USA Softball will hold a Selection Camp for the Women’s and Junior Men’s National Teams January 1-5, 2018 at Eddie C. Moore Complex. Both National Team programs will compete in a World Championship during the 2018 season.

>> WBSC Women’s World Championship | August 2-12, 2018 | Chiba, Japan
>> WBSC Junior Men’s World Championship | July 7-15, 2018 | Prince Albert, Canada

View the list of Selection Camp invitees on pages 6-7
Hello fellow Council Members and Friends,

I am very proud to be addressing you as the new President of USA Softball. Having been involved with the ASA since the 1970’s, I’m still getting used to saying USA Softball …but I’m getting better at it! I would like to begin by thanking our two Immediate Past Presidents, Mr. Warren Jones and Mr. Phil Gutierrez, for working closely with me and helping me to prepare for my term as President. I would also like to congratulate Mr. Rodney Cobb, USA Softball of Texas Commissioner, on his election to the position of President-Elect. I will do all that I can to help you prepare for your term, which will be here in the blink of an eye.

For my first Inside Pitch column I thought I’d touch on a couple of the things I hope to accomplish during my term as President. One is not resting on our laurels, which I think we do too often. Gone are the days when teams and leagues came to us and all we had to do was sit back. There are many other choices when it comes to playing ball these days and if we don’t take care of our customers, someone else will. At times I think we also spend far too much time inventing ways to keep people out of our events with arbitrary deadlines and eligibility rules that take a PhD to understand. While I do advocate for a level playing field and fair competition, I have never hesitated to do my best to allow people to play with us as long as they were in the proper classification and someone else wasn’t being denied an opportunity. I urge each Association to look at how they advance teams in Championship Play and see if there are ways to make it easier for our members to move on to the next level tournament. Same goes with team and umpire registrations. Let’s make it as easy as we can for people to join our organization and play in our events.

Our Adult Program, once the backbone of our association, has seen a continuing decline in numbers over the last decade and a half. As the baby boomer generation gradually becomes older, we are not seeing the influx of Gen-Xers and Millennials taking their place. We need to understand why that is happening and what we need to do to make our sport more attractive to those younger generations. This leads me to my next objective; utilizing our Council. The majority of our council is made up of dedicated and passionate people that want to further our sport and USA Softball, but aren’t always given the opportunity to do so. Sometimes we get too set in our ways, and our structure and organization itself can sometimes cause the simplest change to take years. It’s been said the best and the worst thing about USA Softball is that we are so democratic, and I cannot disagree. We cannot wait until we get together once a year to move things forward. The discussion has to be ongoing and if there is consensus, action needs to be taken. Not “Let’s talk about it more at next year’s Council Meeting”. That means another year or two (or more) before something actually happens.

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 3
...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

...While I’m not advocating change for the sake of change, I think there have been times that good ideas have taken too long to be implemented because we get so bogged down in the process. I recently sent an email to all Council Members asking for your input on committees. If you have not yet replied, please do so at your earliest convenience. I need your input. That is the first step toward becoming a more active and engaged Council.

I promise you there will be much more to follow but that’s it for now. As the end of the year approaches I wish each and every one of you a wonderful holiday season and a great 2018.

ENJOY THIS MONTH’S INSIDE PITCH?

If your local association has news to share and would like to be featured in next month’s newsletter, email Katie at kwillis@usasoftball.com by the 15th of the month.
USA SOFTBALL MOBILE APP

- All the latest in breaking news, results, announcements and stories
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For more information and to download the app, please visit USASOFTBALL.COM
USA Softball concluded the 86th Annual Council Meeting in Greensboro, N.C. after a week of evaluating proposed rule and code changes for all divisions of USA Softball. In addition to new rule and code changes, USA Softball also announced its sites for the 2019 Championship season and elected new Regional Vice-Presidents to the Board of Directors and a new President-Elect for the organization.

During the week of the Annual Meeting, two new Regional Vice Presidents were elected to the Board of Directors as John McPhail (USA Softball of Piedmont, Va.) will represent Region 2 and Drew Wells (USA Softball of Texas) will represent Region 5. Also reappointed to the Board of Directors are Region 4 Vice President E.T. Colvin (USA Softball of Mississippi), Region 6 Vice President Darrin Duistermars (USA Softball of Michigan) and Region 10 Sam Ducato (USA Softball of Northern California).

The 2017 USA Softball Annual Meeting also concluded the tenure of Warren Jones (USA Softball of Ohio) as President of the organization as John Gouveia (USA Softball of Northern California) officially began his term as President. The USA Softball Council also voted to appoint Rodney Cobb (USA Softball of Texas) as President-Elect of the organization.

Also announced during the 86th Annual Meeting was the National Softball Hall of Fame Class of 2018. The Class of 2018 inductees include: Dick Brubaker (Fast Pitch Player), Crystl Bustos (Fast Pitch Player), John Daniels (Sponsor), Ricky Huggins (Slow Pitch Player), Todd Joerling (Slow Pitch Player), Bill Silves (Umpire), Christa Williams (Fast Pitch Player), Charles Wright (Slow Pitch Player).

USA Softball would also like to thank the sponsors of the 2017 USA Softball Annual Meeting: Adams, Visit Spartanburg, Visit Plano, Johnson City, Chattanooga Sports Committee, Play Tennessee, NC Sports, PLI, City of Montgomery, National Pediatric Cancer Foundation, Salem, Ore., Louisville Slugger, Wilson Sporting Goods and USA Softball of Southern California.

The 2018 USA Softball Annual Meeting will return to USA Softball’s headquarters in Oklahoma City, Okla. October 27-November 1.
The 2018 USA Softball Women’s National Team Selection Camp will be held January 1-5, 2018 at Eddie C. Moore Softball Complex in Clearwater, Fla. A total of 61 athletes were invited to attend the Selection Camp with 53 athletes accepting the invitation. Those athletes who accepted the invitation to try out will vie for a spot on the 2018 USA Softball Women’s National Team (WNT) roster which will compete at the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Women’s World Championship in Chiba, Japan August 2-12, 2018, the World Cup of Softball XIII and select invitational events.

Click here to view the list of athletes invited to the 2018 Women’s National Team Selection Camp >>

Pictured (l-r): Ali Aguilar, Ally Carda, Amanda Chidester
The 2018 USA Softball Junior Men’s National Team (JMNT) Selection Camp will be held January 1-5, 2018 at Eddie C. Moore Softball Complex in Clearwater, Fla. The athletes who try out will vie for a spot on the 2018 USA Softball JMNT roster which will compete at the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Junior Men’s World Championship (JMWC) in Prince Albert, Canada July 7-15, 2018 in addition to select tournaments/invitational events.

Click here to view the list of athletes invited to the 2018 Junior Men’s National Team Selection Camp >>

Pictured (l-r): Ryker Zane Chason, Isaac Hormann, Brady Parker
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This past summer was my second year wearing and competing for the United States Softball Women’s National Team. I can tell you that because of all the experiences it brought me, I am the strongest I have ever been spiritually, mentally, and physically.

As I completed my last collegiate season, my mental game was lacking and doubt had begun to creep into my mind. I know the USA coaches recognized where I was because throughout the season, they checked on me and kept telling me that they couldn’t wait to get me back in the summer and to hang in there. I will always be grateful to them for asking me how I was doing and investing in me as a person, not just as an athlete.

When training camp began, the focus was to get better every day. Boy did we work! We had two-a-days every day to prepare us not only for the Japan All-Star Series and our summer games, but also for the 2020 Olympics. Those early days together showed us a glimpse of what we can do, and they were the beginning of a team chemistry that would prove extraordinary during the Pan American Qualifier.

After training camp, we played exhibition games in Southern California, and I was happy seeing my teammates welcomed home with loud ovations and cheers! Then we headed to Japan for a three-game series at multiple venues. We had some memorable experiences in Japan. First, we played in the same stadium where the Olympics are going to be held (Yokohama Stadium), and we got chills imagining ourselves competing in the jersey representing our country. Second, we visited a local middle school. While we were there, we learned about the students’ lives, aspirations, and hobbies! Our next stop was Oklahoma City for the World Cup. Since ESPN and USA Softball signed a contract, the games were televised! The films gave us the opportunity to analyze ourselves and other teams to create game plans. After OKC, we continued our summer with stops in Sacramento, Tuscaloosa, and Auburn. I cannot tell you how amazing it was to play on my home field of four years in the USA uniform. Hearing the fans yell, “COOOOOOOOOOP” and having a packed house was FANTASTIC...not to mention Coach E gave me the green light on my last at-bat on a 3-0 count, giving me the chance to end my time on Jane B. Moore Field with a home run. Having my teammates waiting on me outside the dugout after the homerun and having them congratulate and support me showed what amazing teammates and women they truly are.

CLICK HERE TO READ MORE FROM WOMEN’S NATIONAL TEAM MEMBER KASEY COOPER >>
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DON COOPER SELECTED AS WOMEN’S SLOW PITCH NATIONAL TEAM HEAD COACH

Cooper will once again serve at the helm of the Women’s Slow Pitch National Team, having served as the first-ever Head Coach of the team at the inaugural Women’s Border Battle this past summer. The Red, White and Blue went 3-1 in their debut, with their sole loss to Canada in the title Border Battle contest. Cooper also has previous experience with the Slow Pitch National Team Program, having served as an Assistant Coach for the Futures Slow Pitch National Team in 2013.

“Coaching Team USA is such a great honor and privilege, but most of all it’s extremely humbling.”

Click here to read more about Women’s Slow Pitch National Team Head Coach Don Cooper >>

BRETT HELMER SELECTED AS MEN’S SLOW PITCH NATIONAL TEAM HEAD COACH

A member of eight Men’s Slow Pitch National Teams, Brett Helmer will take over the reins from Steve Shortland (Converse, Texas) who retired following Border Battle IX.

“It’s a huge honor to be named the Head Coach of the Men’s Slow Pitch National Team. After playing for Coach Shortland for so many years, to be able to take the reins from him and lead this program into the future means the world to me. I couldn’t be happier to be headed to Canada in 2018 and bring back the Border Battle title to the USA!”

Click here to read more about Men’s Slow Pitch National Team Head Coach Brett Helmer >>
Playing USA Softball truly is an honor and a privilege and I’m thankful that I have had the opportunity to represent USA Softball on both the Junior Men’s and Men’s National Team and play at the highest level. Being fortunate enough to wear the letters ‘USA’ across my chest and not only represent but compete for my country is an amazing feeling which is at times difficult to put into words.

“\textbf{The electric environment added to our energy and was incredible...}”

The game of fast pitch softball is such an awesome game. Fast pitch softball has been a huge part of my life ever since I was a little kid, always going to tournaments with my dad on the weekends. It’s always been a blast and I’ve loved every minute of it. Ever since I started playing with the USA Junior Men’s National Team in 2012, I wanted to work my way up and earn a spot on the USA Men’s National Team. The experience of attending and competing at the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Junior Men’s World Championship was beyond amazing and resulted in memories to last a lifetime. Team USA finished fifth in Parana, Entre Rios, Argentina in 2012. Even though we wanted to win a Gold Medal and came up a little short, we had an amazing week and left it all on the field. From the team dinners we shared throughout the week, the time spent walking around touring the city and surrounding areas, the practices and the games, all these experiences encompass what made the whole trip so memorable. The experiences made us develop life-long friendships and memories that we all still hold onto today. I will never forget the general atmosphere of every game we played throughout the tournament but one, especially, stands out to me. The night we played host country Argentina in the night cap game – there wasn’t an open seat in the house. There were approximately 8,000 roaring, thundering fans packed into the stadium and very few were supporting the USA. One couldn’t hear what the other was saying from the infield to the outfield because it was so loud. The electric environment added to our energy and was incredible.

CLICK HERE TO READ MORE FROM MEN’S NATIONAL TEAM MEMBER JONATHAN LYNCH >>
USA Softball of Georgia to collect toys and stuffed animals for Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta Scottish Rite Hospital

Each year, USA Softball of Georgia has a drive to collect new toys, stuffed animals, games, etc. to be distributed to the hundreds of children who will spend the Christmas Holidays at Scottish Rite Hospital. They are asking for support in this project from their teams, players, and families and collecting donations that will bring a smile of appreciation to these children who are battling many degrees of illness.

Each team and travel program that donates to this effort will receive recognition through the USA Softball of Georgia web site, social media, and newsletter. The collection of the items started Monday, November 13 and concludes on Friday, December 15.

Visit USASoftballGeorgia.org for more information >>

USA Softball of Southern California Thanksgiving Tournament

10U Winner: Power Surge Bachtell

12U Winner: OC Batbusters

14U Winner: Explosion Smith
The 6th World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Co-Ed Slow Pitch World Cup took place November 18-20 in Plant City, Fla. Co-ed slow pitch features both male and female athletes playing alongside one another on the field. Each team is allowed a maximum of 20 players with no fewer than five being of one gender. Team USA went 4-2 and took home the Bronze Medal, while Great Britain claimed Gold and Canada earned Silver. The following USA Softball umpires officiated the three-day event:

- Dallas Apfelbacher (Mendota Heights, Minn.), USA Softball of Minnesota
- Paul Bosshardt (Naples, Fla), USA Softball of Florida
- Art Dietrich (Leland, N.C.), USA Softball of North Carolina
- Jamie Evans (Holt, Mich.), USA Softball of Michigan
- Lee Gray (Stone Mountain, Ga.), USA Softball of Georgia
- John Hinz (Cooper City, Fla.), USA Softball of Florida
- Mike LaGrave (Indianapolis, Ind.), USA Softball of Indiana
- Rick Robertson Jr. (Holiday, Fla.), USA Softball of Florida
- Dave Swanson (Crossville, Tenn.), USA Softball of Tennessee

Pictures courtesy of Dave Swanson and Rick Robertson

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 15
USA SOFTBALL UMPIRES OFFICIATE WBSC COED SLOW PITCH WORLD CUP

...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14
During the 2017 season, the City of Salem hosted three softball tournaments to raise money for the Linda L. Vladyka Breast Wellness Foundation. The foundation is dedicated to raising funds for education, research and the promotion of breast wellness and breast cancer issues.

This year, benefits from the Play for a Cure Oregon© fund raising tournaments and the USA 18A Girls Fast Pitch National Silent Auction and 50/50 drawing totaled $15,433! To put that into perspective, that is about 206 high-risk women that will be able to receive mammograms who would not otherwise be able to get one. From the 129 teams that participated in the tournaments, each tournament had a top donating team that raised the bar for others to donate. The first tournament of the season was Play for Mother’s Day. The 10U Oregon Blaze from Portland, Ore. donated $710 with a total $2,643 being donated at the tournament. Followed by the Reach for the Stars tournament held on Father’s Day weekend, the 14B Ignite Fastpitch from Vancouver, Wash. raised $510, helping bring the total raised to $5,446. With the final tournament Stars ‘n’ Stripes Forever and despite thinking our goal of $10,000 was out of reach for the year, the teams surprised us by bringing in $7,758 to make the total $13,204. The top donating team 18A Aloha Breeze-Combs from Aloha, Ore. donated $2,095. With the 18A Girls’ Fast Pitch National a couple weeks away, the goal was reset to try and reach $15,000 with skills events, silent auction items and a 50/50 drawing.

Submitted by City of Salem
Due to a heat wave, the skills events had to be canceled for safety but that didn’t slow down the support. The silent auction items brought in $453, and the 50/50, $1,773, with the winner being none other than USA Softball of Oregon’s Commissioner Mike Wells who donated his winnings right back to the cause. With the money that was raised during the national tournament, the grand total for 2017 was $15,433. The City of Salem can’t thank the teams and families enough for all their generosity in donating to Play for a Cure Oregon©.

We look forward to seeing what we can do with the support of the teams and community in the 2018 season. If you are looking for ways you can support this cause for the 2018 season; (1) you can register for and play in one or more of the three fundraising tournaments and raising funds to donate at the tournament, or (2) donating prizes for the top donating teams. The goal is for every team to donate $100, which is about $10 a player.

“Since 2008, we have raised a grand total of $79,118! This is possible only with the support of many people and teams over many seasons. I am honored to support this cause as it is heading into its eleventh year,” said Tournament Director, Maggie Combs.
The Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Team (WWAST) had four events over the last two months to close out their 2017 season. They hosted their first-ever Alumni Kids Camp September 28-October 1 at Ballparks of America in Branson, Mo. This camp reunited WWAST players with 26 of the kids from all over the country who attended one of our previous camps in Orlando, Louisville, Mission Viejo, Calif. and Washington D.C. While there, the WWAST got a chance to work with the kids to hone their softball skills. In addition, everyone got to take in some of the attractions of Branson including a Duck Tour hosted by Ride The Ducks - Branson and the Janice Martin Cirque Show. The big games took place on Saturday night with the two kids’ teams battling it out in game 1. In game 2, the WWAST took on the Branson All-Stars and defeated them by a score of 24-12. The WWAST is currently working to return to Branson next year for another Alumni Kids Camp. On October 13-15, the WWAST ventured to Dayton, Ohio for the second year in a row. On Friday, the team arrived and visited the site of the proposed Fisher House at the Dayton VA Hospital. The team had a great dinner with sponsors where they had the once-in-a-life-time chance to fly in the Wright B Flyer, the world’s first production airplane. Saturday started with a tour of the Air Force Museum at Wright Patterson Air Force Base and then a doubleheader against the Wright Patterson Military All-Stars and the Dayton Legends. Next the WWAST returned to Huntsville, Ala., where they were treated to a welcome reception at the hotel.

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 19
Although it was rainy and unseasonably cold that Saturday morning, the Huntsville and Redstone Arsenal community still came out for a doubleheader against the Redstone Arsenal All-Stars and the Huntsville All-Stars. Later in the evening, the Young Professionals of the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) hosted a dinner for the WWAST, sponsors, opposing team players, and dignitaries of the community. The final event of the year took place in Jonesboro, Ark. on November 10-12. This event was special as it was Veterans Day weekend and the community of Jonesboro honored the team all weekend. On Friday, Nov. 10, there was a welcome banquet at the Central Baptist Church in Jonesboro that was attended by the planning committee, sponsors, and members of the community. WWAST players shared their stories with the crowd and then participated in the Jonesboro Veterans Day parade, where a huge crowd was in attendance. The WWAST then played a doubleheader against the NE Arkansas All-Stars at the Southside Softball Complex as part of a tournament hosted by USA Softball of Arkansas. The weekend was capped off by a catfish dinner at a local restaurant. The WWAST would like to thank everyone - the event organizers, sponsors, and fans who made these events and the entire season such a great success.

Their 2018 schedule was recently released and can be found on their website: www.thewwast.org.
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Coaches have the opportunity to learn from some of the best in the game at USA Softball National Coaching Schools! The schools feature instruction from current and former USA Softball Women's National Team (WNT) coaches and athletes and the last one of the 2017-18 season will take place in January.

**Click here to register for the National Coaching School >>**

Scheduled for January 19-21, 2018 in Plano, Texas, the school is open to 250 participants with a cost of registration of $250 while USA Softball-registered coaches pay $200. Held at the Hilton Granite Park, coaches who register by December 15 will be entered into a drawing to receive free tuition for the school. Eriksen will be joined by 2017 USA Softball WNT members Jessica Moore (Sutter, Calif./University of South Florida Assistant Coach) and Janie Reed (Placentia, Calif./University of Oklahoma Volunteer Assistant Coach).

Following the opening of each school, Eriksen and instructors will cover a variety of topics that relate to coaching fast pitch softball teams. Topics include: pitching strategies, hitting, base running, pitching, embracing the process, slapping and bunting, defense, outfield play, hitting drills, how to plan a practice, leadership and what it takes to play USA Softball.

Pictured (l-r): Ken Eriksen, Mike Candrea, Heather Tarr
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Congratulations to all USA Softball teams on a fantastic National Championship season!

Find a list of 2018 National Championship sites by clicking here!

Relive the 2017 USA Softball All-American Games!

Visit the USA Softball Video Library!
Snapshots of the Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Team and participants at the first-ever Alumni Kids Camp.

Click here to read more and view the entire photo gallery >>

NEWS: The Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Team (WWAST) recently announced its Tour of Virginia, which will be held between April 20-29, 2018. The team will be traveling through Manassas, Fredericksburg, Portsmouth, Hopewell, Richmond, and Bedford areas playing in numerous softball events. The primary sponsor for the tour will be the Virginia Moose Association. Learn more about the WWAST Tour of Virginia >>
Take advantage of partner travel discounts.

Fly United

fly the friendly skies™
USA Softball announced its designation as an National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) Official Convention Sponsor. Comprised of fast pitch softball coaches from all competitive levels of play, the NFCA annually hosts a Convention, which offers networking opportunities, divisional meetings and educational speaker sessions with some of the game’s most successful coaches.

“We are proud to partner with the NFCA and expand upon the relationship we’ve established for many years,” said USA Softball Executive Director, Craig Cress. “As the National Governing Body of Softball, it is our responsibility to grow the game and provide as many educational and development opportunities for coaches. By partnering with the NFCA, who has a very strong and respected presence in the fast pitch softball community, we will be able to not only continue our support of these grassroots initiatives but also provide additional assets to our ACE Coach Education Program.”

As part of the partnership, USA Softball and NFCA will work jointly to create additional education material for the ACE (Aspire, Challenge, Encourage) Coach Education Program along with select international softball clinics. Developed by USA Softball, the ACE Coach Education program is designed to provide softball coaches of all levels – from beginning coaches to experienced veterans – an opportunity to be educated as a coach with a national softball organization. In addition to education material, ACE Coaches will also have an opportunity to purchase a discounted membership to join the NFCA.

USA Softball will also serve as the title sponsor of the Softball Summit during the NFCA Convention. The summit serves as an open forum for the NFCA membership to discuss business and relevant issues across the landscape of softball.

“The NFCA is thrilled to partner with USA Softball as an NFCA Official Convention sponsor,” said NFCA Executive Director Carol Bruggeman. “The partnership highlights education and awareness; two items critical to continued growth of the sport. As the title sponsor of the Softball Summit, USA Softball demonstrates their continued support of diversity and inclusion. To partner with the National Governing Body of Softball, especially with the excitement of softball being back in the 2020 Olympic Games, provides our members a front row seat to athletes on a national and international stage.”
This month, we would like to spotlight USA Softball of Arkansas and their grassroots marketing efforts.

USA Softball of Arkansas JO Commissioner Doris Adams called me before the Greensboro Annual Meeting and mentioned that their association would be attending the Arkansas Recreation and Parks Association Annual Conference and Tradeshow in Rogers, Ark. Doris, Holly Clark and I worked together to figure out what we could do within their space and what we wanted to highlight. This was the perfect opportunity for them to promote their upcoming Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Team Banquet and Jennie Finch Softball Camp in Jonesboro, and of course USA Softball of Arkansas as a whole. Needless to say, USA Softball of Arkansas was very busy this past month!

Their booth set up at the conference and tradeshow was one of the most popular ones there. Commissioner Walker Clark talked to different leagues and cities about why they should play USA Softball of Arkansas. The USA Softball of Arkansas staff did a great job providing plenty of giveaways at their table and had information folders for visitors to take away. When you are setting up your booth at your local state parks and recreation tradeshow, make sure to have plenty of information for them learn more after they leave your booth area. If you would like USA Softball branded folders, feel free to contact me.

Great job to Doris, Holly, Walker and USA Softball of Arkansas on a very successful state parks and recreation meeting! Your association can promote this way as well.

Email me at ndorety@usasoftball.com for help with your state association meeting or parks and recreation meetings and tradeshows.
"I got into (umpiring) by my Grandfather. I started tagging along and getting interested in the game. I wanted to do what he did...”

Hear from 14-year-old Kaipo Adamos about how he developed a love for umpiring!

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