Greetings!

I want to extend a special thank you to all of those who attended the Umpire In Chief Clinic this past weekend in Oklahoma City, especially to the National Umpire Staff. Kevin and his group, along with the Regional Umpire Staff, all worked very hard to make this a successful event. I would also like to thank all the attendees who traveled under bad conditions to get to Oklahoma City and take part in the clinic. I hope you found it was beneficial in helping you administer the program at a local level.

As the ASA President, I want to issue a challenge to each location umpire association. I challenge you to improve your umpire numbers by 25 umpires. If all local associations could sign up 25 new umpires, while not losing any, this would give us an additional 1,500 umpires.

I also ask the UICs when recruiting new umpires who only want to work leagues and not go to a National Championship to ask your Commissioner for help. Ask your Commissioner to possibly lower registrations fees for league umpires which will help grow our umpire program. Many of these umpires are kids or adults just starting out and they may not want to go to the National level yet. If they decide they want then at that point raise the fee.

Thank you to those who are already doing background checks. We strongly encourage those who are not to do so. Backgrounds checks need to go through the National office to ensure that it satisfies the requirements set by the Board.

I have been hearing good things about Register ASA so far this year. With the program in house, the ASA staff can work quicker in working out problems and continuing to get the kinks out of the system.

Recently I have been to the Region 15 meeting and Michigan’s annual meeting. I want to say “congrats” to all of those involved in the planning of these meetings. The attendance was great and I can’t say enough about them as I was very impressed.

In closing, for those that weather will allow play to begin good luck! And thanks to all those who volunteer throughout the Nation that make the program as successful as it is.
A note from The Inside Pitch editor
Jamie Blanchard

Welcome to the February 2011 edition of The Inside Pitch, the official newsletter of the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America.

The past few weeks have been unusual for the ASA National Office staff members, as we have battled two separate snow storms that closed the office. Thank you for being patient with us as we try to get back on track after three snow days.

Luckily, winter will soon give way to the softball season here in Oklahoma City. It is hard to believe that the first of 26 events here at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex is less than a month away. The complex opens the weekend of March 5 with The Preview college tournament, featuring Auburn, Illinois-Chicago, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State, and a 12-Under and 14U girls fast pitch tournament.

Other events highlighting our schedule include June’s NCAA Women’s College World Series and the sixth run of the World Cup of Softball in July. The Men’s Slow Pitch National Team will also play Canada in Border Battle III on July 24. All of these events will be aired on ESPN but we hope that you’ll be in Oklahoma City to enjoy the country’s and the world’s best softball.

Best wishes to all of you as you embark on your seasons. If the National Office can do anything to help you, please let us know. Together we have made the ASA the leading softball organization in the country and together we’ll keep ASA No. 1.

Shockwave’s Chandler Hicks has unassisted triple play in Columbia

Chandler Hicks

There have only been 15 unassisted triple plays in the history of Major League Baseball, so it was a unique experience for one to be accomplished by Chandler Hicks of Belle, Mo., on Oct. 13 in Columbia.

“I did not know at the time that I did something great,” she said. “I just did what I was supposed to do. Then I heard Brian from the stands, he’s the dad of one of the girls on the team that I look up to. He said ‘That a kid Chandler! You just made the play of a lifetime.’ Then I knew that holy cow, I just made a triple play.”

With runners on second and third with no outs, the batter hit a line drive between shortstop and third base. Chandler, playing shortstop, snagged the line drive for the first out, tagged third base for the second out and then tagged the runner coming from second base for the third and final out of the inning.

“The question was brought up if it came up again like that, would I be able to do it again? I answer that with ‘You bet!’”

Chandler plays for the Missouri Shockwave. “Chandler is an excellent athlete and really enjoys playing shortstop,” said Coach Russell Reed. “Our Shockwave team had bases loaded with no outs and I was getting worried about how how we were going to get out of the inning,” he said. “Next thing I know, there was a line drive hit right of Chandler and she caught the ball and immediately turned to step on third and then turned and tagged the runner from second. It was absolutely an amazing play. The entire crowd was super excited. I too was extremely excited and so very proud of her that she would know how to get the other two outs. I know that our Shockwave team and fans will never forget this moment.”

The umpire said in 35 years, it was the first time that he saw an unassisted triple play.
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Eriksen: ‘Incredible opportunity for me’

2001-2004 and also in 2009 and 2010. He is currently the head coach at the University of South Florida, a position he has held since 1997.

“This is an incredible opportunity for me as a coach and for USA Softball to bring new faces into the USA Softball National team family. Our goal is to prepare and shape this unit into a championship caliber team that will compete in the next two ISF medal events as well as the World Cup of Softball here in the United States in front of our fans,” said Eriksen. “The Pan American Games in 2011 and the World Championships in 2012 will be our main focus in helping promote the sport of softball while repeating as Champions.”

Johns led the 2010 USA Softball Junior Women’s National Team to the Pan American Championship and will lead the same team in 2011 to the ISF Junior Women’s World Championships in Cape Town, South Africa in December. Johns has served as an assistant coach for the Women’s National Team program from 2005-2008 where she helped the team win a World Championship and a Silver Medal at the Olympic Games.

“We are really excited to build on the success of the 2010 season. We had a great showing at the Pan American Championship and would like to continue our reign as Junior World Champions this December in South Africa,” said Johns. “This junior team is truly the future of the Women’s National program and the future looks exciting.”

ASA and USA Softball is also announcing the 2011-2012 Women’s National Team Coaching pool of 24 coaches. The assistant coaches for the Women’s and Junior Women’s National team events this summer will be selected from this pool at a later date. The Women’s National Team Selection Committee will continue to open the coaches’ pool every two years due to the ISF World Championship biennial cycle.

“We are thrilled to have a great cross section of coaches for the Women’s National team program for the next two years,” said ASA and USA Softball Executive Director Ron Radigonda. “With the ISF change of World Championships every two years, we are excited to assist coaches in gaining international experience and opportunities.”

ASA/USA Softball announces JMNT 2011-12 schedule

The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America and USA Softball announced Feb. 4 the schedule for the next two years for the USA Softball Junior Men’s National Team which will be highlighted by the 2012 ISF Junior Men’s World Championship, Nov. 1-10, in Parana, Argentina.

The Junior Men’s Team will go through two training camps in 2011 at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, Calif., led by Head Coach Tim Lyon and Assistant Coaches Gary Mullican and Scott Standerfer. The training camps will be held June 20-25 and July 24-30.

“The coaching staff is excited to get the players on the field and begin the process of training and picking a team for the 2012 World Championships,” said Lyon. “Over the past two years we have been putting together a players pool to create depth in the program and we are ready to put this team to work.”

Highlighting the July camp will be six exhibition games against Argentina at the Training Center with more information to come. The USA Junior Men’s National team will also hold a camp and clinic at the ASA Boys Fast Pitch Nationals, Aug. 4-7 in North Mankato, Minn.

The ASA is also pleased to announce that Tim Sonnentag of Marathon, Wis., has contributed significant financial support for the USA Junior Men’s team for training camps and the development of players. Along with his commitment to develop the Junior Men’s Team, he and his family have also established the Sonnentag Family scholarship. The scholarship was established in order to promote educational opportunities for members of the USA Softball Junior Men’s National Team Players Pool and to encourage good citizenship and volunteerism. “I am glad to I can help support the USA Junior Men’s National Team. I have worked with Tim and Scott before and know their dedication to getting the boys team back where it belongs,” said Sonnentag. “This is a great game and I know this will help develop young players and pitchers.”

2011-2012 USA SOFTBALL WOMEN’S NATIONAL TEAM PROGRAM COACHING POOL

Vaughn Alvey – BYU
Suzy Brazney – Golden West College
Mikel Candrea
Chuck D’Arcy – Arizona State
Howard Dobson – Southern Miss
Kate Drohan – Northwestern
Gordon Eakin- BYU
Tairia Flowers – Cal State Northridge
Michelle Gromacki – Cal State Fullerton
Stacy Iveson – Yavapai College
Barb Jordan
Lyndsey Klein
Mike Larabee – Arkansas
Kyle Magnusson – Southern Utah
Jay Miller – Mississippi State
Pat Murphy – Alabama
Stacey Nuveeman – San Diego State
Jamie Pinkerton – Iowa State
Tony Rico – Worth Firecrackers
Eileen Schmidt – Virginia
Mike White – University of Oregon
Karen Weekly – Tennessee
The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America announced Jan. 31 that shortstop Natasha Watley (Irvine, Calif.) and outfielder Johnny McCraw (Lake Wyline, S.C.) have been selected as the USA Softball 2010 Female and Male Athlete of the Year. Third baseman Lauren Chamberlain (Trabuco Canyon, Calif.) has also been selected as the Athlete of the Year from the Junior Women’s National Team program.

Watley helped the USA Softball Women’s National Team program regain the No. 1 ranking in the World as they beat Japan to capture the ISF (International Softball Federation) Women’s Softball World Championship. She hit an outstanding .542 at the Worlds, earning the starting shortstop position in all nine games. She was perfect at the shortstop position as well as on the base paths, going 3-for-3 in stolen bases.

“It’s such an honor being named the USA Softball Women’s National Team Player of the year. Last year was a great year for the USA National Team as we brought the gold back home to the USA winning the World Championship,” said Watley. “There is no greater feeling than that. I am very proud of what we were able to accomplish in 2010.”

Her accomplishments did not stop there, as she led the team at the KFC World Cup of Softball with a .565 batting average with a team-high seven runs scored and 13 hits. She was also 4-for-4 in stolen bases. The United States again defeated Japan in the title game, a 5-1 victory. For her accomplishments at the World Cup, Watley earned July United States Olympic Committee Athlete of the Month honors.

McCraw is a repeat member of the USA Softball Men’s Slow Pitch National Team having earned a spot on the roster for the 2009 and 2010 seasons. For summer 2010, he was a perfect 14-for-14 at the plate with 14 RBI.

“I want to take this time to personally thank ASA/USA Softball for honoring me with this award. I am not only honored to accept this but I am extremely humbled, especially to be the first recipient for slow pitch. I have been training harder than I ever have to keep up with the new athletes, but I never expected to be recognized with such an award,” said McCraw. “I want to thank everyone for their continuous support, and I want to thank God for giving me the opportunity to wear USA on my uniform. He has blessed me with the ability to play and to stay healthy and to continue to play and touch the lives of people I come in contact with every day. Thank you again, this is truly an honor.”

In the 2010, the Border Battle game between Canada and the United States, aired live from Oklahoma City on ESPN, McCraw went 6-for-6, including a double and three home runs, with six RBI and six runs scored for Team USA. In left field, he accounted for two Canadian outs.

In preparation for the Border Battle, which Team USA lost 30-29, McCraw went 3-for-3 with four RBI and four runs scored in Team USA’s 33-18 win over All-Star Plumbing. Team USA also beat the Fence Brokers 28-19 with McCraw going 5-for-5 with four RBI and four runs scored. He also recorded three outs while playing in left field.

Chamberlain, a member of the 2010-11 USA Softball Junior Women’s National Team, was an integral part of Team USA’s 9-0 run at the III Pan American Championships (18-Under) in Bogota, Colombia, which qualified the team for the ISF IX Jr. Women’s World Championship (19-and-under) later this year in Cape Town, South Africa. She played in each of the nine games, starting eight times at third base. In her first game wearing the Red, White and Blue, she hit a home run, laying the groundwork for an outstanding offensive performance in the tournament.

She went 16 for 25 (.640) at the plate with 11 runs scored and 13 RBI. With her 11 extra base hits (seven doubles, two triples and two home runs), she accumulated a slugging percentage of 1.320, by far the highest in Bogota. She went a perfect 6 for 6 in stolen bases, tying Hallie Wilson (North Tustin, Calif.) for second most on the team.

“I feel so blessed to receive this honor and to wear USA across my chest,” Chamberlain said. “I am representing my country playing the sport I love and I’m so grateful to have been given this opportunity. I have so much pride putting on my jersey and playing with some of the best athletes in the country. Softball has given me so many great experiences and I can’t wait to see where it takes me next.”

Chamberlain is a senior at El Toro High School in Lake Forest, Calif. She has committed to play next season at Oklahoma.
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Proper off-season equipment storage with Michele Smith
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BY NIK RULE,
MUSCO LIGHTING PR COORDINATOR

As winter slowly comes to an end teams from across the country are beginning to head to storage sheds to dust off team equipment for the new season. Yet with each new season, coaches and players will find that equipment that wasn’t stored properly can have serious performance and safety problems.

So one may ask, what is the proper way to store vital softball equipment during the off-season? To answer that question we asked two-time Olympic Gold Medalist and Musco Lighting team member Michele Smith to help us out.

Question: What is the proper way to store softballs in the off-season?

Michele: First of all, you want to clean all the dirt off of them with a moist towel and then put them in buckets or bins. Also, make sure that the buckets and bins have a top on them to keep out rodents or bugs. Overall, the most important part is keeping them stored at room temperature. The reason why this is so important is because it takes an extended period of time for a frozen or cold ball to thaw out or warm up. The colder a ball is, the harder it is. If a ball is used before it warms up, it could dent bats and is more dangerous for players.

Question: What is the proper way to store bats in the off-season?

Michele: Again, like with softballs, you want to make sure that they are cleaned up by removing any dirt and wiping down grips. Storing them in a bat bag or a bat sleeve and keeping them in a closet or an area that is going to be a consistent room-like temperature is essential. If stored in the cold the bats tinsel or properties of the metal become less malleable and therefore could dent the bat. A composite bat is more likely to fracture or snap because the materials are less flexible when stored in conditions that are not room temperature.

Question: What is the proper way to store a glove in the off-season?

Michele: The first thing you want to do is clean it up, put some oil on it, and a ball in it. One thing you don’t want to do is tie the glove because you don’t want the glove to become so rounded that it is hard to open. Nowadays gloves are constructed to leave the pinky and the thumb open to increase the pocket and increase the ability for ball to go into the glove. So simply putting a ball in the pocket and storing the glove in a helmet helps keep its overall shape.

One of the largest expenditures for organizations and players is the cost of equipment and taking the necessary time to store it correctly in the off-season can save time and money.
The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America Hall of Fame Complex in Oklahoma City, Okla., will again play host to the premier international softball teams in the world when the World Cup of Softball returns for a sixth run July 21-25. Tickets for the six country event are now on sale online through SoftballOutlet.com or by calling 800-654-8337, the ASA announced Feb. 7.

The World Cup features the 2011 USA Softball Women’s National Team while other teams scheduled to appear include the 2008 Olympic Bronze Medalist Australia, 2010 International Softball Federation (ISF) Women’s World Championship Bronze Medalist Canada, 2009 European Softball Federation (ESF) Women’s Championship Bronze Medalist Czech Republic, 2009 ESF Women’s Championship Silver Medalist Great Britain, and 2008 Olympic Champion Japan. On Saturday afternoon, the men’s slow pitch Border Battle will return as USA and Canada will face off for the third time in a much anticipated rivalry match up.

**Click here for the USA Softball schedule for the World Cup and Border Battle.**

“Playing in the World Cup has been such a great experience for me,” said two-time USA Softball Women’s National Team member Kaitlin Cochran (Yorba Linda, Calif.) “To play among the best and against the best in the world is always an honor and to be able to play in front the best fans in the world makes it that much more special to wear the uniform and represent the Red, White and Blue than this year’s.”

All-session tickets, which are $275 and $325 for the Ultimate Fan Zone seating in the first three rows of the stadium, $75 for other reserved seating and $40 for general admission seating, can be purchased online now at SoftballOutlet.com or by calling 800-654-8337. Single session general admission tickets are expected to go on sale July 5, 2011.

The Ultimate Fan Zone package also includes a private autograph session and meal with Team USA, tentatively scheduled for Sunday morning and only open to Ultimate Fan Zone ticket holders, as well free parking and a replica USA Softball jersey. For an additional $50 (a total price of $325), Ultimate Fans can upgrade to an authentic Nike jersey.

“The World Cup of Softball is the premier event in international women’s fast pitch softball and the Border Battle is the top event in men’s slow pitch. We could not be more excited to welcome players from around the country and around the world to our stadium this July,” said ASA Executive Director Ron Radigonda. “The people of Oklahoma City have been incredibly supportive of our sport for many years. When our athletes walk on to the field with ‘USA’ across their chests this summer, we know the community will be in the stands to cheer them on. The atmosphere is what makes the World Cup such an incredible experience for athletes and fans.”

The Women’s National Team will be named in June following the National Team Selection Camp, June 13-17, at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, Calif. The list of approximately 40 athletes trying out for the National Team will be released prior to camp.

Canada, Japan and two USA teams played in the 2010 KFC World Cup of Softball presented by Six Flags last year, with the Women’s National Team and the Women’s Futures National Team finishing first and third in the event. Olympic Champion Japan, the silver medalists to Team USA at the 2010 ISF Women’s Worlds, fell 5-1 in the World Cup Championship Game. Futures defeated Canada 9-3.

Canada was the only team to beat the Women’s National Team during the 2010 World Cup, taking a 5-2 victory on the fourth day of action last year. The Canadian Men’s Slow Pitch Team also upset the USA Softball Men’s Slow Pitch National Team in the second Border Battle with a 30-29 victory, evening the Border Battle at one victory apiece for Canada and the USA.

“When you put on the Team USA uniform, you know that you are among the best of the best. And I could not imagine a more exciting time to wear the Red, White and Blue than this year’s Border Battle against Canada,” said two-time USA Softball Men’s Slow Pitch National Team member Brian Wegman (Hamilton, Ohio). “The fans watching in Oklahoma City and those tuning in on ESPN are going to witness an incredible moment for the sport of slow pitch softball. We’ve never played at a level higher than this. With Canada taking last year’s game, I’m ready to get out there and take theBorder Battle title back for all of our amazing supporters.”

The members of the 2011 Men’s Slow Pitch National Team are expected to be named later this month.

Complete event schedule, including exhibition games for the USA Softball Men’s Slow Pitch National Team, and the television schedule will be released at a later date at USASoftball.com.
Arizona begins the 2011 softball season as the top ranked team in the ESPN.com/USA Softball Pre-Season Collegiate Top 25 Poll, the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America announced today. ASA/USA Softball is in its ninth season of releasing the ESPN.com/USA Softball Collegiate Top 25 Poll along with the USA Softball Player of the Week Award, which will start next month, and ultimately the USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year Award.

Click here to view the complete pre-season poll.

The Wildcats received nine first-place votes while No. 2 UCLA received 10 and No. 3 Alabama received one. Also in the Top 10 of the pre-season poll are No. 4 Georgia, No. 5 Florida, No. 6 Oklahoma, No. 7 Tennessee, No. 8 Michigan, No. 9 Missouri and No. 10 Arizona State. With the loss of two-time USA Softball Player of the Year Danielle Lawrie (Langley, B.C.), who won in her junior and senior seasons, Washington finished No. 11 in the pre-season poll.

In 2010, Arizona was led by freshman pitcher Kenzie Fowler (Tucson, Ariz.), a Top 10 Finalist for the USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year Award, to the Women’s College World Series in Oklahoma City, Okla. After dropping the first game 9-0 to Tennessee in five innings, the Wildcats battled back to make the Championship Series, where they ultimately fell to UCLA. Arizona finished the season 52-13.

The Bruins finished last year with a 50-11 record. While UCLA received the most first-place votes in the poll, the defending National Champion Bruins ultimately finished second to Arizona, a team they beat 6-5 (eight innings) and 15-9 in Oklahoma City. Megan Langenfeld (Bakersfield, Calif.), who was a Top 3 Finalist for the USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year Award, was instrumental in the team’s performance at the Women’s College World Series, winning the Most Outstanding Player Award to cap off her senior season.

Alabama, the No. 1 seed in the post season last year, missed out on the Women’s College World Series because of a walk-off home run from Hawaii’s Jenna Rodriguez in the final game of the Super Regionals. The Crimson Tide lost to the Rainbow Wahine 7-8 and 4-5 in their final two games of the season but finished 52-11 overall. Hawaii comes into the season ranked No. 13.

Top 50 Watch List

The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America, the National Governing Body of Softball in the United States, has selected its initial “Watch List” for the 10th Annual USA Softball National Collegiate Player of the Year Award. This award, which is considered the most prestigious honor in Division I women’s collegiate softball, is designed to recognize outstanding athletic achievement by female collegiate softball players across the country. Previous winners include USA Softball Olympians Monica Abbott, Stacey Nuveman and Cat Osterman.

The 2011 Pre-Season Watch List is comprised of 50 players representing 36 schools and 15 different NCAA Division I Conferences with the Pac-10 Conference leading the way with seven schools represented. The list includes 23 seniors, 12 juniors and 15 sophomores.

The ASA will announce the 25 finalists on April 13. A player does not have to appear on this initial watch list to be considered as a Top 25 finalist. However, the eventual winner must come from the Top 25 finalists.

Click here for the complete list of athletes on the Top 50 Watch List.
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Hosting a free PHR competition provides boys and girls ages 7-14 the opportunity to showcase their baseball and softball skills. Participants have the chance to advance through four levels of competition, including Team Championships hosted at Major League ballparks, and the 2011 PHR National Finals hosted during MLB All-Star Week.
The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America announced Feb. 4 that Ryan Savage has been hired as the turf manager for softball’s premier facility, the ASA Hall of Fame Complex in Oklahoma City. The Blanchard, Okla., native started his position on Jan. 25.

“The ASA Hall of Fame Stadium is one of the top softball facilities in the state, the country and the world. I’m grateful for the opportunity to be the turf manager for such a great place,” Savage said. “When I interviewed for this position, I really felt like everyone was family and I’m ecstatic that they’re welcoming me into it. I can’t wait to get to work.”

His primary responsibility will be working with the four fields at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex as well as the common grass areas of the award winning facility, which hosts 12-Under ASA events all the way through high school, college and adult softball tournaments. Savage will also manage the facility’s grounds crew.

On March 5, the complex officially opens for the 2011 season with The Preview college tournament, featuring Auburn, Illinois-Chicago, No. 6 Oklahoma and No. 22 Oklahoma State. The stadium will also host many other prestigious events including the Women’s College World Series and the World Cup of Softball.

“We are excited to have a turf professional with the tremendous qualifications that Ryan has. He comes highly recommended from the turf management program at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater,” ASA Executive Director Ron Radigonda said. “We are confident that with Ryan’s expertise, the ASA Hall of Fame Complex will remain one of the best facilities in the nation and the world.”

Savage graduated in December 2010 with a degree in horticulture/turf management from Oklahoma State. Since 2008, he has worked at the school’s athletic facilities, helping maintain the baseball, football, soccer, softball and track fields. He also brings with him experience from preparing the golf courses at the 2009 U.S. Amateur Championship hosted by Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa, Okla., and the 2008 AT&T National hosted by the Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, Md.

From May 2003-June 2009, Savage served in the United States Air Force, Air National Guard. He was a non-commissioned officer in charge (NCOIC), working with aircraft refueling and maintenance.

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Background

The Missouri Amateur Softball Association (ASA) is a massive non-profit that oversees over 2,000 individual teams, 300+ umpires and thousands of players across The Show Me State. Missouri ASA offers teams for both young and old, male and female and for first timers and experienced players, as well. Summers are busy with games, statistics and logistics and the fall off-season is shrinking every year as parents, players and officials look to get next year’s information earlier and earlier.

Challenge

When you have thousands of eager softball players and hundreds of dedicated volunteers looking to you for information, clear, concise communication is going to be your top priority. Previous to discovering Clubspaces, Missouri ASA was using Microsoft Frontpage to build and maintain the official association website, which doubled as the primary communication tool.

Missouri state commissioner Joey Rich:

“The biggest thing that we use Clubspaces for is the association website itself. Microsoft Frontpage was okay, but it wasn’t a tenth as easy as Clubspaces. I can update my website from anywhere in the world, all I need is a computer. Before, I had to be on my computer with my software and it was nowhere near as easy to manipulate as Clubspaces.”

Solution

Missouri ASA made the move to Clubspaces two years ago and the transition was smooth.

“We did the initial testing with Clubspaces and we got a lot of extra attention from your staff in terms of how we were going to set the whole site up. I gave them an idea of what I’d like the site to look like and they came up with several possibilities for me to choose from. I was able to pick the general format and the colors, so that helped get it started.”

It wasn’t long before Missouri ASA began using Clubspaces for more than just website building. In the two years since their site went live, it has begun using Clubspaces dynamic online player registration, payment processing, state tournament scheduling, team creation and more. It is looking at adding umpire registration and management in 2011. Missouri ASA also links to the Clubspaces-driven national ASA website that offers additional resources for softball enthusiasts from coast to coast.

Clubspaces also helped to alleviate some of the communication and logistical issues Missouri ASA was having, as well. It utilizes a combination of social media, timed email blasts and frequent website updates to keep players, coaches and volunteers in the loop.

“You have to keep that information pipeline stocked up, you’ve got to have new information on your site or people will stop coming to it.”

Clubspaces is the Official Online League Management System of ASA
Missouri ASA also uses its Clubspaces website to grant limited access to high-level volunteers so they can efficiently distribute forms, instructions and waivers.

“All district officers in our nine districts have access to a special page of forms that is used just by them and volunteers. There is a link on the main website that says “districts only” and “commissioners only” and they can go on there to save time. That page is the first place they look if they have a question and it is password protected so only they can get on there.”

Result

The goal of Clubspaces is to save coaches, volunteers and even league commissioners time and effort.

“I would say Clubspaces saves me a good six hours a month, and that’s probably conservative. Over the course of a year, I would say that Clubspaces saves me anywhere between 75 to 100 work hours. Saving this kind of time per year is a big deal. “

Missouri ASA is a vibrant, healthy organization that has more demands put on it every year and Clubspaces is helping to meet that challenge.

Clubspaces is the Official Online League Management System of ASA
Important information regarding
ASA Insurance Plans for 2011

Following are the changes to the ASA Insurance Program for 2011:

1) Umpire Accident deductible increased from $100 to $250.

2) Umpire Accident coverage while traveling directly to and from an assignment has a sub limit of $25,000.

3) Umpire, Team, Individual Registration, Tourn/Clinic Accident policies have a 90/10 coinsurance.

4) Team, Individual Registration, Field Owners, Tourn/Clinic Liability policies have a property damage deductible of $1,000.

5) Sports Officials Accident deductible increased from $100 to $250.

6) Sports Officials game fee reimbursement limit decreased from $5,200 to $2,500.

7) Effective date change: Team, Sports Official, Field owners and Accident/Travel policies renewed prior to April 1st, will have an effective date of 1/1/2011. If renewed on or after April 1st, the effective date is the day after postmark on the envelope. As in the past, the effective date on new policies is the day after postmark on the envelope.

If you have any questions, please contact
Margaret Schubkegel at Bollinger, 1-800-350-8005, ext 8236.
San Joaquin ASA Hall of Fame inducts five new members

Approximately 175 people were in attendance for the 60th Annual Stockton/Greater San Joaquin Hall of Fame and Awards Ceremony held January 15 in Lodi, Calif. The evening was filled with laughter and guests renewing old friendships as many of the past Hall of Fame Inductees were in attendance.

The evening began with awards being given to three Greater San Joaquin National Championship Teams in 2010. Italian Athletic Club won the Men’s “A” Fast Pitch National Championship, USA Elite-Vance won the 18 & Under “Gold” Western National Championship, and the Los Banos Tigers won the 18 & Under “B” Western National Championship. The association then recognized the Sponsor of the Year, Stockton Sports Commission for their contribution to GSJSA. Awards were then given to 20 umpires from the Greater San Joaquin area for working a National Championship Tournament in 2010.

Aches & Pains, a women’s senior division softball team from Stockton, was added to the Greater San Joaquin Wall of Honor. This team, made up from women in predominately in the San Joaquin Valley, has won several National Championships. They travel and play in cities such as Seattle, St. George, Utah, and Las Vegas, and are extremely successful in competitive softball.

Five people were inducted into the Greater San Joaquin Hall of Fame, although only two were present to accept their awards. “It was kind of a weird year for our ceremony tonight,” said Matt Pfeifer, ASA Commissioner and Master of Ceremonies. “Because of unforeseen circumstances three of the five inductees were actually present this year. This has never happened before. However, the presentations were still great and they all will be properly recognized at our ceremony in 2012.”

The newest members of the Hall of Fame include athletes and umpires.

Korey Krueg: Krueg, a second year ballot recipient was a feared, clutch hitter and middle infielder that played for several teams in the area. Korey won two National Championships with the San Joaquin Sharks and Team Lyon’s. He also has several All Tournament and MVP’s to his credit.

Kaila Shull: Shull, a standout athlete from Lodi, Calif., was a feared hitter with power. She was named to many different High School Awards such as the Cal Hi Athlete of the Year, All Area Athlete and many others. Kaila went on to play at UCLA where she was instrumental in winning the National Championship in 2010. With many awards and accolades to her credit, she is best known for her double against Arizona to send the Championship game to extra innings, where they eventually won. Shull was introduced by Donna Vechionne, a UCLA coach.

Mike Banda: Banda, a 28 year umpire from Modesto, Calif., was honored for his excellence in the area of umpiring. He has 10 National Tournaments to his credit, 5 of which are majors. He has been selected as an ISF umpire, one who can work international games, and has three ISF assignments to his credit. Banda also works Division 1 college softball and volunteers as a umpire trainer for our local association. Mike was emotionally introduced by Vince Price and Tom Eddy.

Doug Streeter: Streeter, a first ballot, unanimous committee selection from Modesto, was a solid hitter and middle infielder for such Open Division teams as the California Kings and Guanella Brothers, as well as a standout player for the USA Team who played in International Competition. Streeter played in three US Sports Festivals and two Pan American games. Doug unfortunately had a previous commitment and was unable to attend, however Rich Clements gave an impressive speech about Doug and we will properly recognize him next year.

Jack Vernon: Vernon, a long time ASA Fast Pitch player from Stockton, Calif., was a fierce competitor. His primary position was as a pitcher where he excelled, however he could play many positions on the field. Jack could hit both right and left handed and do it for power and average. Vernon also was a respected pitcher who kept you off balance with a variety of pitches. Unfortunately, Vernon got stuck on a plane due to bad weather and did not make it home in time to attend the event. Bob Langone accepted the award for Vernon and did a great job informing the audience of Vernon’s accomplishments.

To nominate an athlete, umpire, administrator or even someone who has passed on, go to www.gsjsa.net and download the nomination form under the Hall of Fame tab. Then follow the directions to submit your nominee. Nominations for the 2012 Hall of Fame are due in November 2011.
MASA Hall of Fame welcomes eight

The Michigan Amateur Softball Association held its annual Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony on Saturday evening, January 22, 2011 at "The H Hotel" in Midland, Mich. There were eight inductees and 240 people at what was the 30th anniversary of the MASA Hall of Fame.

With the 2011 inductions, 277 Hall of Famers in the MASA Hall of Fame. The inductees for this year were David Selden (Umpire), Dave Schimpf (Umpire), Marty Stempky (Player), Debra Hamlin (Player), Mary Scheurer (Commissioner), John Migaldi (Sponsor), Dave Coffey (Player) and Leo Urban (Player), as pictured above from left to right.

ASA President Andy Dooley attended the event.

Four inducted into the Region 15 Hall of Fame

The Northwest Region held their annual Hall of Fame Banquet on Jan. 29 at the Hilton Hotel in Vancouver, Wash. Master of Ceremonies for the evening was John Wright, Washington State ASA Deputy Umpire-in-Chief, assisting John with the awards were Ron Radigonda, Executive Director of ASA, and Andy Dooley, ASA President.

Congratulations to the 2011 ASA Northwest Region 15 Hall of Fame Inductees: Ray DeMarini (posthumous), sponsor and meritorious service from Portland Metro Softball Association; Dick "Horse" Christensen (posthumous), fast pitch player from Seattle/Tacoma Metro Softball Association; Jim Williamson, coach/manager and sponsor for fast pitch from Washington State Softball Association; and Ruth Peake, slow pitch Player from Washington State Softball Association.

DeMarini was first involved with softball as a player in 1980. In 1987, he produced a video “Ray DeMarini Reflex Hitting System”. The video became a National bestseller establishing Ray as the “King of Hitting” in the slow pitch game. He turned his love of the game into a multi-million dollar business known in the late 80’s as DeMarini Sports and is known today as Wilson/DeMarini.


Christensen’s softball career began during his service in the Navy. He helped pitch the Seattle’s Pay-n-Pak to nationals, earning two All-America awards. Playing with the USA Softball Men’s Fast Pitch National Team, he pitched for the USA in the Pan America Games.

Williamson started coaching in Harrison, Pa., in 1965 and then coached the Hi-Country Team in 1973 while playing in the Yakima Softball Association. In 1978, his love for the game took him one step farther when he began sponsoring and coaching the JRW & Associates Teams. Since 1979, his teams have played in 18 ASA Nationals.

Peake began her slow pitch softball career in 1976 and continued through 2008. During this time she participated in 17 ASA National Championships in women’s and coed slow pitch divisions, earning several State, Regional and National Individual Tournament Awards during her career.

These four individuals entering into the ASA Northwest Region 15 Hall of Fame will bring the membership to 96 athletes and non-players who have contributed to the growth and success of the sport of softball in the Northwest.
ASA Hall of Fame Complex schedule set for 2011

The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America announced Feb. 10 that events including the NCAA Women’s College World Series, the World Cup of Softball VI and Border Battle III will be hosted this year at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex in Oklahoma City. From March through October, the country’s premier softball facility will host 26 fast and slow pitch events for both youth and adults as well as postseason events for high school, junior college and Division I college ball. Both international men’s slow pitch and women’s fast pitch will also be featured at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex.

For the complete 2011 schedule of events for ASA Hall of Fame Complex, please click here.

“ASA is very excited about the schedule that has been put together for this year at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex,” ASA Assistant Director of Membership/Stadium Events Chris Sebren said. “Some of the events are ASA girls’ fast pitch, ASA men’s and women’s slow pitch, Oklahoma Special Olympics softball and a variety of high school and college events. We are also very excited to be hosting the World Cup of Softball, the Border Battle and the NCAA Women’s College World Series, all of which will be featured on the ESPN family of networks.”

The action packed schedule kicks off March 4-6 with The Preview college tournament featuring Auburn, Illinois-Chicago, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State on March 5 as well as a 12-Under and 14-Under youth tournament spanning the three days. It concludes October 13-15 with the Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association (OSSSA) 5A and 6A Fast Pitch State Championship.

“Getting to play at the Hall of Fame Stadium means a lot to me,” said Julia Minter, a 12 year old who plays ASA. “Playing on the best softball field in the world is awesome and not a lot of young ladies get the chance to do it. Playing on this field where the very best women in this sport have played is every softball players dream. Just knowing that I have stood and played on the same field as Jennie Finch, Cat Osterman and Natasha Watley, gives me hope that I will someday wear the USA uniform. I have played at numerous softball complexes and in countless tournaments, but by far take away the best memories when playing at Hall of Fame Stadium.”

Minter’s 14-Under fast pitch team, the Lady Cardinal of Edmond, Okla., are playing at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex during the opening 2011 event.

The ASA Hall of Fame Complex schedule is highlighted by the NCAA Women’s College World Series, June 2-8, which features the top eight teams in Division I softball playing for a National Championship. From July 21-25, the complex plays host to the top athletes in international softball with the World Cup, which features the 2011 USA Softball Women’s National Team playing teams from Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Great Britain and Japan. The 2011 USA Softball Men’s Slow Pitch Team will play Canada in Border Battle III during the World Cup on July 23.

“When you put on the Team USA uniform, you know that you are among the best of the best. And I could not imagine a more exciting time to wear the Red, White and Blue than this year’s Border Battle against Canada,” two-time USA Softball Men’s Slow Pitch National Team member Brian Wegman (Hamilton, Ohio) said. “The fans watching in Oklahoma City and those tuning in on ESPN are going to witness an incredible moment for the sport of slow pitch softball. We’ve never played at a level higher than this. With Canada taking last year’s game, I’m ready to get out there and take the Border Battle title back for all of our amazing supporters.”

Other events being held at the complex include the Capital City Classic for adult slow pitch (April 1-3), Region 2 Junior College Championship for women’s fast pitch (May 6-8), ASA Hall of Fame Tournaments for girls fast pitch (June), the ASA Girls’ 18-Under GOLD National Championship qualifier for girls (July 8-10), the Tuttle High School Tournament for girls fast pitch (August 26-27) and the ASA Men’s A and Women’s Open Slow Pitch National Championship (September 30-October 2).

For more information on the ASA Hall of Fame Complex events, visit ASASoftball.com.

National Foundation for Cancer Research joins softball teams in fighting cancer

The National Foundation for Cancer Research is teaming up with softball players around the country for a nationwide fundraiser entitled “Beat Cancer with a Bat!” Any softball team, whether high school, college, or community-based, can participate by dedicating proceeds from one or more games to be donated to NFCR.

“There are countless ways you can help fund cancer research, but a great place to start is by utilizing the talents you already possess,” said Franklin C. Salisbury Jr., President of NFCR. “Fundraising programs like ‘Beat Cancer with a Bat’ allow you to do what you love and help save lives at the same time.”

NFCR is providing numerous resources to help participants get started, including an event manual and cancer information materials. The campaign lasts throughout the end of the year.

To sign up or get more information, click here or visit www.nfcr.org/beatcancerwithabat.
ASA honors umpires in Oklahoma City

From Feb. 3-5, the Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA) held its 22nd Biennial Umpire-in-Chief Clinic held at the Biltmore Hotel in Oklahoma City. With over 400 umpires in attendance at the Saturday evening banquet, the ASA Umpire family gathered to recognize years of service, awards of excellence as well as the Merle O. Butler National Award of Excellence.

The evening was highlighted by the 15 Regional Awards of Excellence and the Merle O. Butler National Award of Excellence that was given to Bill Humphrey (Midland, Mich.) who was honored for his over 30 years of service to the ASA. Humphrey has been an umpire for over 30 years and participated in several national and international events. Walt Stack from Region 11 was also recognized for his retirement from the National Umpire Staff.

Click here for a complete list of the umpires honored.
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