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1. Contact your ASA Commissioner. Visit www.ASASoftball.com for contact info
2. Contact RPS Bollinger Sports — ASA Department, Ph: 800-446-5311 • ASA@RPSins.com

1-800-446-5311

In January visit us at www.RPSBollinger.com
THE LINEUP

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GIVING IT

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Happy holidays to everyone!

As the 2016 calendar year wraps up, it’s time to celebrate another successful season of USA Softball. With over 100 National Champions crowned, successful USA Softball Umpire Schools across the U.S. and the announcement that softball will return to the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, 2016 has been a great year for our organization and the athletes and umpires who play USA Softball!

We are proud to enter into the 2017 season as USA Softball after undergoing an organizational rename and rebrand this last year. Rebranding to USA Softball is a big step for our organization as it unifies our athletes, umpires, sponsors and softball administrators under the USA Softball umbrella. I encourage everyone to embrace USA Softball and the vision and direction that we will continue to take going forward!

We recently held our 85th Annual Meeting in Shreveport, La. where Council Members from all across the U.S. came together for a week to discuss important changes to our sport. New playing rules were established, National Championship sites were determined for 2018 and we inducted eight individuals into the National Softball Hall of Fame while announcing our Class of 2017. As the National Governing Body of Softball in the United States, we’re always looking at ways to allow for more athletes to play the game, and passing code items such as these is just one of the ways to provide additional opportunities. You can find an entire list of 2017 Code, Rule and Procedural Manual Changes on our website at USASoftball.com.

The Annual Meeting also ushered in a realignment of our USA Softball regions from 15 to 10. This regional realignment better serves our teams and umpires, providing them with better opportunities to play, qualify and umpire within their respective regions. You can find out what USA Softball region you or your team fall in by visiting the “Boundaries” tab under the “About Us” section of our website.

I look forward to the 2017 season, which will start off with a bang as we host three USA Softball National Team Camps in the month of January. Our Women’s National Team (WNT) and Junior Women’s National Team (JWNT) Selection Camps will begin on December 30 with an Open Tryout for the JWNT in Clearwater, Fla. while our Men’s National Team (MNT) Selection Camp will take place beginning January 20 in San Diego, Calif.

We also will conduct a USA Softball National Coaching School in Plano, Texas January 20-22. Find out how you can register today at USASoftball.com.

I wish each of you a happy Holiday season and a happy New Year!

Warren Jones, President
USA Softball
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PROUD PARTNER OF USA SOFTBALL
November 12 was a night to remember as eight individuals were honored for their contributions to the sport with their induction into the National Softball Hall of Fame. Read more about the inductees on page 27.
On Saturday, Dec. 10, softball fans from all over had the unique opportunity to see their favorite USA Softball Olympians from the past take the field in a slow-pitch exhibition game against the Louisville Slugger Warriors Team. Held in conjunction with the National Fast Pitch Coaches Association (NFCA) Convention, the game was the first of its kind and commemorated the 20th anniversary of Olympic softball while celebrating softball’s return to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.
FACES ON THE FIELD

Every year, USA Softball has 924,000 Junior Olympic (JO) athletes playing on more than 77,000 teams while over 1 million adults play on 88,000 teams across the United States. Meet Dakota, Demi and Kaitlyn, three athletes who play USA Softball!

DAKOTA, 17
Concord, N.C.
Cape Fear Storm Elite
Girls’ 18-Under GOLD Fast Pitch
Third Base

HER START
My older brothers always played baseball, so I was always at the fields throwing the ball and swinging the bat. It was a natural progression for me when I was seven to start playing t-ball and move on from there.

TOUGHEST OBSTACLE
The mental part of the game is always a challenge.

WHAT SHE’S LOOKING FORWARD TO IN THE FUTURE
To be able to have the opportunity to play collegiate softball for Coach Shawn Rychcik and the NC State Wolfpack Softball program when I graduate from high school in 2018.

GOAL
I really want to just take this as far as I can go. I love the game my team and everything about it. We all want to play on the big stage when we’re growing up so why not go for it?

WHAT SHE LOVES ABOUT SOFTBALL
The competition because I enjoy the challenge. I want to win, have that good at bat, win the battle, and make that big play and the routine ones. Definitely the competition.
FACES ON THE FIELD

DEMI, 17
Meaux, La.
Louisiana Bombers
Girls’ 18-Under GOLD Fast Pitch
Catcher

HER START
I started at age four with boys’ and girls’ t-ball and never stopped!

FAVORITE THING ABOUT SOFTBALL
Making lifelong friends and helping younger girls with lessons.

ROLE MODELS
My step dad, who has been my travel ball coach for many years and has taught me so much, and Lana Bowers, now a college coach who played for Louisiana-Lafayette, and gave me lessons. Also Katlyn Smith, our travel ball assistant coach who has always there to help on and off the field with great advice.

GOAL
My goal is to one day play in the Olympics and win a Gold Medal. That would be awesome!

TOUGHEST OBSTACLE
Toughest obstacle would have to be my size. I'm 5'2 and about 130 pounds, so most people don’t think I can block and hit like I do.

KAITLYN, 18
Houma, La.
XLR8
Girls’ 18-Under Class A Fast Pitch
Third Base and Second Base

HER START
At 12 years old in the 7th grade, my friends and I decided to try out for our junior high softball team for fun.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT SOFTBALL
My favorite thing about playing is the joy and competitiveness it brings out of me, and all of the memories and friendships playing ball has given me.

ROLE MODELS
My role models are Raven Chavanne, Sahvanna Jaquish, Sierra Romero, Bianka Bell.

GOAL
My goals in softball are to daily improve every aspect of my game and be a great teammate!

TOUGHEST OBSTACLE
My toughest obstacle in the sport has been staying mentally tough and confident. Always trust your ability and preparation!
PROUD TO INSURE EVERY MEDAL WON (OR LOST) BY TEAM USA.

Our athletes work hard for all that they’ve earned. And so do you. That’s why we insure every medal you’ve earned in life.
REASONS WHY ANYONE AND EVERYONE SHOULD PLAY USA SOFTBALL

USA Softball is the National Governing Body of Softball in the United States as recognized by the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) and World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC)

USA Softball is a not-for-profit 501 C3 organization and is an affordable competitive and recreational sport for men and women ages 8-80

USA Softball values safely and provides affordable insurance to athletes, coaches and umpires as well as field owners

USA Softball offers an expert coaching education program and expert training opportunities annually, which includes background checks on all coaches in USA Softball Championship Play

USA Softball provides recreational leagues, tournament and National Championship play

USA Softball is the leader in technology with state-of-the-art websites, mobile apps, rulebook apps, registration and tournament hosting

USA Softball has the most knowledgeable and professionally trained umpires in the country

USA Softball is the best in competition, providing the pipeline to all USA Softball National teams in fast pitch and slow pitch

USA Softball is the leader in equipment standards and certification

USA softball is where CHAMPIONS PLAY!
ATTEND A NATIONAL UMPIRE SCHOOL IN 2017!

Whether you want to develop your skills as an umpire, or brush up on your techniques, a USA Softball National Umpire School has something for every umpire at any level! Featuring a newly formatted agenda and layout, the 2017 National Umpire Schools will feature members of the National Umpire staff, on-field drills and classroom lectures. Visit USASoftball.com to find a National Umpire School near you!

NATIONAL TEAM HOPEFULS HEAD TO CLEARWATER FOR SELECTION CAMPS

Over 80 potential National Team athletes will head to Clearwater, Fla. December 31-January 5 to vie for a spot on the 2017 USA Softball Women’s and Junior Women’s National Team rosters. In addition to the Women's and Junior Women's Camps, the Men’s National Team will also have their selection camp for the 2017 roster January 20-22 in San Diego, Calif. Read more about the National Team camps on page 40.
ARMSTRONG PARK IN NEW JERSEY TABBED 2016 COMPLEX OF THE YEAR

After a history of hosting top-notch USA Softball of New Jersey events, Armstrong Park of Ewing, N.J. was tabbed the 2016 ASA Complex of the Year, presented by Stabilizer Solutions. Read more about this award on page 50.

NEW CODE AND RULE CHANGES FOR 2017 SEASON!

Get ready for the 2017 season of USA Softball! Find out about new divisions of play, changes in the USA Softball Code and Playing Rules online at USASoftball.com!

Click here to view the 2017 Code and Playing Rule changes!
SWEET SPOT? TRY SWEET BARREL

Introducing the NIGHTHAWK & SILHOUETTE Fastpitch Bats

Nighthawk 2-PIECE LINK CONSTRUCTION
significantly reduces vibrations to hands

Nighthawk & Silhouette X-ZONE TECHNOLOGY
Sweet Spot Along Whole Barrel
Let’s Hear from You!

If there’s one thing we love at USA Softball, it’s interacting with softball fans from around the world! Are you following along on social media? Share your photos and be sure to tag @USASoftball with the hashtag #USASoftball for a chance to be featured in an upcoming issue of Balls & Strikes Magazine!

“Always a fan of these athletes @USASoftball 1996 reunion @NFCAorg”
@DIAMONDNAVAS

“Watching the Louisville Warriors and the @USASoftball Olympians play tonight was one of the most amazing experiences!”
@TFITE11

“From sports commentator to catcher … Michele Smith does it all. But her pitching topped it all. Awesome Olympians. @USASoftball”
@RAIDERSSBMA

“I remember watching Fernandez and the rest of the team win it all! That’s the moment I fell in love with the game!”
@KATEL_WEAVE

“G.O.A.T’s!!!!” – in response to video of 2004 Olympics in Athens, Greece
TORI LACHELLE HUNTER

“My daughter is number 16 also and she has relived this moment in her head over and over and over and over watching it replayed and she’s only 11 and dreams of one day being on that pitching mound and doing the same identical thing!!!”
LANA CAMPBELL

“Congrats to the newest inductees!”
BETTE N DAN BLAIR

“There’s only one Jennie! Such a trailblazer for not just softball players but all female athletes.”
– in response to Jennie Finch’s induction into the National Softball Hall of Fame.
JAMIE BLANCHARD-SCHNEIDER
2016 BY THE NUMBERS

78,072 fans attended the 2016 NCAA Women’s College World Series (WCWS) at the ASA Hall of Fame Stadium in Oklahoma City.

Over 140,000 teams registered with USA Softball in 2016 (as of Nov. 30)

Over 23,000 umpires registered with USA Softball in 2016 (as of Nov. 30)

Over 1,800 teams qualified and competed for a 2016 USA Softball National Championship, while 417 Junior Olympic teams qualified and competed in one of the “Big Seven” National Championships.

34 National Championships received an overall rating of 95% or greater in 2016

Over 35,000 hours of action was live streamed during the World Cup of Softball XI in Oklahoma City, Okla.

28,600 ACE (Aspire, Challenge, Encourage) coaches participated in the ACE Coach Education Program through USA Softball in 2016

Over 82,000 coaches and support staff were background checked through USA Softball in 2016

Over $55,000 was donated to the Top 12 finishers in each age group at the 2016 USA Softball JO Cup!
Take advantage of partner travel discounts.

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fly the friendly skies℠
WOUNDED WARRIOR AMPUTEE SOFTBALL TEAM

OUR MISSION:
To inspire and educate others while enhancing the health and welfare of Wounded Warrior Amputees.

2017 SCHEDULE:
The Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Team recently released their schedule for 2017

JANUARY 26-29
Spring Training
Tiger Town, Lakeland, FL

MARCH 19
Bataan Memorial Death March
White Sands, NM

MARCH 24-26
Mission Viejo, CA (Tentative)

APRIL 14-16
Newport News, VA

APRIL 28-30
Chester, SC

MAY 5-7
Sacramento, CA

MAY 19-21
Long Island, NY

MAY 26-29
Cooperstown, NY

JUNE 2-4
Pawtucket, RI

JUNE 12-18
Kids Camp
Fairfax, VA

JUNE 23-25
Bismarck, ND (Tournament)

JULY 7-9
Brainerd, MN (Tournament)

JULY 13-16
WWAST Gala
Los Angeles, CA

JULY 28-30
Omaha, NE

AUGUST 25-27
Utica, NY

SEPTEMBER 2-4
Appleton, WI

SEPTEMBER 8-10
Columbus, OH

SEPTEMBER 15-17
Welch, MN (Tournament)

SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 1
Akron, OH

OCTOBER 13-15
Dayton, OH

OCTOBER 27-29
Huntsville, AL (Tentative)

NOVEMBER 10-12
Jonesboro, AR

NOVEMBER 30-DECEMBER 3
US Virgin Islands

Scheduling for the 2018 Season opens up on January 1, 2017. If your community is interested in hosting the WWAST for 2018 please contact WWAST Executive Director, Dennis Wince (dennis@thewwast.org).
MEET OUR PLAYERS:

In each of the issues of Balls and Strikes, we would like you to being to meet some of the players on the WWAST:

**TIM HORTON**
Lance Corporal (Retired) Tim Horton was born in 1984 and is from Sulphur Springs, Texas. He enlisted in the U.S. Marines in 2003 and had a combat tour to Iraq in 2004 as Mortarman. He was injured when the vehicle he was riding in struck an improvised explosive device rendering him a below the knee amputee. He has been awarded the Purple Heart. Lance Corporal (Retired) Horton was recently married and currently resides in San Antonio, Texas where he is an Alumni Manager for the Wounded Warrior Project.

**GREG REYNOLDS**
Staff Sergeant (Retired) Greg Reynolds was born in 1984 and is from Dighton, Mass. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2001 and had a combat tour to Iraq in 2003 as a driver and a machine gunner in a transportation battalion. Just prior to his second deployment while driving his privately owned vehicle, he was struck when another driver failed to yield at a stop sign and is now a left fore-quarter (arm, shoulder, clavicle, and scapula) amputee. He was awarded numerous awards and decorations including two Army Commendation Medals, including one for valor. Staff Sergeant Reynolds currently shares time between Saint Pete Beach, Fla. and Dighton, Mass. where he recently completed his college degree and is building his business, Makin’ Lemonade (www.makinlemonade.org).

**NICHOLAS CLARK**
Corporal (Retired) Nicholas Freeland Clark was born in 1981 and is from Yakima, Wash. He enlisted in the U.S Army in 2005 and had a combat tour to Afghanistan in 2007 as a heavy machine-gunner with 1/503 B company, 173rd ABCT(infantry). His mounted convoy was ambushed with small arms fire and RPG’S, where his vehicle was hit and resulted in his left leg being amputated below the knee. He was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge, Parachutist Badge, Purple Heart, Army Achievement Medal, and the Afghanistan Campaign Medal. Corporal Nicholas Freeland Clark currently resides in Puyallup, Wash. where he and his wife recently had a baby girl.
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Musco’s solutions – using LED or metal halide – provide superior energy efficiency, environmental light control and cost effectiveness, all supported by our leading product assurance and warranty program.

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## National Team Holiday “It” List

It’s the most wonderful time of the year! Balls and Strikes Online caught up with members of Team USA to ask them about their favorite Holiday memories and what they’re asking Santa for this year...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USA Softball</th>
<th>Favorite Holiday Tradition</th>
<th>Holiday Plans This Year</th>
<th>Best All-Time Christmas Movie</th>
<th>Favorite Christmas Carol</th>
<th>Favorite Holiday-Themed Snack</th>
<th>What’s on Your Christmas List</th>
<th>Favorite Holiday Drink</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valerie Arioto</td>
<td>Going to the movies with my family every Christmas Day!</td>
<td>Being at home with my family!</td>
<td>My favorite of all time is The Grinch!</td>
<td>Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer.</td>
<td>Santa hats made with strawberries and bananas!</td>
<td>Whole Foods gift card! (Have to stay healthy during the holidays!)</td>
<td>Hot chocolate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aubree Munro</td>
<td>My mom makes the same breakfast Christmas morning every year. It’s a french toast casserole thing and it is SO good.</td>
<td>Just going home and enjoying time with family.</td>
<td>The Santa Clause.</td>
<td>Last Christmas I Gave You My Heart!</td>
<td>Christmas sugar cookies!</td>
<td>Lulu yoga pants :)</td>
<td>Hot chocolate!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ally Carda</td>
<td>Opening pajamas on Christmas eve and then driving around to look at lights with my family!</td>
<td>I am going home to Elk Grove to spend time with my mom, dad and two brothers!</td>
<td>How the Grinch Stole Christmas.</td>
<td>Santa Clause is coming to town!</td>
<td>My mom makes peanut butter cookies with a Hersey kiss in the middle. They are the best!</td>
<td>Nothing is on my list this year. Just being healthy to continue to play the sport that I love!</td>
<td>Peppermint white mocha!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Chidester</td>
<td>Having breakfast at my grandmas Christmas morning! Soooo delicious!!</td>
<td>Spend time with my family and train for tryouts!</td>
<td>I love all the Santa Clause movies!</td>
<td>Baby it’s cold outside!</td>
<td>Anything! I love all food at Christmas time!</td>
<td>Quality time with family and friends.</td>
<td>Hot chocolate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelsey Stewart</td>
<td>Everyone in my family goes to my granny grunts Christmas Eve and has chilli!</td>
<td>Go back to Kansas and enjoy my family!</td>
<td>The Grinch!!!!!!</td>
<td>Santa Clause is coming to town!</td>
<td>My mom and granny make the BEST homemade sugar cookies from scratch!</td>
<td>Coca-Cola something about those polar bears and santa clause that make it that much better around Christmas!</td>
<td>Hot chocolate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT DO YOU LOOK FORWARD TO MOST DURING THE HOLIDAYS?
“I most definitely look forward to a break from college. Finals are right before break and studying for hours on end takes its toll. I also realize how much more important my family has become. Not seeing them for months on end and then coming home is a feeling like no other. There is so much love and smiles and laughter. It makes me smile just thinking of it.”

IF YOU COULD EAT AS MUCH OF ONE HOLIDAY FOOD AS YOU COULD, WITH NO REGRETS, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
“My favorite holiday food to eat with no regrets is for sure crockpot buttered mushrooms.”

WOULD YOU RATHER SPEND THE HOLIDAY ON A SUNNY BEACH OR A SNOW-COVERED MOUNTAIN? WHY?
“I was born and raised most of my life in Florida I’ve never gotten to experience a Snow White Christmas so I feel like I would have to go with snow covered mountain. It would be one of the first times I’ve ever seen anything truly covered in snow.”

WHAT DO YOU LOOK FORWARD TO MOST DURING THE HOLIDAYS?
“I look forward to getting together with family and friends and having a good time!”

IF YOU COULD EAT AS MUCH OF ONE HOLIDAY FOOD AS YOU COULD, WITH NO REGRETS, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
“Everything, lol. If I had to pick one it would probably be ham.”

WOULD YOU RATHER SPEND THE HOLIDAY ON A SUNNY BEACH OR A SNOW-COVERED MOUNTAIN? WHY?
“Snow covered mountains, because, it never snows in Bakersfield, Calif.”

WHAT DO YOU LOOK FORWARD TO MOST DURING THE HOLIDAYS?
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IF YOU COULD EAT AS MUCH OF ONE HOLIDAY FOOD AS YOU COULD, WITH NO REGRETS, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
“That is a tight race between honey glazed ham and Christmas cookies, both made by my grandma and both to die for.”

WOULD YOU RATHER SPEND THE HOLIDAY ON A SUNNY BEACH OR A SNOW-COVERED MOUNTAIN? WHY?
“Definitely on a sunny beach! I’m not a big fan of the cold and not a fan at all of the snow!”

WHAT DO YOU LOOK FORWARD TO MOST DURING THE HOLIDAYS?
“Being away from all of my family now in college at LSU, something I look forward to most during the holidays is the time that I am able to spend with my family and of course the presents.”

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WHAT DO YOU LOOK FORWARD TO MOST DURING THE HOLIDAYS?
“I look forward to spending time with my family."

IF YOU COULD EAT AS MUCH OF ONE HOLIDAY FOOD AS YOU COULD, WITH NO REGRETS, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
“Chocolate fudge”

WOULD YOU RATHER SPEND THE HOLIDAY ON A SUNNY BEACH OR A SNOW-COVERED MOUNTAIN? WHY?
“Snow covered mountains, because, it never snows in Bakersfield, Calif.”

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“Snow covered mountains, because, it never snows in Bakersfield, Calif.”
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TIME FOR A NEW SEASON OF USA SOFTBALL!

Code and Rule changes, awarding of 2018 National Championships, get ready to play #USASoftball!

After a week of evaluating proposed code and rule changes for all divisions of USA Softball, potential National Championship sites and association business, the 2016 season of USA Softball officially came to a close. As Council Members from all across the United States came together during the 85th Annual Meeting in Shreveport, La., we highlight some of the top moments from the USA Softball Annual Meeting below!

2016 HALL OF FAME INDUCTION
Eight individuals received softball’s highest honor on November 12 as USA Softball held its 36th Annual Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. Three Men’s Fast Pitch players, two Meritorious Service honorees, one women’s fast pitch athlete, an umpire and a sponsor were among the individuals honored. At the conclusion of the banquet, the Class of 2017 was also announced, and inductees for the Class of 2017 can be found on page 27 of Balls and Strikes. You can re-watch the ceremony in its entirety at USASoftball.com!

9TH ANNUAL FUN WALK
Council Members and guests had a grand time at the 9th Annual Funk Walk on the morning of November 15. Sponsored by USA Softball of Kentucky, participants were given a t-shirt as they made their way to the walking route!

A TASTE OF SHREVEPORT
Shreveport welcomed Council Members with an evening filled with great music, food and company on the evening of November 15 as guests were shuttled to the Shreveport Municipal Auditorium. As the live band played on, Council Members and guests were treated to Southern hospitality!
ANNUAL TRADESHOW
Over 60 exhibitors attended the USA Softball Annual Tradeshow on November 16. Ranging from cities bidding on a 2018 National Championship to equipment manufacturers, attendees were able to talk with exhibitors and learn about how their products or cities can help their local teams and leagues!

VOTING DAY!
Concluding the week-long meeting was the final General Council Session on November 17. In addition to announcing passed code and rule changes, USA Softball Council Members also decided which cities will host 2018 USA Softball National Championships, which is one of the most anticipated decisions made by the council! Each USA Softball National Championship has the potential to have thousands of dollars in economic impact for the host city. You can find a list of 2018 National Championships at USASoftball.com!

IN OTHER NEWS
For 2017 Rule and Code changes that were voted on during the Council Meeting, please click here.
Eight individuals received softball’s highest honor on the evening of November 12 as USA Softball inducted eight members to the National Softball Hall of Fame at the 36th Annual celebration at the Shreveport Convention Center in Shreveport, La.

A night to remember, the 2016 class consisted of Ken Eriksen (Tampa, Fla.) - Meritorious Service, Jennie Finch (La Mirada, Calif.) - Fast Pitch Player, Harry Haroian (Melvindale, Mich.) - Fast Pitch Player, Peter Meredith (Salt Lake City, Utah) - Fast Pitch Player, John Nelson (Dalton, Ga.) - Umpire, Tom Penders (Narragansett, R.I.) - Fast Pitch Player, Terry Petersen (Omaha, Neb.) – Sponsor and Mick Renneisen (Bloomington, Ind.) - Meritorious Service.
MIKE CANDREA
Meritorious Service
(Tucson, Ariz.)

QUICK FACTS/BY THE NUMBERS
Head Coach of 2004 Olympic Gold Medalists, 2008 Olympic Silver Medalists

Two Pan American Games Gold Medal finishes – 2003, 2007

Eight NCAA National Championships at Arizona

JIMMY DERRICK
Umpire
(Douglasville, Ga.)

QUICK FACTS/BY THE NUMBERS
Umpired in 19 USA Softball National Championship Finals

Served as Umpire-in-Chief for 15 National Championship Finals

Member of the National Indicator Fraternity, Gold Medals Program, WBSC Certified and an Elite Umpire

GARY EVANS
Umpire
(Mason, Mich.)

QUICK FACTS/BY THE NUMBERS
Umpired in eight USA Softball National Championship Finals

Served as Umpire-in-Chief or Assistant Umpire-in-Chief in five National Championship Finals

WBSC Certified, Gold Medals Program and Elite Umpire

MARK MARTIN
Slow Pitch Player
(Fayetteville, Ark.)

QUICK FACTS/BY THE NUMBERS
North Dakota Commissioner since 2013

Served on USA Softball Board of Directors from 2001-2003, 2008-2012

Served as chairman of the Equipment Testing & Certification Committee since 2005

Inducted into the North Dakota Softball Hall of Fame in 1996

DICK GULMON
Meritorious Service
(Valley City, N.D.)

QUICK FACTS/BY THE NUMBERS
North Dakota Commissioner since 2013

Served on USA Softball Board of Directors from 2001-2003, 2008-2012

Served as chairman of the Equipment Testing & Certification Committee since 2005

Inducted into the North Dakota Softball Hall of Fame in 1996
2017 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

RICK MINTON
Men’s Fast Pitch
(Cerro Gordo, Ill)

QUICK FACTS/BY THE NUMBERS
Two time USA Softball National Champion
Six time First Team All-American
Won two Pan American Games Silver Medals (1987, 1991)

BOB QUINN
Fast Pitch Player
(Branchville, N.J.)

QUICK FACTS/BY THE NUMBERS
Played 15 years in the Men’s Major Fast Pitch division
Four time National Champion
Two time All American
1984 WBSC World Championship Bronze Medalist
1979 Pan American Games Silver Medalist

WILLIE SIMPSON
Slow Pitch Player
(Oak Lawn, Ill.)

QUICK FACTS/BY THE NUMBERS
Nine time All-American in Men’s 16” Slow Pitch
10 time USA Softball Men’s 16” Slow Pitch National Champion
Named MVP of the 1976 and 1977 USA Softball Men’s 16” Slow Pitch National Championship
Posted over a .740 batting average throughout his playing career

EVANS TELEGADAS
Fast Pitch Player
(Scottsdale, Ariz.)

QUICK FACTS/BY THE NUMBERS
Six time All American
Played at nine USA Softball National Championships
Holds a .336 lifetime batting average as a shortstop
1991 Metro Detroit Softball Hall of Fame Inductee
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Umpires across the U.S. will have the opportunity to attend five USA Softball National Umpire Schools, including an Advanced National Umpire School for Fast Pitch, in the 2017 season! Taking place in five different states across the United States: Arkansas, California, Georgia, New Hampshire and South Carolina, there’s a new look for the schools, including a new agenda and new school layout.

Attendees at a USA Softball National Umpire School can expect discussions on rule changes for the upcoming 2017 season while developing and enhancing their skills with lectures and on-field drills. Check out the list of schools below and find out how you can sign up today!

### 2017 USA SOFTBALL NATIONAL UMPIRE SCHOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>COORDINATOR</th>
<th>PHONE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lexington, S.C.</td>
<td>January 20-22</td>
<td>Region 3</td>
<td>Tommy Borucki</td>
<td>609-827-4977</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tborucki@aol.com">tborucki@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roseville, CA</td>
<td>February 10-12</td>
<td>Region 10</td>
<td>Chuck Brabec</td>
<td>916-834-8074</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nus2017@sacramentoasa.org">nus2017@sacramentoasa.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benton, AR</td>
<td>February 24-26</td>
<td>Region 4</td>
<td>Mike Adams</td>
<td>903-826-2324</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ablueump@windstream.net">ablueump@windstream.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derry, NH</td>
<td>March 31-April 2</td>
<td>Region 1</td>
<td>Will Martin</td>
<td>603-365-0096</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nhasauc@hotmail.com">nhasauc@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cummings, GA</td>
<td>June 15-18</td>
<td>Region 3 - FP</td>
<td>Rick Hearn</td>
<td>770-560-3754</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rick.hearn@gaasablue.net">rick.hearn@gaasablue.net</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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For more information on USA Softball National Umpire Schools click here!
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Each summer, teams from all across the U.S. compete for a berth to a USA Softball National Championship for an opportunity to hoist a National Championship trophy in the air. Where will your team be heading next summer? Check out the “Big Seven” USA Softball National Championships for 2017, and visit USASoftball.com to find the complete list!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>USA Softball Girls’ GOLD 18-Under</td>
<td>July 17-22, 2017</td>
<td>Clearwater, FL</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA Softball Girls’ GOLD 16-Under</td>
<td>July 17-22, 2017</td>
<td>Clearwater, FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Softball Girls’ Class A 10-Under</td>
<td>July 30-August 6,2017</td>
<td>Findlay, OH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Softball Girls’ Class A 12-Under</td>
<td>July 23-30, 2017</td>
<td>Dallas, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Softball Girls’ Class A 14-Under</td>
<td>July 30-August 6,2017</td>
<td>Chattanooga, TN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Softball Girls’ Class A 16-Under</td>
<td>July 30-August 6,2017</td>
<td>Normal, IL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Softball Girls’ Class A 18-Under</td>
<td>July 30-August 6,2017</td>
<td>Salem, OR</td>
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THIRTY-FOUR ATHLETES TO VIE FOR A SPOT ON 2017 MEN’S NATIONAL TEAM ROSTER

The chance to represent the United States at the WBSC Men’s World Championship next summer will come next January as 34 athletes have accepted an invitation to try out for the Men’s National Team (MNT). Slated to be held January 20-22 in San Diego, Calif., athletes will vie for a spot on the 17-athlete roster.

Currently ranked No. 6 in the WBSC Softball World Rankings, the MNT will compete in the WBSC Men's World Championship in Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada, July 7-16, 2017. The Red, White and Blue will look to improve upon a ninth-place finish at the 2015 WBSC World Championship in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, where the team finished with a 7-3 record and placed first in the Playoff Rounds.

The U.S. will be led by National Softball Hall of Fame coach Denny Bruckert (Gillespie, Ill.). The complete 2017 schedule for the MNT, including exhibition games, will be announced at a later date.
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For around 80 athletes, the first step for an opportunity to rock the Red, White and Blue this summer is quickly approaching as hopefuls will gather in Clearwater, Fla. to try out for the 2017 USA Softball Women’s and Junior Women’s National Teams. Over 50 athletes will be vying for a spot on the 2017 Women’s National Team (WNT) roster, while over 30 athletes will compete for a spot on the 2017 Junior Women’s National Team (JWNT) roster.

Competing for your country is an honor unlike any other, with many current and former National Team athletes recollecting their first time they put on the USA Softball jersey as a moment they’ll never forget. While the complete schedule for both National Team squads has not been released, fans in the U.S. will have an opportunity to watch these teams in action at the World Cup of Softball XI in Oklahoma City, Okla. in July, 2017 while the JWNT will be competing at the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Junior Women’s World Championship in Clearwater, Fla. July 24-30.

Madilyn “Bubba” Nickles is returning for her second opportunity to represent the U.S. as a member of the JWNT. Bubba was a member of the 2015 roster that claimed the Gold at the 2015 WBSC Junior Women’s World Championship.

Click here to see the athletes who will attend the 2017 Women’s National Team Selection Camp
As the excitement surrounding softball’s return to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games continues to grow, athletes also have the opportunity to attend the 2017 USA Softball Junior Women’s National Team Open Tryout on December 30. The top athletes from the open tryout will be selected to participate at the USA Softball JWNT Selection Camp December 31-January 1, where they will compete for a spot on the 17-athlete roster along with the list of invited athletes.
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Kaiea Higa, of Maple Valley, WA was 1 of 12 girls to advance to the 2016 Scotts Major League Baseball Pitch Hit & Run (PHR) National Finals. PHR is the official skills competition of MLB and is designed for youth ages 7-14 to showcase their baseball and softball skills. Higa competed locally with her ASA/USA Softball league, attended the Team Championship at Safeco Field, and represented the Mariners at the National Finals during MLB All-Star Week in San Diego. Higa took some time to answer a few questions about her experience with Pitch Hit & Run!

**BIO INFO:**

**ASA Team/League:** Team Seattle 14U

**Position(s):**
3B/1B

**Height:** 5’6”

**Age:** 12
**NATIONAL FINALIST QUESTIONNAIRE:**

1. **How did you find out about the Pitch, Hit & Run competition/who encouraged you to try PHR?**
   
   I was 9 when I first tried out for PHR. My parents asked if I wanted to do it and I thought it would be fun. In 2014, I won the Seattle Mariners Team Championship but didn’t qualify for the All-Star game until this year. I am lucky to be fully supported by my family, and that’s all that really counted. They always have my back, encouraged me to work hard, and support me in whatever I want to do in life.

2. **What was your favorite element about PHR: Pitching, Hitting or Running? Did you practice a lot?**
   
   My favorite element is Pitching as I think it’s the most difficult. I practiced by throwing into a BowNet on the sidewalk outside my house nearly every day. You have to hit the target as many times as you can out of six attempts. I had to work on my mental approach as it’s tough to not feel too much pressure. Sure, I could make the first four and think, “Yeah, I got this,” and then totally blow it by getting too overconfident or thinking too much and end up getting a lower score then I’d like. So, I would refocus and think of each throw as the first one I’ve thrown all day.

3. **What do you remember about the first time you stepped on to a Major League Field at the Team Championship?**
   
   I have been to a lot of Mariners games and love Safeco Field. But being on the field is so different than being in the stands. I participated in the 2014 Team Championships at Safeco Field and still remember everything about that moment — the smell of the grass, the sun shining through the open roof, and how big the field was. This year was so much different. I wasn’t as nervous and was hopeful that this was the year that I would complete my goal of making it to the National Final, and I felt more prepared than the years before.

4. **Looking back at your PHR National Finals experience during All-Star Week, what was your favorite memory?**
   
   I think one of my favorite parts of the week was the All-Star Game itself. It was indescribable to watch some of the best athletes playing the game I love. I also really enjoyed FanFest. We were surrounded by the love of baseball and softball and I could not have been happier. I participated in the 2014 Team Championships at Safeco Field and still remember everything about that moment — the smell of the grass, the sun shining through the open roof, and how big the field was. This year was so much different. I wasn’t as nervous and was hopeful that this was the year that I would complete my goal of making it to the National Final, and I felt more prepared than the years before.

5. **How did you feel being announced with the rest of the PHR National Finalists in front of the crowd during the Home Run Derby?**
   
   It was insane! We walked through a gate leading to the field, and the vibration of the crowd at Petco Park matched the shaking of my hands. I ran out with the rest of the group (who I had all become good friends with) and tried to pay attention to what the announcer was saying. Then I finally realized that I was standing on the field at the Home Run Derby as the MLB Pitch Hit & Run Champion!

6. **What was it like when you got home after the All-Star Game with peers, classmates, teammates, reporters, etc.?**
   
   Each time I explained the experience, I would randomly remember bits and pieces of what I did during that unforgettable week. A lot of my friends were in shock, and I’m positive some didn’t believe me. I was interviewed on ROOT’s sports before I threw the first pitch at “Salute to Kids Day” at the Seattle Mariners game. I got to meet Robinson Cano and the Mariners coaching staff. I was nervous, excited, and honored…but I threw a strike from the mound!

7. **What advice would you give to other girls planning to compete in their local PHR competition?**
   
   I would tell them to practice, practice, and practice. Everyone’s heard it a million times, but it’s the truth. Accepting failure is also key. If you mess up, keep trying! Continue believing in yourself, accept advice, and don’t let anyone stop you.

8. **Who are your softball idols?**
   
   Some of my biggest softball idols would be Jenna Lilley from the University of Oregon, Lauren Chamberlain of Oklahoma, and Ally Carda of UCLA, just to name a few. They are incredibly capable of showing leadership and devotion underneath all odds, and I can’t thank them enough for providing an example of everything I aspire to be in the future.

9. **What are your goals for the next couple years?**
   
   I plan on traveling a lot next summer playing for my ASA team, Team Seattle. Another goal of mine is to continue to go through the college recruiting process, as I would love to play softball for a Division I school. That’s definitely what I have my heart set on overall; working towards being able to learn and compete at the highest level.

10. **Are you planning to participate in PHR next spring and if so, how will you practice to return as a repeat National Finalist?**
    
    Yes!!! I would love to participate in PHR and make it to the National Finals during the All-Star Week again. If I were to change one thing about how I practiced for this year, it would be the hitting element. I would really focus more on hitting for distance in order to score higher in the competition.
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CANDREA ON COACHING
A YEAR IN REVIEW

One of the most respected coaches in the game, two-time U.S. Olympic Softball Head Coach Mike Candrea has quite the resume’. Eight NCAA National Championships, 21 trips to the NCAA Women’s College World Series (WCWS), two World Championship titles and two Pan American Games titles in addition to his Olympic accolades are just a few of his noteworthy accolades.

With his years of experience at the helm of some of the most dominating teams in the history of softball, Candrea has gained valuable lessons and insights throughout his coaching career. Those tips and tricks of the trade are shared monthly in USA Softball’s “Candrea on Coaching, presented by Liberty Mutual Insurance.” Covering hot topics in the youth softball world, such as finding success in failure and team unity, take a look at some of Coach Candrea’s topics for the 2016 season below.

FINDING SUCCESS IN FAILURES:
“How do we draw from our failures in life and realize that failure is just part of the process to being successful?”

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HAS COACHING CHANGED?
“Just like everything in our lifetime, change is inevitable.”

PLAYING AT THE ELITE LEVEL:
“Playing at the elite level in our game is not easy by any means.”

TEAM UNITY:
“The longer I coach in this game, the more I realize that building a team that believes and trust in one another is a key ingredient to building team success.”

LET THE COACH, COACH:
“…good coaches will teach the game and prepare players how to succeed in life after softball.”

COMPETITION:
“Competition is something that we must prepare our players for if they are going to survive in the real world.”
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ARMSTRONG PARK NAMED 2016 COMPLEX OF THE YEAR

A history of hosting top-notch New Jersey softball events has helped land Armstrong Park in Ewing, N.J. the 2016 Complex of the Year presented by Stabilizer Solutions, Inc. Armstrong Park, operated by the Township of Ewing Recreation Department, received their award at the 85th USA Softball Annual Council Meeting in Shreveport, La. and will also receive approximately $2,000 in field maintenance products from Stabilizer Solutions.

Named after former seven-term Ewing Mayor C. Wesley Armstrong, Armstrong Park is home to three youth and two adult softball fields while also housing a t-ball field. With amenities such as bullpens for pitchers and catchers to warm up, outdoor batting cages and a press box for game day operations, Armstrong Park hosts a variety of events annually. In 2015, the USA Softball Women’s National Team held a tour stop at the park, where a packed crowd of over 3,735 fans enjoyed a doubleheader as the U.S. faced off against the New Jersey All-Stars.

“Our association is honored to accept this award on behalf of Ewing Township,” said USA Softball of New Jersey Commissioner Mike Warner. “They have welcomed us with open arms and continue to support our ASA/USA Softball programs each year. In 2017 and in a joint effort with USA Softball of New Jersey, we have plans on expanding the park and adding additional fields for future use. It’s a very exciting time for our softball program in New Jersey and we owe a big part of that to the communities that show their overwhelming support.”

In 2016, Armstrong Park was the site of the Region 2 Qualifier for the 2016 USA Softball 14-Under Class A and Class B National Championship. Armstrong Park also hosted several elite youth fast pitch and adult slow pitch tournaments while also hosting the New Jersey Special Olympics Tournament in September. In addition to tournament play, Armstrong Park also holds weekly men’s and co-ed slow pitch leagues.
WELCOME OUR NEW USA SOFTBALL COMMISSIONERS!

BOBBY PENA | USA SOFTBALL OF ARIZONA
Peña steps into the position with a backing of over 30 years of experience from all areas of the game as an athlete, coach and administrator. From a young age, Peña began playing baseball and continued through high school and college, where he was granted a full ride scholarship to attend and play for both Phoenix College and Grand Canyon University. Peña played in the Men's 30-and-over Men's National Baseball League representing the Arizona Angels, going on to win four World Series Championship titles in 1990-91 and 1995-96, and at the same time entering his rookie season with the Seattle Mariners. Following his playing days, Peña went on to become a Varsity Softball Head Coach at Xavier College Preparatory which led to his current spot at Pinnacle High School. Shortly after becoming the Head Coach for the Pinnacle high school squad, Peña started his own business, ’9 STARS SPORTS Arizona Fast Pitch Events’ and continues to oversee and manage all events. Peña brings extensive experience, having been a Tournament Director, fast pitch coach and skills clinic instructor at different times throughout his life which will in turn help him lead ASA/USA Softball of Arizona.

WALKER CLARK | USA SOFTBALL OF ARKANSAS
With the desire to continue his work promoting USA Softball from Arkansas’ recreational leagues to the competitive travel teams, and increasing the participation of adult attendance, Clark begins his role as Commissioner with an array of USA Softball experience. Clark began umpiring at the age of 16 and continued his work on the field by coaching at the local community ballpark while he was in high school. After graduating, he started playing competitive Men’s Class B Slow Pitch and continued through 1996, where he switched roles to take over as District Commissioner of Districts 3 and 9 in Arkansas. During that time, Clark took part in the coaching of his two daughters. From instructional leagues to travel competitive softball, Clark’s girls, Courtney and Hunter, went onto play collegiate ball and he continued to grow the game throughout the state of Arkansas. In 2010, he transitioned to the Junior Olympic (JO) Commissioner role and began work in all aspects of USA Softball, while promoting RegisterASA and individual registration, in addition to the building of brackets and running of tournaments.
USA SOFTBALL TO HOLD SLOW PITCH NATIONAL INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT IN MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. IN JANUARY, 2017

The USA Softball Men’s Slow Pitch Invitational Tournament (NIT) is set to take place January 13-15, 2017 in Myrtle Beach, S.C. Slated to be held at Grand Park Athletic Complex, the Slow Pitch NIT will feature four different men’s divisions, while a women’s and coed divisions will also be eligible for play.

“This tournament was created following discussions from the USA Softball Slow Pitch Task Force Committee,” said USA Softball President and USA Softball of Ohio Commissioner Warren Jones. “The Committee wanted to create an event that could be held in the winter with a nice destination while allowing for rule modifications that would otherwise not be eligible for Championship Play. Similar to the USA Softball JO Cup, this Slow Pitch NIT will give tournament directors the flexibility to adjust the rules based on feedback from the players and coaches.”

Unique to the Slow Pitch NIT are four open men’s divisions, which teams can choose to register under: Division I will allow for six home runs a game per team, Division II is allowed four home runs, Division III is allowed two home runs while no home runs will be allowed in Division IV. Additional Slow Pitch NIT tournament details include a three-game guarantee, no player classifications and prize packages, including sponsor awards and Championship rings.

Featuring 52/300 softballs for the event, which will be supplied, the blind draw for the Slow Pitch NIT will be streamed live on January 8 for teams and fans. An Opening Ceremony will also kick off the event on January 13 at 6 p.m. ET. Teams also have the opportunity to participate in a golf tournament on January 12 prior to the start of the tournament.

The deadline to enter the Slow Pitch NIT is January 5, 2017, and an entry form can be found online at the tournament website: http://www.usasoftballnj.com/page/show/2719547-winter-classic
We're making it easier for ASA teams in your area to find your tournaments. Launched in 2010, TournamentASA.com is an ASA exclusive, tournament management system designed to promote your ASA tournament, register teams and manage your online bracket from the first pitch to the last out. Coaches and managers can’t get enough of the special features that are included on the site! Tools such as our Power Rankings, opponent overview and tournament history, all based off teams past games, give coaches a better understanding of the competition they are scheduled to face.

Scan the code from your smart phone to visit TournamentASA!
FROM THE VAULT

An athlete takes a cut at the 1990 Boys’ 14-Under Slow Pitch National Championship.

Ernest Ludy shows off his game face in preparation for an upcoming contest.

Ieva Sijats shows off her team’s uniform at a media day.

Pete Gallagher shows off his 1968 National Championship jacket as a member of the Clearwater Bombers.

1982 Women’s Class A Slow Pitch Home Run Champion and MVP Jennifer Oliver shows off her hardware.

Ieva Sijats shows off her team’s uniform at a media day.
How well did you pay attention to this edition of Balls and Strikes? Submit your answers to these five questions to promotions@softball.org with the subject “Balls and Strikes Trivia” and you could win a Softball Prize Pack from USA Softball.

1. Name one of the locations of a USA Softball National Umpire School.

2. What is Women’s National Team athlete Valerie Arioto’s favorite holiday drink?

3. List an event that Armstrong Park, the 2016 Complex of the Year, hosted.

4. Who is the new USA Softball of Arkansas commissioner?

5. Where is the 2017 USA Softball Slow Pitch NIT being held?
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