Team USA wins Gold!

Turn to page 23 to learn more about USA’s road to Gold at the 2015 WBSC Junior Women’s World Championship in Oklahoma City, Okla.

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Greetings everyone.

August has ending, taking with it an exciting month for all of ASA/USA Softball. During this month tens of thousands of young athletes competed in our Junior Olympic National Championships. Much time, hard work and dedication are required of these young athletes just to reach our National Championships, so we hope the journey was exciting, eventful and rewarding. Those athletes are going to remember playing in a National Championship the rest of their lives. Special recognition goes out to each team that was crowned an ASA/USA Softball Junior Olympic National Champion.

This month also brought to a close the inaugural USA Softball Junior Olympic Cup. This event, held in Chino Hills, Calif., was an invitational tournament featuring 28 of the top Junior Olympic Teams in the nation. They were competing to determine which team would win of course, but they also were given the opportunity to display their very talented softball skills before the USA Softball Women’s Selection Committee and the coaching staffs for each team. The names of players identified as candidates for possible consideration for selection to future Women’s and Junior Women’s National Teams were placed in a pool listing for continued observation. Congratulations to the Wichita Mustangs for their top finishing at the 2015 USA Softball JO Cup. As determined by a majority vote of the coaches of the teams that participated in this year’s Cup, the 2016 USA Softball JO Cup will take place in Marietta, Georgia.

Three of our National Teams competed in international events during the month. Our Men’s Slow Pitch National Team participated in and won the Annual Border Battle played for the first time in the Mid-West portion of our country before very large crowds. Our Women’s National Team traveled to Japan where again large crowds came out to the Japan Cup, as Team USA emerged victorious. While our Junior Women’s National Team competed at the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Junior Women’s World Championship hosted at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex in Oklahoma City, Okla. Our young Eagles completely dominated the competition as they earned Gold by outscoring Japan twice, 10-0 in a playoff game and 8-1 in the Gold Medal Game. There were many individual stellar performances throughout the event, including the equaling or breaking of several Team USA records. The future of USA Softball is indeed bright!

Let’s keep in mind, as well, that the success of our programs, discussed above, is possible in large part because of the dedication, hard work and professionalism of our volunteer coaches and support personnel. We are truly grateful for the time they contribute sharing their knowledge and providing leadership to our programs. Their inspiring presence is much appreciated. Also very necessary to our successful events are the thousands of Umpires-in-Chief and umpires who qualified for and provided their services to our events. Their efforts, rightfully unnoticed most often, are crucial. Thank you as well to the thousands of volunteers who host our very important events.

A reminder, the deadline for submitting 2016 Code and Rule Change Proposals to the National Office is September 15. The Code and Rule Change Proposals Committee will meet on September 20 to prepare the change proposal submissions for our Council Meeting. A further reminder, our 2015 Council Meeting will be held at the Galt House Hotel, Louisville, KY from October 31 to November 5.

Lastly, the Board of Directors will meet on September 19-20 in Oklahoma City. Please contact one of your Territory VPs prior to the meeting should you have an item for the Board Agenda or to have something brought to the Board’s attention. As stated often in the past, you are welcomed at any Board Meeting as they are open to the membership, except for Executive Sessions.

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Region seven has announced their first ever 16U and 18U Fall GOLD Qualifier for the 2016 ASA/USA GOLD Nationals in Oklahoma City at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex. The tournament will be held in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. The deadline to apply is October 2. Play ASA!

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

These 17 year olds all umpired at the 12-U ASA/USA Softball National Championship in Sacramento, Calif. From left to right: Lexi Logan (Sacramento ASA/USA), Ethan Vazquez (Oregon ASA/USA) and Alexandra Newsom (Central California ASA/USA). Vazquez was part of the umpiring crew in the Championship game. Bright umpiring careers are ahead for all of them!
Team USA star Amanda Chidester stopped in to hang out at the 2015 Girls 16U A Northern National Championship in Novi, Mich. She is pictured with ASA/USA Representatives Troy Jacobs (left) and Stu Alderman (right), Metro Detroit ASA/USA Softball Commissioner.

Keith Pragle (center), who plays Special Olympics softball for the Sunmount Mountaineers (Tupper Lake) of Area 27 (the North Country Region), reportedly made Special Olympics history in Malone on Saturday, Aug. 15, when he recorded an unassisted triple play. Pragle played second base for the first time. In his very first inning defensively at that position, with runners on first and second, he caught an infield pop-up, stepped on second to record the second out and tagged the runner that had occupied first base to complete the historic triple play. According to information sent by Area 27 Coordinator Beth Demo, Special Olympics 15-year veteran Anne Daignault stated that she had ‘never seen this happen in Special Olympics.’ Since 1909, there have only been 15 unassisted triple plays recorded in Major League Baseball, making this feat in Special Olympics a memorable one. Flanking Pragle are Special Olympics umpires Truman Daignault and Andy Radley, who signed the game ball, which was presented to Pragle.
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www.RPSBollinger.com
Hello and welcome to the August 2015 issue of The Inside Pitch, the official newsletter of ASA/USA Softball!

It has certainly been a busy month across the country and here in Oklahoma City at the National Office as summer comes to a close. This month, we hosted the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Junior Women’s World Championship (JWWC). It was a fun way to wrap up the summer season at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex, as 15 countries were in town competing for the Gold Medal. Hopefully many of you watched some of the games on our website and cheered Team USA to victory. It was great to see the Junior team win Gold as I had traveled with them all summer on their tour stops and at the World Cup of Softball X. As I have a background in interning at a sports commission, Oklahoma City All Sports Association, I was taught to be neutral to every team participating and to never cheer. It’s definitely a little tricky to do at times, as I consider all of the members and coaches on that team to be friends of mine. I may have even given a little fist bump to someone on the field after they won. One thing about this job that is cool is that I’m able to get so close to the action when a team is celebrating and in a state of pure joy. I’ve been just feet away as I’ve seen multiple NCAA Champions crowned in several sports and now can add that I was right there at a World Championship covering Team USA as they won. My goal is to always try to use social media and the website coverage to try to make users feel like they are right there, just feet away from all the action.

Social media allows people like me to capture these special moments and to share them all across the country with passionate fans. As adult season begins, try to capture special moments like these at your next event. If you are in charge of a local ASA/USA association’s social media, think through the perspective of a fan who may be several states away. Special moments like these don’t just occur at a NCAA National Championship or a WBSC World Championship, they happen all the time in cities all across the country. It could be a city, state or a class tournament that a team takes great pride in winning or competing in. It’s amazing what we can do with social media to help build softball, whether it just generates interest or helps gain registrations in next year’s leagues.

The benefits of social media and how it can help your association will be discussed by Codi Warren at this year’s Annual Meeting in Louisville, Ky. Speaking of, we’ve shifted our attention to the Annual Meeting here in Oklahoma City. I’ll be running this year’s trade-show. I’d strongly encourage your local Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) to come get involved and to participate in it. It’s extremely affordable for a spot and provides great exposure to our Council and National Office staff.

On another note, I hope all the readers enjoy the newsletter! Have a great month, everyone!

Have a question for Nick Dorety? Send it to ndorety@softball.org

PICTURED ABOVE: Nick Dorety, far left, pictured with friends at Top Golf before his best friend got married.
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The ASA Hall of Fame Complex plays host to the WBSC Junior Women’s World Championship

The Complex hosted the WBSC Junior Women’s World Championship for the first time this August. Fifteen countries participated, as fans from all across the world cheered at the stadium and watched online. Team USA emerged victorious after the week-long event, avenging their loss in 2013 to Japan. If you missed any of the action, rewatch games online.

Episode 8 of Softball 360 now online

Can’t get enough softball? Keep up with all the latest around ASA/USA Softball all season long. Check it out now.

Steve Walker defends his title at the Semi-annual bags tournament

Steve Walker defeated Craig Cress to win the tournament. Walker has won the last two tournaments.

Plan your last minute Summer family roadtrip to Oklahoma’s Adventure Road

Check out the ASA/USA Softball National Hall of Fame Museum and many of the other exciting stops on the Adventure Road. Plan out your next trip to OKC & stop in and say ‘hello’ to your favorite National Office staff!

OKC Energy FC join the Adventure District

Oklahoma City’s professional soccer club, Energy FC, broke ground on the club’s new training facility at the Oklahoma City-County Health Department. Just minutes down the road from the ASA Hall of Fame Complex, the Energy will become neighbors to ASA/USA Softball’s National Office. The Energy join the Adventure District as the newest member.

Check out the latest collegiate softball gear

Get a jump start on the 2016 College Softball season. For new visors, hats, t-shirts and more, visit Softball Outlet for all the latest swag!
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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 program wrapped up in August. The program’s second year was successful, as eight athletes were awarded the honor. This year’s program was presented by Worth Fastpitch and FloSoftball.com.

Learn a little bit more about the JO Players of the Week since the last Inside Pitch publication.

Sydney Dale (Watertown, S.D.) showed off her skills in every facet of the game in route to helping her earn ASA/USA Junior Olympic (JO) Player of the Week honors. Dale’s dominant pitching and stellar outstanding performances pushed her team, Jurgens Printing, to another South Dakota ASA/USA State Championship.

“Sydney was in complete control from the circle this weekend,” stated her Head Coach and father, Jim Dale. “Several comments were made throughout the weekend on her pitching ability and control. She also got the games going for us this weekend as the leadoff hitter.”

Dale pitched all seven games for her squad in their Championship run at the 2015 South Dakota ASA/USA State Slow Pitch Championship. Dale also showed off her offensive firepower, going 21-for-25 for an .840 batting average. She scored fifteen times during the tournament while collecting 11 RBI with one home run, four doubles and two triples. Jurgens Printing won their third ASA/USA National Championship the weekend in Watertown, S.D. after Dale was named Player of the Week.

PICTURED ABOVE: Week 1 JO Player of the Week, Bella Hills.

PICTURED ABOVE: Week 4 JO Player of the Week, Trinity Lennon.

2015 JO Player of the Week winners

Bella Hills (Branford, Conn.) – Connecticut Impact
Hailey Peloquin (Woonsocket, R.I.) – RI Thunder Gold
Aryka Knoche (Little Canada, Mn.) – Renegades ‘98
Trinity Lennon (Pawcatuck, Conn.) – CT Cyclones 00
Meg Cohrs (Elburn, Ill.) – Kane County Xplosion 16U Black
Lauren Mirtoni (Roseville, Ca.) – Roseville Thunder Elite
Hanna Sveen (Ewota, Minn.) – Rochester Royals
Sydney Dale (Watertown, S.D.) – Jurgens Printing
Being a family member of Team USA has it’s benefits.

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United has flown Team USA for over 30 years, and we strive to be the airline of choice for Olympic family members as well. That’s why we offer discounted fares for USOC/NGB associated events. Go to united.com/USOC to book your flight, or to learn more.
The World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) concluded a two-day interview August 7-8 in the Japanese capital with Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games organisers, as the WBSC outlined the viability and potential value of having baseball and softball in the 2020 Olympic Games.

WBSC President, Riccardo Fraccari, led a seven-person delegation in Tokyo that included home-run king, Sadaharu Oh and Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB) chief, Katsuhiko Kumazaki. NPB, Japan’s most popular sports league and WBSC Member, attracted more than 23 million spectators in 2014, the second-highest recorded attendance of any sports league in the world in 2014.

After joined the WBSC delegation following his throwing out of the ceremonial first pitch on August 6th that commemorated the 100th anniversary of Japan’s annual “Koshien” National High School Baseball Championship -- the legendary two-week youth tournament that fills the 48,000-seat Hanshin Stadium and is televised nationally.

Also part of the delegation from WBSC leadership was Secretary General Ms. Beng Choo Low, Softball Executive Vice President Dale McMann, Japan Softball Association (JSA) Vice President and three-time Japanese Olympic Softball Team coach Ms. Taeko Utsugi, Athlete Representative and 2008 softball Olympian, Ms. Maria Soto.

Baseball/softball is one of eight new sports being considered by Tokyo 2020 following Olympic Agenda 2020’s landmark ruling last December that allows Olympic hosts to propose adding sports that are not currently on the Olympic programme but could help engage audiences and young people in the host nation and around the world.

The top sport in Japan in terms of youth participation, infrastructure, media coverage and fan-following, baseball and softball are played by an estimated 65 million men and women athletes in over 140 countries worldwide.

“Given our sport’s footprint in Japan and worldwide, WBSC and our global partners hoped to have shown during the interview in Tokyo that staging Olympic baseball and softball in 2020 would be easily accommodated -- fully in the spirit of Olympic Agenda 2020 -- and the added value as well as the historic value would be a ‘home run’ for Tokyo 2020, the Olympic Movement and our sport,” said President Fraccari.

Following the presentation to Tokyo 2020, President Fraccari and legendary coach Utsugi attended the finals of 2015 JSA Japan Cup that brought the Women’s National Softball Teams of Australia, Chinese Taipei, Japan and the United States to Ogaki City.

Tokyo 2020 is expected to announce a proposal for additional event(s) by September 30, 2015.
Ben Gibson (Birmingham, Ala.) passed away on August 5 at the age of 95. Born in Valley Head Alabama on August 25, 1919, he was a longtime Birmingham resident and member of South Highland Presbyterian Church. He was predeceased by his parents, James A. and Leona Wells Gibson, his wife, Burnadette Montgomery Gibson, and a daughter, Ellen Boutwell Brown. He is survived by his daughter Catherine Rogers James A. and Leona Wells Gibson, his wife, Burnadette Presbyterian Church. He was predeceased by his parents, James A. and Leona Wells Gibson, his wife, Burnadette Montgomery Gibson, and a daughter, Ellen Boutwell Brown. He is survived by his daughter Catherine Rogers Brown. He is survived by his daughter Catherine Rogers James A. and Leona Wells Gibson, his wife, Burnadette Montgomery Gibson, and a daughter, Ellen Boutwell Brown. He is survived by his daughter Catherine Rogers Brown. He is survived by his daughter Catherine Rogers

Mr. Gibson attended Pisgah High School and Jacksonville State Teachers College. A member of the greatest generation, he was proud of his service to his country during WWII. He served in the 83rd Infantry Division, 308th Medical Battalion. He landed at Omaha Beach in June 1944 and participated in five major campaigns in the European Theater until the end of the war. A highlight of his military memories was his participation in the 2010 Honor Flight trip with fellow veterans to visit WWII monuments in Washington, DC. He was a member of American Legion Post 171.

After the war, Ben Gibson moved to Birmingham and began a career with the U.S. Treasury Department. He later transferred to the Social Security Administration, from which he retired in 1978. His lifelong love of softball was demonstrated by his 67-year association with the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) and the Birmingham Metro Association. He was a player, manager, commissioner, regional vice president, and national council member. He was inducted into the Birmingham Metro Softball Hall of Fame in 1985 and into the Alabama ASA/USA Hall of Fame in 1995.

By Bill Plummer

When Bobby Quinn, former Clearwater Bomber pitcher, took the mound for the famed Clearwater Bombers, you knew he would battle from the first pitch to the last pitch.

Quinn, who earned ASA/USA All-America honors four times during his long career, passed away Friday, July 31 in Clearwater, Quinn was born November 19, 1941 in Somerville and starred in both college hockey and fast pitch softball, which is a rare combination.

In 2001, Quinn was inducted into the ASA/USA National Softball Hall of Fame and four years later was honored with induction into the UMass Boston State Hockey Hall of Fame.

In hockey, Quinn transferred from Boston University to Boston State College and in two years established himself as one of the most prolific ice hockey forwards. He led the NCAA in scoring with 67 points for the 1964-65 season averaging 3.9 points per game. Just to show that it wasn't a fluke, Quinn again led the NCAA in scoring as a senior with 71 points and led Boston State to a 20-0 season and a No. 1 ranking among small colleges.

Quinn still ranks as the school's all-time leader in scoring average with 3.7 points per game to give him 138 points in 37 games and graduated (1969) as the career leader in total points before it was broken in 1975. He now stands fourth in Boston State history in career points and assists (73) and is fifth in goals (65). Prior to his transfer to Boston State, he was a member of the 1962 United States National Hockey Team that competed at the World Championships in Stockholm, Sweden.

In softball, Quinn played for Local 57 of Providence, RI and the renowned Clearwater Bombers, 10-time ASA/USA National Champions. Quinn hurled Local 57 to a third place finish in the 1965 ASA/USA Men's Major Fast Pitch National Championship, compiling a 4-1 tourney record and a season mark of 34-4. A year later, Quinn led Local 57 to a second place finish in the Men's Major Fast Pitch National Championship, losing ironically to the Clearwater Bombers in the finals, 4-2.

In 1971, Quinn moved to Clearwater and finished his career with the Bombers, hurling the team to the national title in 1973 and a runner-up spot a year earlier. In the 1973 National Quinn won three games including beating Sunnyvale, 4-1 in the championship game on a four-hitter. In 1972, Quinn split four games in the national tournament. Overall, Quinn appeared in 18 ASA/USA National Tournaments and compiled a 22-17 won-lost record. Quinn made his last appearance in an ASA/USA National Tourney in 1986. Quinn is one of 22 former Bombers enshrined in the ASA/USA National Softball Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City.

Quinn was a school teacher for 30 years at both Ponce De Leon and San Jose Elementary.

Quinn is survived by his loving wife Diane (Myler) Quinn of Clearwater, his daughter Nancy Q. Preising and her husband Jeffrey of Seminole, daughter Stephanie Quinn and her fiancé Marquis O’Neal of Clearwater, daughter Melissa Quinn of Clearwater and grand-daughter Rachel Courtney. Dear brother of Walter Quinn of Tewsbury Mass., the late Edith Schrage and her surviving husband Francis of Medford, Mass., the late Joseph Quinn of Everett, Mass., William Quinn and his wife Mary Jane of Reading, Mass., the late Mary Quinn of Somerville, Mass., and James Quinn and his wife Maureen of Wakefield, Mass. Also survived by many loving nieces, nephews and cousins.
Photos from the Brooking, S.D. league games.
All photos belong to Steve Brua.
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The Chattanooga Sports Committee, the City of Chattanooga Parks and Recreation Department and local ASA officials began planning for the ASA/USA 16U National Championships approximately 18 months ago. Despite all the meetings and preparations, no amount of planning or foresight could have prepared us for what occurred in Chattanooga just 10 days prior to the start of the 2015 16U ASA/USA Nationals.

On the morning of July 16, 2015, at approximately 11:00 am, I received word that the Historic Federal Courthouse where my office is located was on lock down due to “active shooter” incident. We immediately turned on the local news and began to hear stories about a shooting five miles away. Later that afternoon, we were shocked to learn that a young man named Muhammad Youssef Abdulazeez had opened fire on two military installations in Chattanooga. The shootings began shortly after 10:30 a.m. at the Armed Forces Career Center. There, Abdulazeez fired 25 to 30 shots into the office from inside a silver rental Ford Mustang convertible, wounding a U.S. Marine. He then escaped and led members of the Chattanooga Police Department on a pursuit. Abdulazeez drove seven miles to a U.S. Navy Reserve center on Amnicola Highway in Chattanooga, where he rammed his vehicle through a security gate. He drove to one of the center’s buildings and first fired at it, then charged inside and continued firing, critically wounding a U.S. Navy sailor, Petty Officer 2nd Class Randall Scott Smith. Abdulazeez then exited the building through the back and entered a fenced motor pool area, where he shot and killed four military personnel. Three to five minutes after the second shooting began, he reentered the building, where he fired upon responding police officers and was fatally shot by police officers.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Randall Scott Smith died from his gunshot wounds on Thursday, July 23rd making him the fifth victim of this terrible tragedy. The funeral for Petty Officer 2nd Class Randall Scott Smith was scheduled for Tuesday, July 29th with the burial to be held at the National Cemetery located on Holtzclaw Avenue, just one block from the Warner Park Softball Complex where pool games would be underway. Local police officials alerted the tournament directors that the funeral procession was to pass by the Warner Park Complex at approximately 3:45 pm. The tournament directors had a plan in place to have tournament officials at each diamond in order to stop play and have the players turn toward Holtzclaw Avenue as the funeral procession passed by the park. However, Mother Nature had a better plan. At approximately 3:15 pm, an afternoon storm blew up north of the city and the Umpire in Chief alerted Tournament Directors of lightning in the area. Play was halted and almost spontaneously and without regard to any threat of lightning, players, fans and field umpires flocked to Holtzclaw Avenue and lined the streets along the outfield fences and waited for approximately 45 minutes.

The funeral hearse carrying the body of Petty Officer 2nd Class Randall Scott Smith passed by Warner Park at approximately 4:05 pm. ASA players, coaches, fans and umpires lined an entire city block and were there to salute and waive American flags. There was not a dry eye on that street as the motorcycles, police cars and the funeral procession moved slowly toward the National Cemetery. The lightning threat had long passed but play did not resume until the entire procession had passed and all players and umpires had time to return to their fields. Later that evening, several military officers and a local City Councilman stopped by Warner Park to personally thank ASA officials for the special tribute by the players and the umpires.

During the course of that championship week, there were 547 games played by 181 teams and there were some colossal moments. There were home runs, no hitters, squeeze plays, defensive gems, thirteen inning ITB games with astonishing endings and there were college offers made to players. The championship game between the Florida Fire 98 and the Williamsburg Starz was a classic pitcher’s dual ending with the Florida Fire winning the National Championship 2-0. There were so many compelling memories that week. However, that spontaneous moment in time on Tuesday afternoon watching the salute by our ASA players, coaches fans and umpires will be what I will always remember about the week of July 26th-August 2nd, 2015 at the ASA/USA 16U Nationals.
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Nesa Grider, Dallas ASA/USA Softball Junior Olympic (JO) Commissioner and long time community service advocate, was named winner of the 2015 the National Association of Women in Real Business (NAWRB) Community Service Award. NAWRB’s national recognition program is open to any woman who works within the housing industry in the country, who is a leader in her field and passionately involved in her community. The award celebrates the woman, her professional and personal achievements, as well as her ability to inspire and advocate for other women.

“There is little doubt Nesa is a woman tirelessly giving back to her community, successfully swinging between her professional and personal life. She never sacrifices the time she donates to charitable organizations, mentoring of youth through softball outlets as well as her community. Ms. Grider is a successful professional business woman, mother of two successful daughters in their own right, Taylor and Chandler Hoagland, but still finds time to tirelessly give back to others in need. She successfully navigates between her professional and personal life giving back and mentoring those in many organizations like: For Love of Kids, DCFOF, ASA/USA Softball and many others. She never sacrifices the time she donates to charitable organizations and her local community,” shared NAWRB’s Desirée Patno.

“I believe that giving back to the community is one of the most important of life’s obligations - to serve and mentor others. If I am able to change one person’s life for the better, I know that impact will create a ripple effect. The ripple effect is further edification of - change a girl, change a family and you will most certainly change the community,” stated Grider.

The NAWRB Community Service Award was presented to Nesa Grider at the annual NAWRB Gala in August in Long Beach Calif. Congrats Nesa!

Softball runs in the blood of many families across the country. Some families play, while others choose to umpire. At the 2015 Eastern National Championship in La Plata, Md., several umpiring families were in attendance. Steve Milhan and Andrew Milham are brothers from Delaware and came down to umpire the National Championships, while brothers Tyler Cappadonia and Cameron Cappadonia also were part of the crew. Tyler is age 17, while Cameron is 14. The best way to bond is at the softball diamond umpiring! Thanks to both families for making ASA/USA Softball an instrumental part of their lives!
The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America/USA Softball and Nevada ASA/USA Softball will host the 2015 USA Softball National Coaching School, presented by Liberty Mutual Insurance. The school, which features instruction from current and former USA Softball Women’s National Team coaches, will take place Nov. 20-22 at The Orleans Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, Nev.

Click here for more information on the National Coaching School.

Open to 250 participants, the USA Softball National Coaching School is $200 per coach but those who make payment by Oct. 1 will receive an early bird rate of $175. Coaches who register before Oct. 1 will also receive a commemorative portfolio.

The school features firsthand instruction from members of the 2015 USA Softball Women’s National Team coaching staff, including Head Coach Ken Eriksen (University of South Florida) and Assistant Coach Laura Berg (Oregon State University), USA Softball’s only four-time Olympian. Eriksen has been at the helm of the USA Softball Women’s National Team since 2011 and has led the program to a Pan American Games Gold, four World Cup of Softball titles and two World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) World Championship Silver Medals. Berg has been an Assistant Coach with the Women’s National Team Program since 2012.

Portions of the school will also feature former USA Softball Women’s National Team Head Coach turned ASA/USA Softball Director of Coaching Education Mike Candrea (University of Arizona). Candrea led the program to a Gold and Silver Medal at the Olympic Games as well as numerous other medals in international competition before retiring from his USA Softball coaching duties in 2008.

After the opening of the school on Friday, Eriksen will address the audience on the state of the USA Softball National Teams. Other Friday clinics are “Outfield Play” with Berg and “Hitting Basics: The USA Way” with Candrea.

Saturday and Sunday’s instruction includes classes on both defense and offense as well as base running, hitting, pitching and outfield play. Candrea will also speak on the Liberty Mutual Insurance Play Positive program. The National Coaching School concludes Sunday morning with a question and answer session with the staff.

A special room rate of $99 per-room plus tax/fees is available at The Orleans Hotel & Casino, 4500 W Tropicana Ave, Las Vegas, NV 89103. To book a room, call 800-675-3267 or visit their website. The Group Code is “A5USL11”.

For more information on the 2015 USA Softball National Coaching School presented by Liberty Mutual Insurance, visit ASAUSASoftball.com.
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The USA Men’s Slow Pitch National team won Border Battle VII in Midland, Mich. at Dow Diamond, home of the Great Lakes Loons.

Team USA came out red hot early, as Bryson Baker (Woodland, Calif.) and Brett Helmer (Cicero, N.Y.) both homered in the first inning. Luis Reyna (Tampa, Fla.) and Kevin Bazat (Columbia, Mo.) broke open the game in the second inning as each of them had triples, which pushed the U.S. to an eight run lead in second. Canada finally got on board in the third with a home run to left field.

Team USA continued to roll throughout the game, as Canada threatened briefly in the fourth before a Dale Brungardt (Vancouver, Wash.) two-run home run solidified the lead. Team USA scored eight more from there to decide the game by run-rule in six innings.

Baker racked up eight RBI on five hits for the U.S. He homered in the first, second and fifth innings, doubled in the sixth and singled in the third. Team USA hit eight home runs in the win.

In the inaugural Border Battle slow pitch competition against Canada in 2009, the Americans won 30-23 but Canada evened the series in 2010 with a 30-29 win. The USA men rebounded in 2011 with a dominating 25-3 performance, a 32-21 victory in 2012 and a 25-10 win in 2013. Team USA won 18-9 last year in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. With the win last night, Team USA secured their sixth Border Battle title.

The evening concluded last night with the ASA Long Haul Bombers. Miken’s Denny Crine (Henderson, Nev.) stole the show, as many of his home runs landed outside of Dow Diamond. Crine won with 13 points, as his win sets up an exciting finale. The top four sluggers will be heading to Miami for the ASA Stadium Power Tour Finals to be held on September 12 at Marlins Park.

Team USA also went on the road after the Border Battle, with tour stops at Nike Park in Parma, Ohio, East Park in Topeka, Ind. and at Matt Uban Softball Complex in Holland, Mich. Team USA went 4-1 on those stops, as their only loss came to the USA Futures 28-8. Team USA concludes the 2015 season with a 7-1 record.
The USA Softball Junior Women’s National Team are once again World Champions as the Eagles cruised to an 8-1 win over Japan in the Gold Medal Game at the 2015 World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Junior Women’s World Championship (JWWC). Team USA’s offense was the story throughout this Championship, as the team finished the tournament with a team-leading .425 batting average while scoring 119 runs in 10 games played.

The game started off at a stalemate as both teams felt out one another until Jenna Lilley (North Canton, Ohio) broke the game open in the third inning with a deep three-run bomb to left field. Japan left several runners on base, as Team USA backed up Kelly Barnhill (Marietta, Ga.) in the circle. Barnhill dominated all seven innings as she continued to confuse Japanese batters for the second straight night. Sydney Romero (Temecula, Calif.) and Alyssa Palomino (Mission Viejo, Calif.) broke the game open in the fifth with timely hits. Team USA would never look back from there, as they kept pouring on runs. Homeruns from Palomino and Romero late in the seventh started the celebration.

Palomino shattered several records at the 2015 WBSC JWWC. The previous record for most RBI was Team USA’s Stacey Nuveman (La Verne, Calif.) in 1995 with 18, as Palomino had 27. She also tied Nuveman’s 1995 record of five home runs in the Championship. Palomino went 2-for-4 today, scored once and brought in two RBI.

“This summer has been an amazing experience,” said Kelly Barnhill. “I’ve seen these girls in travel ball and many have seen one another in college. Getting to know these girls and to play for USA has been an honor. Tonight we came together and showed everyone what Team USA is made of.”

This was the fifth time that Team USA won the JWWC, tying Japan for most first place finishes. On the year, Team USA finished 14-4 in international competition, as they competed in the World Cup of Softball X and the WBSC JWWC.

For the complete schedule, box scores and video replays of the Championship, visit 2015jwwc.com.
Team USA ended their 2015 season with a Gold Medal finish at the 2015 Japan Cup following a 2-1 (eight inning) thriller over tournament hosts Japan. With the game scoreless through regulation play, the U.S. plated two runs in the top of the eighth off a two-run double from Michelle Moultrie (Jacksonville, Fla.) while Ally Carda (Elk Grove, Calif.) shined from the circle to earn the title of tournament MVP.

Both sides would get their leadoff batters on base in the first inning as Raven Chavanne (Thousand Oaks, Calif.) singled for the U.S. and a hit batter put the leadoff batter on for Japan. Both sides used their defenses to get out of the inning unscathed to keep the game tied up at 0-0. Valerie Arioto (Pleasanton, Calif.) led off the top of the second inning with a hard hit ground ball single to the third baseman but the next three batters were retired to bring Japan back to the plate. The U.S. defense would get put to work in the bottom half of the inning as Japan would load the bases with two outs, but a pop up to Lauren Gibson (Pasadena, Md.) at second base got the U.S. out of the jam.

Team USA would pick up a few more hits through the next five innings but were kept off the board. Chavanne picked up her second hit of the game in the top of the third with a two-out single to left field and Gibson led off the top of the fifth with a single to left field. Sierra Romero (Murrieta, Calif.) picked up another hit for the U.S. in the top of the sixth but Japan’s defense was able to keep Team USA from crossing the plate to force the game into extra innings.

Heading into the top of the eighth, Haylie McCleney (Morris, Ala.) started at second base due to the international tie-breaker (ITB) rule. A popup kept McCleney at second before she advanced to third base on a single from Kelsey Stewart (Wichita, Kan.), who was able to wheel her way to second on the throw from the outfield. Down to a 1-2 count, Moultrie smoked the ball over the left fielders head for a standup double to plate McCleney and Stewart to give the U.S. the 2-0 lead.

Japan’s Kaoru Matyoshi started at second base in the bottom of the eighth and advanced to third on a groundout to Gibson at second base. A sac fly to Janie Takeda (Placentia, Calif.) in left field would plate Matyoshi to cut the lead in half with two outs. Needing just one out to pick up the win, Japan’s Natsumo Sugama connected for a hard hit fly ball down the left field line that looked to fall, but the speedster Takeda made the game-ending snag with the U.S. taking the 2-1 (eight inning) win.

Moultrie had a day at the plate, going 1-for-3 while picking up both of Team USA’s two RBI. Chavanne also had a great performance at the plate, finishing the game with a 2-for-4 outing.

Carda earned the win for the U.S., going the full eight innings with three walks, six hits and zero runs allowed while also picking up two strikeouts. Ueno suffered the loss, issuing six strikeouts, seven hits and one run through her eight innings of work. Carda was also named the 2015 Japan Cup MVP for her efforts during the tournament, finishing with a 0.00 ERA, one win and eight strikeouts through 14 innings from the circle.

The Japan Cup marked the end of the 2015 season for the Women’s National Team, who finished the summer with a 16-3 record while claiming a Pan American Games silver, a World Cup of Softball Gold and the Gold at the Japan Cup. Chavanne led the way offensively on the year with a .462 batting average and Carda notched a .38 ERA to lead the pitching staff.

For box scores from the 2015 season, click here.
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South Dakota Coach Honored

Named a ‘coach of excellence’ by Black Hills Parent, a local magazine

Written by Black Hills Parent

Being involved with sports all of her life, Sherry Grismer knows what athletes go through and is there to make a difference in their lives.

“[The sport] is about relationships and people and being together,” said Sherry. “But, [for me] it’s all about the kids and I want them to have the best possible experience that they can have.”

“In all that we do, Coach Grismer continuously reinforces hard work, communication, respect, faith, and mental toughness,” explains SWAT athlete Mackenzie Erickson. “[All of which] will take us further in life than the fundamentals of the game we all love.”

Beginning as a student coach in college, Sherry became close with her Augustana athletes and coaches. As time went one, she kept in touch and continues to volunteer her time over spring break to help coach at the college’s tournament in Florida – learning tips and tricks to bring back to her own teams.

Sherry has been coaching softball for over a decade with the support of her husband and two children. She has taken strides to grow the love of the game in South Dakota, organizing multiple camps and clinics for girls to learn the basics while coaching them to be the best player they can be.

“Sherry has always been about what is best for kids,” said Augustana’s Head Softball Coach Gretta Melsted. “She is our players’ biggest fan and [they] look forward to her coming every year.”

Leaving her players with inspirational messages that extends farther than the field, Sherry’s goal is to “create both awesome players and exceptional people”, according to her daughter and athlete Abby Grismer. “I just love the games and the sports that I coach,” said Sherry. “I love the kids, and I want them to be able to experience everything and have it all, just like I was able to as a kid.”

Whether players are facing challenges in their personal lives or during the game, they know they can turn to Sherry for support and advice – and that is what makes her a coach of excellence.
Submit your favorite photos to Nick Dorety, ndorety@softball.org

‘Nick’s pics’
Favorites from August

Photo from Topeka ASA/USA Softball

Photo from Ohio ASA/USA Softball

Photo from Alabama ASA/USA Softball

Photo from Florida ASA/USA Softball

Photo from West Virginia ASA/USA Softball

Photo from Pennsylvania ASA/USA Softball

Photo from Southern-New York ASA/USA Softball

Photo from Indiana ASA/USA Softball

Photo from North Dakota ASA/USA Softball

Photo from Dallas ASA/USA Softball and Darryl Brunson

Photo from Connecticut ASA/USA Softball

Photo from So Cal ASA/USA Softball
The clock is ticking to register for the 84th ASA/USA Softball Annual Meeting to be held in Louisville, Ky. from Oct. 30-Nov. 6, 2015. This year’s host will be the Galt House Hotel, located in the heart of downtown Louisville.

Over 300 voting members of the National Council for ASA/USA Softball will be in attendance. Anyone is welcome to attend the Annual Meeting. 

**Click here for an agenda.**

This year’s tradeshow will take place on Wednesday, November 4. Registration will open soon for the event.

The 35th annual National Softball Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony will be held on Saturday, November 7. Inductees include Bonnie Anderson (Springfield, Ore.) - Umpire-Posthumous, John Davide (Centereach, N.Y.) - Slow Pitch Player, Andy Dooley (Thaxton, Va.) - Commissioner, Sue Enquist (San Clemente, Calif.) - Meritorious Service, Mark Ingrao (Falls Church, Va.) - Umpire, Charles Moss, Sr. (Lanexa, Va.) - Meritorious Service, Steve Padilla (Manteca, Calif.) - Fast Pitch Player and Mike White (Eugene, Ore.) - Fast Pitch Player.

The “Swing For A Cause” golf tournament is back! This annual event benefits the ASA/USA Special Programs and Special Olympics NIT. Registration is due to Andy Dooley by October 17, 2015. This year’s tournament will take place at the Cherokee Golf Course. Limited club rentals are available at Cherokee and will be available on a first come, first serve basis. **Click here for a flyer.**

For additional information (forms for council members, training session information, etc.) on the Annual Meeting, visit the event page.

The ASA Hall of Fame Complex will play host to the Men’s C National Championship Sept. 4-6, with the Men’s B National Championship to be played the next weekend. #TheBestPlayInOKC

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Long Haul Bombers
Check in with August Tour Results; Finals to be held in Miami on September 12th

2015 ASA Long Haul Bombers Stadium Tour Results from August

August 12 - St. Louis, Mo. (Busch Stadium): Kevin Filby (Team Miken)- 10 pts.

The 2015 ASA Long Haul Bombers Stadium Power Tour Finals will be held on September 12 in Miami at Marlins Park. Come watch the Power Tour Finals as the Marlins take on the Washington Nationals! Tickets can be purchased here. This year’s finalists include Denny Crine, Dale Brungardt, Kevin Filby and Brian Wegman.

PICTURED ABOVE: Denny Crine (Team Miken) about to hit a dinger out of Dow Diamond in Midland, Mich. Crine will be competing in the Power Tour Finals on September 12th.

PICTURED ABOVE: Kevin Filby (Team Miken) won the St. Louis tour stop in August. Filby will be competing in the Power Tour Finals on September 12th.

PICTURED ABOVE: Dale Brungardt (Team DeMarini) about to hit a bomb out of Target Field in Minneapolis, Minn. Brungardt will be competing in the Power Tour Finals on September 12th.

PICTURED ABOVE: Brian Wegman (Team Easton) at the plate on the Dallas tour stop in May. Wegman will be competing in the Power Tour Finals on September 12th.
Gary coach Eric Hanson provided his team with some pre-game strategy prior to their 12-and-under pool play game at the ASA/USA National Slow Pitch softball tournament at Koch Complex. Gary defeated the Sioux Falls Rise 8-6 in their opener.

Coaches who know the game and love to teach it, a community who supports the program financially and spiritually and players putting the teams ahead of their own agenda’s is a recipe for success in the sports arena.

Listen to the leaders of the softball program in Gary and they’ll tell you that’s the secret of their success. Four teams from Gary are entered in the ASA National Slowpitch Softball tournament at Koch Complex this weekend. The tiny border town in Deuel County has one team entered in each of the four divisions. A fifth team, the 10-and-under, would have made the trek to Watertown, but only two teams were entered so the division was scrapped.

“We just love the game of softball and it’s been a big deal in Gary for as long as I can recall,” said Jerry Kockelman, coach of the 16-and-under team. “These kids were watching all the older girls when they were six or seven and when they hit 10, it’s their turn.”

Kockelman’s 16-and-under team has been together since they were nine and 10. Like all the other teams wearing the orange and black, they are always competitive. Two of the four entrants won their first pool play games Friday afternoon. Kockelman’s team defeated Huron Inferno and the 12-and-under team, coached by Eric Hanson, pulled out a victory over Sioux Falls Rise. Pool play continued Friday evening and will conclude Saturday morning.

The Gary softball program has always been successful on the field, but it’s the behind the scenes activities that bring the teams together and make the program something many people want to be associated with.

“Most of our players are from Gary and Canby, but we also have a few from Minneota, Madison, Mariette and Revillo,” said program coordinator Laurie Kahloff. “The support we get from all of the parents and the people of the community is incredible.”

Finding equipment and uniforms, not to mention funding trips to state and national tournaments takes a lot of money. The women of the Gary American Legion Auxiliary hold an annual fundraiser to secure the funds for all of the teams.

“The ladies at the Legion have been doing this forever and they take care all our needs,” said Sabrina Stockman, coach of the 14-and-under team. “They do a supper for $30 a ticket and everyone gets involved. It’s a lot of fun to be a part of.”

The Gary teams participate in the Northeast League, a travel league with teams from the Brookings area north to Gary. Doubleheaders are scheduled each week and each team is responsible for scheduling their own practice sessions. All practices are held in Gary and are considered social events.

“It’s crazy to see people coming out to watch you practice,” said Kockelman. “We make sure the merchants in the town have a schedule of games and practices so they know when to stay open at night,” said Kallhoff. “There’s a lot of activity in town when we have softball.”

Youth softball, especially on the girls’ side of the ledger has become increasingly competitive over time, but softball in Gary remains simple. Work hard, play hard, have fun, bring a positive attitude to the field, but remember it’s just a game and there are other things to do with their summer.

“We practice a lot, play once a week and play state, national and league tournaments and that’s about it,” said Randy Karrath, assistant coach of the 14-and-under squad. “These girls love the game, but we make sure they keep it in perspective.”

Written by Watertown Public Opinion Sports of Watertown, S.D.
Join Liberty Mutual Insurance and ASA/USA Softball as we celebrate September as Sportsmanship Month. For the entire month we will be spreading the word about the importance of playing the game the right way, while also encouraging parents and coaches to make a commitment to sportsmanship by taking the Play Positive Pledge at PlayPositive.com/Pledge.

On the heels of a recent Sportsmanship Survey conducted by Liberty Mutual Insurance that showed sportsmanship is something many coaches and parents see on the decline among young athletes, Liberty Mutual is poised to use the month as a rallying cry to encourage positivity and respect in youth sports.

Learn more about Sportsmanship Month.

Looking for additional resources to help encourage sportsmanship? Visit PlayPositive.com for helpful tips and advice including:

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