Softball teams fighting hunger in Virginia, while North Dakota umpire battles for his life

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Turn to page 30 to learn more about the massive food donation; turn to page 18 to learn more about Kenton Cargile and his fight against cancer.
Greetings everyone.
This letter comes to you from Chino Hills, Calif. where the inaugural USA Junior Olympic (JO) Softball Cup is being played by 24 of our nation’s best Girls Fast Pitch (GFP) 18U Gold teams. At this event we have most of the best GFP players from throughout the country displaying their tremendous softball talents not only to the many fans present, but also to the USA Softball Women’s Selection Committee and college coaches.

The great physical agility and mental concentration that is necessary to excel at this level of play will certainly be tested. This challenging and extremely competitive tournament will also measure the capabilities of each team as they play to determine a champion. The hard work and dedication to softball that these teams have brought to this event is remarkable and very much appreciated. This USA Softball JO Cup, a National Invitational Tournament, will continue to be played annually somewhere in the United States, the location to be determined by a committee of JO coaches.

In addition to the USA JO Cup, JO National Championships are being played throughout the USA which involve nearly 1,500 teams. Nearly 100 JO National Champions have very recently been or will soon be crowned. Congratulations to each of you and a thunderous thank you to each team that participated in our championship play.

While our JO Program championship play is coming to a very successful completion, our adult program’s championships will continue through September. There is still time to qualify your adult team for one of our many adult softball National Championships. Contact the local ASA/USA Softball association in your area to sign up and participate.

Congratulations also to the nearly 2,000 umpires that have been selected to umpire at our National Championships. Only about 2 percent of the ASA/USA Softball registered umpires are selected to umpire at a National Championship each year, so such a selection is very prestigious.

During this month our Men’s National Team participated in the 2015 World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) World Championship and the Pan American Games, both hosted by Canada. Although we finished out of the medal standings at each event, we are proud of the team’s highly competitive performance and their very professional representation. Our Women’s National Team (WNT) competed at the Pan American Games, bringing home the Silver Medal as Team Canada earned the Gold Medal. Our WNT earned the Gold Medal at the World Cup of Softball X in Irvine, Calif. During August, our Junior Women’s National Team will compete in the WBSC Junior Women’s World Championship that will be hosted at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex while our Men’s Slow Pitch National Team will compete in the Annual Border Battle Series. Let’s go out and support our teams as they represent the USA in our sport of softball.

Lastly, but very importantly, thank you to all who in anyway are responsible for the hosting of our fantastic National Championships. Your hard work and the many tireless hours that it takes to reach the fabulous results that we have every year at these events are very much appreciated. Your unsung efforts contribute greatly to keeping our organization number one in the world.

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South Carolina ASA would like to welcome Ty Wilson to our staff as an assistant JO Commissioner. He will be hosting tournaments in multiple locations throughout the state starting this fall, mainly concentrating on the midlands and coastal area.

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!

Former Team USA athlete and National Office employee Destinee Martinez spoke to western All-Stars attending a tournament in Midland, Texas. Martinez was the guest speaker at the tournament’s opening ceremony.
RB Thomas, Jr., ASA Hall of Famer and 20-Year National Council Member was recently honored by the National Association of Sports Commissions as the Sports Event Organizer of the Year. Congrats RB!

The 2016 Boys Slow Pitch National Championship was awarded to Ohio ASA/USA Softball recently. The National Championship will be held in Canton, Ohio. Canton was unanimously approved by the Board of Directors.

The Annual Sam McQuade Sr. Budweiser Charity Slow Pitch tournament in Bismarck, N.D. celebrated its 40th anniversary in June by hosting over 430 teams in the mecca of slow pitch tournaments. Hosted by North Dakota ASA and the McQuade Distributing Co., the tournament welcomed 1,000s of visitors to the area who always love to have a good time!
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www.RPSBollinger.com
Hello and welcome to the July 2015 issue of The Inside Pitch, the official newsletter of ASA/USA Softball!

I started off this month in Irvine, Calif. at the World Cup of Softball X. This was a very different event from others that I have worked at in the past, as this was my first international tournament. At times it was difficult, as several issues came up that were tricky with the language barrier. At one point I went up to the Argentina team, I was anticipating that no one spoke English. Quite to my surprise, many of them were from the local area and were quite fluent! I also had the opportunity to meet future NFL Hall of Famer and Team USA supporter, Troy Polamalu. Polamalu’s niece, Jenavee Peres, plays on our Junior Women’s National Team (JWNT). It was great to see him out there cheering on the squad. He was as humble as they come and just wanted all the focus on the JWNT. Working the World Cup of Softball X was a great experience for me as there were many different challenges and learning moments. The rumors from around the office that running an international softball event was very unique were very true.

After the World Cup of Softball, I went with the JWNT to Hillsboro, Ore. for a tour stop. It was a very quick stop as we hosted a youth clinic, a luncheon, a doubleheader and even a visit to Doernbecher Children’s Hospital. There will be more details about the tour stop later in this edition of The Inside Pitch.

I did indeed spend a couple of days back at the office before heading back on the road and going to MLB All-Star Week in Cincinnati, Ohio. I was there to represent ASA/USA Softball and to help out with the Pitch, Hit and Run National Finals. Twenty-four boys and girls from all across the country were there to compete in the finals of the annual competition. More to come on that also later in this edition of The Inside Pitch! In addition to helping with the competition, I helped out with the kids as they attended the MLB All-Star Game and were catching balls on the field during the Home Run Derby. It was an absolute dream come true to be at this event and to even be a small part in helping run the Derby. Todd Frazier won the Derby and I caught the ball that pushed him into the Championship round. It was just too cool. Check out the photo in the top right corner. I really enjoyed the All-Star game the next evening.

After Cincy, I went back out to Oregon to help run and overlook the 16U and 18U GOLD National Championships. It was a lot of fun to get back to youth softball as I haven’t been around that all summer. My stay in Oregon at Salem and in Hillsboro was top notch. I particularly enjoyed hanging out with umpires from all across the country at the hotel each night. It was a lot of fun to hang with everyone as that was truly a special group of umpires.

I am fortunate enough to do a lot of cool things with this job, but my favorite thing honestly is getting to know people from all across the country. I’ve made friends with many new people that I would have never met if it wasn’t for this job. Truly blessed.

Lastly the leader of the Marketing and Communications Department, Julie Bartel, will be moving on from ASA/USA Softball. It was really great getting to know her over the last eight months, while also learning tons of valuable information that will be useful in my career moving forward. Thanks for all the good times Julie! I’m thankful to have you as a friend.

On another note, I hope all the readers enjoy the newsletter!

PICTURED LEFT: From left to right: Nick Dorety and future NFL Hall of Famer, Troy Polamalu.
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Busy July at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex and OGE Energy Field

The Complex hosted several events in July, including the All-Indian Fastpitch tournament. This tournament featured teams from all over the country and was held at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex for the first time. Other events hosted included the 10U and 12U HOF Qualifiers.

July 2015 Plays and Clarifications for Umpires

The National Umpire Staff for ASA/USA Softball has released the latest edition of Plays and Clarifications. Check it out now, click here.

Semi-annual cornhole tournament finals scheduled

Steve Walker looks to defend his title against Craig Cress. Many at the office have been anticipating this matchup for months. The hype is now equal to Muhammed Ali vs. Joe Frazier, arguably...

Director of Marketing and Communications, Julie Bartel, leaving ASA/USA Softball after 10 total years

Bartel will be taking a position within the Marketing Division at Loves Travel Stops Corporate Headquarters in Oklahoma City. “I came to ASA/USA Softball as a ‘baby’ just out of college and leave extremely grateful for the opportunities and support over the years,” said Bartel. “To say I have ‘grown up’ here is an understatement. I want to personally thank each and every one of you for your impact, friendship and memories. There are moments, experiences and people from all over the World and the United States that I will cherish forever. It has been a pleasure and honor to represent this association and I deeply appreciate the relationships I have and will always have because of the sport of softball.”
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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 honors 10 athletes, male or female, from May 27 - August 4 following the conclusion of the ASA/USA JO National Championships. In order to be eligible for the award, athletes must be registered with their local ASA/USA association and must participate in ASA/USA Softball sanctioned events or tournaments during the week nominated. Nominations can be made here: FloSoftball.com.

Learn a little bit more about the July JO Players of the Week.

Week 5: **Meg Cohrs** (Elburn, Ill.) brought her team, the Kane County Xplosion, to the ASA/USA Hall of Fame 16U Qualifier Championship game. Cohrs is a threat while stepping into the batter’s box as the clean up hitter.

“Meg Cohrs is our number four hitter and a standout third baseman,” stated Kane County Explosion Head Coach, Rick Lovestrand. “She had clutch hit after clutch hit and is our emotional leader on the field.”

With a busy weekend at the plate, Cohrs finished with a .545 batting average (12-for-22), with four doubles, two triples and 11 RBI while taking a total of 20 bases.

Week 6: **Lauren Mirtoni** (Roseville, Ca.) was one of over 600,000 boys and girls, ages 7-14, who competed in the Pitch Hit & Run program this past spring for the opportunity to advance to the National Finals of the annual MLB competition. Mirtoni won competitions on the local, sectional and team levels. Mirtoni’s score at the team competition was one of the top three in her age group, which earned her and her father a trip to the National Finals during MLB’s All-Star Week in Cincinnati.

During the Pitch Hit & Run program, Mirtoni hit six for six targets while also hitting the furthest of all the youth girl participants at the team competition level. As a 2021 high school graduate, Mirtoni has plenty of time to continue to develop her skills in the batter’s box. With a batting average of .416 (5-for-12), she had 12 total bases and one home run. Mirtoni finished second in her age division at the National Finals.

Week 7: **Hanna Sveen** (Eyota, Minn.) competed in five games with her Rochester Royals squad in the ASA Tri County State Qualifier. Sveen asked to play a different position other than her normal role at first base and succeeded beyond all expectations. With a couple of key players gone, she was asked to play third base and made a couple outstanding diving catches.

Sveen had one of those tournaments where nothing could stop her. The lead-off hitter for the Rochester Royals had an impressive batting average of .714 (10-for-14). “All the balls she hit were line drives in the outfield, not just the infield bleeder hits or the bloopers in the outfield, all her hits were pounded hard,” said Chase. She had a total of 11 runs, six doubles, one triple, and a single homerun.
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The Arizona Softball Foundation (ASF) recently announced the selection of these individuals for Induction into the Arizona Softball Hall of Fame. There are five (5) categories in the Arizona Softball Hall of Fame; Contributors, Men Players, Sponsor, Umpire and Women Players.

**Eva McGonigle**: Inducted as a player. She started playing softball at the age of 12 with the Webster Dairy Buttercups of Glendale. Her softball career started full throttle in 1958 with the formation of the Phoenix Blues. In 1962, the Phoenix Blues joined the Copper State League where Eva was selected: CSL All Star 12 straight years, ASA All State and Cactus Regional All Star third Baseman. While with the Phoenix Blues, Eva won five CSL Championships, six ASA Metro Championships, six Independent State Championships and participated in seven ASA Cactus Regional tournaments. Eva had a lifetime batting average of .401.

**Kara Brun**: Inducted as a player. She began playing softball at the age of 11 for the Phoenix Storm. In 1992, her Storm Team won the ASA 12 Under National Championship. She was a member of the Storm Team that won the 2000 and 2001 ASA Women’s Major National Championships. In 1999, Kara was selected to play on the USA Junior Women’s National Team that took silver in the World Championship. Kara attended Deer Valley High School from 1995 to 1999, where she played varsity ball for four years. She was selected second team West Regional All-American, and stills holds the most hits in at DVHS. In 1996, she was selected the Gatorade’s Arizona Athlete of the Year and was named Defensive Player of the year. In 1998, she was selected as a NFCA Second Team All American. While attending ASU from 1999 to 2002, Kara was selected an Academic All-Pacific Region Team Member, co-Defensive Player of the Year, co-Scholar Athlete of the Year, while maintaining a .332 career batting average.

**Jimmy Turner**: Inducted as a player. He began playing Little League Baseball at an early age, but became interested in softball after watching a local game while visiting Phoenix. He wanted to play so he moved to Glendale and played on his first team called B & K. Jimmy joined the Schaefer-Smith-Ankeney Insurance Team and finally played for another great Arizona team called, 7th Avenue Auto Parts. During his 31+ years playing, he attended numerous State, Regional, and National Championships. His career batting average was .350+. Jim was as a member of the Schaefer-Smith-Ankeney Insurance Team was the Runner-Up Champion in the 1982 ISC World Championship.

**Joe Lane**: Inducted as a contributor. Lane has spent over 37 years serving as a youth softball coach, team manager with several youth teams. In 1998 he became ASA Deputy Junior Olympic Metro Commissioner. In 1978, Lane began coaching his youngest daughter, age seven, in the Paradise Valley Girls Softball League. When his second daughter wanted to play, he continued coaching until 1992. In 1998, ASA was looking for volunteers, and Joe answered the call. As the ASA Deputy Junior Olympic Metro Commissioner, Joe organized and ran several ASA JO tournaments including: State Tournaments, Phoenix Metros, Cactus Regions and National Championships. These tournaments influenced the lives of thousands of youth softball players. When asked, Joe replies, “It’s not never about me”. He is respected by coaches, players, umpires, and parents.

**Rick Beach**: Inducted as a contributor. Beach became interested in fast pitch softball while living in Prescott. He played for local teams for a few years, then he traded in his glove for coaching girls’ softball. In 1983, Beach moved back to Phoenix where he began coaching his two daughters. He coached the Phoenix Firebirds and the Phoenix Storm. His first youth national championship came in 1992 with the Phoenix Storm 12 Under team. Those Phoenix Storm teams coached and managed by Rick have captured several ASA Regional Championships, and even back to back ASA Women’s Major Championships in 2000 and 2001. Beach served as the ASA Metro Phoenix Commissioner for 10 years building a very strong ASA presence in the Metro Phoenix area. He is coaching today with the Mizuno Storm Beach 16 & Under team.

This year’s induction banquet will be held at the Embassy Suites Phoenix North on August 8, 2015. The reception will be held at 4:30 p.m., while dinner will be served at 6 p.m. Tickets for this year’s banquet will be 40 dollars. Please contact Bobbi Forner at 602-266-7125 for ticket information.
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ML Brackett (Gadsden, Ala.) passed away on June 30. Brackett was a former Alabama ASA/USA Softball Umpire-In-Chief (UIC).

He played fast-pitch softball and umpired for 30 years, nine of which he was the state UIC. He was inducted into the Alabama ASA/USA Softball Hall of Fame in 1994 and the Etowah County Hall of Fame inaugural class. Field one at the Gadsden Softball Complex was named in his honor.

Brackett also played in the NFL for the Chicago Bears and the New York Giants in the fifties before he fell in love with softball.

Sympathy cards can be sent to his spouse, Carolyn Brackett at the following address:
1216 Monte Vista Drive
Gadsden, Alabama 35904

James Wallace Edinger (Coeur d’Alene, Idaho) passed away on July 16. He was surrounded by his family when he passed.

“Jim was an ASA umpire for over 30 years and the District #1 UIC for 26 years,” said Steve Anthony, Idaho Commissioner and Regional Director. “Jim was not only a friend of ASA/USA Softball, but I considered him one of my closest friends. Jim loved being an umpire and made many friends during his career as an umpire. He will be missed.”

Edinger was an ASA/USA umpire for the Coeur d’Alene Parks and Recreation Department, where he officiated men’s and women’s softball. He also served for 25 years as the umpire assignor scheduling umpires for games for North Idaho cities and leagues.

Edinger was very popular with the players and made many friends throughout the softball community. Edinger, with his two brothers, Ron and Dick (commonly known as the “3 Blind Mice”) umpired many championship games at Memorial Field during the Lake City Invitational and several state tournaments. He umpired in more than 25 state and regional tournaments and four national tournaments. Jim also officiated youth and men’s basketball for 25 years and served as the treasurer. Edinger was inducted into the Idaho ASA/USA Softball Hall of Fame in 2005.

Edinger never missed a day checking out all the box scores in the sports section and the stock market of the Coeur d’Alene Press, always with a toothpick in his mouth. He enjoyed many trips with his dad and brothers cutting firewood, especially buckskin tamarack.

Due to his love of youth sports, in lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate you considering a donation to the Coeur d’Alene Recreation Department, in c/o Steve Anthony at 710 Mullan Ave., Coeur d’Alene, ID 83814 to provide youth scholarships for children in this community that he loved so much.

Thanks to the Coeur d’Alene Press for this obituary.
Submitted by Dan LaCorbiniere, Rhode Island ASA/USA Softball Player Rep & Regional Player Rep

The annual Smithfield Firecracker Tournament is an annual July tradition in Rhode Island. In 2015, it exploded to an even bigger level with five divisions of Junior Olympic softball: 10U, 12U, 14U, 16U and 18U. This year while teams, parents and coaches celebrated the fourth of July during the event, they also had an international element with a team that traveled from Canada. The Cole Harbour Comets registered ASA to participate in this tournament as they enjoyed their second ever softball road trip to the United States. The fun did not stop there. There was a ton of great softball played! There were fireworks and a dunk tank dubbed the “Shark Tank.” Players, coaches, parents and children of all ages all took the plunge in the “Shark Tank.” Many even had the signature sandwich of the event from the concession stand called “The Storm Burger.” As you can see from the pictures there was a lot of fun to be had. We will end on this note, we had a ‘Pegasus sighting,’ yes a Pegasus!

Congratulations to all the participants! Here were your winners:

10U Division
CT Valley Fusion- Champion
Coventry Crush- Runner-up

12U Division
CT Valley Fusion- Champion
Southcoast Sea Devils- Runner-up

14U Division
RI Thunder Hopkins- Champion
Southcoast Mayhem- Runner-up

16U Division
Rampage- Champion
MWS Eclipse Blue- Runner-up

18U Division
MWS Eclipse Blue- Champion
Smithfield Storm- Runner-up

PICTURED ABOVE: Fans enjoyed the dunk tank aka the “Shark Tank” at the 2015 Smithfield Firecracker.

PICTURED ABOVE: CT Valley Fusion was the 12U Champions at the 2015 Smithfield Firecracker.

PICTURED ABOVE: MWS Eclipse Blue was the 18U Champions at the 2015 Smithfield Firecracker.

PICTURED ABOVE: A candid shot of the RI Rampage Black, the 16U Champions at the 2015 Smithfield Firecracker.
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"It just is."

Kenton Cargile’s answer was short, but exact. It was emotional, but thought out. Those three words - "It just is" - was all he needed to say.

For anyone that knows Cargile, and judging by his Facebook page many people know him, this year’s 37th annual Brainerd Softball Tournament scheduled July 11-12 at Memorial Park in Brainerd means more than softball. Hence Cargile’s answer “It just is.”

Cargile and his officiating partner Willie Brown III have been coming to the lakes area every year to ump the softball tournament. Proceeds from the tournament, also known as “This One’s for Hop,” benefit the Jon C. Happajoki Memorial Fund. However, some of the money will go toward Cargile’s own fund.

Cargile was diagnosed with multiple myeloma cancer, which is formed from malignant plasma cells. He’s undergone extensive chemo treatments as well as two stem cell transplants.

“It can be pretty tough the first couple of days after your chemo,” said Cargile. “They put you on different steroids. You may not get any sleep and your appetite changes. You really don’t get an appetite. I do my regiment on Monday and your taste buds change throughout the week. You’re really not hungry to the extent that I would normally be until Wednesday or Thursday. It can get to be tough. But don’t get me wrong, I’ve been blessed to be healthy and strong and be at the point I am now.”

One reason has been softball. The former military man and body builder started umping high school and college softball games 16 years ago. He and Brown started coming to Brainerd around that same time for extra cash. Now the Brainerd tournament is his favorite.

“(Softball) probably saved my life,” said Cargile. “That’s it. It probably saved my life. After my first transplant, I came home and I was told you need to rest for six months. You know what I did two weeks after I got home? I went out and umped and played. I got my butt chewed by my doctors, but I did it.”

Cargile said the key to staying healthy has been his daily routine of exercise, going for walks, going to the gym and keeping his diet as clean as possible. He’s also used softball to keep him motivated and his body functioning. He’s also used athletics to keep his mind off cancer and the draining effects of chemotherapy.

“It’s a mental game,” Cargile said. “Mentally if you shut down, then physically you will follow.”

“That’s been the weird part of what has happened to me. It’s great to talk about it. I love to talk about it, because one of the first things I said when this happened was I don’t want to be the face of cancer we normally know. We see people and they lost their hair. They’re depressed and not depressed because they don’t have the strength for the fight, but financially chemo wears you down and all of these things. I just wanted to be a different face, a different image. And that’s part of getting up and going to the gym for me. It doesn’t bother me. I want people to talk to me and understand I’m OK, I’m OK. I’m going to be OK. This is going to be OK.”
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Over the Easter 2012 weekend, Bailey Marshall and Vanessa Brown were infected by a deadly strain of E. coli bacteria (E. coli 0157) after drinking contaminated raw milk. Within days of ingesting the milk, both girls were admitted to Doernbecher Children’s Hospital and were under the care of the Pediatric Nephrology team. Without the expertise and life-saving efforts of these specialists, their story may have had a very different outcome. The softball community in Oregon came together and Fastpitch Cares was born.

After diagnosis, the news spread quickly in the softball community of the seriousness of the girls’ condition. Cards and gifts began pouring into the hospitals rooms, as meals started to appear at the homes of both families. Softball teams throughout the community made banners, posted pictures, even made stickers to wear on their helmets during the games to show their support.

Bailey and Vanessa both recovered from their ordeal with E. coli, yet realized that there was a greater need for further advanced medical equipment at Doernbecher Children’s Hospital at Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU). Fastpitch Cares came together and organized a one-day tournament with all the proceeds going to OHSU. With a large amount of support from the community, the tournament was a success, on and off the playing field. A raffle and silent auction helped to make the day fun and enjoyable for all participants. Fastpitch Cares was able to donate $28,000 to the Nephrology Department and the Pediatric ICU at Doernbecher.

The Nephrology Department purchased six machines to monitor patient blood pressure on a 24 hour basis, which will help two to three thousand patients a year. The Pediatric ICU purchased devices used to allow doctors, parents and children communicate with each other when verbal communication is not available.

Fastpitch cares would not stop there. This past April, Fastpitch Cares, along with Marshall and Brown, presented another check to the physicians at Doernbecher for $25,000. Fastpitch Cares was another piece the puzzle in helping reach the Knight Cancer Challenge, launched by Nike’s co-founder Phil Knight. Knight pledged in 2014 to donate $500 million for cancer research at OHSU if the state of Oregon could match it in two years time. Late last June, that goal was met and one billion dollars was raised.

All proceeds at the Junior Women’s National Team tour stop in Hillsboro, Ore. went to Fastpitch Cares. ASA/USA Softball donated several signed jerseys to help raise funds for Fastpitch Cares. Sue Oran, the charity’s founder, coordinated a visit for Team USA and staff to Doernbecher before the doubleheader exhibition games. Johanna Grauer, Emily Griggs, Sydney Romero and Nick Dorety, ASA/USA Softball staff member, all stopped in to hang out and play with kids in the waiting rooms. The Team USA stars gave out sunglasses, bracelets and more fun items.

Fastpitch Cares is currently planning a softball tournament to be held September 12-13 at Gordon Faber Recreation Complex in Hillsboro. Many vendors, games and a silent auction will surround the charity’s softball tournament.

To keep up with Fastpitch Cares, click here to visit their website or follow them on Facebook and Twitter.
North Carolina ASA/USA Softball will be participating in the inaugural USA Masters Games next summer in Greensboro, N.C. The USA Masters Games, a National Sports Festival for competitive adult athletes ages 25 and over, will introduce its first ever event held in 2016 at the Greensboro Coliseum Complex. Expected to draw thousands of competitive adult athletes, the Games will take place over a 10-day period from Friday, July 22 to Sunday, July 31, 2016.

Featuring 20 or more sports competing in the 2016 USA Masters Games, softball will be one of the major sports in this competition. Each sport will be conducted at a National Championship level and will be staged in conjunction with the applicable NGB for each sport. As the NGB for softball in the U.S., ASA/USA Softball will be represented by North Carolina (NC) ASA/USA Softball and NC ASA/USA Softball Commissioner Tony Laws. In addition to being an ASA/USA sanctioned event, all officials for softball will be ASA/USA certified umpires.

"On behalf of ASA/USA Softball and North Carolina ASA/USA Softball, we are very happy to be a part of this exciting new sports event," said NC ASA/USA Commissioner Tony Laws. "Masters and Senior softball is an important part of the ASA/USA program as we strive to keep our older adults active and healthy. We look forward to helping make softball a high participation event of the USA Masters Games and to providing a lot of enjoyment for the participants and spectators."

As a new event, the organizers of the USA Masters Games have decades of multi-sport event organizational experience while the Greensboro Coliseum Complex having a long history of hosting some of America’s largest events. The USA Masters Games will feature an Opening and Closing Ceremonies as well as a Games Village, which will serve as a central hub. The 2016 USA Masters Games will be the first of what are planned to be biennial events, held in the even-numbered years while moving around the country. To enter the 2016 USA Masters Games, registration is expected to open sometime during this summer. Athletes are eligible to register in as many as three sports without additional games fees.

To learn more about the USA Masters Games, click here.
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WBSC Men's World Championship in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada

The USA Men's National team collected two victories on its final day of competition earning a 9th place overall finish at the World Championships. The Red, White and Blue defeated Guatemala 4-0 on July 4 and closed out its tournament run with a 4-3 victory over Mexico. In addition, the U.S. added another victory on Saturday due to a forfeit from Indonesia. Team USA finished with a

The U.S. team finished the week with a 7-3 overall record. Derrick Zechman (Watsontown, Penn.) led the way going 6-for-21 (.286) with one home run and five RBI throughout the week.

“We certainly didn’t finish were we wanted at the World Championships,” said head coach Denny Bruckert (Gillespie, Ill.). “The two close losses to Japan 5-4 and to Venezuela 3-2 were the difference in making the playoff round. I really thought we played well except the lost to Australia. The Venezuela loss was really hard as I thought we did outplay them but calls sure didn’t fall our way. We regrouped and played three really nice ball games to end on a positive note that will give us momentum for the Pan American Games.”

For additional coverage from the WBSC Men’s World Championship, click here.

Pan American Games in Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Despite some late inning heroics at the plate, Team USA was unable to overcome a second-inning solo home run that put Venezuela on top in a 1-0 loss at the 2015 Pan American Games. With the loss, the U.S. finished the Pan American Games with a 2-4 record, falling just one game shy of the medal rounds to finish in fourth place.

“I’m proud of our boys,” said Head Coach Denny Bruckert (Gillespie, Ill.). “We had just as many chances today as Venezuela did to turn the tide in our favor, we just didn’t get the breaks. We went through this tournament and faced everyone’s ace and you’re not going to score a lot of runs when you face pitching like that. Despite that, we showed that we can play with anybody. Everyone in the stands saw that. The future of this program is bright.”

It was a battle from the pitching circle through the majority of the game as USA's Tony Mancha (Las Cruces, N.M.) and Venezuela’s Ramon Jones came out strong in the top of the first inning. Both sides would get a runner on base in the first inning as Matt Palazzo (Pleasant Hill, Iowa) reached on a walk and Mancha issued a leadoff single, but both defenses stood behind their pitchers to keep the game scoreless.

Venezuela would hit the would-be game winning home run in the bottom of the second inning. Mancha came back on fire, however, issuing two strikeouts and a fly out to keep the game close as Venezuela took the 1-0 lead.

The U.S. was kept off the bases until the top of the fourth inning as Josh Johnson (El Paso, Texas) connected for a two-out double down the left field line but was stranded at second base with a groundout. Team USA would get another opportunity to plate a run in the top of the sixth inning when Derrick Zechman (Watsontown, Pa.) reached base on a walk and moved to second on a single from Palazzo. With two outs already in the inning, a groundout to the first baseman kept the U.S. off the board.

Down to their final at-bat, the U.S. looked to get a rally going with a pair of leadoff base runners. Chase Turner (San Jose, Calif.) started the charge with a double to shallow right field and advanced to second base when Kris Bogach (Huguenot, N.Y.) was hit by a pitch. A strikeout would keep the runners at bay before they advanced on a ground out from Nick Mullins (Toms River, N.J.). Down to their final out, Pat Sagdal (Richland, Wash.) drilled a hard ground ball right back at the pitcher, who snagged the ball at the last second to get the last out of the game. Mancha earned the loss, giving up just one earned run through six innings of work while striking out seven batters.

Team USA finished the 2015 season with an 8-7 record and a team batting average of .206. Zechman led the U.S. offense, finishing with a .303 average, one home run and six RBI. For the pitching staff, the U.S. finished with a 2.24 ERA with a combined 140 strikeouts. Mancha led the staff, boasting a 1.93 ERA and 73 strikeouts through 50.2 innings of work.

PICTURED ABOVE: Nate Devine
The USA Softball Women’s National team defeated No. 2 seed Japan 6-1 to win the World Cup of Softball X Championship in Irvine, Calif. The U.S. finished with a 7-1 overall record. This was the seventh time that Team USA has played Japan in the Championship, with the USA improving to 5-2 in those games. This win marked the eighth time that Team USA has been crowned the World Cup of Softball Champions. The Junior National team clinched fifth place at World Cup X on Sunday afternoon with a 6-5 win over Mexico. Every game was played at Bill Barber Park, as the World Cup of Softball X was hosted by So Cal ASA/USA Softball.

Once again, fans came out loud and proud on June 20 wearing pink to support cancer awareness during the annual “Pink Out” game. The first 500 fans received a pink bracelet courtesy of Sports Authority. Team USA wore pink uniforms on the field as they defeated Puerto Rico 14-1 (four innings).

On July 1, it was USA Softball Legacy Club Night. The legends were all over the ballpark serving in a variety of roles. Current Head Coaches of Team USA, Ken Eriksen and Tairia Flowers were present, as their teams were competing on the field. Eriksen was a catcher for the 1991 USA Men’s National Team that captured a silver medal in the Pan American Games before coaching the Women’s National Team. Flowers was a part of the 2004 Olympic Gold Medal team and the 2008 Beijing Silver Medal team. Stacey Nuveman was in attendance for the festivities, a three-time Olympian and two-time Gold Medalist.

Stacy Brazney, ASA Hall of Famer and USA National team member from 1983-1993 and Leah Amico, a three-time Gold Medalist, provided commentary for the live stream from the pressbox. The only four-time Olympians, Laura Berg was honored as well before coaching Team USA in the evening game. 1995 USA Junior World Champion Toni Mascarenas was also in attendance.

There was also a very exciting proposal at home plate between games. Argentina’s Samantha Galarza was called to home plate after each of the teams shook hands. She stood there until her boyfriend, Moses Morgan walked onto the field from the first base side as he wore his fan-made Galarza Argentina uniform shirt. Moses got on one knee and Galarza said ‘Yes!’ Galarza’s teammates went wild, as did the crowd in attendance. It wasn’t the first World Cup of Softball proposal, but it was by far the best!

To relive the World Cup of Softball X, click here.
Women’s National Team

Drops an extra inning 4-2 game to Canada at Pan Ams; finishes with silver medal

The USA Softball Women’s National Team suffered their sole loss of the Pan American Games in a 4-2 extra-inning decision against host country Canada to earn a silver medal finish at the Toronto 2015 Pan American Games. With the game scoreless through regulation play, the game entered into the international tiebreaker (ITB) rule as Canada punched in four runs in the top of the eighth. The U.S. would plate two of their own in the bottom half of the frame but were unable to overcome the deficit as Canada went on to win the Gold.

“It’s tough to coach against good fortune,” said Head Coach Ken Eriksen (Tampa, Fla.). “We hit the ball really well today, just couldn’t catch any breaks. When you hit the ball right at them, it’s hard to make things happen. Unfortunate things happened for us while fortunate things happened for them.”

It was a pitcher’s duel through the majority of the game as USA’s starter Sara Nevins (Pinellas Park, Fla.) retired Canada in order to start the game while Canada’s Sara Groenewegen returned the favor in the bottom half of the frame. The first runner of the game would get on in the bottom of the second inning as Michelle Moultrie (Jacksonville, Fla.) hit a two-out single but was thrown out in an attempt to leg it out into a double.

The U.S. would get a leadoff runner on in the bottom of the third as Janelle Lindvall (Stevenson Ranch, Calif.) hit a hard ground ball that sneaked by the third baseman but a pair of fly outs and stolen base attempt kept the U.S. from dealing any damage to keep the game scoreless through three complete innings. Canada would get their first base runner in the top of the fourth inning on a two-out single by Kaleigh Rafter, but a fly ball to Moultrie in left field kept the runner from advancing.

Two runners would get on base for Team USA in the bottom of the fourth inning as Raven Chavanne (Thousand Oaks, Calif.) reached on a bunt and advanced to second base on a line drive by Lauren Gibson (Pasadena, Md.). With two on and one out, a hard hit fly ball to centerfield recorded the second out before Sierra Romero (Murrieta, Calif.) roped a line drive that the first baseman leaped up to snag for out number three. The U.S. would get another two on base in the bottom of the sixth as Chavanne reached on an error by the shortstop and a two-out walk to Gibson, but another deep fly ball from Arioto kept the game scoreless heading into the final inning.

Both sides would get runners on base in the seventh inning but failed to plate any runs to push the game into extra-innings. With the ITB rule in effect, Canada started the top of the eighth with a runner on second base. The first batter would reach on an error by the defense to put two on with no outs before a ground out to Romero at third advanced the runners a base. An intentional walk loaded the bases before Canada pushed across the first runs of the game with a hard hit two-run single from Joey Lye. With runners on second and third, an intentional walk to Rafter loaded the bases for the second time in the inning with one out. A sac-fly pushed across another run for Canada before a two-out single plated the final run for Canada to give them the 4-0 lead.

Down by four runs, Team USA started with Kellie Fox (San Diego, Calif.) on second base per the ITB rule. A walk to Haylie McCleney (Morris, Ala.) put two on with no outs before Chavanne dropped in a fly ball single to left field to plate Fox to close the lead to 4-1. Kelsey Stewart (Wichita, Kan.) advanced the runners with ground out to the third baseman before Gibson collected an RBI on a ground out to second base. With two outs and a runner on third, a walk to Arioto put runners on the corner, but a strikeout drew the game to a close with Canada earning their second Pan American Games Gold.

“It’s disappointing but our team was in it all the way until the end and that’s all you can ask for,” said Moultrie. “We didn’t give up and we were still in the game. We’re disappointed, but still very proud of our team. We’re still building and in years to come this will be a good learning experience for us.”

Team USA will take a break before returning to action at the Japan Cup in Ogaki City, Japan August 7-9. Fans at home can follow along with Team USA all summer long at ASAUSASoftball.com.
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Connecticut adds to HOF
Nine to be honored at the banquet and ceremony to be held in September

Connecticut ASA/USA Softball announced its newest Hall of Fame inductees who will be honored at a Hall of Fame awards dinner on Sunday, September 27. The dinner and reception will be held at the Costa Azzurra Restaurant in Milford. Social hour will be at 4:00 p.m. with dinner following at 5:00.

This year’s honorees are as followed: Jim Carey of Shelton, Tom Chiappetta of Norwalk, Larry Deschaine of Plymouth, Nelson Eddy of North Haven and Stephen (Spider) Eldridge of Farmington, Joseph Languell of Torrington, Michael Matarazzo of West Hartford, Buddy Phelps of South Lyme and Kevin Russo of Shelton.

For dinner information, contact Hank Korikoski at 860-803-3012 or email him at hank.donnak@comcast.net. Tickets are priced at $50 and will not be sold at the door.

The ninth edition of the Buckeye Tournament in Columbus, Ohio was recently held. Over 220 teams were registered in the annual tournament. Our friends at Softball 360 were in attendance for that tournament and the ASA/USA 10U Girls Fastpitch Championship in Normal, Ill. Softball 360 could be coming to a town near you! Check out some photos from their travels!
Submit your favorite photos to Nick Dorety, ndorety@softball.org

‘Nick’s pics’
Favorites from July

Photo from Florida ASA/USA Softball
Photo from Ohio ASA/USA Softball
Photo from Missouri ASA/USA Softball

Photo from Arizona ASA/USA Umpires
Photo from Illinois ASA/USA Umpires
Photo from Washington ASA/USA Softball

Photo from Seattle Metro Softball Umpires Association
Photo from Softballcityusa Wallace Marine Park
Photo from Arkansas ASA/USA Softball

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Got Game Fastpitch and North Carolina ASA/USA Softball challenged teams to a canned food drive for a tournament on July 18-19. Canned food items were donated in Salem and Roanoke, Va. The teams really came through. The food donations from the weekend were weighed and the total came to 5657 lbs….almost three tons!!!! We are so proud of our coaches, parents & girls who have such giving hearts! We love the generosity that has been shown to a local community.

We would like to thank and recognize all teams that donated items but especially to Coach Lonnie Raines and the VA Scrappers ‘03 team which donated 3,847 cans and other items. They put a lot of extra effort and time into requesting and gathering food items. The Southwest Food Bank of VA was the recipient of our drive this weekend and they help serve over 127,000 people each month.

Got Game Fastpitch and NC ASA/USA challenged teams to top the number of pounds donated. We will return to Moyer Complex and Northside in September as we have two more “Strike Out Hunger NC” events coming up soon.

“That is AWESOME and we are so thankful to be able to receive a donation of this size. It’s one of our big ones from a single source and to think that it wasn’t on the radar this time last week!! We are blessed and cannot thank you enough for working with us to make this happen. The generosity of the team members and the parents is so heart-warming. We thanked them so much when they were dropping off the food, and it was so nice to have them thank us for our mission to feed the hungry in our area. We couldn’t do what we do without the support of thousands. It was a pleasure to work with all of you. We are so excited the have the opportunity to work with you again in September. It has been a total pleasure to work with all of you. The girls really came through in both the games and the donations. They GOT GAME!”
Champions were crowned at each of the 16-Under and 18-Under Fast Pitch GOLD National Championships, in Salem and Hillsboro, Ore. Nebraska Gold, out of Region 12, defeated Originals-Self to win the 16U GOLD. At the 18U in Hillsboro, the Beverly Bandits, out of Region 9, beat the Marucci Patriots 3-2 in a closely contested National Championship.

16U GOLD

The Championship featured the Originals Self, from Kansas City ASA/USA Softball, against Nebraska Gold. Originals Self had battled their way back into the National Championship by winning seven straight games, including three earlier in the day on Championship Saturday. Nebraska Gold won the winners’ bracket after steamrolling opponents. They entered the Championship matchup after going 5-0, while outscoring teams 23-4. With a tied score late and needing a win to force a ‘winner-take-all’ Championship game, the Originals-Self exploded in the bottom of the sixth inning to get a 10-6 win. Sydney Gardner racked up three RBI on three hits for Originals-Self. A pitching change in the third inning changed the game for the Originals-Self as Abby Atkin was solid, allowing only two runs over five innings and getting out of numerous tricky situations.

However, game two was different. Strong pitching by Olivia Ferrell held Originals Self scoreless for seven innings to boost Nebraska Gold to a 3-0 victory, which earned them the 16U GOLD National Championship. Coutney Sandell was 1-for-3 and scored one run.

“I’m just really proud of our team and how we came together this year,” said Sandell. “We’ve had our rough patches and we pushed through it this tournament. I just couldn’t be happier with how we performed. I just love this family and they mean everything to me.”

In total, Nebraska Gold went 9-1 throughout the entire tournament. They dominated not only the bracket, but also pool play, outscoring opponents 21-4 while going 3-0. Their only loss was in the first game of the National Championship.

“I’m very proud of how the team handled themselves all week,” said Nebraska Gold head coach Mike Heard. “I’m also proud of how we bounced back and handled the adversity of losing the first game of the Championship. Something we’ve talked about all year was building on the positive and not the negative. Courtney Sandell had a great tournament and was one of the key players to our success this week. I’d also like to thank the Salem and the tournament directors for this tournament. It was an amazing experience out here.”

18U GOLD

The 18U Championship featured the Beverly Bandits and Marucci Patriots. Earlier in the day, both of these teams played one another in the winners’ bracket finals, as Beverly Bandits won easily 15-3. The Marucci Patriots beat Washington Explosion Gold 5-1 to force a Championship rematch with the Bandits.

The National Championship game was tightly contested, as the Beverly Bandits jumped out to an early 1-0 lead in the top of the second. Haley Dominique got on base with a single, before she showed off her base running abilities. Dominique stole home on a wild pitch. A couple of runs for the Marucci Patriots late tied up the score at two as the game entered the seventh inning. Fans were in store for an exciting finish, as Caitlyn Robinson tagged up to score the game-winning run on a Dominique fly ball to deep center field. Dominique went 3-for-4, brought in two RBI and scored once herself. The Beverly Bandits won the National Championship game 3-2.

“It was a privilege and an honor to play in the 18 GOLD against awesome teams and in these exceptional facilities in Hillsboro,” said Beverly Bandits head coach Rona Dorsey. “Our team fought hard together and it was an amazing experience. Thanks to everyone who put this tournament together.”

The Beverly Bandits went 2-0-1 in pool play, before winning six straight en route to the National Championship. They outscored opponents 46-10 in bracket play.

To relive moments from the 16U GOLD click here and from the 18U GOLD, click here. For complete schedules and brackets from each of the GOLD National Championships, click here.
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Isabella Picard hopes to return to the softball diamond to play a game one day. She's one pitch closer after Saturday.

Picard, who broke a vertebrae and lost the ability to use the right side of her body after a collision during a Saint Joseph’s University softball game in April, threw out the first pitch before a U.S. softball game at Moody Park in Ewing, New Jersey. With her right arm, no less.

Picard has been rehabbing since having surgery in early May.

Her family set up “Bring Back The Right Side” to support the medical funds and create awareness for her cause. She wants to return to the field as soon as humanly possible, though doctors predict it will be a few years before she is able to walk again.

To check out the entire article by Eisenberg, including video of the first pitch by Picard, click here.
Chad Mitchell stepped down as the Wisconsin ASA/USA Softball State Umpire-In-Chief (UIC). Mitchell plans to put all his focus on his young children’s baseball games. Feel free to send Chad an email thanking him for his dedication to Wisconsin ASA/USA. His email is cmitchell_ump@yahoo.com.

Allen Waldvogel will be stepping into the State UIC role immediately. His email is awaldvogel9999@charter.net. Welcome Allen and thank you Chad!

2015 ASA Long Haul Bombers Stadium Tour Results from July
July 20 - Cincinnati, Ohio (Great American Ballpark): Scott Kirby, (Team Easton)-10 pts.
July 24 - San Diego, Calif. (Petco Park): Denny Crine, (Team Miken)-14 pts.
July 26 - Tampa, Fla. (Tropicana Field): Tie between Scott Kirby (Team Easton), Denny Crine (Team Miken), Chris Larsen (Team DeMarini) and Kevin Filby (Team Miken)-11 pts.
Rhode Island (RI) ASA/USA Softball hosted three 6U coach pitch softball tournaments this year. Led by David Ethier, the JO Commissioner and Dan LaCorbiniere, the RI ASA/USA and Region 1 Player Rep, the tournaments have been a huge hit so far, as RI has not had the opportunity for kids to play at that young age historically. They created the 6U division because purely ‘instructional’ softball for athletes that are ages 4-6 gets extremely repetitive to some more advanced young athletes. They felt that these tournaments were needed to help kids in this age group to fall in love with softball and to help get them exposed to the game in a non-instructional way.

In 2014, there were only three teams, as the league has built to 8 teams this year. Rules were developed by Ethier for the 6U tournaments and JO ASA/USA umpires call the games. The 6U coach pitch program is a spin-off from the 8U coach pitch program that Ethier created in RI.

The 8U program has continued to grow each and every year, as now they are in their tenth season of competition. In RI, the 8U tournaments are by far the most heavily attended. Many friends and family members come out to these tournaments to see their loved ones play.

Three ‘round-robin’ events this summer alone. Check out some of the photos from these events below!
Maintaining self-control in the face of challenges is one of the life lessons that sports can teach our kids. And in the heat of competition it can be easy to lose your cool. Provide your kids with the tools they need to keep their cool in sports and in life.


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