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The Lineup

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Hello everyone and welcome to the most wonderful time of the year... softball season! These next few months will be an exciting time for players, coaches, umpires and administrators all across the country as the pursuit of a coveted #USASoftball National Championship begins! Whether it’s the high-level competition, the best-of-the-best in umpires or the world-class facilities that draws you to one of our 100 National Championships this year, the most important aspect is to have fun! One of the best aspects of the summer months are the memories that you create with your fellow teammates, umpires, parents or tournament administrators. That’s the reason why I, and so many others, got involved in this great game to begin with and it’s what continues to foster and grow the game that we all love.

The softball world turned their eyes to the USA Softball Hall of Fame Stadium earlier this month for the 2017 NCAA Women’s College World Series (WCWS). We are proud to be the Softball Capital of the World® and showcase our headquarters across the globe. There’s no doubt that the USA Softball Hall of Fame Complex is the finest facility in the world, and our members across the country should take pride in adding to the legacy of this historic facility. If you have not made the trip to an NCAA WCWS, I strongly encourage you to add it to your bucket list.

Members of our USA Softball National Teams will also have a busy schedule this summer representing our great country in various international competitions. The Women’s and Junior Women’s National Teams will make several exhibition tour stops across the United States prior to taking the field at the World Cup of Softball XII in Oklahoma City. Joining those two teams in Oklahoma City are the Men’s Slow Pitch and Futures National Teams and the inaugural Women’s Slow Pitch National Team, which will compete in Border Battle IX. Our Men’s National Team will also look to stand atop the podium in July at the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Men’s World Championship. These athletes take great pride in representing our nation and showcase our sport at the highest level. If you can, take time to come watch these world-class athletes this summer at one of their many U.S. stops. You can find a complete schedule at USASoftball.com.

Have a great 2017 season, and thank you for playing USA Softball!

Warren Jones, President
USA Softball
Florida sophomore pitcher Kelly Barnhill was named the 2017 USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year! Read more about the honor on page 24.
Forty five athletes will wear the Red, White and Blue this year at Border Battle IX. With 15 athletes on each Slow Pitch National Team squad, see who will represent the United States on page 30.
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Every year, USA Softball has almost one million 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 Ashley, Anne, Kat, Kate, Kylie, Lexi and Madaline... athletes who are proud to play #USASoftball!

ASHLEY, 12
Green Bay, Wisc.
Wisconsin Bandits 12U - Black
Girls’ 12-Under Fast Pitch Class A
Shortstop

HER START
When I was seven years old I played for the Suburban Athletics Culver’s softball team. This was twice-a-week league play and where I first fell in love with the game! I continued on to play with the 10U Suburban tournament team before moving to the Green Bay area in 2014.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT PLAYING SOFTBALL
The camaraderie amongst the other girls I play with. We all put on the same uniform and wouldn’t be successful if not for the whole team pulling together to make the plays. Being a shortstop grants me the best view of the field and with that I am able to motivate my teammates by calling out the next play or offering words of encouragement to our pitcher. Softball challenges me daily by reminding me that it’s important to continue working at improving my swing, throws, and plays. It also teaches me that there will be wins (the highs) and losses (the lows) in life, however it’s how we react to both that makes the difference in being a success or failure.

WHO ARE YOUR ROLE MODELS IN THE GAME?
My role models are Andie Varsho (Pennsylvania Rebellion NPF) and Kaylen ‘KK’ Krueger (Minnesota Gophers). Both are from Wisconsin and have taken the time to coach me in the sport of softball. I hope that I have the same opportunities to walk in their ‘cleats’ someday!

GOALS IN SOFTBALL
To continue playing on through college as well as I have my sights on the Olympics in 2020 since it was voted in 2016 to bring softball back.
FACES ON THE FIELD

ANNE, 11
Pittsburgh, Pa.
Pittsburgh Power (06)
Girls’ 10-Under Fast Pitch Class A
Pitcher

HER START
I started playing softball when I was seven years old for our local community in North Allegheny, Pa.

BEST EXPERIENCE IN SOFTBALL
Pitching a perfect game this season for the first time!

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?
Just being able to play and compete. Every time I go on the field I say “This is great,”...even in the pouring rain or snow!

TOUGHEST OBSTACLE
Learning to pitch a drop ball.

ROLE MODELS
Kelly Barnhill from the Florida Gators and my pitching coach Lauren.

GOALS IN SOFTBALL
To someday play for the Florida Gators!

KATE, 16
Columbus, Ohio
Sluggers Fastpitch Ohio
Girls’ 16-Under Fast Pitch
Center Field

HER START
I began playing softball at age five when my dad started to teach me the game.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT SOFTBALL
The memories I make with my teammates and how deep the friendships and team bonds are. I love softball and really enjoy teaching and helping younger softball players grow in their development and skills of the game.

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?
My freshman year I made Second Team All-League, Honorable Mention All-District and Rookie of the Year.

Do you want to be profiled in “Balls and Strikes Online Softball Magazine” in the future?
Click here for information on how to submit your profile and photo.
FACES ON THE FIELD

KAT, 15
Tupelo, Miss.
Mississippi Bombers 14U
Girls’ 14-Under Fast Pitch Class A
Third Base, Pitcher,
First Base, Catcher

HER START
I’ve been playing since I was six years old. My older sister played and was pretty good so I wanted to give it a try and loved it!

FAVORITE THING ABOUT PLAYING
The friendships and travel!

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?
Our team was picked up by the Texas Bombers and that as a team we work hard, play hard and compete at the highest level.

TOUGHEST OBSTACLE
Learning to throw a curveball - yikes!

ROLE MODELS
Cat Osterman and a lot of the players for Ole Miss and Mississippi State. Katie Ann Bailey would be another.

GOALS IN SOFTBALL
To win a USA Softball National Championship and to play in college.

KYLIE, 13
Dell Rapids, S.D.
Dell Rapids Q’s
Girls’ 14-Under Fast Pitch
Pitcher

HER START
I have played softball my whole life! I began playing with my mom as young as I can remember.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT PLAYING
I love everything about the sport, but the best thing is playing and growing as a team. My teammates become my sisters!

BEST EXPERIENCE IN SOFTBALL
I have begun to learn different pitches and pitch placement. I love the challenge to become a better player.

TOUGHEST OBSTACLE
To look at a loss, not as a loss, but as a learning experience and to grow from it.

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?
When our team won our league tournament last year! We played a game with only eight players due to injuries and really played together to pull it off!

GOALS IN SOFTBALL
To use my softball abilities and attend college on a full ride scholarship.
LEXI, 9
Bradner, Ohio
Fast Wizards 419 9U
Girls’ 10-Under Fast Pitch
Shortstop and Pitcher

**HER START**
My parents coached my brother’s teams, so I started playing T-ball at age two, and started playing 8U Fastpitch softball at age five.

**FAVORITE THING ABOUT PLAYING SOFTBALL**
Teamwork, playing on a team of talented players, working hard towards my personal and team goals. Always learning how to do something better and that there’s always room for improvement.

**GOALS IN SOFTBALL**
I want to play for Team USA in the Olympics someday. But I would also like to play for a Big Ten (or other) college team and eventually professional softball someday.

**BEST EXPERIENCE IN SOFTBALL**
Winning the 8U Championships at age six, starting on a 10U travel softball team at age seven, playing with some great teammates and for some great coaches.

**WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?**
Coming to a new travel team in which I had to try out for and winning the starting shortstop position. I also played for my school softball team as a second and third grader for the fourth/fifth grade team.

**TOUGHEST OBSTACLE**
Playing as a seven and eight year old in 10U travel tournaments against 10 and 11 year olds. I even won an MVP in a couple of games for my pitching and shortstop plays, that was very tough to do.

**ROLE MODELS**
So many past and current players: Jennie Finch, Megan Betsa, my current pitching coach Jamie Reno and my current travel ball coach Nick Chapetta, who has taught me so much in the last nine months and pushes and teaches me at every practice to be a better player.

---

MADALINE, 12
DeSoto, Kan.
Team Kansas 05
Girls’ 11-Under Fast Pitch
Pitcher and Utility

**HER START**
I started playing when I was six years old.

**FAVORITE THING ABOUT PLAYING**
Being with teammates, traveling to different places and the sisterhood.

**GOALS IN SOFTBALL**
To play college softball.

**WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?**
My pitching – I can throw a fastball, knuckle change, drop and drop curve.

**TOUGHEST OBSTACLE**
When I played as a guest for my older sister’s 14U team in Oklahoma last year.

**ROLE MODELS**
Sophia Tempin, pitcher from Kansas. She was my first pitching coach and I still talk to her and ask questions. Tracy Bunge, is my pitching and hitting coach now and she is awesome.

---

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USA SOFTBALL PRIDE STARTS WITH YOU BLUE!

Every year, USA Softball registers over 25,000 umpires across the U.S. From the local level to the international stage, USA Softball Umpires are the best trained and proficient in the world! From our Umpire Awards Programs to the various local and national clinics through the country, it pays to be a USA Softball Umpire! Here, we feature David Martin, a USA Softball umpire from Texas.

DAVID Denton, Texas / USA Softball of Texas Umpire / Umpires: Adult Slow Pitch / Started Umpiring: 1979

Goal: To continue to umpire and continue to train and mentor young umpires.

Favorite thing about umpiring USA Softball: Bringing professionalism and excellence to the softball field.

Best experience in umpiring so far: Umpiring at the Special Olympics World Games in Los Angeles, Ca. in 2015.

Proudest accomplishment: Working at the USA Softball 12-Under National Championship.

USA Softball Umpire Awards: I’m an Elite umpire, Gold Level in the Medals Program, a member of the National Indicator Fraternity and WBSC certified.

Advice to fellow umpires: All USA Softball umpires represent their local group, their association, the National Organization and officiating in general. For this reason, pride should be taken in the uniform and in carrying out the responsibilities we are given.

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INTRODUCING RAWLINGS SOFTBALL

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The USA Softball JO Cup will head to the West Coast this July as a total of 64 teams are slated to compete in the annual week-long tournament. With 32 teams in both the 16-Under and 18-Under divisions, teams will battle for the coveted title of JO Cup champions in Southern California. See more info on page 33.
At-large assignments for 2017 USA Softball National Championships have been announced as proud #USASoftball blues will receive the call for these prestigious events. Nominated by their respective Regional Umpire-in-Chief (UIC), these at-large assignments are for the following: 16-Under and 18-Under GOLD, USA Softball JO Cup, Men’s Major Fast Pitch, Men’s Super Slow Pitch, Men’s Class A, Class B and Class C Slow Pitch, Men’s Class D Slow Pitch Championship Series, Women’s Open Slow Pitch and the Men’s and Women’s Armed Forces Championship.

Tickets are now on sale to watch the world’s BEST softball this June and July in Oklahoma City! Held at the Softball Capital of the World®, All-Session and single-session tickets are now available for purchase through USASoftball.com!

Click here for tickets to World Cup XII and Border Battle
Take advantage of partner travel discounts.

Fly United

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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!

Jessie had a blast catching for @chiddy3 and getting to hit off her at #playball event in OKC.

“I can’t wait to play you in Sacramento at Raley Field!!” – in response to the Women’s National Team 2017 schedule

Hey there @USASoftball! My 8yr old niece Sophia loves reading your tweets & articles. You guys are truly an inspiration for her! Thank you!

“College coaches have all said they’ve never seen someone with such deceptive spin on the ball. She has a shot at the 2020 Olympic team!” – Congratulating Kelly Barnhill on winning the 2017 USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year

“Softball is such a great sport with true athletes. It’s great to share the love of the game.” – in response to a youth clinic USA Softball attended

“What a great sport to watch! Love it.” – in response to an espnW article on softball returning to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games

“Awesome @USASoftball she is our greatest of all time! Lisa Fernandez was the hardest working player I had ever met! #GOAT” – in response to the redesigned USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year Trophy being molded after Lisa Fernandez

Way to go DeMarini Aces @USASoftball Memorial Day champs! 10-0 #aces it took a team!

“Can’t wait! We leave Wisconsin on Friday. Safe travels everyone!” – on the NCAA WCWS

“Team USA looks dynamite to me. The futures look great too nice to see some guys who deserve to be on both teams.” – in response to the rosters named for 2017 Slow Pitch National Teams

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2017 USA SOFTBALL STADIUM POWER TOUR KICKS OFF

The 15th USA Softball Stadium Power Tour kicked off on May 18 in San Diego, Calif. at Petco Park, home of the San Diego Padres. First-time Power Tour slugger, Jerred Messersmith made a statement with his 10-point performance outlasting the four-time champion, Denny Crine who finished second.

Coverage of the Stadium Power Tour as well as a lineup of over 20 USA Softball events will continue to be featured on Softball 360, produced and edited by Long Haul Productions.

Hosted by two-time Olympian, Jennie Finch, the show features several USA Softball sanctioned teams, events, features and programs across the country. From Adult and Junior Olympic (JO) tournaments, both fast pitch and slow pitch, accompanied by umpires and administration stories, the hosts take an in-depth look at several of the opportunities playing USA Softball can provide. Softball 360 will be on hand for National Team events including the World Cup of Softball XII and the Border Battle IX as well as the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Junior Women’s World Championships, the 16-Under and 18-Under USA Softball GOLD National Championships and the USA Softball Men’s C Slow Pitch Nationals.

UPCOMING SOFTBALL 360 SCHEDULE

June 30 • BOMBERS at Great American Ballpark – Cincinnati, Ohio
June 30-July 2 • Border Battle IX – Oklahoma City, Okla.
July 5-9 • World Cup of Softball XII – Oklahoma City, Okla.
July 20 • BOMBERS at Cashman Field – Las Vegas, Nev.
July 17-22 • USA Softball 16U & 18U GOLD Nationals – Clearwater, Fla.
July 23 • BOMBERS at Tropicana Field – Tampa, Fla.
July 24-30 • WBSC Junior Women’s World Championship – Clearwater, Fla.
July 30 • BOMBERS at BB&T Ballpark – Charlotte, N.C.
July 31-August 6 • USA Softball Girls’ Class A 16U National Championship – Normal, Ill.
August 11 • BOMBERS at Security Service Field – Colorado Springs, Co.
August 18-20 • USA Softball All-American Games – Oklahoma City, Okla.
August 24 • BOMBERS at Busch Stadium – St. Louis, Mo.
August 29 • BOMBERS at MCU Ballpark – Brooklyn, N.Y.
September 1-3 • USA Softball Men’s C Slow Pitch Nationals – Oklahoma City, Okla.
September 16 • BOMBERS Marlins Park – Miami, Fla.
September 29 • WWAST Alumni Kids Camp – Branson, Mo.
September 30-October 1 • USA Softball SP Championship Series – Oklahoma City, Okla.

For complete results from the USA Softball Stadium Power Tour, visit Softball360.com
“WE JUST MIGHT BE LOOKING AT THE NEW FACE OF SOFTBALL”

After traveling to San Diego, Calif. to kick off the 2017 USA Softball Stadium Power Tour at Petco Park, home of the San Diego Padres, first-time Power Tour slugger, Jerred Messersmith (Monsta) came out swinging and made a statement with his 10-point performance. Launching most of his hits well over 400 feet into left-center, Messersmith surprised the crowd after rising atop the list and surpassing four-time champion, Denny Crine (Miken), by one point.

“I have been watching the Long Haul Bombers for years on TV,” Messersmith said. “So to be on the same field with them and then to win the derby makes me humble and grateful.”

Messersmith, a Southern California native, was greeted by family and friends who joined in on the celebration afterwards.

Fellow slugger Ryan Dacko said, “We just might be looking at the new face of softball.”

Crine, who returned from an injury last season, capped off his at-bat by sending the money ball deep onto the third level of the Western Metal Supply Building. Crine finished the night with nine points total.

Additional sluggers present at the Petco Park tour stop included Mike Brambilla (Miken) who finished with six points and Chris Grienert (Monsta) who earned three.

For more information, please visit USASoftball.com.
2017 NCAA WOMEN’S COLLEGE WORLD SERIES RECAP

Florida 8

Texas A&M 0

UCLA 1

LSU 2

Texas A&M 2

UCLA 8

Washington 2

Oregon 1

Washington 3

Oklahoma 6

Baylor 3

Oregon 7

Baylor 4

LSU 1

Florida 7

Florida 5

UCLA 0

Washington 2

Florida

Oklahoma

Championship Finals (Best 2-of-3)
June 5 Gm 1 - 7-5 Oklahoma (17 inning all-time classic)
June 6 Gm 2 - 5-4 Oklahoma

Kelly Barnhill (Marietta, Ga.) was selected as the 2017 USA Softball National Collegiate Player of the Year. “It’s really amazing to be chosen for this award as just a sophomore,” said Barnhill. “There are so many amazing players out there and to be honored at such a young age is a special accomplishment.”

The 2017 Southeastern Conference (SEC) Pitcher of the Year, Barnhill led the nation with a 0.36 ERA and ranked in the Top 10 in shutouts and strikeouts. In just her sophomore season at the University of Florida, Barnhill racked up First-Team All-SEC honors and boasts a 24-3 record with 333 strikeouts and only nine earned runs allowed through Super Regional play. Barnhill, who was named NFCA First-Team All-American, was also tabbed as the espnW Player of the Year.

Barnhill is just the second Gator to earn USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year honors, along with former Gator Lauren Haeger who won the award in 2015. Barnhill’s notable 2017 performances include 14 wins and nine shutouts over Top-25 ranked opponents this season. Earning SEC Pitcher of the Week honors five times this season, the first pitcher in Florida history to do so, Barnhill threw four no-hitters in her sophomore campaign.

“The first thing that I can say is to attribute a lot of her success to just how much she’s embraced being a competitor and her tremendous work ethic,” said Florida Head Coach Tim Walton. “Not only have her teammates embraced her, but she’s embraced her teammates and is really becoming very comfortable in being a quiet superstar. She’s very humble and very driven.”

The other two finalists for the 2017 award were 2017 Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) Pitcher and Player of the year Megan Good (James Madison) and 2017 SEC Player of the Year Meghan Gregg (Tennessee).

Barnhill was the first recipient of the newly redesigned USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year Trophy. The redesigned trophy honors one of the most decorated USA Softball athletes, three-time Olympic gold medalist Lisa Fernandez, whose athletic achievements embody the essence of the prestigious award.

Barnhill now joins the ranks of past winners of the award which include UCLA’s Stacey Nuveman, Florida State’s Jessica Van der Linden, three-time winner from Texas Cat Osterman, Tennessee’s Monica Abbott, Virginia Tech’s Angela Tincher, two-time winner Washington’s Danielle Lawrie, Stanford’s Ashley Hansen, back-to-back winner Oklahoma’s Keilani Ricketts, Lacey Waldrop from Florida State, Lauren Haeger of Florida and 2016 winner Sierra Romero from Michigan.
USA Softball was proud to unveil the redesigned USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year trophy at this year’s NCAA Women’s College World Series (WCWS) team banquet, where Florida sophomore pitcher Kelly Barnhill was honored with college softball’s highest honor. Sculpted and designed by MTM Recognition out of Oklahoma City, Okla., the redesigned trophy honors one of the most decorated USA Softball athletes, three-time Olympic Gold Medalist Lisa Fernandez, whose athletic achievements embody the essence of the prestigious award.

USA Softball commissioned MTM Recognition, the nation’s leader in sports awards and recognition, to create the iconic Player of the Year award. Fernandez and USA Softball staff worked hand-in-hand with MTM’s sculptor, Mario Grijalva, on all the fine details of the piece. Though the sculpture is frozen in time, the fluid motion of the wind up and Fernandez’s determination shine through in this iconic bronze. With the overall vision to create a recognizable symbolic award for softball, the sculpture incorporates the pitching circle at the foot of the bronze statue, which sits atop a black, stained walnut base. Standing at five and a quarter inches tall and 11 and a half inches wide, the base is cut into the shape of a home plate. The bronze sculpture stands almost a foot tall atop the base to add to the rich texture of the overall look of the trophy.

In addition to the redesigned trophy, USA Softball also unveiled new branding for the award, which was designed by Old Hat Creative out of Norman, Okla. Using the redesigned trophy as their inspiration, Old Hat Creative closely observed the intricacies of the sculpture while designing the artwork.

Lisa Fernandez is one of the greatest players to ever play the game. A three-time Olympic Gold Medalist, Fernandez is the only pitcher to have appeared in three Olympic Game finals. Achieving a 7-2 record throughout her Olympic career, Fernandez has the distinction of holding four individual Olympic records: most strike outs in a game (25 at the 2000 Olympic Games), fewest runs allowed, highest batting average (.545) in Olympic play and most doubles (three). A graduate of UCLA, Fernandez played for the Bruins from 1990-1993, where she was a three-time winner of the sport’s Honda Award, becoming the first softball player to win the prestigious Honda-Broderick Cup in 1993. A four-time, first-team All-American, Fernandez led the Bruins to two National Championships and two runner-up finishes. She was also named All-Region and All-Pac-12 first-team each season and was the Pac-12 Player of the Year her final three years.

CRAIG CRESS ON THE REDESIGN
“What better representation of the top award in NCAA Division I softball than to honor one of the greatest athletes to ever play the game,” said USA Softball Executive Director Craig Cress. “Lisa is without a doubt one of the best to ever wear ‘USA Softball’ across her chest. She has inspired millions of players and fans around the world with her tireless work ethic, her champion mindset and her resounding success. Her relentless attitude both on and off the field perfectly represent what the USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year award is all about. We are privileged to design the trophy in her honor as we continue the legacy of celebrating college softball’s most outstanding Division I athlete.”

Lisa Fernandez (middle, holding trophy) with a representative from MTM Recognition and sculptor Mario Grijalva (right).
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The smell of fresh cut grass, the sight of a newly chalked field...there’s nothing better than the start of softball season! Make sure you’re prepared for the 2017 season of USA Softball by visiting OfficialGear.com...the umpire’s one stop shop! Whether you’re in need of new travel gear, caps or the rulebook app, OfficialGear.com has got ya covered!

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Keep your umpire uniform in tip-top shape when you travel with this travel bag!

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This officially licensed USA Softball polo is one of your options when taking the field as a USA Softball blue!

$7.99
For those early mornings, this coffee mug is a MUST!
OVER 160 UMPIRES TO GET THE CALL THIS YEAR AT USA SOFTBALL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Years of hard work and dedication to their craft has landed over 160 umpires at a prestigious USA Softball National Championships. Nominated through their respective USA Softball Regional Umpire-in-Chief (UIC), these umpires were selected based on their performance and history as a USA Softball umpire within their Local Associations and evaluations at previous USA Softball assignments. These at-large assignments are for the following National Championships: Men’s Major Fast Pitch, Men’s Super Slow Pitch, Men’s Class A, Class B and Class C Slow Pitch, Men’s Class D Slow Pitch Championship Series, Women’s Open Slow Pitch and the Men’s and Women’s Armed Forces Championship.

Congratulations to those umpires selected to a 2017 USA Softball National Championship and the JO Cup. Teams know that when they play at USA Softball events that they will be playing with the most knowledgeable and trained umpires. USA Softball umpires take great pride in their knowledge of the rules and mechanics, and to receive an assignment at a USA Softball National Championship is a true testament to their skills and dedication to the USA Softball program.

– Kevin Ryan, Director of Umpires

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2017 USA SOFTBALL SLOW PITCH NATIONAL TEAMS NAMED

Thirty athletes selected to National and Futures Team

With a roster of 11 National Team veterans and five rookies, the Men’s Slow Pitch National Team will look to defend their Border Battle title, while 10 Futures Team veterans and four rookies comprise the USA Softball Slow Pitch Futures Team. Both teams will take part in a series of exhibition games at the USA Softball Hall of Fame Complex this June and July in Oklahoma City for the Border Battle and the Slow Pitch Showdown.

The team will be coached by Steve Shortland (Converse, Texas), who is making his ninth-consecutive appearance as the head coach of Team USA.

“There is no bigger honor than being able to represent the greatest country in the world in the sport that he or she loves to play. Any diehard softball player like myself knows that being on Team USA means you are part of the best of the best. I look forward to representing this great team.”

– Jason Branch, first-time Team USA member

Created in conjunction with the inaugural Border Battle slow pitch competition against Canada in 2009, the Men’s Slow Pitch National Team program is now in its ninth season. Last year, Team USA captured their seventh Border Battle title with a 27-8 win over Canada. The USA men have captured the past six-consecutive Border Battle titles with Canada’s last win coming in 2010.

The Futures Slow Pitch National Team will be coached by Rob Humphrey (Burlington, Iowa), who is making his fourth-consecutive appearance on the coaching staff of Team USA.

In addition to participating in Border Battle IX, the Slow Pitch national Team will take on the Futures Team in the Slow Pitch Showdown, while both teams will also compete against Canada and local slow pitch teams in a series of exhibition games June 30-July 2.
USA SOFTBALL TO FIELD INAUGURAL WOMEN’S SLOW PITCH TEAM

The new national team will compete in the inaugural Women's Border Battle against Canada

2017 WOMEN'S SLOW PITCH NATIONAL TEAM
Leigh Campbell (Venice, Calif.)
Brooke Connell (Moultrie, Ga.)
Christian Dowling (Rochester, N.Y.)
Amanda Durand (Onalaska, Wash.)
Laura Harms (Bradley, Ill.)
Tammy Higginbotham (Kent, Wash.)
Mandy Hollman (York, Pa.)
Kami Marrott (Las Vegas, Nev.)
Megan Miller (Wichita, Kan.)
Melissa Perez (Rowland Heights, Calif.)
Tiffany Quinell (Tacoma, Wash.)
Tara Salcedo (Bellflower, Calif.)
Dara Toman (Columbus, Ohio)
Stefanie Watt (Marshfield, Wis.)
Julie Wisniewski (Riverview, Fla.)

Coaching Staff
Don Cooper (Browns Point, Wash.)
Shannon Cooper (Burien, Wash.)
Diana Brummer (Seattle, Wash.)

With the addition of women’s slow pitch to the annual Border Battle competition, USA Softball announced the inaugural 15-athlete roster for the USA Softball Women’s Slow Pitch National Team (WSPNT), which will compete against Canada’s Women’s Slow Pitch National Team in July in the inaugural Women’s Border Battle.

“With the success of our Slow Pitch National Teams and the popularity of Border Battle, we’re excited to provide our women’s slow pitch division the opportunity to compete on the international stage,” said USA Softball Event Manager Rich Cress.

The roster, which is comprised of members from the 2016 USA Softball Women’s Open Slow Pitch National Championship Team Derby Girls/OA/Easton, includes athletes from 11 different states who have earned numerous USA Softball National Championships and individual tournament accolades.
Open to GIRLS AGES 7-14

visit PitchHitRun.com to register
Sixty-four of the nation’s top 16-Under and 18-Under teams will be heading west this July for the 2017 USA Softball JO Cup. Slated to be held July 23-29, each age group is represented by 32 teams who will battle for the coveted title of USA Softball JO Cup champions.

For the 2017 tournament schedule, the 18-under division will be played at the Big League Dreams facility in Perris, Calif., while the 16-under division will split their time with pool play at the Lake Elsinore Softball Complex and bracket play at the Big League Dreams facility. Kicking off the tournament will be a coaches meeting, including check-in and bat testing, on July 23. Pool play is set to take place July 24-25, before teams move onto bracket play July 26-29. New this year, each age group will have two 16-team double elimination brackets, where the winners will play a one game championship game for the title of JO Cup Champions. FloSoftball will once again serve as the source for live-streaming for the USA Softball JO Cup, and viewing and live stat links will be available on USASoftball.com.

“The EC Bullets 18U Gold team always looks forward to the national competition provided at the USA Softball JO Cup each summer. We were fortunate to have won the 2016 championship after finishing second in the inaugural event in 2015. The opportunity for our young ladies to play against the best teams in the country, and to do so in front of the USA coaching staff is a thrill for all of us! We look forward again to the competition this summer in California!”

- East Cobb Bullets 18U Gold Team
Manager Greg Schnute

Click here for quick facts about the 2017 USA Softball JO cup
TOURNAMENTUSASOFTBALL.COM

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100’s of tournament listings!

We’re making it easier for USA Softball teams to find USA Softball-sanctioned events in their area! Visit the new and improved TournamentUSASoftball.com, USA Softball’s exclusive tournament management system, to find a USA Softball tournament near you! From easy-to-access brackets, text alerts and Power Rankings, check out these special features and more today!

Visit TournamentUSASoftball.com to find a tournament near you!
WOMEN’S NATIONAL TEAM LOOKS TO QUALIFY FOR 2020 OLYMPICS

As the USA Softball Women’s National Team (WNT) begins to ramp up their international calendar in hopes of qualifying for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, the 2017 season is highlighted by four international events that circle the globe including the World Cup of Softball XII in Oklahoma City.

JULY 5-9
World Cup of Softball XII
Oklahoma City, Okla.
JULY 12-14
Training Camp • Sacramento, Calif.
JULY 13
Youth Clinic • Sacramento, Calif.
JULY 13
Exhibition Games
Sacramento, Calif./Raley Field
JULY 19-23
Training Camp
Tuscaloosa/Auburn, Ala.
JULY 20
Exhibition Games
Tuscaloosa, Ala. / Rhoads Stadium
JULY 22
Exhibition Games
Auburn, Ala. / Jane B. Moore Field
AUGUST 4-13
Pan Am/World Qualifier
Santa Domingo, Dominican Republic
AUGUST 25-27
Japan Cup • Takasaki City, Japan

Click here to see the full 2017 Women’s National Team schedule
Click here to see the 2017 Women’s National Team roster
The Junior Women’s National Team (JWNT) schedule for the 2017 season is highlighted by events in four major cities, including the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Junior Women’s World Championship (JWWC) and the World Cup of Softball. The team prepares to defend and strive for a back-to-back gold medal finish at the WBSC JWWC along with competing against some of the top international teams at the World Cup of Softball.

All 24 members of the training team will meet at USA Softball headquarters June 11-19 in Oklahoma City, Okla., to train at the USA Softball Hall of Fame Complex to officially kick off their 2017 season. After taking a brief break the team will return to Oklahoma City for the World Cup of Softball, held July 5-9, to face powerhouse teams from across the globe. Following the World Cup, the JWNT hits the road for Clearwater, Fla. where they will train during the days leading up to the WBSC JWWC, set to take place July 24-31. The JWNT will conclude their season in Ohio where they will participate in an exhibition game on August 9 before the Major League Baseball (MLB) Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) World Series on August 10 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Announced earlier this year was the coaching staff for the 2017 JWNT, including head coach and four-time Olympian Laura Berg, in addition to assistant coaches Trisha Ford (Fremont, Calif./head coach at Arizona State), Kristie Fox (San Diego, Calif./head coach at UT-Arlington), two-time Olympian Natasha Watley (Irvine, Calif./director of operations at CSUN), and three-time Olympian Lori Harrigan-Mack (Las Vegas, Nev./pitching coach at College of Southern Nevada).
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Life Changing Experience: We are on a mission to help every softball player in America know where she stands and how she can reach her full potential.

Professional Evaluation: Our ratings are the Gold Standard trusted by college coaches nationwide. Plus, participating in a tryout may lead to being selected for an Under Armour Softball Factory Team or Training Program.

Proven Results: Our players participate on college teams in the best conferences in the country, including the ACC, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac 12 and SEC. Put our experience to work for you.

It's the proven combination of honest evaluation & qualified coaches that helps us build greatness in young athletes nationwide.

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SOFTBALLFACTORY.COM

Or 1 855 822 5115 to find an event near you.
OUR MISSION:
To inspire and educate others while enhancing the health and welfare of Wounded Warrior Amputees.

2017 SEASON-TO-DATE:

The Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Team (WWAST) have been crisscrossing their way across the country. The season kicked-off with Spring Training at TigerTown (home of the Detroit Tigers Spring Training) in Lakeland, Fla. in January and the team has played in numerous events since then. On June 12-18, the WWAST held their fifth annual Kids Camp in the Washington D.C. area. The camp brought in 20 amazing children who were missing limbs and received mentoring by the Wounded Warriors. It was a very inspiring event for everyone.

Be sure to look out for the WWAST the remainder of the year as they may be coming to your community. As a reminder, their website, www.thewwast.org provides a lot of information about the WWAST. The WWAST is also on Social Media where fans can follow along with their travels all year long. Supporters can “Like” the team on Facebook and “Follow” them on Twitter @WWAmpSoftball. The WWAST is not affiliated with other charities having the words “Wounded Warrior” in their name (e.g. Wounded Warrior Project, etc.). Since their inception over 85% of their donations have supported programs helping Wounded Warrior Amputees, amputee children, and medical research.
# Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Team

## 2017 Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location/Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JULY 7-9</td>
<td>Brainerd, MN (Tournament)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JULY 14-16</td>
<td>Akron, OH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUGUST 4-6</td>
<td>Topeka, IN/South Bend, IN (Combined Event)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUGUST 25-27</td>
<td>Utica, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEPTEMBER 2-4</td>
<td>Appleton, WI (Game on Sept. 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEPTEMBER 8-10</td>
<td>Columbus, OH (Tournament)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEPTEMBER 15-17</td>
<td>Welch, MN (Tournament)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEPTEMBER 27-OCTOBER 1</td>
<td>Alumni Kids Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCTOBER 13-15</td>
<td>Dayton, OH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCTOBER 27-29</td>
<td>Huntsville, AL (Tentative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER 10-12</td>
<td>Jonesboro, AR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scheduling for the 2018 season is open! If your community is interested in hosting the WWAST for 2018, please contact WWAST Executive Director, Dennis Wince (dennis@thewwast.org).
The JUGS® 7-foot Complete Practice Travel Screen® features a huge 6.5' x 6.5' Hitting Sock!

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$179
MEET OUR PLAYERS:
In each issue of Balls and Strikes, we would like you to begin to meet some of the players on the WWAST:

NICK BRADLEY
Staff Sergeant (Retired) Nick Bradley was born in 1982 and is from Emerson, Ark. He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 2001 and has combat deployments to Iraq in 2003-2004 and 2005 and in Afghanistan in 2008 with the Air Force Security Forces. While in Afghanistan, he was driving a vehicle that rolled over a command denoted mine that rendered him a left index and right hand partial amputee. He has been awarded the Purple Heart, Army Combat Action Badge, the Air Force Combat Action Medal, the Joint Services Commendation Medal, and three Air Force Commendation Medals. Staff Sergeant (Retired) Bradley currently resides in North Richmond Hills, Texas, where he is pursuing his college degree.

FRANK WASSON
Staff Sergeant (Retired) Frank Wasson was born in 1982 and is from Salem, Ore. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2005 and has a combat tour to Iraq in 2007 and one in Afghanistan in 2010 as a Weapons Squad Leader with 2/327 B Company, 101st ABN in the Infantry. While on a mounted patrol, his convoy was ambushed. An enemy rocket penetrated his vehicle and now is a below the knee amputee. He was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge, Parachutists Badge, Bronze Star with Valor, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal with Valor, (2) Army Commendation Medals, (2) Army Achievement Awards. Staff Sergeant (Retired) Frank Wasson currently resides in Salem, Ore., where he is pursuing his college degree.

CHRIS HUTTON
Sergeant (Retired) Chris Hutton was born in 1975 and is from Grand Forks, N.D. He enlisted in the North Dakota Army National Guard in 1993. He was called to active duty for Operation Noble Eagle once, twice for Operation Iraqi Freedom and three times for state activations (flood operations). His last deployment was from June 2004 through November 2005. Upon his return to North Dakota, he was struck by a drunk driver while operating his motorcycle in Grand Forks. The accident left him with a below the knee amputation of the right leg. Sergeant Hutton continued his service for the Army National Guard until his retirement in 2012, and continues to serve his community as a Corporal for the Grand Forks County Sheriff’s Department.
MEET OUR PLAYERS:

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

CODY RICE
Staff Sergeant (Retired) Cody Rice was born in 1985 in Newark, Ohio. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2008 and has two combat tours to Afghanistan in 2009-10 and 2012 serving with the 173rd Airborne Brigade as an Airborne Paratrooper and infantryman. One month into his second deployment, he was hit with a grenade which took his right foot and rendered him a below the knee amputee. Staff Sergeant (Retired) Rice has been awarded a Purple Heart, multiple Army Commendation medals and multiple Army Achievement medals. He currently resides in Grass Valley, Calif., where he is pursuing his college degree.

KYLE EARL
Lance Corporal (Retired) Kyle Earl was born in 1986 and is from Mt. Pleasant, Mich. He enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 2005 and has a combat tour of Iraq in 2006 serving in a Mobile Assault Platoon. Six weeks into the deployment he was hit by an I.E.D. burning the right side of his body, fracturing his face, and severely damaging his right arm which ultimately led to the amputation of his right hand. Lance Corporal (Retired) Earl has been awarded a Purple Heart and Combat Action Ribbon. He currently resides in Kalamazoo, Mich.

MIKE DREYER
Mike Dreyer was born in 1975 and raised in central New Jersey. He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1993 and honorably discharged as a Senior Airman in 1998. He was a member of the 92nd Air Refueling CE Squadron as a heavy equipment operator and weapons control specialist. Mike Dreyer re-enlisted in 2002 into the NJ Air National Guard. His enlistment was cut short due to a stateside work related accident in which a 4K pound steel plate fell and landed on his leg and he was forced to self-amputate. For the past 14 years, Mike Dreyer has worked in the prosthetic/orthotic field as a tech/fitter. He currently resides in Anderson, S.C. with his wife and two daughters.
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The world’s best will transcend on the USA Softball Hall of Fame Complex – OGE Energy Field – INTEGRIS Field for the World Cup of Softball XII and Border Battle IX from June 30 to July 2 and July 5 to July 9. The World Cup of Softball will be highlighted by the top four teams in the world while the Border Battle will pit the USA Softball Men’s and Women’s Slow Pitch National Teams against Canada’s best. General admission all-session and single-session tickets for both events are on sale by phone at 800-654-8337 or online at USASoftball.com.

The week begins with the ninth-annual Men’s Border Battle from June 30-July 2 featuring round-robin games between the USA Softball Men’s Slow Pitch national Team, the USA Softball Women’s Slow Pitch National Team, the USA Softball Men’s Futures Slow Pitch National Team, Team Canada and several other USA Softball-registered teams. The three-day event will be highlighted by the Men’s Border Battle IX, where Team USA will look to hold onto their Border Battle bragging rights on July 1. The USA Softball Men’s Slow Pitch National Team and the USA Softball Men’s Futures Slow Pitch National Team will also be competing in the Slow Pitch Showdown on July 2. Adding to the action-packed lineup is the Women’s.
Border Battle, featuring the inaugural USA Softball Women’s Slow Pitch National Team who will take the field against Team Canada.

The 2017 World Cup of Softball is set to feature six of the Top 10 teams in the world: No. 1 ranked Japan, No. 2 USA, No. 3 Canada, No. 4 Australia, No. 7 Puerto Rico and No. 10 Mexico. The No. 17 ranked Philippines and the USA Softball Junior Women’s National Team (JWNT) will also be part of the lineup. The complete Border battle and World Cup of Softball game schedule, special promotions, autograph sessions with the USA Softball teams, and media schedule will be announced at a later date.

All-session tickets for the Border Battle are $12 for both adult and youth tickets, while single-session, daily tickets can be purchased for $5. The World Cup of Softball has all-session ticket packages available for fans wanting to watch every pitch. All-session tickets are $40 for adults and $20 for youth. Adult single-session tickets are also available for $10, while youth can attend for $5 per day. Tickets can be purchased by phone at 800-654-8337 or online at USASoftball.com. All tickets are general admission seating, and will be available for pickup outside the USA Softball Hall of Fame Complex at will-call.
DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A MEMBER OF TEAM USA?

JUNIOR MEN’S NATIONAL TEAM EXPOSURE EVENTS PROVIDE THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO SHOWCASE YOUR SKILLS!

Four exposure events remain for the 2018 Junior Men’s National Team that will provide athletes the opportunity to showcase their skills in front of members of the JWNT coaching staff. The exposure events are open to any male U.S. citizen born in 1999, 2000, 2001 or 2002 who can commit to future team events. There is a $15, non-refundable registration fee for athletes who are not registered through their respective USA Softball association. Participants are responsible for their own equipment and expenses to the tryouts, and applications must be submitted one week prior to the start date of each event. Athletes will participate in a series of softball-related skills for each position, hitting and bunting.

For more information or to register for an exposure event visit USASoftball.com

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 1-2</td>
<td>Pekin, Illinois</td>
<td>Mike Armitage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 10-12</td>
<td>Midland, Texas</td>
<td>Tyron McKinney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 25-27</td>
<td>Ashland, Ohio</td>
<td>Tyron McKinney</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Members of the 2017 USA Softball Men’s National Team (MNT) roster geared up for the 2017 World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) World Championship by competing at the Rodney Fox Memorial Tournament in Stevens, Pa. Playing in four round-robin games before the playoff brackets, Team USA went undefeated en route to the Rodney Fox Memorial Tournament Championship.

“These guys played as a team,” said Head Coach Denny Bruckert (Gillespie, Ill.). “We swung the bats against some good pitching and our defense played really good all weekend. All in all, we did a really good job all weekend and I’m excited to see how this team develops.”
USA Softball will hold a Fall Classic, the second USA Softball Men’s Slow Pitch Invitational Tournament (NIT) of the 2017 season, which will take place October 7-8 in Virginia Beach, Va. Slated to be held at Princess Anne Athletic Complex, the Slow Pitch NIT will feature three different men’s divisions with no player classifications.

Unique to the Slow Pitch NIT are the three open men’s divisions, which teams can choose to register under: Gold will allow for four home runs a game per team, Silver is allowed two home runs, while no home runs will be allowed in Bronze. Additional Slow Pitch NIT tournament details include a four-game guarantee, no player classifications and prize packages, including championship rings for the first place team and awards packages for the second place team.

Click here for more information
BASEBALL, SOFTBALL COMBINE TO BECOME MOST PARTICIPATED TEAM SPORTS IN U.S.

The efforts of USA Baseball, USA Softball and Major League Baseball have proved successful as nearly 25 million participants in the United States has helped baseball and softball combine for the most participated team sport in 2016. Overall, baseball participation increased by 7.7% while slow pitch participation increased by 8.1%.

Baseball Commissioner Robert D. Manfred, Jr. said: "No goal is more important to Major League Baseball than making baseball and softball accessible and to engage with children in all communities. The results of the SFIA Report demonstrate that participation in baseball and softball is growing. We are encouraged by the success of the PLAY BALL initiative toward our objectives and grateful for partnerships with USA Baseball, USA Softball and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Together, we will continue to work to provide memorable experiences for young people, especially those from underserved areas."

In 2015, Major League Baseball launched the "PLAY BALL" initiative as the sport’s largest collective effort to encourage young people to participate in baseball- or softball-related activities, including formal leagues, special events and casual forms of play. PLAY BALL events have become MLB’s signature youth engagement activity during the professional and amateur baseball and softball calendar, particularly in connection with key dates from Spring Training, through the MLB Championship Season and into the Postseason and World Series. PLAY BALL aims to highlight the fun and community-focused natures of the game at the Major League, professional, amateur and youth levels. In addition to flagship partnerships with USA Baseball and USA Softball, PLAY BALL is also supported by all 30 MLB Clubs, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and MLB Corporate Partners Chevrolet, Scotts and Nathan’s Famous. In 2016, MLB Network launched Play Ball, a weekly player interview and demonstration show geared toward kids. In the program, MLB stars, including Bryce Harper, Dexter Fowler, Francisco Lindor and Anthony Rizzo, have discussed their experiences reaching the Major Leagues and shared tips in one-on-one demonstrations and conversations with MLB Network analysts. Currently in its second season, Play Ball is available on multiple platforms, including MLB Network, MLB At Bat, MLB.com and Facebook.

"Seeing the growth of both baseball and softball means that opportunities continue to expand for people to get involved in bat and ball sports," said USA Softball Executive Director Craig Cress. "We are honored to be partnered with MLB and USA Baseball for the PLAY BALL initiative and believe that the efforts of all three organizations has greatly contributed to the growth in participation in both sports. By putting a bat and ball in kids' hands and growing the game at the grassroots level, it fosters a passion and love for the game, which is the reason why so many get involved in our great sports. We look forward to continuing to work with MLB and USA Baseball in providing more opportunities for young people across the country to get involved in baseball and softball."
Special Price for USA Softball: $269.99
Regular Price: $299.99

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Each week, USA Softball highlights some of the legends in the game of softball. From Slow Pitch Hall of Famers like Steve Loya and Nancy Oldham to legendary fast pitch players like Bill Wojie and Donna Lopiano ... find out which legendary players helped pave the way for the players of today!
Your gut isn’t just your stomach and it isn’t just another word use for “instinct”. Your gut is also your digestive tract and a complex mix of organs, microbes, hormones, and enzymes. How this complex mix interacts dictates how well you will absorb the food you consume. And what happens or doesn’t happen in your gut will impact your daily lifestyle.

Your digestive tract delivers all of the nutrients you eat to your body, and there are many steps you can take to make sure you’re reaping the full reward from the nutrients you consume in terms of absorption, especially if you’re prone to gas, bloating, acid reflux, constipation, or other distress after eating.

For years the adage has been, “you are what you eat,” but science has now amended that narrative to “you are what you eat – and can absorb.” In recent years, there has been a focus on the trillions of microbes that make up our digestive tract – collectively known as the microbiome – and the impact they have on everything from your digestion to your immune system. Studies suggest that changes to our microbiome can influence an array of health conditions, both for good and for bad.

As we learn more about the role of the microbiome – the collection of bacteria living in the digestive tract – the more we understand the impact of our gut health on a multitude of systems in the body.

Gut flora consists of trillions of living microbes in your digestive system. Gut microbiome compositions will vary based on geographic origins, what a person eats, medications being taken, and numerous environmental factors. A healthy microbiome is important in keeping the lining of the intestines healthy, which in turn impacts our ability to digest and absorb food, as well as playing a large role in regulating our immune response.

How does your microbiome affect your daily life? Consider how a person gets “butterflies” in the stomach when they’re nervous. This is because the vagus nerve connects the brain to the stomach. Microbiome health plays a big role in regulating what messages the brain receives from the gut. This is known as the gut-brain axis and researchers are investigating its role in multiple health conditions.

The microbiome connection is also important when we consider stress. Stress has a negative impact on the microbiome. Although stress can be caused by environmental, social, and emotional factors, it also can be caused by heavy performance training. During strenuous training, the body shuttles blood from the gut to the muscles, leaving less blood flow to the digestive tract, which in turn raises core temperature. These are sources of stress to the gut and can lead to an inflammatory state. Repeated or sustained digestive inflammation can lead to what is known as a “leaky gut,” which can impact the ability to fully absorb the nutrients in food.

Adding fermented foods to your diet will improve gut health and immunity, and can help prevent and manage inflammation in the gut. Examples of fermented foods are sauerkraut, kimchi, pickles, Greek and regular yogurt, kombucha, miso, soy sauce, and tempeh.

The use of a probiotic supplement can be an effective way to promote the growth of “friendly” microorganisms within the digestive tract.*
The journey to a #USASoftball National Championship is happening all across the United States! USA Softball National Qualifiers are held in the girls’ fast pitch division and are used to qualify teams for USA Softball National Championship Finals.

Select a Region or Territory below to find an USA Softball National Qualifier in which your team can participate.
FROM THE VAULT

A player takes a swing at the 1986 Men’s Class A Fast Pitch National Championship.

Bobby McDaniel shows the grip on a softball.

Way before the invention of Gamechanger, tournament administrators had to fill out stats on the big board!

The umpire staff for the 1983 Men’s Major Industrial National Championship.

Tracy Pateria is thrown out at home by Michele Bottomly.
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. Who won the 2017 USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year?

2. Name one of the stops on the USA Softball Stadium Power Tour.

3. When is Border Battle IX and World Cup of Softball XII?

4. List one of the Junior Men’s National Team Exposure Events.

5. Where will the Fall Slow Pitch NIT be held?
#WomensHistoryMonth: Delanie Gourley
USA Softball recognizes and celebrates #WomensHistoryMonth by featuring a post from WNT athlete, Delanie G.

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**Upcoming Events**

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**USA Softball News**

- #WellnessWednesday: How Sleep Impacts Health and Performance by Thorne Research
- O’Toole no hits her way to USA Softball Player of the Week honors
- Undefeated season moves Oregon to No. 1 in Week 7 of ESPN.com/USA Softball Collegiate Top 25 Poll
- How the Top 25 Fared - Week 7
- Twenty-two teams to compete in USA Softball Spring Challenge, College Preview Tournament to feature OU, UAB, Mississippi State and LA Tech
- Legends of the Game - Ruth Sears
- USA Softball to field inaugural Women’s Slow Pitch National Team in 2017
- #WellnessWednesday: The Travel Ritual by Thorne Research

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PHOTO GALLERIES, PLAYER JOURNALS, BLOGS, TRAINING TIPS AND STILL YOUR SOURCE FOR LIVE SCORING, STATS, BIOS, PRODUCTS AND MORE.

FOLLOW THE USA SOFTBALL NATIONAL TEAMS AT

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AS THEY TAKE ON THE WORLD.