ASA/USA JO Players of the Week

Four athletes have received the ASA/USA Softball JO Player of the Week award, presented by Worth Fastpitch and StudentSports.com.

Faith Willis (Liberty, Mo.) from the Originals - Shanks boasted a 1.75 slugging percentage with 12 RBI on her way to winning the inaugural JO Player of the Week award. Over the course of their seven games, Willis went the distance for her team, tallying a .687 batting average (11-for-16) with two doubles, a triple and four home runs.

Allie Roberts (Rogers, Minn.) of the NW Diamonds was the second recipient. Through five games, Roberts maintained a .545 batting average going 6-for-11 at the plate. Roberts also scored three runs. Finishing with a 3-0 record from the circle, Roberts handed out 15 strikeouts in the tournament. In eight innings pitched, Roberts only allowed five runs.

Jordyn Kadlub (Wesley Chapel, Fla.) earned Week Three honors after a 3-0 performance with the Tampa Mustangs - Bell. Through 19 innings of work, Kadlub only gave up two runs and two walks.

The most recent recipient of the award was Lauren Mathis (Windermere, Fla.) who pitched shutouts in all four games started, two of those came back-to-back in the championship finals. In Mathis’ four starts she helped to produce four wins and had two saves. She had an impressive offensive performance as well with three doubles, three runs scored and two RBI.

Established to recognize JO players 18 years or younger for outstanding play in an ASA/USA sanctioned event, the ASA/USA Softball JO Player of the Week will honor 14 athletes, male or female, from May 9 - August 8 following the conclusion of the ASA/USA JO National Championships. Nominations will be taken on a week-by-week basis (see below schedule) and will be submitted and accepted through StudentSports.com until noon ET every Tuesday. In order to be eligible for the award, athletes must be registered with their local ASA/USA association and must have participated in ASA/USA Softball sanctioned events or tournaments during the week nominated.

IN THIS ISSUE

5 OGE Energy Field
OGE Energy Corp to hold naming rights to the ASA Hall of Fame Stadium field

7 ASA Stadium Power Tour
An update on the Longhaul Bombers and ASA Stadium Power Tour

15 NCAA WCWS update
OGE Energy Field at ASA Hall of Fame Stadium to host NCAA WCWS through 2035
Greetings to everyone. As we conclude the month of May, I hope that everyone had a wonderful Memorial Day Weekend in which we remembered and honored the men and women who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces. This holiday, which was formally known as Decoration Day and originated after the American Civil War to commemorate the Union and Confederate soldiers who died in the Civil War, later renamed Memorial Day, has been extended to honor all Americans who have died while in the military service. Memorial Day typically marks the start of the summer vacation season, thus the official beginning of the ASA/USA Softball Championship season.

Many of us are in the championship qualifying process already, while others are preparing to begin the process. Regardless of where you are in the process, there is still time to add players and teams to the quest of qualifying for an ASA or an ASA/USA National Championship. I urge you promote our organization, the best softball organization in the world, by enlightening those that are not yet playing softball with us on the extensive benefits and rewards available through membership with ASA/USA Softball. Let them know that our organization is the National Governing Body of Softball in the USA, that we are a Not-For-Profit Organization, that we provide playing opportunities for both male and females of ages 8 to 80 and at all levels of play, that we have the best coaching certification program available, that we crown true national champions who must qualify to participate in our national championships, and that we have without question the most knowledgeable and best trained umpires in the country. Moreover, let them know of the many membership benefits available, such as Liberty Mutual Insurance Responsible Sports, individual team and umpire insurance, team travel services, fundraising opportunities, Hilton hotels discounts, United Airlines discounts, Hertz Rental Car discounts as well as the Active Network.

As we move full force into our championship season, I wish each of you the best of luck through your summer of softball. Travel safe, play hard and have fun. Remember, in each game there are two teams playing but only one can win. Win with honor and lose with dignity. Good sportsmanship should always prevail.

Lastly, the acme of our sport is the USA National Teams Program. As I have mentioned in the past, this summer we have our Women’s National Team, our Junior Men’s National Team and our Slow Pitch National Team participating in events that include the World Cup of Softball IX and International Federation of Softball (ISF) World Championships. During June and July these teams will be participating in events throughout the country in preparation for the World Championships and the Border Battle. Please visit our national website at USASoftball.com for the schedules of each team and then please support our great athletes who are representing our country on the world stage while they are in your part of the country. For the World Cup of Softball IX schedule and to purchase tickets, please click here.

Thank you, and have a great month of June.
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Hello everyone and welcome to the May 2014 issue of The Inside Pitch, the official newsletter of ASA/USA Softball!

I hope everyone had a chance to watch the NCAA Women’s College World Series (WCWS) on the ESPN networks these past few weeks...you may have even noticed some pretty cool renovations at OGE Energy Field at ASA Hall of Fame Stadium! Renovations have and will be a big part of our upcoming seasons, but in the long run our athletes, coaches and fans who visit our complex will enjoy the outcome!

This month, my focus in Codi’s Corner will be spreading the word about the impact that ASA/USA Softball has had on it’s athletes, coaches and umpires. For many, we offer them a chance to play, coach or umpire an amazing team sport, for others it’s a chance to continue their involvement after their playing days. Many of our members can see an immediate impact: a lasting friendship, the concept of teamwork and time management. For some, ASA/USA Softball won’t factor into their lives until they are older. A perfect example is a girl from a small town in Oklahoma who grew up just an hour east of the ASA/USA National Office.

During my days of travel softball, I had no real concept of what playing ASA/USA Softball truly embodied. All I knew was that when I told my friends I qualified for a ASA National Championship they knew that I was going to be playing against the best-of-the-best. As I got older I started to learn a bit more about the game and what it took to be a true competitor. I went to school, headed to practice, did my homework and then started the cycle back over the next day. I worked my tail off so that when it came time to head out to a weekend tournament I didn’t have to worry about a homework assignment or failed test. When I stepped on that field, I was ready to play and had the mindset of a champion. Did we always win? I’m not ashamed to say no, in fact we lost more often than not, but were we “losers”? No. It takes a winners mentality to push yourself to be the best you can be, both on and off the field. So in that aspect, softball, more importantly playing ASA/USA Softball, had an immediate impact on my life.

It’s funny to remember my days of coming out to the ASA Hall of Fame Stadium and being so inspired by the women athletes playing on that legendary field. I wanted to be them and didn’t care how much hard work and dedication it would take to get there. Not to sound corny or toot our own horn, but in order to be the best you have to play the best and there is no doubt that ASA/USA Softball is the best in the game.

Playing ASA/USA Softball allowed me to develop lasting friendships, obtain a college scholarship and get a degree from a first-class university...but it didn’t stop there. A little over two and a half years ago, I was fortunate enough to be hired on at the ASA/USA National Office and have to pinch myself every day to make sure I’m not dreaming. Again, sounds cheesy I know, but to say I have my dream job is an understatement. ASA/USA continues to shape my life to this day, and now I get to be a part of it’s legacy.

We want to hear how ASA/USA Softball has impacted your life, of the lives of your members! Send stories to cwarren@softball.org! Until next time, thank you for all that you do for ASA/USA Softball!
ASA/USA Softball is excited to announce that OGE Energy Corp. (NYSE: OGE) has entered into a 20-year agreement with the Oklahoma City All Sports Association and ASA/USA Softball for naming rights to the stadium field at the ASA Hall of Fame Softball Complex.

The new name for the field, OGE Energy Field at the ASA Hall of Fame Stadium, was launched May 29 during the opening day of the 2014 NCAA Women’s College World Series (WCWS). Sean Trauschke, OGE Energy President and CFO, also threw out the first pitch on May 29.

“The ASA complex, with the fields and the stadium, has a significant economic impact for the communities we serve and showcases our state as a leader in women’s athletics,” Trauschke said. “Through our commitment, we’re not only helping maintain this important asset but also supporting the many local communities who take part in events here.”

The ASA Hall of Fame Complex is widely regarded as the finest softball facility in the nation and even the World. With four fields and many other amenities, the complex has played host to the most recognized softball competitions in the world, including USA teams that represent the nation in international competitions.

The complex draws more than 120,000 fans a year to approximately 30 events with more than 400 teams from over 25 states. The NCAA WCWS draws more than 75,000 spectators from around the nation, with ESPN coverage during the seven-day event.

“In 1990, Oklahoma City All Sports first successfully secured the NCAA Women’s College World Series by aligning with corporate entities willing to join as community partners”, said Oklahoma City All Sports Association Executive Director, Tim Brassfield. “This agreement with OGE Energy is the most significant step to help provide the student-athletes a world-class facility.”

The agreement also calls for OGE Energy to work with the ASA on a capital improvement plan to incorporate energy efficient and sustainable technology and practices within the field and the ASA complex.

“We want the field to serve not only as an entertainment venue but also as an educational platform on energy efficiency stewardship for all who visit here, especially young people,” Trauschke said.

Upgrades include improvements to the dugouts and locker rooms as well as building a new media center and pressbox, adding suites and a 4,800-seat expansion as a part of the overall plan.

OGE Energy is the parent company of Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company, a regulated electric utility serving approximately 810,000 customers in Oklahoma and western Arkansas. In addition, OGE holds a 26.7 percent limited partner interest and a 50 percent general partner interest of Enable Midstream, created by the merger of OGE’s Enogex LLC midstream subsidiary and the pipeline and field services businesses of Houston-based CenterPoint Energy.
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Longhaul Bombers update
The ASA Stadium Power Tour kicks into gear!

May 27, 2014 Atlanta GA - Easton Scott Kirby, was on his game, leading round 3 of the ASA Stadium Power Tour.

Kirby’s 12 points included a few upper deck shots at Turner Field. “It was a hot muggy night and the ball was not really carrying, but we still managed to hit well.”

DeMarini’s Chris “Crusher” Larsen lead off and set the bar high with 11 points including some massive upper deck blasts into the 715 club, named in honor of Hammerin’ Hank Aaron.

In pursuit, Miken’s “Flip” Filby, the hefty lefty sent Evil Softballs deep into right field, before a sell out crowd before the Braves Red Sox game.

Houston TX – May 16, 2014
– DeMarini’s Chris Larsen and Easton’s Scott Kirby got the 2014 Stadium Power season off to a fast start. Both sluggled out massive show bombs, hit the money ball and sent several balls completely out of Minute Maid Park. Larsen and Kirby credited their bats, the Evil Softballs and a strong off-season of training.

“The hard work pays off, I need to keep this pace going all the way to finals” said a beaming Scott Kirby. His Easton Team mate Brian Wegman also had a strong show, with 11 points.

Final Results from Cincinnati
Brian Wegman, Team Easton: 13 Points
Kevin Filby, Team Miken: 12 points
Chris Greinert, Team Combat: 12 Points
Scott Kirby, Team Easton: 11 Points
Johnny McCraw, Team Combat: 8 Points

Final Results from Houston
Chris Larsen, DeMarini: 13
Scott Kirby, Easton: 13
Brian Wegman, Easton: 11
*Donovan Pokraka, DeMarini: 9
Kevin Filby, Miken: 8
*Pokraka hit for Brungardt
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Desmond Merida Roy, 83, of Memphis died Monday, April 28, 2014 at Signature Skilled Nursing at Methodist University Hospital. Mr. Roy retired as a salesman for Wittichen Lime and Cement Company, he was a member of Highland Heights Presbyterian Church for 60 years, he was the Metro Memphis Amateur Softball Association Commissioner for 27 years. He also played and umpired, and he was President and Chairman and King of Ramet. He was preceded in death by his parents, Orville Merida Roy and Flossie Desmond Holt Roy; and a sister, Junie Douglas. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Julia Pennington Roy of Memphis, TN; a daughter, Connie Parra (Ray) of Arlington, TN; a granddaughter Julie Barnum (Jamie) of Cordova, TN; a great-grandson Tristan Barnum of Cordova, TN.

Sis passed away at age 87, after an extended illness. She was preceded in death by her parents, Rita and Patrick King, her brother John, and her niece Sue. She is survived by two great-nephews, Damon and Chad (Kim) Chilinski, a great great nephew, John, a great-great niece, Bridget, several cousins in Canada and Nova Scotia and many, many friends. She will be remembered for her kindness, generosity and her talent as a fast pitch softball player. Sis got hooked on playing softball at the age of 8, when she was a bat girl for the Kohstall Tomboys. She went on to play for many years in Arizona, Connecticut and Ohio, and is a member of six softball Halls of Fame - the National Softball Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City, the Connecticut Hall of Fame in Stratford, CT, the Hudepohl Hall of Fame in Cincinnati, OH, the Caldwell Hall of Fame in Ohio, the Arizona Hall of Fame and the American Softball Association in Shelton, CT. One of her fondest memories was that, in 1964, as a member of the Raybestos Brakettes, Sis was afforded the opportunity to travel worldwide as the Brakettes represented the United States in the first World Tournament, which was held in Melbourne, Australia. On this worldwide tour the team also visited 39 countries in 40 days, playing exhibition games and holding softball clinics for young girls.

John Spring; May 4, 2014; age 83. Beloved husband of JoAnne (nee Brune). Loving father of Debbie (Mike) Farley and Terri (Peter) Mann; dear poppie of Lindsay, Brody, and Max Mann, Sean and Erin Farley, and the late Michael Mann. John was an inductee of the National Softball Hall of Fame, Michigan Sports Hall of Fame, and Softball Hall of Fames in Connecticut and Illinois. He was the past president of the Lochmoor Country Club. John was a graduate of GMI and a member of Alpha Gamma Upsilon.
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HAMMAMET, Tunisia -- On a continent where no baseball or softball world congress had gone before, the inaugural congress of the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) elected Italy’s Riccardo Fraccari to lead the world governing body as its first-ever sole president.

“I am tremendously honoured to be entrusted by my peers to lead the WBSC,” said Fraccari. “This role comes with an unprecedented level of responsibility and commitment -- it’s an exciting and historic time, a ‘new era’, for baseball and softball.”

Dating back to 2012, the 64 year-old Fraccari helped guide and deliver the birth of the WBSC as an interim co-president, alongside softball partner Don Porter. Now, Fraccari will serve as the lone WBSC president for an initial seven-year term that extends to 2021.

The WBSC Congress, which took place over the weekend in the North African city of Hammamet, also elected its first-ever executive board, formalizing a complex merger of baseball’s and softball’s two independent international sport federations -- a process that took nearly four-years of talks, legal consultations and planning to arrive at the day where only one official would lead as president.

The initial election term, which applies to the entire WBSC Executive Board, was extended beyond 2020 by the Congress in Hammamet ahead of the elections, in order to better guarantee the new president and board a sufficient time frame with which to formulate/implement a mid- and long-term growth plan for the young international federation that is now challenged with overseeing a truly global and fortified baseball-softball movement that possesses an estimated sixty million athletes and hundreds of millions of fans.

Following the next round of elections in 2021, voting will take place every four years, and always in the year following the summer Olympic Games.

The WBSC Congress also paid tribute to longtime softball leader, Don Porter, who steps down after over forty years of service to softball; during which time, he helped construct greater pathways for women to be better represented in sport and helped softball become an Olympic sport (1996-2008). The former softball leader leaves behind a forceful softball movement that is played in over 140 countries and is enjoyed by millions of athletes and fans.

“As baseball and softball’s global footprint deepens, I want to put the growth of our sport under the Olympic umbrella to help further enhance and sustain the uniqueness, year-round message, visibility and economic positioning of the Olympic Games for the collective benefit of the Olympic Family and its partners -- to help grow world sport together,” said Fraccari.
The 2015 ASA/USA Girls’ 18-Under and 16-Under Fast Pitch GOLD National Championships, two of the most prominent tournaments in Junior Olympic (JO) play, will be hosted by the Oregon ASA. The 18U GOLD, which will be held in Hillsboro, Ore., and the 16U GOLD, which will be held in Salem, Ore., are slated for July 19-25, 2015.

“What an exciting year to have both of our top ASA/USA JO National Championships in the state of Oregon,” said Oregon ASA Commissioner Mike Wells. “The Hillsboro and Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation, along with the Washington County Visitors Association worked hard to secure the 18U GOLD while the city of Salem has run several successful ASA/USA National Championships. Thank you to all parties involved for all of their hard work and the Oregon ASA is confident both sites will do an excellent job hosting both prestigious events.”

Returning to Oregon for the first time since 2003, the 18U GOLD will be played at the Gordon Faber Sports Complex with additional playing fields at PCC/Rock Creek Sports Complex in Hillsboro. The Gordon Faber Sports Complex features six fields plus two all artificial turf fields while the PCC/Rock Creek Sports Complex has four fields. Each complex features warm up areas behind portable fences at each field and digital scoreboards on all fields. The Gordon Faber Sports Complex also features locker rooms for umpires, meeting rooms and an enclosed dog park within walking distance. The complex is also the home of the Hillsboro Hops, an affiliate of the Arizona Diamondbacks.

“Oregon’s Washington County is thrilled to host ASA’s premier tournament in 2015,” said Carolyn McCormick, president and CEO of the Washington County Visitors Association. “The history of girls’ fast pitch softball is rich in the Pacific Northwest and we’re honored to grow that legacy by hosting the top teams in the country. The players and coaches will have worked hard to qualify for the tournament and we’ll work just as hard to make sure they have a great experience.”

Located 22 miles from Portland International Airport, Hillsboro is Oregon’s fifth largest city and sits within Washington County. Referred to as “Portland’s cool next door neighbor”, Washington County is just 10 minutes away from downtown Portland and 90 minutes away from the Oregon Coast and iconic Mt. Hood. The area also offers nationally renowned golf courses, award-winning wineries, tax-free shopping and endless outdoor recreational activities.

Known as the “Softball Capital of the Northwest”, Salem, Ore. will host the 16U GOLD at Wallace Marine Park, which is 60 miles south of Hillsboro. The complex features five playing fields and is the original star designed complex in the nation. Wallace Marine Park Softball Complex opened in 1986 and was renovated in 2007, when the City of Salem Public Works

Continued on page 13
Recreation Services took over running the park full time. The infields and out fields were also refurbished in 2012 after the complex was completely flooded. All fields at the complex are lighted, have scoreboards and bleacher seating, with Les Schwab Championship Stadium Field as the main field for championship games. The complex sits at the edge of the beautiful Willamette River and is a short walk across the pedestrian walking bridge to Salem’s Riverfront Park which sits on the edge of Salem’s vibrant downtown.

“Salem looks forward to welcoming the 2015 16U ASA/USA GOLD participants, their families and the high caliber of play during the tournament,” said Mayor of Salem Anna Peterson. “Salem is a major softball City and our partnership with this tournament is proof that Salem and softball go hand in hand.”

As the capital city, Salem is rich with historic sites, tax-free shopping, museums, galleries, parks, wineries and outdoor recreation that are located within walking distance of downtown. The city has a long history with ASA/USA Softball and has hosted 21 ASA/USA National Championships, including the 2003 18U GOLD National Championship and five girls’ fast pitch Western Territory National Championships. This year Salem, also known as Softball City USA, will host the ASA/USA Girls’ Fast Pitch 10U and 12U Class A Western National Championship July 27-August 3, 2014, and the Men’s Slow Pitch Class D Western National Championship August 30-September 1, 2014.

“It is an honor to host the 2015 16U ASA/USA GOLD in Salem,” said Angie Morris, CEO of Travel Salem, Marion and Polk Counties Destination Marketing Organization. “In Salem we recognize the tremendous dedication it takes from the players to get to this level, and Travel Salem will do everything in our power to make sure this an experience that the players and their families will never forget.”

Clearwater hosted the 2013 18U GOLD National Championship with the Atlanta Vipers-Giles (Kennesaw, Ga.) taking the title. Oklahoma City will host the next ASA/USA Girls’ 18U Fast Pitch GOLD National Championship, July 20-26, at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex while Broken Arrow will host the inaugural 16U GOLD National Championship at Arrowhead Park July 21-26. The 18U GOLD is held in Oklahoma City every other year with locations in the east and west alternating in the off years while the 16U GOLD is held in proximity to provide college coaches and members of the USA Softball Women’s National Team Selection Committee (WNTSC) the opportunity to identify and recruit a large volume of athletes at the two locations.

Locations of other 2015 ASA National Championships were announced by ASA/USA Softball following the 82nd Annual Council Meeting last November. A full list of National Championships can be found at USASoftball.com.
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The NCAA Women’s College World Series® will continue to take place in Oklahoma City through 2020, and significant improvements to the Amateur Softball Association Hall of Fame Stadium will be made during that time that could enable the championship to extend its stay through 2035.

“ASA/USA Softball is extremely proud and privileged to be here in Oklahoma City,” said ASA/USA Softball Executive Director Craig Cress. “The sport of softball is a team sport, and the efforts and improvements that have been made are truly a team effort. We’re grateful for our partnership with the city of Oklahoma City, the Oklahoma City All-Sports Association and the NCAA. We’re thankful to be able to host this great event.”

The agreement between the NCAA and Oklahoma City includes a four-phase renovation process to improve facilities for student-athletes, access for media, and hospitality for fans. A new television compound has also been completed. The city is currently in the process of improving and enlarging dugouts, team rooms, and training rooms attached to dugouts—improvements which were completed before the start of the 2014 Women’s College World Series. The next phase for 2015 includes expanded press boxes, a new building for game operations, and upgraded guest service areas, with future phases that include expanded concessions, a new concourse and ticket area and an upper deck that will add 4,200 additional seats to the arena.

“The NCAA is committed to ensuring the optimum experience for the student-athletes competing in our championships,” said Mark Lewis, NCAA executive vice president of championships and alliances. “This long-term agreement with Oklahoma City enables us to take the time to improve the facilities to ensure an even better experience for student-athletes and fans alike.”

Oklahoma City has a rich history of hosting the Women’s College World Series. All of the women’s softball championships (with the exception of 1996) have been held at ASA Hall of Fame Stadium, with fan attendance increasing rapidly over the years. The record for highest overall attendance was in 2012 at 75,960. The Championship series game in 2013, in which the University of Oklahoma defeated the University of Tennessee, was the highest-attended championship game, with 8,527 fans, a near sellout. Between 2012 and 2013, an attendance record was set for every single session of the Women’s College World Series. Through 32 years of the WCWS, 1,022,117 fans have attended and in 2013 the one millionth mark was reached on Sunday, June 2 during session 6. A record 48 states were represented in ticket sales in 2013.

“It has been thrilling to watch this event grow through the years and Oklahoma City is proud to be a part of the success story,” say Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett. “I believe the young women that compete for this national championship are incredible role models for young people in our community and we all benefit by keeping this event in our city. We believe these improvements reflect our commitment to making this event the best it can be. Oklahoma City has a long history of hosting successful NCAA events and we look forward to continuing that relationship.”

The 33rd annual WCWS will take place May 29-June 4 at ASA Hall of Fame Stadium.

For complete information, on the NCAA Women’s College World Series, please visit NCAA.com/wcws.
Create a flyer for your own local association! Email Steven Embree at sembree@softball.org to get yours today!

TOP TEN REASONS TO PLAY INDIANA ASA SOFTBALL

1. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR LEAGUES AND TOURNAMENT PLAY FOR ALL AGES
2. RULEBOOKS, SCOREBOOKS FOR EACH REGISTERED TEAM
3. TRAINING FOR UMPIRES (IN-PERSON CLINICS/SCHOOLS IN ADDITION TO VIDEO SUPPORT)
4. TRAINING (VIDEO) FOR YOUTH SOFTBALL COACHES
5. AFFORDABLE BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR COACHES AND OTHER LEAGUE OFFICIALS
6. INSURANCE DISCOUNTS WITH NATIONAL PROVIDER FOR FIELD OWNERS, LEAGUE DIRECTORS, TEAMS AND INDIVIDUALS
7. TOURNAMENT (INVITATIONAL, NATIONAL QUALIFIERS, TERRITORY AND NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP) HOSTING OPPORTUNITIES
8. MARKETING EXPOSURE FOR TOURNAMENTS ON STATE AND NATIONAL WEBSITES
9. ACCESS TO MERCHANDISE (APPAREL, BATS, BALLS, PRIZES) DISCOUNTS FOR LEAGUES AND TOURNAMENTS
10. EQUIPMENT STANDARDS/TESTING PROTOCOLS AND PLAYER CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM TO ENSURE COMPETITIVE BALANCE

INDIANA ASA - WHERE THE PLAYING FIELD IS LEVEL.
International Softball executives have announced that Clearwater, Florida (USA) will host the top event in 19-and-under female fast pitch softball in 2017. The XII ISF Junior Women’s World Championship will take place 24-30 July 2017. The event will mark the first time that Clearwater has ever hosted an ISF world championship.

“Clearwater and Pinellas County is becoming the softball capital in the southeastern United States and is recognized throughout the country as a premier location for softball tournaments,” said City of Clearwater Mayor George Cretekos. “The city is honored to have been chosen to host the XII Junior Women’s World Championships. All of us look forward to welcoming these world-class athletes and hopefully future Olympic champions to Clearwater’s sugar sand beaches and to the United States.”

“We’re honored to be named host destination for the 2017 ISF Junior Women’s Softball World Championship,” said DT Minich, Executive Director of Visit St. Pete/Clearwater. “Hosting an event of this caliber bolsters the area’s reputation as a leader in sports tourism, and we’re looking forward to showing off all the area has to offer.”

The United States will now host back-to-back junior women’s -- the 2015 tournament will be contested in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and the 2016 Junior Men’s World Championship in Midland, MI.

“It is an honor to know that Clearwater, Fla. will host the 2017 ISF Junior Women’s World Championship,” said Craig Cress, ASA/USA Softball Executive Director. “They have proven to host some of the best softball tournaments of all levels of play and adding an international World Championship to their list is exceptional. The countries and participants should look forward to an outstanding event in Florida.”

ASA/USA Softball submitted the 2017 bid on behalf of the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Sports Commission. The Eddie C. Moore Complex -- featuring nine softball fields and state of the art training facility -- will host the championship.

“I have every confidence that Clearwater will put on an exceptional world championship. The ISF looks forward to working closely with the organizers,” WBSC Executive Vice President and ISF President Dale McMann said. “The location and top notch facilities will be an asset for the top youth female softball athletes to compete. This is an important competition opportunity for this age category to be able to continue to test their skills against their counterparts from around the world.”

“At the Junior Olympic level this is the most elite and competitive tournament in the world,” said two-time USA Softball Olympic Gold Medalist Michele Smith. “It only makes sense for this prestigious event to come to Clearwater as it’s just another step in our city becoming a hot bed for softball. Not only do we have a world class facility, amazing fields, the destination is world class in its ability to host teams and events like this from around the world.”

This will mark the third junior women’s world championships to be celebrated on the two-year rotation -- previously having been one every four years.

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Baraboo Ump School

Umpires attend one of ASA/USA Softball’s Umpire Schools in Baraboo, Wis.

From Baraboo News Republic

ASA/USA Softball made Baraboo its training facility over the April 25-27, bringing in 67 umpires from across the state and nation to take part in one of its 10 national schools.

Behind efforts from Wisconsin Umpire-in-Chief Chad Mitchell, as well as state and national instructors and students, the ASA held numerous lectures and drills between the Clarion Hotel and Convention Center, Jack Young Middle School and Baraboo High School from Friday night until Sunday evening.

“We’re the only ones that offer training like this,” said Mitchell of the ASA. “These training schools are the kinds of things that the other competing organizations in the country don’t do.”

Once everybody was there, the weekend was jam-packed from start to finish with softball in an effort to train and prepare the ASA umpires – who ranged from 17-77 years old and each paid a $100 registration fee to participate. Saturday was packed with lectures and base drills at the high school fields, while Sunday there were more lectures followed by plate drills in the high school gymnasium.

“You’re drinking, eating, sleeping softball from six in the morning until midnight,” said Mitchell, who noted there were about 10 Baraboo Thunder players that helped by pitching over the weekend. The ASA donated $250 to the Thunder for their help over the weekend.

The main difference between last year’s school and this year’s was the presence of national instructors, who flew in from places like South Dakota, Michigan and California. One of those was Western Territory Deputy Supervisor Malcolm Boyles, who works directly for Director of Umpires Kevin Ryan.

“All these umpires are very conscious that they are providing a service in their communities, but they want to invest in themselves to become the very best they can be,” Boyles said. “They take time out to come to these weekends and they’re just like sponges, soaking up information. Then they take it back to their local association and share it and it makes the whole Amateur Softball Association better.”

To Mitchell, the goal is to send each umpire away with two new things from each instructional school they attend, especially the younger group which he says is very important for the future of softball. If he had it his way, there would be two specifics the 57 graduating umpires would gain from this weekend.

“Angle over distance, that’d be the best thing people could take away,” he said. “When our umpires get into position to make a call, no matter where you are on the field, if the angle is right you’re going to have a better chance of making the call right. The second thing that I’m very strong on is vocalization. A good umpire is a vocal umpire. That’s what you’ve got to be to do the certain levels.”

Mitchell, who lives in Hager City, said he started umpiring when he was 17 and is in his 23rd year. He is an elite slow pitch umpire, which is the highest honor an ASA umpire can obtain other than selection to the ASA Hall of Fame.

According to Mitchell, it is important to reach young umpires at schools like this due to the dropping number in umpires now that the Baby Boomer generation is retiring.

“The young kids, they’re going to be formed by this,” he said.

“40 million people play softball a year,” Burhans said. “There are two and a half million people in ASA. We have 154,000 girls teams and men’s teams in the United States. That amounts to a lot of ballgames needing umpires. So they need a lot of training.

“It starts here.”
ASA/USA was proud to honor Florida State pitcher Lacey Waldrop (Chester, Va.) with the 2014 USA Softball National Collegiate Player of the Year. The award, which is considered the most prestigious honor in Division I women’s softball, is designed to recognize outstanding athletic achievement by female collegiate softball players across the country. This season, Waldrop helped lead the Florida State Seminoles to their eighth NCAA Women’s College World Series (WCWS) appearance, their first since 2004. Florida State becomes the first team to have two different players select as USA Softball National Collegiate Player of the Year with Jessica Van der Linden taking the honor in 2004.

“This is really hard to believe,” said Waldrop. “I want to thank everyone and recognize the other finalists. They are amazing players. To be a part of this is incredible. There’s so much talent in this room and in college softball so to even be considered a finalist is amazing in and of itself.”

The 2014 Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) Conference Pitcher of the Year, Waldrop paces the country with 38 wins to just five losses and ranks third with a 1.01 Earned Run Average (ERA). In 257 innings in the circle this season, the Florida State junior has given up just five home runs and has held opposing batters to a .184 batting average. Waldrop, a two-time All-ACC selection, led her Seminoles to both regular season and conference tournament titles in 2014.

In just three seasons, Waldrop has compiled an 81-20 record with 680 strikeouts ranking her ninth all-time in Florida State history. Behind their pitching ace, the Seminoles climbed from a preseason No. 12 ranking to the No. 3 overall spot in the final regular season ESPN.com/USA Softball Collegiate Top 25 poll.

“This is an incredible and deserving honor for Lacey and a big achievement for our program,” said Florida State Head Coach Lonni Alameda. “Her competitive drive is incredible and after last season she really set out to try and be one of the nation’s best pitchers. She has been our leader in the circle all year, and more than just being a great player, she is a great person. She’s extremely coachable and is always trying to get better, which sums up our entire team. I’m so proud of Lacey for receiving the USA Softball National Collegiate Player of the Year – It’s a product of her hard work and dedication.”

The other two finalists for the 2014 award were Michigan’s Big 10 Player of the Year Sierra Romero (Murrieta, Calif.), who ranks second in the nation with a .491 batting average, and Pac-12 Player of the Year Ally Carda (Elk Grove, Calif.) of UCLA who finished the season with a 1.90 ERA and .394 batting average.

The USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year award is voted on by coaching representatives from 11 Division I Conferences in the 15 ASA Regions as well as members of the media who consistently cover Division I Softball across the country, and previous Player of the Year recipients. Other past winners of this award include UCLA’s Stacey Nuveman, three-time winner from Texas Cat Osterman, Tennessee’s Monica Abbott, Virginia Tech’s Angela Tincher, two-time winner Washington’s Danielle Lawrie, 2011 winner Ashley Hansen from Stanford and 2012 and 2013 back-to-back winner Keilani Ricketts of Oklahoma.
Liberty Mutual Insurance Responsible Sports sat down with USA Softball standout Lauren Gibson to get her thoughts on the importance of good sportsmanship.

In our exclusive TAKE 5 interview, Lauren told us she is impressed with the current state of sportsmanship in softball.

"Overall, I feel the majority of players that I’ve encountered display great sportsmanship in softball, and are all very supportive to one another,” said Lauren. “I have numerous friends on opposing teams, and that makes playing the game that much more fun!”

Lauren also stressed that she believes in always showing respect for the opposing team. She even told us about an “awesome” display of good sportsmanship that occurred in a World Cup game against rival Puerto Rico. Read her full Q&A for the story.

Lauren emphasized the impact that strong coaches can have on players, including how well they practice and display sportsmanship.

“I feel as though players look to coaches to set the tone for the team,” said Lauren. “How a coach reacts to certain situations or calls will affect how players react to those same situations. Coaches need to be good role models and leaders for players – but most importantly, coaches need to stay positive.”

Finally, Lauren shared her thoughts on how softball can take steps to improve sportsmanship even further. In her opinion, ensuring good sportsmanship is essential not just for the game’s players, but for the fans as well.

To read the full TAKE 5 interview with Lauren, visit ResponsibleSports.com. And come back next month for another exclusive TAKE 5 interview!

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Out with ASA/USA
Photos from ASA/USA events throughout the month

ABOVE & BELOW: USA Softball’s Lauren Gibson speaks with teams and athletes at the Prince George County Parks and Recreation Opening Day Ceremonies.

ABOVE & BELOW: Umpires attend the National Umpire school in Lewiston, Maine.
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THREE EASY WAYS TO INSURE SOFTBALL:

1. Contact your ASA Commissioner. Visit www.ASASoftball.com for contact info
2. Contact RPS Bollinger Sports—ASA Department, Ph: 800-526-1379 • ASAIinfo@Bollinger.com
The 2014 Official Rules of Softball are now available for purchase on the Apple and Android platforms. The user-interactive application contains the complete version of the 2014 Official Rules of ASA Softball and also has a searchable option on the iOS platform only.

The new app is available for all participants of softball including umpires, coaches, parents, players and fans. A great tool to learn the rules of softball, the $15 annual fee app is a new and innovative for accessing the official rules of softball.

Click here to find links to both the Apple and Android products.

In addition to the 2014 Official Rules of Softball app, ASA/USA also offers a web-based search feature for all iPhone, iPad, Blackberry, Android, Windows phones and tablet users. From any of the devices listed, visit m.asasoftball.com and you will be directed to ASA/USA’s mobile website. M.asasoftball.com also allows users to quickly access relevant material that users may need at the softball field, including tournament information and certified equipment.

The World Cup of Softball IX, held in Irvine, Calif., game schedule has been announced. A record eight countries including Canada, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Mexico, Philippines, Puerto Rico, USA, and Venezuela, are scheduled to participate at Bill Barber Park, Deanna Manning Stadium this summer. A sanctioned event by the International Softball Federation (ISF), the Japanese National team will look to defend its World Cup title as they defeated Team USA 6-3 in the championship game in 2013.

Monday, July 7
Venezuela vs Chinese Taipei - 9 a.m.
Mexico vs Puerto Rico - 11:30 a.m.
Philippines vs Puerto Rico - 2 p.m.
Canada vs Japan - 4:30 p.m.
USA vs Mexico - 7 p.m.

Tuesday, July 8
Venezuela vs Japan - 9 a.m.
Japan vs Puerto Rico - 11:30 a.m.
Philippines vs Mexico - 2 p.m.
Canada vs Chinese Taipei - 4:30 p.m.
USA vs Venezuela - 7 p.m.

Wednesday, July 9
Philippines vs Canada - 9 a.m.
Canada vs Venezuela - 11:30 a.m.
Japan vs Mexico - 2 p.m.
Puerto Rico vs Chinese Taipei - 4:30 p.m.
USA vs Philippines - 7 p.m.

Thursday, July 10
Puerto Rico vs Venezuela - 10 a.m.
Chinese Taipei vs Mexico - 12:30 p.m.
USA vs Canada - 6 p.m.
Japan vs Philippines - 8:30 p.m.

Friday, July 11
Mexico vs Venezuela - 10 a.m.
Chinese Taipei vs Philippines - 12:30 p.m.
USA vs Japan - 6 p.m.
Puerto Rico vs Canada - 8:30 p.m.

Saturday, July 12
USA vs Puerto Rico - 10 a.m.
Mexico vs Canada - 12:30 p.m.
USA vs Chinese Taipei - 5 p.m.
Chinese Taipei vs Japan - 7 p.m.
Venezuela vs Philippines - 9 p.m.

Sunday, July 13
Seed 1 vs Seed 2 - 10 a.m.
Seed 7 vs Seed 8 - 12:30 p.m.
Seed 5 vs Seed 6 - 2 p.m.
Seed 3 vs Seed 4 - 4 p.m.

*Schedule is subject to change.
Tickets are on sale for the World Cup by visiting http://www.socalasa.org or by emailing WorldCupIX@aol.com with any questions.

A complete media coverage schedule including televised games and live streamed games will be released at a later date as well as special promotions and autograph session days.

For complete coverage of World Cup IX including bios, rosters, live stats, streaming and results log on to www.USASoftball.com.
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