WBSC named to short list for 2020 Olympic Games

Turn to page 18 to learn more about the bid and the process behind getting softball back in the 2020 Olympic Games!

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Greetings everyone.

The month of June ends with the fantastic news out of the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) office in Lausanne, Switzerland that men’s baseball and women’s softball have been included on the short list of additional sports, also referred to as events, that are being evaluated by the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games organizers for possible inclusion at the 2020 Olympic Games. The WBSC was one of 26 international sport federations that submitted bids to Tokyo 2020 organizers and now is one of only eight federations on the short list. Phase II of the evaluation now begins where in August the eight federations on the short list will make presentations to the Tokyo 2020 organizers who have until September 30, 2015 to propose any new events (sports) to the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The final decision on the composition of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Program will be made at the 129th IOC Session in Rio de Janeiro in August 2016.

In view of the above, it is very important that we as softball enthusiasts help show the Tokyo 2020 organizers and the IOC that softball belongs on the 2020 Olympic Program. We can do so by supporting our sport nationwide, but also worldwide through our national teams. Four of our five national teams began training this month and will be competing through the summer months. Our Men’s National Team is in Canada where they will compete at the WBSC-Softball Division (SD) World Championship while our Women’s National Team and our Junior Women’s National Team compete in the World Cup of Softball X (WCX) in Irvine, California. The Men’s Team and the Women’s Team will follow these events by competing in the Pan American Games in Toronto, Canada. The Junior Women’s Team will follow the WCX with competing in the WBSC-SD World Championship at our ASA Hall of Fame Complex in August. Let’s show our support of softball by attending national team events near your home and/or by watching them on TV or live streaming. Attendance at and viewership of softball events whether on TV or live streaming are very important during this evaluation process as the numbers will be reported to the Tokyo 2020 organizers and the IOC in upcoming presentations. Please visit our national website at www.asausasoftball.com for each team’s complete schedule.

Congratulations to the many teams that have already qualified for and are now anxiously awaiting the start date of their national championship, and good luck to the teams that are still chasing the dream of playing in an ASA/USA Softball National Championship. Congratulations also to the hundreds of umpires who have been selected to umpire at our national championships. Thank you all for participating in ASA/USA Softball, the governing body of softball in the United States of America. As such, the only softball organization recognized by the USOC and the sole representative of softball for sanctioned World Championships and the Olympic Games.

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Piedmont, Va. ASA/USA Softball Commissioner, Andy Dooley, has been elected onto the Bedford County Board of Supervisors. Dooley will be sworn into office in January 2016. He plans to learn more about the people from across the county that he will be serving. Congrats Andy!

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!

A Mount Rushmore staple, Abraham Lincoln stopped by the Mount Rushmore Classic to watch some softball. Pictured to the right is Tournament Director, Rick Den-Herder with Honest Abe. Rumor on the streets is that Abe is a huge ice cream fan and was spotted in the concession line several times!
(Submitted by Gary Young of South Dakota ASA)
ASA Hall of Famer and USA National team member from 1983-1993, Suzy Brazney tosses out the ceremonial first pitch at the World Cup X in Irvine, Calif. Hosted by Southern California ASA, fan enjoyed a pre-game celebration honoring past USA players to have created the foundation and legacy that is the USA program today.
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Words from the editor of The Inside Pitch

Hello and welcome to the July 2015 issue of The Inside Pitch, the official newsletter of ASA/USA Softball!

As many of you may agree, I feel like this past month has just flown by. The NCAA Women’s College World Series wrapped up in exciting fashion. It’s great to see so many people excited about our sport at our facility. Everyone knows about the great play on the field, but the behind the scenes portion can often be overlooked. Each department at the National Office played a pivotal role in executing an event that drew 78,078 fans, a new attendance record.

After the World Series, things ramped up for the Women (WNT) and Junior (JWNT) Women’s National Teams. Players and coaches arrived for training camp, eager to learn more and become a part of the program. Players enjoyed being cheesy at the photoshoots. I will say that we do have some hilarious personalities on this year’s teams!

I went on my first trip with ASA/USA Softball to Ohio this past month. The hospitality shown by Ohio ASA/USA Commissioner and our future President, Warren Jones and his JO Commissioner, Bruce Sidel, was outstanding. They made this trip very easy for me and just allowed me to learn everything that has to do with a tour stop. I also have to give a huge shoutout to Bruce’s son, Zach, for being there and helping along the way. Zach leaves for the Marines in just a few weeks, so thank you and good luck to him.

At the Ohio tour stop, I caught myself looking at the roster before the game. There was a couple of local media members in the pressbox telling me about all the talent on the challenging Ohio All-Stars roster. Many of the athletes on the roster were attending NCAA Division I, II or III schools in Ohio and the surrounding midwest states. It was a great reminder to me that anyone can play this game and that if you treat it with respect, it will treat you well. This was just reinforced the next day at the youth clinic when JWNT Head Coach, Tairia Flowers, had the tallest and shortest JWNT members stand next to one another in front of the youth. She told the youth that anyone can play this game at a high level. Both of the girls were very different in height and body structure. She reminded them that you should never wish you had another characteristic about another player, that you are a perfect athlete they way you are. This message should be shared more frequently, anyone can play softball.

Take that message from Coach Flowers out into your community as you build your local association. You don’t have to be the tallest and the strongest to play this game. It’s all about heart, effort and having fun.

As for me, I’ll be in California for the World Cup then traveling with the JWNT to Oregon for a tour stop. After a couple of days back in Oklahoma, I’ll be attending the Major League Baseball All-Star Weekend to help out with the finals of Pitch, Hit and Run. It’ll be a dream come true to attend the Home Run Derby and the All-Star Game. Then I’ll be back up in Oregon for the GOLD National Championships. If you see me at any of these places, introduce yourself and let’s chat! I’d say that I’m a pretty friendly guy, so don’t be shy.

As an employee at the National Office for ASA/USA Softball, it is my pleasure to help the local associations in any way I can. Please remember that I would love to hear feedback from you. Whether you have a comment about The Inside Pitch or anything else regarding ASA/USA Softball, I am open to talking to you. Hope you enjoy the newsletter!

PICTURED LEFT: From left to right: the adorable Olivia Bartel, Julie Bartel, Oklahoma City Thunder player Mitch McGary, Intern Alyssa Gardea, Nick Dorety and Codi Warren at the 2015 NCAA WCWS.
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Busy June at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex and OGE Energy Field

Tournaments continue at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex and OGE Energy Field in Oklahoma City, Okla. After the 2015 NCAA Women’s College World Series concluded, a 14U, 16U 18U and 18U Gold HOF Qualifiers all took place this past month.

Eric Dixo to serve as full time over concessions

Dixo has been around ASA/USA Softball for quite some time and was added on full time after the NCAA Championships. His title will be Facility/Concession Supervisor. Dix can be contacted at edix@softball.org.

Check out the latest Softball 360 episodes

Catch episodes 1-4 out online to keep up with the latest surrounding ASA/USA Softball. You won’t regret it!

National Office shows support in the fight against autism

Our friends at “Beading to Beat Autism” have teamed with ASA/USA Softball to help spread awareness in hopes of eradicating autism forever. They sent in thousands of beaded bracelets that we would share to fans, players and coaches. Each team at the NCAA Women’s College World Series, along with the USA Women’s and Junior Women’s teams have been wearing them on and off the field to show their support. The bracelets have been given out at the ASA Hall of Fame Museum gift shop and will be a gate giveaway at the World Cup. To learn more about ‘Beading to Beat Autism,’ follow their Facebook page.
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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 June JO Players of the Week.

Week 1: Bella Hills (North Branford, Conn.) was spectacular both offensively and defensively, helping lead her Connecticut Impact team to an undefeated championship at the Rhode Island Eastern ASA Qualifier. Hills pitched 15 and one-third innings with only five hits while posting an ERA of 0.60 en route to a 4-0 record. Along with her pitching, Hills had a solid weekend at the plate. She had a batting average of .750 (9-for-12) with eight RBI, including a homerun. She also led her team with 17 stolen bases.

Week 2: Hailey Peloquin (Woonsocket, R.I.) was dominant on the mound leading her to the Week 2 honors. Peloquin pitched 22 innings for the RI Thunder Gold, piling up four wins in as many appearances while racking up 45 strikeouts at the Think Pink Tournament this past weekend in Tewksbury, Ma. Along with her pitching, Peloquin was also a standout at the plate. With a batting average of .680 in 25 at bats, she brought home five RBI on 12 hits. Peloquin also showed off her base running abilities this past weekend, scoring 14 times.

Week 3: Aryka Knoche (Little Canada, MN.) not only pitched outstanding, but also helped herself offensively to work her Renegades team to win the championship in the ASA National Qualifier in Mounds Minnesota. Knoche had a performance not most could say they accomplished. Aryka pitched a perfect game against the Minnesota Combats and pitched a two hit game resulting in a three to zero victory in the championship game against the Minnesota Magic 16 GOLD team. To add to her defensive statistics, Knoche had a solid weekend at the plate. She had a batting average of .375 (3-for-8) with one RBI, including a three hits with one double and a total of four bases. Knocke is a Drake University commit.

Week 4: Trinity Lennon (Pawcatuck, Conn.) showed off her skills as double threat in a June ASA/USA Kick off Invitational. A team player for the CT Cyclones 00, her grit helped her work her way to this week’s fourth ASA/USA Junior Olympic (JO) Player of the Week honors. Lennon saved her best for last. Entering the bottom of the seventh against the Quebec Revels, after a leadoff single, she powered through and hit a triple to tie the game, later scoring the winning run. The CT Cyclones 00 went 6-0 in their first tournament of the 2015 season, led by Lennon pitching in five of those games. She was dominant over the weekend, picking up five wins and three shutouts.
Being a family member of Team USA has its benefits.

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United has flown Team USA for over 30 years, and we strive to be the airline of choice for Olympic family members as well. That’s why we offer discounted fares for USOC/NGB associated events. Go to united.com/USOC to book your flight, or to learn more.
INTEGRIS Health becomes a community partner at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex; signs 10-year deal

INTEGRIS Health, Oklahoma’s largest Oklahoma-owned health care corporation, has stepped up to the plate becoming an official community partner of the ASA Hall of Fame Softball Complex.

A 10-year partnership that will rename the existing Field 4 to INTEGRIS Field at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex. The commitment and partnership demonstrates the continued active role INTEGRIS plays in the OKC community and promise of all parties to continue the growth of ASA/USA Softball.

“INTEGRIS is proud to be a community supporter of women’s softball and athletics,” says Bruce Lawrence, President and Chief Executive Officer of INTEGRIS. “The athletes who play at this first-class venue share our belief in active, healthy lifestyles and the pursuit of excellence.”

INTEGRIS Health is the state’s largest Oklahoma-owned health care corporation and one of the state’s largest private employers (about 9,000 employees statewide), with hospitals, rehabilitation centers, physician clinics, mental health facilities, fitness centers, independent living centers and home health agencies throughout much of the state.

INTEGRIS Health operates five hospitals in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, led by INTEGRIS Baptist Medical Center and INTEGRIS Southwest Medical Center. INTEGRIS Health also maintains three regional hospitals across the state. Approximately six out of every 10 Oklahomans live within 30 miles of a facility or physician included in the INTEGRIS Health organization.

“We are thrilled to be working with INTEGRIS Health for the future,” said Craig Cress, Executive Director of ASA/USA Softball. “It is extremely exciting to watch our venue grow and improve in order to provide outstanding athletes of all ages from all over the world with the best softball experience possible.”
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Softball legends honored

Iowa ASA/USA Softball hosted their annual Men’s Fast Pitch Hall of Fame induction ceremony. They honored the following individuals:

**Mike Christner** started playing softball when he was 16 years old. Christner lead his team to a World Tournament in Canada and has played in other National and World Championships. He played fast pitch for over 25 years. Christner currently coaches softball at William Penn University, where he is the winningest coach in program history.

**Dennis Delorit** began his fast-pitch softball career in 1970, competing in over twenty years worth of ISC World and ASA/USA National Tournaments. Delorit will also be inducted into the ISC World Hall of Fame this upcoming August in Kitchener, Canada.

**Robert Michaelson** began playing fast-pitch in 1982. Always a team first person, Michaelson’s teams were highly successful, appearing in four ASA/USA National Championships and winning two. He also was a part of the 1988 USA team that won the Gold at the World Championship in Saskatchewan, Canada.

**Tony Nelson** grew up watching his father play fast-pitch softball, so it was only fitting that he began his playing days on his father’s team. Nelson’s teams were extremely successful, regularly winning state Championships and competing in ASA/USA National Championships. He currently umpires for ASA/USA Softball and the NCAA.

**Jim Sokolik** played in seven World Championships, six ASA/USA National Championships and two Olympic Sports Festivals. He coached high school for six years.

In Memory

Celebrating the lives of our ASA/USA Softball family members

Lisa Lowery Carter (Auburn, Ala.) passed away on June after a brief battle with a very rare form of cancer.

She was a devoted and loving wife to her husband Robby, Player Rep for Alabama ASA/USA. She was an amazing mother to her two daughters, Jessica and Jamie as well as to many others. She was a dedicated employee at Auburn University in the School of Veterinary Medicine in the Sugg Lab Research Department.

She is survived by Robby, her husband of 35 years; two daughters, Jessica and Jamie, Jamie’s fiancé Russ Long; her mom, Irma Lowery; and three brothers, Lawrence (Jeanette), Wade (Joy), and Jeff. Nieces and nephews include Nathan Lowery, Kayla (Danny and Kaydence) Wineberg, Paul and Dalton Lowery and a host of extended family and friends.
Seattle umpires surprise
Bring three Umpires out for a Championship Game; going above the call of duty

Sumbitted by Kayleen Dunson, Seattle ASA/USA Softball Umpire-In-Chief

The West Seattle Girls Fast Pitch league is usually covered with just one umpire. Most of the players in the league range in ages from 10-15 and it is a true recreational level. This year, the league requested two umpires for the championship game – to give the girls the thrill of playing the game with two umpires. Seattle UIC Kayleen Dunson didn’t want to stop there. “I thought it would be awesome to give these young players the sense that they were in the big leagues – let’s give them 3-umpires, just like the college players.”

Dunson lives in West Seattle and cut her teeth umpiring this local league. “These young women, their coaches, and their parents are models of great sportsmanship and a supportive enthusiastic community. I wanted to give all of them something to remember.”

Dunson was assigned to work the game with another local West Seattle umpire, Shani Neamen, and so recruited yet another West Seattle umpire, Mike Katz, to join the crew. The all-local umpire team arrived on site and were treated like rock-stars; cheery hellos from the fans, giggles and whispers of “it’s my favorite umpire” from the players; and strong hearty handshakes from the coaches.

But there was only one team at the park – the other team had to forfeit, so there was no game to umpire. That didn’t stop the group from taking a team photo with the three umpires and breaking out into a raucous game of kickball.

“This is softball at its absolute best,” Dunson said. “And we will be back next year!”

PICTURED ABOVE AND BELOW:
Umpires from left to right: Mike Katz, Kayleen Dunson, Shani Neamen
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WBSC places bid for Tokyo 2020

Learn more about softball’s timeline to getting back in the Olympic Games

World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) President Riccardo Fraccari welcomed on June 22 the news that men’s baseball and women’s softball have been included on the shortlist of additional sports being evaluated by Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games organisers for potential inclusion at the 2020 Games.

The WBSC was among 26 international sport federations to have submitted bids to Tokyo 2020 organisers earlier this month.

“This is a great day for our sport,” said President Fraccari, “today baseball and softball, along with the millions of athletes and fans who call it their sport, reached first base. And on behalf of the WBSC as well as the entire baseball and softball world, I would like to thank Tokyo 2020 and its evaluation panel for this opportunity to move into the second phase of this process. Being considered for the Olympic Games is a tremendous honour for baseball and softball, and the possibility of our athletes playing for their countries on the Olympic stage is a shared point of hope and excitement within our sport.”

As Tokyo 2020’s evaluation continues, the WBSC will be hoping to underline that adding baseball and softball to the 2020 Games in Japan, where baseball and softball are embedded in the culture, have existing facilities and are popular across both genders. This can provide Tokyo 2020 organisers with another tool to shine the spotlight on the 2020 Games and on the host nation itself, optimistic fans, youth and increase the overall engagement nationally and internationally.

In August, presentations to Tokyo 2020 organisers will be made by the shortlisted international federations. Tokyo 2020 will have until September 30, 2015 to propose any new events to the International Olympic Committee. The final decision on the composition of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic sports programme will be taken by the 129th IOC Session in Rio de Janeiro in August 2016.

WBSC’s previous Olympic bid, which proposed men’s baseball and women’s softball for the 2020 and 2024 Olympic Games, earned the second-highest amount of votes at the IOC Session in Buenos Aires in 2013, finishing behind wrestling.

Keep up with all the latest on Facebook and Twitter with the WBSC’s efforts to bring softball and baseball back to the Olympic Games.

PICTURED ABOVE: Players high-five one another at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games.
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I started umpiring around 1990 when I was in college at The University of Akron in Akron, OH. I took Sports Officiating as an elective and the final exam was the ASA Test.

At that point the teacher who was in the local ASA association, told us we could take the mechanics course and join the association (I think it was like a $30 fee). So I did. What a great college job.

When I got married, I stopped umpiring and let life take over. 20 years later after successful Lapband Surgery, I was tired of going to the gym and running and all the normal exercise routines, so I decided to start umpiring again.

This was one of the best decisions I have ever made. I have really enjoyed my last 3 years umpiring. My son almost always went to my games, I would go do fast pitch tournaments and he would be right there with me. It was a very natural decision for Andrew to decide to start umpiring last year. Again, what a great college job. Andrew understands his priorities - get an education (currently carrying a 4.0 in Mathematics Education at Wilmington University), his commitment to his college Cross Country Team, but he still finds time to be a student of the game.

He is always at the field trying to learn something new, listening to the "old timers" and improving his game.

Initially Andrew was only going to do Slow Pitch. At the beginning of the High School season last year, Andrew came along with me to a play day to get some work in on the bases and just get a jump start on working on mechanics etc...... At that point, Our Association President, Steve Woodward said to Andrew....."Look, if you are going to umpire, then you need to umpire......go put your dads gear on and get behind the plate".....Nervous, scared and downright intimidated....Andrew climbed in and did quite well......He was hooked......Fast Pitch is his love too.

Andrew and I have been very fortunate in our umpiring. We have had very good people teaching us and helping us along the way.....(Diane Carden, Steve Woodward, Dave Mattern and Steve Zawierucha to name a few). I have had the distinct honor of being accepted to 2 National Tournaments and Andrew has completed 1 National Tournament. This year we will both be umpiring in another National. We owe everything we have been able to accomplish to the very good, honest and sincere people who have helped us along the way.

Last year, was what I would consider one of the greatest highlights of my life. I had the great fortune to be assigned to work in an elimination round game at the Eastern National with Andrew. He was on third base and I was on 1st base in the 3 person system. It was one of the proudest moments of my life. To top the week off, I was able to sit back relax and enjoy watching Andrew umpire in the Losers Bracket Final (Semi-Final), before I took the field in the Championship Game.

Umpiring started out to be a way to just get a different type of workout in and has turned into a passion that allowed my son and I to relate to each other on a level playing field at an age where a lot of kids are quickly trying to get away from Mom and Dad.
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The NCAA Women’s College World Series (WCWS) was held at OGE Energy Field in Oklahoma City. The annual event was hosted by the Oklahoma City All Sports Association and the University of Oklahoma athletics department.

Teams participating in the Championship included eight teams from across the nation: Alabama, Auburn, Florida, LSU, Michigan, Oregon, Tennessee, and UCLA.

The Championship went from May 28-June 3 and featured five Southeastern Conference teams.

The most exciting games were the elimination games in the consolation bracket. With both teams fighting for a spot in the Semifinals, Auburn and UCLA put on quite a show! Auburn trailed UCLA 5-0 in the top of the third, before throwing 6 runs on the board. In total, the third inning had the 2 teams combine for 11 runs, while 6 pitchers appeared. It was a back-and-forth affair from there, as UCLA and Auburn exchanged leads several times. Both teams had several opportunities in the extra innings. Haley Fagan almost won it all for Auburn in the bottom of the第八 when she flew out on a ball that was caught against the wall with the bases loaded. UCLA later left the go-ahead run on third the next inning. Auburn finally took care of business, winning 11-10 in 10 innings.

The Championship series between the Florida Gators, the defending National Champions, and the Michigan Wolverines went the full 3 games for the first time since 2012. Florida won game 3 of the Championship Series 4-1 to become the first back-to-back National Champions since Arizona in 2006-2007. The USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year, Lauren Haeger, was dominant from the circle and had timely hits to lead the Gators and won Tournament MVP honors.

The Gators had several Team USA stars on their roster, including Kelsey Stewart on the Women’s National Team (WNT) and Nicole DeWitt on the Junior Women’s National Team (JWNT). JWNT Assistant Coach Tim Walton won his second National Championship, while JWNT trainer Katie Davis was also a part of the squad.

Several records were set at this year’s NCAA WCWS. The WCWS set an all-time attendance record this year and set an extremely high television viewership marks. Total attendance was 78,078 for the entire Championship, shattering the 2012 record of 75,960. Three of the sessions finished in the top 10 sessions of all-time. Attendance records are only expected to continue to increase as OGE Energy Field will be expanded in upcoming years.

ESPN televised the most viewed WCWS ever. This was the 15th year that ESPN televised the entire event, and the fans loved it. The Championship Series was the most viewed ever, with Game 3 tallying over 2.2 million viewers.
Men’s National Team Update
Learn more about Team USA and the Men’s World Championship

Four different U.S. batters recorded an RBI as Team USA earned a 4-1 win over the Netherlands at the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Men’s World Championship in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. Led by a strong performance in the circle from pitcher Josh Johnson (El Paso, Texas), Team USA now moves to 3-1 in the tournament and is currently sitting in the No. 2 spot in Pool B.

“Today’s game was a good bounce back victory after a tough loss last night,” said USA Head Coach Denny Bruckert (Gillespie, Ill.). “The Netherlands are a good, solid defensive ball club. Matt’s homerun really helped take some pressure off of Josh, who threw a good game.”

Led by a dominant performance from Johnson, Team USA combined for four hits en route to a 4-1 win over the Netherlands in Monday afternoon.

It was a pitcher’s duel through the majority of the game as each side was retired in order through two complete innings before Rylan Sandoval (Castro Valley, Calif.) singled in the bottom of the third. Team USA was unable to capitalize, however, as back-to-back ground outs ended the effort.

The Netherlands got their first base runner of the game in the top of the fourth inning when leadoff batter Jeff Delfina was hit by a pitch. The U.S. defense held strong behind Johnson, however, getting a pair of fly outs before Johnson issued a strike-out to bring the U.S. back to the plate.

Team USA got on the board first in the bottom half of the frame when Matt Palazzo (Pleasant Hill, Iowa) hit a solo home run to give the U.S. a 1-0 lead. The Red, White and Blue would further add to their lead in the bottom of the sixth inning when Kris Bogach (Huguenot, N.Y.) reached on a leadoff walk. Another walk to Palazzo put two runners on bag for the U.S. when Derrick Zechman (Watsontown, Pa.) hit a ground ball to left field to plate pinch runner Chris Miljavic (Easton, Mo.). Chase Turner (San Jose, Calif.) followed up with another ground ball to left field to plate Palazzo. One additional run would score for Team USA when Frank DeGroat (Ringwood, N.J.) reached on a fielding error by the shortstop, bring Zechman around to score.

The no-hitter for Johnson was broken up in the top of the seventh inning when the Netherlands got a leadoff double to left field. A walk to the next batter put two runners on base, with each advancing on a groundout to Sandoval at second base. With two runners in scoring position, the Netherlands knocked in a run with a groundout to Chris Heinline (Columbia, Mo.) at shortstop. Johnson would be unfazed, however, issuing a strikeout to end the game while giving the U.S. the 4-1 win.

Team USA now moves to 3-1 at the WBSC Men’s World Championship. Fans at home can follow along with live stats and live streaming for the entire WBSC Men’s World Championship at www.ASAUSASoftball.com.
Curious about all the ongoings at World Cup X in Irvine, Calif. Check back in July’s issue of “The Inside Pitch” for all the latest pictures, stories and tidbits from the event. Complete Inside Pitch coverage will be available then, as the event is currently ongoing as of release.
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The creation of World Softball Day itself by the World Governing Body was inspired by the June 13, 1991 announcement by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that women’s softball would debut at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Ga. World Softball Day also pays tribute to Olympic Day, which is celebrated annually on June 23.

For World Softball Day 2015, the WBSC encouraged all its 141 national federations and individuals of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to participate in softball. This was part of a global initiative to put softball at the service of society to promote health, physical activity, social integration and international spirit. World Softball Day also serves as to inspire future generations of boys and girls to seek excellence and become empowered through sport, particularly softball.

WBSC officials indicate that the World Softball Day has been set up to boost awareness that softball, along with baseball, is embraced by millions of people from diverse ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds in more than 140 nations around the world, particularly with youth and females.

“With World Softball Day 2015, WBSC will continue building baseball/softball’s position together as a welcoming, inclusive and gender-balanced global sport,” said WBSC Executive Vice-President Dale McMann.

All day long, thousands of people tweeted the hashtag #WorldSoftballDay at the WBSC and ASA/USA Softball twitter accounts. Many showed themselves playing softball or mentioned how much they love the sport!
KEEP UP WITH ALL THE LATEST ONLINE

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Two members were added to the 2015 USA Junior Women’s National Team (JWNT). Learn more about each of them below.

Zoe Conley (Berkeley, Calif.), a sophomore pitcher currently at Cal State Northridge (CSUN), replaces Chelsea Whitcomb (Chesterfield, Va.), who suffered a knee injury following the JWNT tryouts in January.

“I want to thank my parents, coaches, and teammates for their constant encouragement,” said Conley. “I’m very blessed and honored to be chosen for the team. To represent USA on such a broad platform has always been a dream of mine. Playing for my college coach, Coach Flowers is going to be a wonderful experience as well.”

Conley just completed her freshman season at CSUN, playing a vital role in the success of the Matador’s 2015 season. In her freshman season, she appeared in 40 games, starting in 21 and finishing with a 19-7 record. Conley finished with 1.84 ERA, eight complete games, eight shutouts and tossed CSUN’s first no-hitter since 2008. Her team had a very successful 2015 campaign, winning the Big West Conference Championship for the first time since 1998 and gaining a birth in the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 2007. She won the 2015 Big West Freshman Pitcher of the Year award, while also receiving First Team All-Big West honors and was named to the Big West All-Freshman Team.

Paige Lowary (Dallas Center, Iowa) was added to the 2015 USA Softball Junior Women’s National Team (JWNT) roster just before the World Cup X in Irvine, Calif. Lowary is a sophomore pitcher currently at Missouri.

“We’re excited to welcome Paige to the team and look forward to working with her this summer,” said Tairia Flowers, Head Coach of the JWNT. “After watching her outstanding freshman season at Missouri, we’re looking forward to what she will bring to our pitching staff. The entire roster and coaching staff is looking forward to her arrival.”

Lowary just completed her freshman season at Missouri. She finished the season with an 18-7 record and a 3.40 ERA. Her team had a very successful 2015 campaign, gaining a Top 16 berth in the NCAA Tournament, falling in the Los Angeles Super Regional. She was also named to the Freshman All-Southeastern Conference Team.

Lowary’s first day with Team USA when she arrived at the World Cup of Softball was also her 19th birthday. Talk about the perfect way to celebrate!

PICTURED LEFT: Conley having fun and laughing at the Youth Clinic on the Ohio tour stop.

PICTURED ABOVE: From left to right: Nicole DeWitt, Emily Griggs, new addition Paige Lowary and Meghan Gregg.
The Miken Freak Tour continues to make dreams come true. Round 3 was held at McQuade, the world’s largest softball tournament in Bismarck North Dakota.

Justin Huether, (pronounced hitter) from Minot North Dakota, used his Miken Freak bat to slug the most Evil softballs out of the park and into the parking lot at Clem Kelly Softball Complex.

“What an amazing experience, I can’t believe I get to hit at Target Field, I’ve watched Denny Crine on “Softball 360” and now, I get to hit with him and my Miken Freak bat, it’s amazing.”

Justin Huether hits with the ASA Long Haul Bombers on July 30, at Target Field home of the Minnesota Twins, part of the ASA Stadium Power Tour.

For more information, click here.

2015 ASA Long Haul Bombers Stadium Tour

May 1 - Arlington, Texas (Global Life Park)
May 29 - Houston, Texas (Minute Maid Park)
June 9 - Pittsburgh, Penn. (PNC Park)
July 20 - Cincinnati, Ohio (Great American Ballpark)
July 24 - San Diego, Calif. (Petco Park)
July 26 - Tampa, Fla. (Tropicana Field)
July 30 - Minneapolis, Minn. (Target Field)
August 12 - St. Louis, Mo. (Busch Stadium)
September 12 - Miami, Fla. (Marlins Park) - Bombers Tour Finals
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Try this exercise – either with your individual athlete or the whole team – to help players get focused on being a good teammate in the “4 Steps To Build Teamwork” from Liberty Mutual Insurance Play Positive®.

Watch top athletes and coaches such as Valerie Arioto, Amanda Chidester, and Michelle Moultrie talk about the importance of maintaining self-control and keeping your cool in the game.

What teamwork quality could your kid’s team improve upon? Take the Liberty Mutual Insurance Play Positive® Poll to tell us.

To learn more about teaching teamwork and how to be a great teammate to your youth athlete, visit: PlayPositive.com/Success-Through-Teamwork

Visit PlayPositive.com for helpful advice, tools and resources you can use on and off the hill.
PUTTING SPORTSMANSHIP BACK INTO YOUTH SPORTS

Liberty Mutual Insurance started the Play Positive™ program to encourage good sportsmanship and help parents and coaches promote a better youth sports experience.

Visit PlayPositive.com for helpful advice, tools, and resources you can use on and off the field.

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