events like the World Cup of Softball XI and Border Battle VIII, which both return to Oklahoma City this year.

Across the country: It has been amazing to see via social media what you all are up to at your respective associations. For those that aren’t active on social media, I would highly encourage you to do so - it is a great tool for promoting your association and sharing things that reflect how great it is to #PlayASA! Your coaches, players, parents and others around the country are paying attention, so share game photos, weekend clinics, umpire meetings, etc. To help you in ramping up your social media game, I send out a weekly email with suggested social media content. If you are not on that list, please email me at kwillis@softball.org to be added. If you would like additional content or have questions, please don’t hesitate to ask - I would love to help!

Enjoy this month’s Inside Pitch! If your association has news to share and would like to be featured in next month’s newsletter, email me at kwillis@softball.org by the 15th of the month.
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Submitted by Gary Young, South Dakota ASA

“Most athletes hope to reach the top level in their chosen sport. Sports officials have the same goals. Steve Riswold, also known as “Riz”, from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, a National Staff member as well as South Dakota ASA/USA Softball (SDASA) and Region 11 Umpire-in-Chief (UIC), is one of the top clinicians in the country. That is evident with the excellent ratings of the umpires sent to National Tournaments. Steve has worked with his deputy UICs at umpire clinics as well as training on the field.

To help us realize that fact it was recently brought to my attention that Riz will be representing ASA/USA Softball for 10 days of clinics at U.S. Military bases in Europe. He will be at a base in Vicenza, Italy from April 12 – 16. After that stop, he will travel for a couple days to Germany for clinics outside of Frankfurt at Kaiserslautern Military Community, Ramstein Air Base April 19 – 23 before heading back to South Dakota for the start of our summer season.

Even though the trip is a once in a lifetime opportunity, Steve had second thoughts to accept the assignment this year as it fell on the weekend of the SDASA State Umpire School.

Riz explains “I had a call from Director of Umpires Kevin Ryan asking if I would represent ASA/USA Softball in Germany and Italy training umpires over the same time period. I first considered asking if I could go another year. After talking to others who have made the trip, I was encouraged to go. There was no guarantee I would have another chance, or that the program where ASA/USA Softball sends a clinician to Europe will continue. It was an opportunity that might not ever happen again.”

Riz may work with umpires from all branches even though the two bases he is working on are primarily Army bases. Fifteen to 20-plus umpires will attend the clinics while in Italy and 20 to 30-plus while in Germany. Kevin Ryan said the partnership with the military started approximately in the year 2000.

“Steve will be the only ASA/USA Softball clinician at the bases,” replied Kevin Ryan. “We send one instructor every year to conduct clinics in Italy and Germany for our Military Umpires. In the past, Nationals Umpire Staff members Gene Harrison, Jim Craig, Bill Silves, Larry Montgomery and Julie Johnson have been chosen and attended. Even ASA/USA Softball Executive Director Craig Cress has attended.”

“Steve is an excellent instructor,” said Ryan “The umpires in Europe work primarily Slow Pitch and as we all know, Steve is one of the best in the game of Slow Pitch softball. He was chosen because we know he will represent all ASA/USA Softball umpires and their respect for the U.S. Armed Forces.”

It is this writer’s opinion that Steve’s accomplishments reflects highly on all of our umpires in SDASA softball program.
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Continued from Page 10

I asked Mr. Ryan if there was anything he wanted to add with this in mind.

“It is indeed an honor and a privilege for ASA/USA Softball to send an instructor to Europe to help train and make our military umpires better. They look forward to getting better and becoming the best umpire they can be.” Ryan went on to say, “It is a small way for us to give back to those who give so much for us to do what we do. As an ASA/USA Softball representative, Steve is excited to be able to do this.”

Thrilled to be going, Steve’s thoughts are still with his umpires at home.

“I know the Deputies bring experience and knowledge to our umpires. It will be a good thing for them to take a more active role at the state clinic. Veteran National Staff clinician “Wild” Bill Silves will still be making the trip and will help Rich Skorheim, LeRoy Zafft, and SDASA UIC staff, it will be a well run state school.”

No one works harder for the umpires of South Dakota and the Northern Region than Steve. He has been very successful in getting our umpires to that top level. South Dakota umpires are getting opportunities in ASA/USA Softball National Championships as Steve has built relationships around the country. Those high ratings at the National Championships to which our umpires are assigned ensure that will continue.

That last fact is directly attributable to his ability to work with his deputies. I have no fear of any one of the deputies being an clinician as well as being assigned to be UIC at a State or National Championship. They will ban together at the State Umpire Clinic and each help in their area of specialty. At the same time, Steve Riswold will be training umpires in the Armed Forces to be just like our SDASA umpires, which is to “Be the best umpires that they can be.”

Congrats Steve for representing SDASA with this assignment as well for helping many umpires reach that top level!”

Passing of Dallas ASA Umpire, Danny Flanery

ASA/USA Softball lost a valuable member of the team this past month - Dallas ASA Umpire, Danny Flanery. Shared below are heartfelt condolences from the Dallas ASA Facebook page:

“Danny called my games for years and was a phenomenal umpire and true gentleman. He always put the girls first and I knew we would get his best everytime we stepped on his field.”
- Michael Ryan Curtis

“Such a great man, always had the game and the girls best interest at heart, never made it about himself. May he rest in peace.” - Blake Savell
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ASA/USA Softball recently announced that four-time Olympian Laura Berg (Corvalis, Ore./head coach at Oregon State) has been selected as the Head Coach for the 2017 USA Softball Junior Women’s National Team (JWNT) that will compete at the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Junior Women’s World Championship (JWWC) in July of 2017 in Clearwater, Fla.

“I’m very excited to lead the Junior Women’s National Team and honored to once again wear the Red, White and Blue,” said Berg. “I’m looking forward to working with a special group of young athletes that will have an unforgettable experience as we defend Team USA’s Gold Medal finish at the 2015 WBSC JWWC. Go USA!”

Berg, USA Softball’s only four-time Olympian, recently finished her fourth season as an Assistant Coach with the USA Softball Women’s National Team. As a member of the coaching staff, Berg helped lead the Red, White and Blue to three Gold Medal finishes at the World Cup of Softball, two WBSC World Championship Silver Medals and a Silver at the Toronto 2015 Pan American Games. Berg also has previous experience with the JWNT program as an Assistant Coach for the 2013 JWNT that earned a Silver Medal at the 2013 WBSC JWWC in Brampton, Ontario, Canada.

As a player on the USA Women’s National Team, Berg is one of four women who hold three Olympic Gold Medals. Considered to be one of the greatest outfielders to ever play the game, Berg helped the United States to a Gold Medal at the 1996, 2000 and 2004 Olympic Games and also holds an Olympic Silver Medal from the 2008 Beijing Olympics. In addition to competing in four Olympic Games, Berg also appeared at four WBSC World Championship, and three Pan American Championships, all of which were Gold Medal finishes.

Berg is currently in her fourth season as the Head Coach at Oregon State University. Prior to her duties at Oregon State, she spent time as an Assistant Coach at her alma mater, Fresno State.

In addition to Berg’s selection as the Head Coach for the 2017 JWNT, the complete coaching staff has also been selected. Joining Berg as Assistant Coaches are Trisha Ford (Fremont, Calif./head coach at Fresno State), Kristie Fox (San Diego, Calif./head coach at UT-Arlington), and John Rittman (Valencia, Calif./Softball Consultant). Athletes for the 2017 USA Softball JWNT will be selected at a later date following a National Team Selection Camp.
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Valid through May 15, 2016.
After posting a .60 ERA with 37 strikeouts during four appearances at the Libby Matson Tournament, Cal Poly junior Sierra Hyland (Visalia, Calif.) was selected as the Week 3 USA Softball Collegiate National Player of the Week. The pitcher went 3-0 with a save in the circle, garnering her ninth career and second-consecutive Big West Conference Pitcher of the Week honors.

“Weekend-by-weekend, I’ve been working on my mental game and staying strong with every pitch and every inning to succeed,” said Hyland. “I’ve added a few more pitches this season and that’s helped throw the batters off. As a team, if we keep our energy and our will strong, I feel things will keep going well for us. We’ve done a good job bouncing back from adversity this year. I’d like to thank ASA/USA Softball for their recognition.”

Hyland opened the Libby Matson Tournament with 11 strikeouts while allowing just one earned run in a 3-2 win over Purdue. Hyland returned the following day to strikeout 10 Cal State Bakersfield batters while allowing just two hits during a complete game, 5-0 shutout win. During the Mustang’s second game of the doubleheader, Hyland earned her second save of the season as she fanned six Purdue hitters to help lead her team to a 5-3 win. Hyland would close out tournament play with another 10 strikeout performance in a 3-1 victory over tournament hosts Pacific.

CO-WEEK FOUR
MOLLY HUTCHISON
NC State

Following a strong offensive performance during Week 4 of the NCAA Softball season, NC State’s Molly Hutchison (San Diego, Calif.) and Michigan’s Sierra Romero (Murrieta, Calif.) were named USA Softball Collegiate National Co-Players of the Week. Both sluggers hit over .500 for the week.

Wolfpack junior Hutchison turned in one of the best weekly performances in NC State history, leading her team at the plate as she compiled a .667 (8-for-12) batting average. During her on-fire performance at the plate, Hutchison tallied seven RBI and scored six runs to help lead the Wolfpack to an Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) series win over Virginia Tech while capturing a standalone victory over Charlotte earlier in the week. Against Charlotte, the California native went 2-for-4 with a double and a triple, driving in what would prove to be the winning run in a 6-5 victory. Hutchison ignited the Wolfpack offense in the first two games of the ACC Conference series against Virginia Tech, going 3-for-5 with two singles, a home run and three runs scored. In their series finale, she went a perfect 3-for-3 with two singles and a three-run home run that helped NC State walk away with the series win. For the weekend, she had a 1.417 slugging percentage and a .714 on-base percentage.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17
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CONTINUED: SIERRA HYLAND

For the week, Hyland allowed just 13 hits, six walks and two runs while holding opponents to a .157 batting average in 23 and one-third innings. Hyland helped out her cause at the plate, finishing the weekend with a .313 (5-for-16) batting average, one run scored, two RBI and one walk.

“Sierra has worked really hard in the offseason both offensively and defensively,” said Cal Poly Head Coach Jenny Condon. “Her willingness to do whatever it takes for the team has helped both the team and herself. She’s really focused on the process instead of the result. She’s more composed and relaxed in the circle than she has been in the past. Ally Carda has been a great addition to our staff and helped Sierra and our pitching staff tremendously.”

This is the first USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Week award for Hyland, who leads all Big West pitchers in opposing batting average (.177) and innings pitched (69). This is also the first USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Week honors for an athlete from Cal Poly.

CONTINUED: MOLLY HUTCHISON AND SIERRA ROMERO

“Wow, it’s quite the honor,” said Hutchison. “It’s such an honor to represent NC State at this level and to achieve this national award is great exposure for our school and our program. I’m extremely excited about it and it feels great. I just wanted to hit the ball hard each time I stepped to the plate. Coach Rychcik talks all the time about having quality at-bats, hitting the ball hard and things worked out for me this weekend. I was happy to get some big hits to help our team win, so I’m very pleased to be named USA Softball Co-Player of the Week.”

“It’s well deserved for Molly,” said NC State Head Coach Shawn Rychcik. “She had a fantastic week with big hits in every game and we needed her to have them. I’m super proud of her. She’s been working really hard. It took her a couple weeks to get going, but she’s stayed at it and it showed this week. It’s a really big honor to get the national player of the week award because you’re competing against all the other athletes at softball programs in the country and it’s super special to our program.”

Michigan second baseman Romero batted .500 (5-for-10) with two doubles, a triple, a home run, and 13 RBI over the Wolverine’s busy six-game schedule last week. Against three Top 25-ranked opponents, the senior posted at least one hit in all six games, extending her current hit streak to 12 games while tallying four extra-base hits. Romero boasted four RBI apiece in back-to-back run-rule wins against then-No. 13 Missouri and Long Beach State, while recording a 3-for-4, three RBI performance versus North Carolina. Romero also utilized her speed during the Wolverine’s six-game stretch, adding two stolen bases and nine runs scored to her season stats. For the week, Romero finished with a .850 slugging percentage and a .583 on-base percentage.

“Having success at the plate really helps with my overall confidence, because I know I can get the job done even if it takes me a few at-bats to get going,” said Romero. “But to be honest I don’t know if I’ll ever be satisfied with my hitting. My biggest thing and our team’s biggest thing is our focus, and we did a really good job with that over our entire spring break trip. I’m proud of how our team has kept energy in the dugout, kept swinging and kept battling each and every game.”

CLICK HERE TO READ THE ENTIRE ARTICLE >
WEEK 3
WITH 2016 RECORD
1. Florida (16-0)
2. Alabama (15-1)
3. Michigan (12-2)
4. Auburn (15-1)
5. Louisiana-Lafayette (14-1)
6. LSU (13-2)
7. Washington (12-3)
8. Oregon (12-4)
9. Texas A&M (17-1)
10. James Madison (12-1)
11. Georgia (13-1)
12. Florida State (13-3)
13. Oklahoma (10-4)
14. Missouri (9-2)
15. UCLA (9-6)
16. Kentucky (14-2)
17. Arizona State (15-2)
18. Arizona (11-5)
19. Minnesota (10-4)
20. Tennessee (10-5)
21. Fresno State (12-3)
T22. Baylor (11-3)
T22. Oregon State (14-2)
24. Texas (14-2)
25. Notre Dame (12-3)

RV: Nebraska, Mississippi State, Utah, California, USC Upstate, UT Arlington, Ohio State, Long Beach State.

WEEK 4
WITH 2016 RECORD
1. Florida (22-0)
2. Michigan (18-2)
3. Auburn (20-1)
4. Alabama (20-2)
5. Louisiana-Lafayette (17-1)
6. LSU (19-2)
7. Washington (16-3)
T8. James Madison (17-1)
T8. Oregon (17-4)
10. Texas A&M (20-2)
11. Florida State (17-3)
12. Georgia (17-2)
13. Missouri (13-3)
14. Oklahoma (12-4)
15. Kentucky (18-3)
16. UCLA (13-8)
17. Minnesota (13-5)
18. Arizona State (18-5)
19. Tennessee (16-5)
20. Arizona (15-7)
21. Baylor (14-5)
22. Fresno State (13-5-1)
23. Notre Dame (16-3)
24. Oregon State (16-4-1)
25. Texas (14-3)

RV: Nebraska, USC Upstate, Mississippi State, Utah, UT Arlington, California, Cal Poly, Ohio State, Texas State, Long Beach State, San Diego State, Tulsa.

WEEK 5
WITH 2016 RECORD
1. Florida (26-0)
2. Michigan (20-2)
3. Auburn (22-3)
4. LSU (23-3)
5. Louisiana-Lafayette (19-1)
6. Alabama (22-4)
7. Washington (19-3)
8. James Madison (22-2)
9. Oregon (20-4)
10. Texas A&M (23-2)
11. Florida State (20-3)
12. Georgia (23-3)
13. Kentucky (22-3)
14. Oklahoma (17-4)
15. Missouri (15-4)
16. Tennessee (20-5)
17. UCLA (17-8)
18. Arizona (18-8)
19. Notre Dame (21-3)
20. Baylor (19-5)
21. Arizona State (21-7)
22. Minnesota (16-7)
23. Oregon State (20-4-1)
24. Fresno State (15-6-1)
25. Nebraska (15-6)

RV: USC Upstate, Texas, Oklahoma State, Ohio State, UCF, Mississippi State, Mississippi, North Dakota State, Cal Poly, San Diego State, UT Arlington, South Florida.
WEEK 6
WITH 2016 RECORD

1. Florida (30-1)
2. Michigan (21-2)
3. Auburn (26-4)
4. Texas A&M (27-3)
5. Louisiana-Lafayette (22-2)
6. LSU (25-5)
7. Oregon (22-4)
8. Alabama (26-5)
9. James Madison (22-2)
10. Washington (19-5)
11. Florida State (23-3)
12. T12. Georgia (25-4)
14. Oklahoma (21-6)
15. Missouri (20-4)
16. UCLA (18-8)
17. Notre Dame (22-3)
18. Arizona (20-9)
19. Tennessee (21-8)
20. Baylor (23-6)
21. Arizona State (22-9)
22. Minnesota (19-9)
23. Fresno State (18-8-1)
24. Oregon State (20-6-1)
25. Mississippi State (19-8)

RV: Ohio State, South Florida, USC Upstate, Mississippi, Nebraska, Tulsa, Ball State, UT Arlington, Louisville, North Dakota State, San Diego State, Cal State Fullerton, Utah, Florida Atlantic.

WEEK 7
WITH 2016 RECORD

1. Florida (33-1)
2. Michigan (24-3)
3. Auburn (30-4)
4. Louisiana-Lafayette (25-2)
5. Oregon (26-4)
6. James Madison (25-2)
7. Alabama (28-6)
8. Florida State (26-3)
9. Georgia (29-5)
10. LSU (26-8)
11. Texas A&M (27-6)
12. Kentucky (30-4)
13. Washington (21-7)
14. Oklahoma (23-6)
15. Missouri (24-5)
16. Tennessee (25-8)
17. Arizona (22-10)
18. UCLA (19-10-1)
19. Baylor (26-6)
20. Notre Dame (24-5)
22. Minnesota (22-9)
23. South Florida (29-9)
24. Ohio State (18-7)
25. Louisville (22-6)

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ASA/USA Softball recently announced that two-time Olympian Jennie Finch will serve as the host of Softball 360 for the 2016 season. Produced and edited by Long Haul Productions, the show enters its 12th season and will create 13 original air dates that reach over 97.4 million households through a series of 25 television networks.

“I’m happy to be part of Softball 360 and their coverage of our sport,” said Finch. “They are a wonderful resource, and I am looking forward to working with them to share all the exciting things going on in the softball community.”

Arguably one of the most recognized athletes in the sport of softball, Finch was named to the USA Softball Women’s National Team in 2001 and competed for the Red, White and Blue through her retirement in 2010. At the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, Finch was 2-0 from the circle en route to a Gold Medal finish for the U.S. Women. At the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, Finch compiled another 2-0 performance as the U.S. claimed Silver at the sport’s last Olympic Games. In addition to her Olympic accolades, Finch is a four-time World Cup of Softball Gold Medalist, three-time World Champion and two-time Pan American Games Gold Medalist as a member of Team USA.

In addition to her career highlights, Finch has also appeared on episodes of Pros vs. Joes, The Real Housewives of Orange County and was a contestant on Celebrity Apprentice in 2008. In 2004, she was named one of People Magazine’s “50 Most Beautiful People”. Finch is married to former professional baseball player Casey Daigle and the couple has three children – Ace, Diesel, and Paisley. Finch holds Jennie Finch Softball Camps across the U.S. and has a softball academy at Diamond Nation in Flemington, N.J.

Softball 360 will feature several ASA/USA Softball sanctioned teams, events, features and programs across the country. From Adult and Junior Olympic (JO) tournaments both in fast pitch and slow pitch, accompanied by umpires and administration stories, the hosts will take an in-depth look at several of the opportunities playing ASA/USA Softball can provide. Softball 360 is also the home of the ASA Long Haul Bombers Stadium Power Tour that travels to approximately eight Major League Baseball (MLB) stadiums throughout the country showcasing some of the best hitters in the game in a competitive series seeking the Manufacturers Cup title.

The complete schedule for the 2016 season of Softball 360 will be announced at a later date. Check your local listings for scheduled air dates and times or log on to Softball360.com for the complete network lineup.
Seven umpires from the United States have been selected to represent the ASA/USA Softball Umpire Program internationally in the 2016 season as the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) recently announced the umpiring staff for the Women’s and Junior Men’s World Championships. Slated for July 15-24 in Surrey, B.C., Canada, three U.S. umpires have been assigned to the WBSC Women’s World Championship while an additional four umpires have been selected to the WBSC Junior Men’s World Championship staff, which will be held July 22-30 in Midland, Mich.

“ASA/USA Softball is honored to have seven umpires selected this year for the WBSC-Softball Division World Championships,” said ASA/USA Softball Director of Umpires Kevin Ryan. “This is a huge honor for our umpires along with the entire ASA/USA Softball Umpire Program. These umpires have worked hard to bring their abilities to the level it takes to be an umpire at a World Championship, and all of them deserve this opportunity because of their hard work and dedication to ASA/USA Softball. There is no higher honor for an ASA/USA Umpire than to represent your country on the softball field on the international stage.”

ASA/USA Softball umpires for the WBSC Women’s World Championship will be Laura Head (Signal Hill, Calif.), Geri Magwire (Tempe, Ariz.) and Steve McCown (Wylie, Texas). Head and Magwire have recent international experience, having served on the umpiring staff for the 2015 WBSC Junior Women’s World Championship in Oklahoma City, Okla. In addition to the umpire assignments, Chris Drumm (San Louis Rey, Calif.) has been appointed as an Assistant Umpire-in-Chief (UIC) for the Women's World Championship.

In addition to the WBSC Women’s World Championship, four umpires were selected for the WBSC Junior Men’s World Championship. James Connors (Manchester, Mich.), Jerry Norris (Belle Center, Ohio), Kevin Wallace (Shipman, Ill.) and Sean Wells (Renton, Wash.) will represent the United States on home soil in Midland, Mich. ASA/USA Softball Director of Umpires Kevin Ryan will also serve as an Assistant UIC for the Championship.
ASA/USA Softball recently announced that Andy Souza (Turlock, Calif.) is the 5,000th coach to register for the 2016 season for the ACE Coaching Certification Program. The ACE (Achieve, Certify, and Educate Coaching) Coaching Certification Program is designed to provide softball coaches of all levels, from beginning coaches to experienced veterans, an opportunity to certify as a coach with the National Governing Body of Softball. For a fifth-straight year, ASA/USA Softball has teamed up with Pocket Radar™ to provide coaches like Souza with a prize pack. At every 5,000th milestone, ASA/USA Softball will award that coach with a brand new Ball Coach Training Tool, courtesy of Pocket Radar™ ($300 value).

Souza, who is registered with Greater San Joaquin ASA/USA Softball, coaches a 10-under team named the Central Valley Swarm. Beginning his coaching career when his daughter was in her younger years, he now has the pleasure of coaching alongside her.

“We both have a love for the sport and are always learning new things about the game together,” Souza said. “It has definitely been an awesome and enjoyable experience for the both of us.”

While teaching them a variety of softball fundamentals, the number one thing he continues to instill in his players is that, “You will never be perfect, but if you don’t try to be, you’ll never get close.” He explains that you can’t get down after a bad play or error – that you have to pick yourself up and know that you tried your hardest every play of the game.

“The videos on the ACE test help to remind me of all the little things that go into the sport that make up the big picture of the game,” Souza said of the ACE Certification Program.

When asked about what he most enjoys about coaching under ASA/USA Softball, he commented, “As a coach, I enjoy attending ASA/USA Softball tournaments, not only for the competition, but also because every aspect of the tournament is well taken care of. From the umpires all the way to the lines on the field, every part of an ASA/USA Softball tournament is well-thought out and that makes it enjoyable for everyone.”

As the National Governing Body of Softball, it is ASA/USA Softball’s responsibility to ensure that coaches achieve a certain level of understanding of what their duties are as a coach of a softball team. The ACE Certification videos and the ACE Certification Manual are practical guides to the everyday situations you will encounter as a youth softball coach.

It is highly recommended that all coaches wishing to coach at the Championship Play level or those coaches wanting to receive full ACE Certification benefits become an ACE Certified coach. Coaches can do so online using the ACE Online System on RegisterASA.com. There are four levels to the ACE Program and upon successful completion of each level; benefits include RPS Bollinger insurance coverage, a background check clearance and ID card. For more information on the ACE Online Coaching Certification Program, please contact your local ASA/USA Softball Association Commissioner or visit the ACE Coaching Certification section of ASAUSASoftball.com.