A note from Amateur Softball Association
President E.T. Colvin

Just a few days ago, the ASA Board of Directors met in Oklahoma City, Okla. to discuss important issues surrounding our organization. One of the main concerns that arose during our discussions was the ever increasing cost of travel and how that affects our registration numbers. With gas prices slated to be at an all-time high, many parents and athletes are facing hardships and unfortunately the number of teams who register this year may be affected. With this in mind, please try to think of ways to retain and recruit more leagues and teams the ASA. The Marketing and Communications team at the National Office have created a variety of materials that you can use to promote our organization to new areas, and I strongly encourage everyone to take advantage of them. There are a number of other ways we can help retain our teams, some of which are having the correct paperwork for tournament play and listing your association's information correctly.

Last month, the 2012 schedule for the ASA/USA Softball National Identification Program was announced, and I also advise that you promote this to your Junior Olympic participants. With the rising publicity that USA Softball gets every year, it is an important way for us to show our support to our programs by identifying potential players for our Junior Women's National Team. ASA/USA Softball and Softball Factory have created a great way for young ASA athletes to get the levels of exposure needed to further their playing career, while also giving our organization a chance to provide additional skill developments and top-notch experiences.

Please remember to vote daily through April 9 to help get Lisa Fernandez and the 2004 U.S. Olympic Softball Team into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame. Imagine the message that this would send to the Olympic Family and the International Olympic Committee (IOC)! I hope that we can count on you to spread the word to your teams, cities, coaches, etc… With the IOC voting next year to reinstate softball for the 2020 Games, a win by both or one of the nominees would be a tremendous boost for our sport.

Thank you all for everything that you do and are continuing to do.

Renovations are going strong at the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America’s headquarters. The current phases of the renovations include the installation of new front doors, finishing up the Olympic Room in the Museum and putting the final touches on the basic structure for the new Gift Shop. You can keep up with the renovations by going to ASASoftball.com or by checking the ASA/USA Softball Facebook page.

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A note from The Inside Pitch editor
Codi Warren

Hello, and welcome to the March 2012 edition of The Inside Pitch, the official newsletter of the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America.

We had a bittersweet month of March here at the National Office as we said goodbye to Assistant Director of Marketing and Communications Jamie Blanchard. She has taken a position with the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) Paralympics Division, and while we are sad to see her go, we wish her nothing but the best in her new endeavor. We have received some outstanding resumes from potential candidates for the open position, and we will be sure to inform you when a decision has been made.

With the season underway, please remember that Julie Bartel and I are always here to help, so please let us know what you need to spread ASA in your area. If you need promotional materials, logos, or ideas on how to improve your association’s marketing of ASA, don’t hesitate to contact us. If you need additional help, please refer to the “Contact Us” section of ASASoftball.com. There you will find a listing of all National Office staff duties.

And as a reminder, if you would like to have a news item or photo included in The Inside Pitch, please send me an electronic copy by the 15th of every month at cwarren@softball.org. We are always happy to include news from our local associations and members! Any items not submitted by the deadline may not be included, so please plan ahead.

Thank you all for everything you do!

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ASA President speaks at Pennsylvania ASA Hall of Fame Banquet

ET Colvin, the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America’s President, gave a speech at the 2012 Pennsylvania ASA Hall of Fame Awards Banquet. The banquet was held at the Holiday Inn Harrisburg-Hershey Hotel in Grantville, Penn. and featured a Hall of Fame induction ceremony in addition to various other recognition awards.

ASA awards additional ACE Coaches

The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America, Pocket Radar™ and Powerchalk™ continue to award prize packs to coaches who achieve an ACE Certification. Every time the ACE Program reaches a 1,000th milestone, ASA will award that coach with a Pocket Radar ($200 value) and the next coach with a custom Powerchalk account ($100 value).

The following coaches are the latest recipients:
• Chalise Brown (Conroe, Texas) - Pocket Radar
• Julie Cox (Albany, Ore.) - Powerchalk Account
• Jason Epps (Cypress, Texas) - Pocket Radar
• Maria Conn (Flat Rock, Mich.) - Powerchalk Account
• Randy Eacret (Castle Rock, Colo.) - Pocket Radar
• Richie Wood (Soddy Daisy, Tenn.) - Powerchalk Account

ASA sales kits on sale for $7

The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America advertising and promotional packets are still on sale for $7 each, which includes a DVD, an Official Team Scorebook, and an ASA Participant Manual. Purchasing a packets also covers the cost of shipping. Commissioners and Junior Olympic (JO) Commissioners can place orders for their association by e-mailing Codi Warren, Coordinator of Marketing and Communications, at cwarren@softball.org.

If ordering the packages to distribute at a specific event, please order at least two weeks before you need to receive them, if possible. Please include the date of your event in the e-mail to ensure they are shipped in time.
Being a family member of Team USA has its benefits. Take advantage of partnership travel discounts.

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Missouri ASA awards scholarship to deserving student-athlete

The Missouri Amateur Softball Association (ASA) named Maegen Shults (Rolla, Mo.), a senior pitcher/first baseman for the 2011 Rolla High School softball squad, as an ASA Student Scholarship recipient during the Missouri ASA Awards Banquet, held at Seven Springs Winery in Linn Creek on Feb. 26.

In addition to Shults, the Missouri ASA also awarded Katelyn Hardy (Sedalia, Mo.) the $400 scholarship to the college of their choice.

Also at the ASA Awards Banquet George Sutphin (Waynesville, Mo.), who has regularly umpired softball games for the Rolla adult slow pitch and area youth fast pitch leagues, was inducted into the Missouri ASA Hall of Blue. A Silent Auction and 50-50 tickets, which were held earlier in the evening, also raised $829.50 to benefit the benefit the Student Scholarship program.

This marks the fourth-straight year that the banquet was held at Seven Springs Winery in Linn Creek, and 110 people attended the 26th annual event.

2012 Washington State ASA Umpire Academy

Bob Cooley, Washington State Umpire-in-Chief (UIC), recently fulfilled a long standing dream of his at the culmination of the first Washington State Umpire Academy, March 4th through 5th, in Vancouver, Wash. Twenty-seven umpires with less than four years of experience or no experience were given the opportunity to learn umpiring basics and to be mentored on the field by clinicians.

Rick Kincaid, a long standing umpiring icon in the Vancouver area, was instrumental in organizing the training for the academy. His hard work culminated in the first successful Amateur Softball Association (ASA) umpire training academy for the State of Washington.

The umpires were exposed to current ASA materials presented through lectures, PowerPoints, ASA DVDs and a large dose of umpiring passion. Additionally, the classroom lectures were followed-up with field exercises to reinforce the presented materials. This approach was well received by the umpires.

On Sunday, eight games were played allowing all the umpires to get in game time while being shadowed by experienced clinicians. This meat and potatoes approach allowed each umpire to receive immediate feedback on their mechanics and to be better students of the game.

One of Sunday’s highlights occurred when Rick Kincaid presented 21 year-old Kaslin Daniels with her ASA National Indicator Fraternity Award. Kaslin is a Vancouver umpire that has been umpiring since the age of 15. She is a quiet spoken, demure person until she gets on the field. In each of her three ASA National Tournaments, she was assigned to work the championship game. Kaslin is continuing a long history of umpiring in her family as her grandfather was Jerry Kenny, past Region 15 UIC from Anchorage, Alaska.

Two umpire legends arrived on Sunday afternoon and infected the umpires with a love and passion for the game as “Wild” Bill Silves, Region 15 UIC and Julie Johnson, Deputy Supervisor of Umpires, arrived at the fields. Their contagious personalities radiated through the umpires, coaches and players. They assisted in presenting five clinicians with ASA Umpire Service Pins: Mike Buskuhl 10 years, Randy Beaudry 25 years, Mike Sturdevant 25 years, Rick Kincaid 30 years and Dennis Schodt 35 years.

Due to the positive responses from the umpires and clinicians plans are being put in place to continue this academy concept and rotating its location around the state.
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We get a lot of questions asking for tips on how to rally the community to help win a $2,500 grant. To earn the grant, Rocklin Girls Fastpitch Softball of Rocklin, California rallied supporters to participate in the program through use of Facebook posts and personal messages to friends on Facebook, as well as tools and suggestions found on Extra Point to produce flyers and email messages.

Extra Point is sent twice monthly throughout the three-month grant period. Each issue will feature:

- A Key Grant Promotional Theme with exclusive new downloads
- “Where Are They Now?” Past Winner Feature
- “What I Learned” Parent Perspective

Once the grant period ends and the winners are announced, you will be automatically unsubscribed from this list.

This is the only way to get these insider tips and what you can be doing to make sure your softball team comes away with one of the 15 $2,500 grants to be awarded.

Sign up today! >>

Artifact of the Month!

Since softball has such a rich and vast history, we want to share with you some of the amazing artifacts we have deep within our collections. Stay tuned every month for a glimpse into our archives!

Since its establishment in 1957, the National Softball Hall of Fame has inducted 360 of softball’s finest. Known as one of the premier Sports Hall’s of Fame, induction into the National Softball Hall of Fame is the ultimate goal for any player, coach, umpire or administrator.

This program, which is found in the Museum’s collection, is from the 1987 Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, held in Oklahoma City, Okla. Inside, you’ll find information on Rose Marie Adams, Carl “Tex” Collins, Henry Flowers, Bill Humphrey, Alfred Morton and Lorene Ramsey, that year’s Hall of Fame inductees.

There are 10 different categories in which a person can be inducted, including both non-player and player efforts. Annual inductions are held at the ASA Annual Meeting. The deadline to nominate an individual for the 2013 year is Sept. 1, 2012.
The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America/USA Softball announced that 14 athletes have been selected for the inaugural USA Softball Men's Futures Slow Pitch National Team. After a series of exhibition performances, the 2012 USA Softball Men's Futures Slow Pitch National Team squad will play the USA Softball Men's Slow Pitch National Team in the ESPN2 televised Slow Pitch Showdown on June 27 in Oklahoma City.

Boombah, Inc., will serve as the official uniform supplier for both the Men's Slow Pitch National and Men's Futures Slow Pitch National Teams.

2012 USA Softball Men's Futures Slow Pitch National Team Roster
- Kevin Bazat (Columbia, Mo.)
- Travis Clark (Kenosha, Wis.)
- Anthony Dress (Rosemount, Minn.)
- Kevin Filby (Cardington, Ohio)
- Jeremy Isenhower (Olathe, Kan.)
- Chris Larsen (Vancouver, Wash.)
- Bubba Mack (Milton, Fla.)
- Tommy Melton (Mont Claire, Calif.)
- Lee Powers (Gaston, N.C.)
- Luis Reyna (Tampa, Fla.)
- Nick Robertson (Scottsdale, Ariz.)
- Jimmy Salas (Whittier, Calif.)
- Frank Allen Yeilding (Birmingham, Ala.)
- Brian Zirkle (Kanakakee, Ill.)

"When you think of how many players there are in softball in the USA, you have to be humbled by your selection to represent the USA Softball Men's Futures Slow Pitch National Team," Robertson said. "I am thankful for this opportunity and it's an honor to be recognized for your talents and hard work."

Robertson is one of 12 athletes who are new to the USA Softball Men's Slow Pitch National Team program. Created in conjunction with the inaugural Border Battle slow pitch competition against Canada in 2009, the USA Softball Men's Slow Pitch National Team has gone 2-1 against Canada in three Border Battles.

"It's a true privilege to represent the USA Softball Men's Futures Slow Pitch National Team," Melton said. "I am thankful for being a part of this elite group of men selected for this team. I look forward to the challenges and the chance to grow through this experience."

The Border Battle IV, between the Men's Slow Pitch National Teams of Canada and the United States, is scheduled for June 30 at the ASA Hall of Fame Stadium in Oklahoma City. In addition to participating in that game, the Men's Slow Pitch National Team will also take on the Futures Team in the Slow Pitch Showdown on June 27, the opening night of the World Cup of Softball VII in Oklahoma City. Both the Slow Pitch Showdown and Border Battle will be followed by autograph sessions. Both USA teams will also compete in exhibitions prior to the Slow Pitch Showdown.

"To be included in this event is very special to anyone playing slow pitch," Isenhower said. "To get the opportunity to play against the USA Softball Men's Slow Pitch National Team is a real privilege that I look forward to."

Slow Pitch Showdown and Border Battle tickets are included in all-session tickets to the World Cup, June 27-July 2 in Oklahoma City. All-session tickets, which are $275 for the Ultimate Fan Zone reserved seating in the first three rows of the stadium, $80 for other reserved seating and $45 for general admission seating, can be purchased now by phone at 800-654-8337 or online at Softballoutlet.com. An official World Cup program is included with all-session tickets. Single session general admission tickets will be on sale in early June.

The Ultimate Fan Zone package also includes a private autograph session and meal with the USA Softball Women's National Team, tentatively scheduled for Sunday at a local hotel and open only to Ultimate Fan Zone ticket holders, as well as free parking and a replica USA Softball women's jersey customized with a name and number of the fan's choice.

The complete 2012 schedule for the USA Softball Men's Slow Pitch National Team program will be announced at a later date.
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Delaware ASA inducts three into Hall of Fame

By Jerry Grasso

The Delaware ASA Hall of Fame inducted three members on Feb. 24 at the Atterbury VFW Hall in Wilmington, Del. Over 150 people attended the event. The inductees, Jimmy Rogers (deceased), Henry Culley, and Horace Ellingsworth, join 29 other men and women as members of the Delaware ASA Hall of Fame.

Rogers was considered one of the best fast-pitch pitchers in the state of Delaware between 1960 and the early ‘70’s. “Jimmy was known for his great movement on his pitches”, added Bill Karbonick, former catcher for Rogers. He grew up in Cecil County before joining the Air Force in 1955, after which he was sent to Korea. Upon his return, he started playing fastpitch softball at St. Andrews AFB for a team called the Comets. Rogers continued his career in the Oxford AA League and eventually won his first State Championship with the Rising Sun Legionnaires team in 1961.

Rogers continued his winning ways by tacking on another State Championship in 1965 with Brooks Armoured Cars and Defiance. The next year, Rogers collected a 40-6 record with Kum On Inn in the Wilmington Major League. In 1967, he won a state championship with Keck’s, shutting out Claymont in the finals on a two-hitter. Rogers also won a state championship with Dover Downs in 1968 and 1969, where he shared the majority of pitching duties. Through a five-year span, Rogers won over 20 games with Keck’s, Dover Downs, Green Valley, and Post 194. Rogers was characterized as a non-selfish teammate, who in his spare time would help train young players to pitch in the early 60’s. He would spend countless hours showing them the proper footwork, pitching spins, and developing speed. Rogers finished out his playing career in the Salisbury Fastpitch League in Ocean City, Md. in 1973, and in 1984 founded the program Mission America, where he was the director until his death in 2006.

When you talk about the game of softball, one of the first people that comes to mind is Henry Culley, better known as “Hank or Hammer.” Culley has an incredible resume as an athlete, starting in 1972 when Culley won a state championship with Gerres Construction out of Elkton, Md. That was just one of 28 state championships Culley has in his pocket. Some of his teams included: Huber’s Sporting Goods, Foraker-Bart, Maddy’s/Schweizers, Ashley’s Construction, and Paint Doctor. Seven of Culley’s state championships came from his 35-Over team called Gene’s Automotive. He has played against the elite, including Steele’s, Taylor Brothers, Lighthouse, Dean’s Concrete, Schreppler’s, Larry Mobil CarWash, DiBacco Brothers, Bank of New York, AJ&D, and many others. What is most remarkable about Culley is his tournament resume as he literally has traveled across the United States, playing in over 50 plus tournaments, some of which included the prestigious Richmond Round Robin and Trentonian. His Damon’s Grill/Angle Inn team won various tournaments nationally. Let’s not forget our own celebrated Terrace Athletic Club tournament (TAC) and the Joe Flynn Early Bird tournament, where he baffled batters with his pitching jargon and completely destroyed teams offensively. Culley has recently joined the ranks of umpiring, but undoubtedly you will see him somewhere on the field, creating havoc playing.

Horace Ellingsworth has given the state of Delaware 50-plus years of outstanding umpiring and service to various organizations. He started his career helping the Camden/Wyoming Little League, working as a baseball volunteer umpire. Twenty years later he decided he would do both baseball and softball umpiring, where he has been involved at all levels, including collegiately. Ellingsworth has worked behind the plate in both fastpitch and slowpitch games, and is considered one of the best. Ellingsworth has traveled up and down the East coast doing both Men’s and Women’s Regional and National Championships.

He has worked countless hours umpiring high school league action and has been selected to state tournament games for over 30 years. Because of Ellingsworth’s passion for umpiring fast pitch, he has worked numerous ASA Junior Olympic (JO) State Championships in Delaware. His superiors have elected by him to go out of state and do Regional and National Championships. Ellingsworth is a person with a serious conviction towards helping fellow umpires and has demonstrated sincere dedication and devotion to a sport he loves.
ASA and The Oklahoman donate school supplies to local school

In conjunction with The Preview college showcase, ASA and The Oklahoman held a Pencil Drive to benefit North Highland Elementary School. The LSU Softball program collected over 1200 pencils to benefit the drive. North Highland Principal Gloria Anderson (center) and staff members met with the team to thank them for their generosity.

Julie Bartel, Director of Marketing and Communications for ASA, dropped off the boxes of pencils to students at North Highland Elementary School.

The Broken Arrow High School Softball squad with their packs of pencils for the drive.

Fans who attended the Bedlam Softball game, held March 28, participated in a Crayon Drive to benefit North Highland.
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The present and past Indiana ASA State Commissioners headlined a class of five individuals and one team inducted into the Indiana Amateur Softball Association/Wayne L. Myers Hall of Fame in Bloomington on March 17. Approximately 150 people attended the 36th Hall of Fame induction ceremonies.

The late commissioner Dave Nolan and present commissioner Mick Renneisen were inducted along with players Dennis Gerke, Brad Johnson and Dave Rohn. Also inducted was the Royal Crown/Candlish team from the Logansport-Rochester-Peru area.

Nolan’s term as commissioner was shortened by his sudden death in March, 2011. Although he served just one year in that office, he held many others in the association prior to that. He served as an Indiana ASA board member going back to the 1980s.

During his term, Nolan developed a player data base that has been used as a model by other state slow pitch associations around the country. The Mitchell native also was a civic leader in his community. As a player he participated in the 1991 Men’s C National Championship.

Renneisen has served on many boards – local, state and national. He has played a major part in bringing many state and national softball tournaments to his current home in Bloomington.

Renneisen is an eight-time winner of the Jim Farrell Award of Excellence as a national tournament director. In 2010 he was given the 20-year Service Award by the ASA National Council and the President’s Award for Service in 2002-03.

Gerke is one of the state’s great pitcher/infielders. He has played on two National Championship teams and three runners-up. He was named to the 35-over All-American Team in 1998, the 40-over All-American team in 1999 and the 45-over All-American team in 2002. He has played on five state championship clubs.

Johnson was a great fast pitch infielder in the Indianapolis area in the 1980s and ’90s. A leadoff hitter with power, he was invited to try out for the U.S. Pan-American team in 1987. In 1992 he was the MVP of the Indy Merchants team that won the Midwest Regional in Belmont, Ill. The Beach Grove resident also has served as a hitting instructor.

Dave “Rabbit” Rohn of Danville made his mark as a slow pitch shortstop. He played in the 1987 nationals and was named a first team All-American. He also was named All-American in both the 35-over and 40-over divisions in 1997. His 35-over team won the National Championship.

The Royal Center/Candlish team dominated the Logansport area and beyond, advancing to seven state finals from 1974-81. They were Class A State Champions in 1979. Jerry Peters was the MVP that year and Charlie Gaumer was named the home run champ. The team finished fifth in the nation, with Peters making All-American.

Four other players from the team went on to win multiple state and national titles – Steve Williams, Rick Scott, Greg Holden and Jim Davis. In conjunction with the awards banquet, the Indiana ASA also conducted its annual meeting of local commissioners, Junior Olympic (JO) staff and umpires staff. A special, featured session on equipment and bat-testing procedures was presented by Ron Radigonda, ASA Executive Director, and Craig Cress, ASA Membership Services Director.
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John “Juggo” Frank – Frank was also inducted as a player. John began his career playing for the Ben Franklin softball team. John excelled as the team’s batting champion and led them in many state tournaments and was often known for his “big” hits and leadership on the field. John is retired from playing softball but is an 18-year veteran as an ASA umpire, umpiring in many championship and state tournaments.

John “XE” McAndrew – McAndrew was inducted as a player. His career began in the 1960’s playing for local Scranton and Wilkes Barre based teams and on Open, Major and Class A travel teams through the 1980’s. In 1980 John was named to the ASA All-American team as a second baseman with York Barbell. John carried a .600 batting average and hit 100 homeruns. John coached the Dunmore Bishop O’Hara girl’s softball team to a Class A State Championship in 2001. Currently John is playing Senior Softball and was inducted into the National Senior Softball HOF in 2009. John has been part of several Senior Softball World Championships and was named to numerous world teams. He is considered a “complete” player.

Michael Walsh – Walsh was inducted as a player, and he began his softball career in 1971. While competing in ASA of PA State Championship tournaments in the 9 Man Modified Major Division from 1985-1994, he posted a record of 35-7. In 278 innings of State Championship play, his earned run average was 1.96, pitching his team to five state titles. Mike pitched in eight National Tournaments and was named First Team All-American in 1992 and Second Team All-American in 1993. Through his career Mike had 332 wins, 78 losses and an ERA of 2.12.

Robert W. Mullaney – Mullaney was inducted as a player. Bob began his career in 1969 as fast pitch player in Uplan AC, and migrated to slowpitch softball from 1975 to 1996. Bob played as a pitcher and second baseman and competed in numerous State Tournaments with the Sloppy Joe’s team, winning the 35-Over Championship in 1992. Bob has served as President of the Aston Softball League, a supervisor for Delaware County Parks and Rec and has been an active umpire since 1986. He is currently an ASA of PA District 6 Deputy Commissioner.

Team Induction – The Iron Dukes Softball Team was formed in 1970 by life long friends Lou Qualhiero and Anthony Guillano and managed by Joe Cangey. The Iron Dukes played from 1970-1976 with most players being brothers, cousins and close friends that came from a three mile radius of New Castle Pa. The Iron Dukes played in the highest classification at the time, whether Open or Major. The Iron Dukes were ASA of PA State Champions in 1972, 1973, 1974 and 1975. Other awards presented:

- The Presidents Award: Ms. Tina Sanders
- Sportswriter/Media Award: Delaware County Daily Times
- Richard J. Millhouse Umpire Award: Mr. Bob Kenney
Catching up with Olympian Laura Berg

After joining the Women’s National Team in 1994, Laura Berg made a name for herself on the international scene. The only USA Softball athlete to collect four medals from the Olympic Games, Berg is no stranger to winning. Throughout her 14-year span, Laura collected four International Softball Federation (ISF) World Championship titles, three Pan American Gold Medals, two World Cup of Softball titles, three Olympic Gold Medals and one Olympic Silver Medal. In what is perhaps one of softball’s most iconic moments, Berg retired upon the completion of the 2008 Olympic Games, leaving her cleats on home plate and symbolizing an end to a USA Softball career.

Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to us!

After such a long career as an athlete, what have you been up to since retiring from softball?

Since I have retired from playing, I gave lessons for about two years in Santa Fe Springs, Calif. After giving lessons for a while, I joined the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) for a year and a half before getting a call from the Oregon State head coach, Kirk Walker, asking me to be a part of his coaching staff. I couldn’t pass up the opportunity, so I resigned from LAPD and I’ve been at Oregon State ever since.

What made you decide to play softball when you were younger?

I started playing softball when I was six years old. My twin sister wanted to play, and since I was very shy and usually did everything she did, I started playing.

With 12 Gold Medals under your belt, you are one of USA Softball’s most decorated alumni. Since you’ve competed in a variety of international events, what would you say is your best memory or moment as a Team USA player?

I have several favorite memories from my time with Team USA ranging from the hotel room to the bus rides to the airports. My all-time favorite memory is being on the gold medal podium with my teammates, hearing our National Anthem being played and watching the American flag being raised higher than the other two flags.

Do you still keep in contact with any of your former teammates?

Yes, I keep in contact with a lot of my teammates. I’ve worked a lot of clinics with them and Facebook certainly makes it easier to stay in contact with them.

If you had to pick one thing that you believe is the best part about being a part of Team USA, what would you pick?

There are a lot of great things about being a USA Softball player. You get to travel the world, meet some amazing people and create incredible friendships with your teammates that will last a lifetime. Not only that, but you also get to play the sport you love for a longer period of time after college. You get to compete against the best and play a sport that is one of the hardest sports to play.
By Bill Plummer

He had a first name as unique as his batting style, but Birdsdall Robert Smith became a household name during the 1960s and 1970s playing men’s Major slow pitch softball for County Sports, Jerry’s Catering, Little Caesars and Howard’s Furniture.

Now Smith, who was more often called Bert, has become the second Howard’s player to pass away this year. Stan Harvey passed away on January 5th at age 69 of a stroke.

Smith, 66, passed away Feb. 25, 2012 from injuries suffered in a wreck, which happened shortly before 4:30 a.m. in the 100 block of Parkwood Avenue off North Davidson Street in Charlotte, N.C.

Smith, according to police, was driving to the hospital because of chest pains he started complaining about while working. He decided to drive himself to the hospital, but his 1999 Plymouth Neon went off the right side of Parkwood Avenue and hit a tree.

Paramedics took Smith to Presbyterian Hospital, where he died about 45 minutes later.

Smith, who played the outfield, was one of the most colorful players throughout his career. He was outspoken, opinionated, had a flair for talking to the media and had a unique batting style of lifting his front foot (left foot) off the ground before hitting the ball. It was softball’s version of a right-handed hitting Met Ott, former National League baseball batting champ.

But as colorful as Smith was, he backed up his words on the softball field by becoming one of the best players of his era. Four times he earned ASA All-America honors, including being named the tourney MVP a record three times. He played in nine ASA National Championships and compiled a .669 batting average, hitting 74 homers and driving in 160 runs. He was a member of four national championship teams: County Sports, 1968; Virginia Beach Piledrivers, 1971 and Howard’s Furniture, 1973-1974.

After playing for Howard’s for four years, Smith played part of the 1976 and 1977 seasons for Miami slow pitch power Jerry’s Catering before joining the Detroit Caesars in the American Professional Slo-Pitch League. In his four years with Howard’s, Smith compiled a .635 batting average, hitting 774 homers.

Caesars dominated the pro league and Smith more than did his partner, batting .512 in 1977, hitting 53 homers in 52 games and .529 in 1978 with 42 homers in 44 games. Detroit won the league and World Series titles each of those years and Smith was the star of the 1978 APSL World Series.

Despite a nagging hamstring, Smith batted .940 (15-for-16) in the World Series, hitting five homers and driving in 16 runs. Smith’s performance earned him the MVP award.

In 1994, Smith was inducted into the ASA National Softball Hall of Fame. He is one of nine former Howard’s players who’ve been enshrined since the Hall of Fame was established in 1957.

“Being named to the National Softball Hall of Fame was one of my greatest thrills,” said Smith during his enshrinement. “Knowing all of the great players that I had played with and against I was thrilled to no end. Being named to the Hall of Fame seemed like a dream, but it was real.”

Smith will be missed, not only by his family and friends, but by the many players who get to know him throughout his career. He was one of a kind.

Former Howard’s slugger Bert Smith passes away

Sikorsky Men’s softball wins 18th Championship title

At last year’s ASA Men’s Major Industrial National Championship, the Sikorsky Men’s softball team made program history by winning the team’s 18th title over all and the first in seven years. The team had clearly taken steps to improve itself in the past three years with a second place finish in 2010 and a third place finish in 2009.

In the quarter finals, team Sikorsky beat the upstart Yamaha team out of Macon, Ga. with a 17 – 2 victory. Next, in the semi-final matchup, Sikorsky was pitted against the other undefeated team Alliance Electrical out of El Paso, Texas. This game was a little closer with an 8 -2 win for Sikorsky.

That win moved them into the Championship game that was a rematch with the two teams that fought for the National Title back in 2004. Worthington Industries out of Columbus, Ohio, who finished second in the 2004 Nationals vs. our Sikorsky team which at the time was the 2003 defending National Champions. The Championship game ended with Sikorsky on the right end of an 18 – 7 score after 6 innings.

Four members from the Sikorsky team make the First Team All Americans: Justin Kozloski, Eric Kraemer, Nick Maher, and John Tokarz. Separately, Mark Mihalick led the tournament with a .833 batting average and Nick Maher led all players in the number of home runs.
The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America, the National Governing Body (NGB) of Softball in the United States, and Sports Authority announced that the Englewood, Colo.-based company has been named the official sporting goods retailer of ASA Softball for the 2012 season.

Sports Authority's partnership with ASA Softball marks its most significant foray into America's softball community, composed of approximately three million athletes playing both slow pitch and fast pitch softball. ASA/USA serves as the NGB for softball to the United States Olympic Committee and the International Softball Federation and registers over 200,000 teams annually. ASA conducts over 100 National Championships each year with over 36,000 athletes participating in 2011 championship play.

“We are very pleased to welcome Sports Authority into the ASA Softball family,” said ASA/USA Softball Executive Director Ron Radigonda. “Together we can continue to push softball participation to the next level through our events and initiatives that benefit the millions of individuals who love to play this sport.”

Sports Authority operates more than 460 stores in 45 states. An industry-leading retailer of sports equipment and apparel, Sports Authority will be woven into ASA Softball's national events, marketing and branding initiatives including discount coupons for members and coaches as well as special coupons for 2012 National Championship participating teams.

“Sports Authority is proud to be the official sporting goods retailer of the Amateur Softball Association of America. This partnership is a reflection of the confidence the sport’s national governing body has in Sports Authority to provide to its members the best service and value in the industry. We look forward to exceeding those expectations,” said Joe Newsum, Senior Vice President Marketing at Sports Authority.

David Maury appointed Cincinnati commissioner

The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America, the National Governing Body for the sport of softball in the United States, announced this month that David Maury of Cleves, Ohio, has been appointed the commissioner for the Cincinnati ASA. With his immediate appointment as commissioner, Maury strives to make the Cincinnati ASA the leading softball organization in the area.

“I have been a part of ASA for over 30 years and it is a privilege and honor to be named the Cincinnati ASA commissioner,” said Maury. “I look forward to building a staff and a program that will take Cincinnati ASA softball to the next level. Cincinnati is full of good teams and good people and I am very excited and looking forward to good things happening with our program.”

Maury has a long history of involvement with the ASA, starting in 1982 when he became an ASA umpire. Since then, Maury has held a variety of positions at both the local and national level. Locally, Maury has served as an At-Large Player Rep and has been an active umpire and player. Additionally, Maury has represented ASA as an ASA Player Rep at five National Championships and has umpired in one. At the national level, he currently serves on the legislative, player’s rep and slow pitch playing rules committee and is the existing Vice Chair for the ASA slow pitch task force. Maury has also served as the Regional Vice-President and served one term on the Board of Directors and three terms as the Region 10 Player Rep.

Maury is currently employed with Mid-America Ballyard, a baseball and softball complex in Cincinnati, as the Operations Manager for the facility, which has twice hosted exhibition play for the Men's Slow Pitch National Team. Maury also worked for Wessel Sports from 2001-08 and Rumpke Amusements from 1990-2001. He graduated with honors from Landmark Christian High School in 1982 and completed his Bachelor's degree in General Studies from the University of Cincinnati in 1985.
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ASA has strengthened our partnership with Clubspaces this year by integrating Clubspaces with Register ASA. Over the years, we have seen our leagues continue to save time and money by taking advantage of all the league management tools Clubspaces has to offer. Clubspaces is ideal for all ASA leagues.

—Ron Radigonda,
Executive Director of ASA

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References

ASA Official Portable Fence; NCAA Women’s Fastpitch “World Series” Division I, II & III Championships Series; City of Woodland, City of Santa Maria, Salem VA, etc.

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