OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF ASA/USA SOFTBALL

Balls and Strikes

March 2016

Raven Chavanne

The World Cup

World Cup Returns to OKC

#TheBestPlayinOKC

Team USA Takes On The World

ASAUSAsoftball.com
USA SOFTBALL MOBILE APP

- All the latest in breaking news, results, announcements and stories
- Watch live-streaming from ASA/USA Softball events across the U.S.
- Find photo galleries and athlete profiles for members of USA Softball National Teams
- Discover the membership benefits of playing ASA/USA Softball and learn how to register
- Locate an ASA/USA Softball event near you
- Expansive photo galleries
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- Donation opportunities
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NEW

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

Mizuno.
THE LINEUP

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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.
Hello everyone!

The 2016 season is upon us and I hope that those teams who have already begun league and tournament play are enjoying another great year with ASA/USA Softball. We take great pride in offering the best softball for you, no matter what your involvement may be. From the umpires behind the plate to the fans in the stands, we want to create a memorable experience from the moment you step into a softball complex until you head home for the evening.

As we get closer to Championship Season, I encourage you to view your local association websites for the most up to date information for softball in your area. From local tournaments to ASA/USA Softball National Championship Qualifiers, your local association serves as a great resource center for your program. I also encourage you to look into the many benefits that ASA/USA Softball provides to our members. Coaches can grow with the ACE (Achieve, Certify, Educate) Coaching Certification Program while umpires can attend a National Umpire School in their area to develop their game.

We are also continuing our mobile presence as we now offer two mobile apps, the Official Rules of Softball and the Official USA Softball Mobile App, in addition to our web-based rulebook application. The USA Softball Mobile App provides the latest in news, results and videos from ASA/USA Softball, while the Official Rules of Softball allows you to have the rules in the palm of your hand! You can get information about all of these resources and many more by visiting www.ASAUSASoftball.com.

As you begin preparations for the 2016 season, Junior Olympic (JO) administrators also took steps to prepare for the year as they traveled to Oklahoma City for the biennial JO Commissioner Workshop. A lot of important discussions were had on how we can continue to provide more opportunities for youth athletes across the U.S., and I am certain that each attendee will use the information they were given to better their local programs.

Letter continued on next page
There are a lot of big events in store for ASA/USA Softball this year. We will once again hold close to 100 National Championships across the U.S. in all levels of play. We are also proud to once again hold the USA Softball JO Cup, which moves to the east this year in Marietta, Ga. With the success of the inaugural event in 2015, we’ve added a 16-Under division to provide even more opportunities for athletes to play ASA/USA Softball.

Our USA Softball National Team program will also be busy in 2016, as five National Teams will compete this year for the Red, White and Blue. Our Women’s National Team will head to Surrey, B.C., Canada for the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Women’s World Championship while our Junior Men’s National Team will be competing on home soil in the WBSC Junior Men’s World Championship in Midland, Mich. We’re also proud to have the World Cup of Softball XI and Border Battle VIII return to Oklahoma City to be played at the historic ASA Hall of Fame Complex this July. In addition to the Women’s National Team, our Women’s Elite Team will be competing in the World Cup, which will have a record-13 countries represented. Our Slow Pitch National Teams will also take the field during the Border Battle and Slow Pitch Showdown.

Please help support these athletes who represent not only our great organization, but the United States in a professional manner by attending one of these events this year. These athletes take great pride in representing the U.S. and are class acts, plus you can also catch some great softball!

It’s going to be another great year of softball! On behalf of everyone at ASA/USA Softball, I wish you a successful 2016 season.

Warren Jones, President
ASA/USA Softball
As a member of ASA/USA Softball, you could receive exclusive savings on auto and home insurance from Liberty Mutual.¹

Join thousands of satisfied customers with Liberty Mutual Insurance.²

$ Discounted Rates—You could save up to $427.96 a year³ on auto insurance and receive additional discounts on home insurance.

Exceptional Service—Whether you’re in an accident or just need some advice, know we’ll always be on call for you.

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This organization receives financial support for offering this auto and home benefits program.

¹ Discounts and savings are available where state laws and regulations allow, and may vary by state. To the extent permitted by law, applicants are individually underwritten; not all applicants may qualify.
² Based on Liberty Mutual Insurance Company’s 2013 Customer Satisfaction Survey in which more than 85% of policyholders reported their interaction with Liberty Mutual service representatives to be “among the best experiences” and “better than average.”
³ Figure reflects average national savings for customers who switched to Liberty Mutual’s group auto and home program. Based on data collected between 9/1/12 and 8/31/13. Individual premiums and savings will vary.
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⁵ With the purchase of optional Towing & Labor coverage. Applies to mechanical breakdowns and disablements only. Towing related to accidents would be covered under your Collision or Other Than Collision coverage.
⁶ Optional coverage. Applies to a covered total loss. Deductible applies. Does not apply to leased vehicles and motorcycles. Not available in NC.

Coverage provided and underwritten by Liberty Mutual Insurance and its affiliates, 175 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116.

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THE LEAD OFF:

Members of the 2016 USA Softball Women’s National and Elite Teams were named following a Women’s National Team Selection Camp in January. Be sure to read more about the teams on page 40 and 41 of this issue.
The Lead Off:

The 2016 season at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex will be full of competition as the softball capital of the world will hold over 30 events this year. Highlighting the 2016 season: the NCAA Women’s College World Series (WCWS), the World Cup of Softball XI and Border Battle VIII. Read more about the 2016 calendar on page 50.
CUSTOMIZE YOUR PLAYER.

CUSTOMIZE YOUR TEAM.

CUSTOMIZE THE SPORT.

NIKETEAM.NIKE.COM

ENGINEERED TO THE EXACT SPECIFICATIONS OF CHAMPIONSHIP ATHLETES

JUST DO IT.
KINSLEY, 11
Tucson, Ariz. • Tucson Strikerz • Girls' 12-Under Fast Pitch • Pitcher, Third Base, Catcher

HER START
I started playing as soon as I could hold a bat. My mom, dad and I would play in the backyard and we'd get in trouble for hitting the ball over fences or into the neighbors stuff. My brother plays baseball so it was an easy way for us to have competitions.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT SOFTBALL
We are a military family, and move a lot. But everywhere we go now there is a softball team that is either looking for a good team player, or my dad will volunteer to coach and we stay involved as a family. Softball girls are my other family. Even though there are different schools and different people, softball stays the same. Competition is always there, and there's nothing like being under the lights with crazy moms screaming "Hustle!" or "Slide!" When Dad was gone for a year, I played on a travel team with other girls that became my other sisters. We moved away from them, but I knew they were there. Dad’s year overseas was hard, but we talked all the time about practice and games, and he still got on to me for knuckleheaded plays!

ROLE MODELS
My dad. He coaches other girls when other teams pass on them or girls who think "they can’t". He pushes them to be better and makes all of our events “Family Time”.

GOAL
To go to college and be the best Warrior Scholar Athlete I can be. Also, I hope to have my family see my name on ESPN.

TOUGHEST OBSTACLE
Moving. I’ve been in about six different schools. I hate leaving my teammates. We share too much on the road and at home.
DENNIS, 65
Tempe, Ariz.
City of Grace
Men's A Slow Pitch Church League
Pitcher, Catcher

HIS START
When I was 10 years old in Dallas Center, Iowa, we had an American Legion Junior Softball League instead of little league baseball. I pitched and played first base. I didn't play baseball until high school and coached high school baseball in my home town after I graduated from Iowa State.

TOUGHEST OBSTACLE
I have been a Type 1 diabetic for 46 years. I worked hard at taking proper care of myself over those years and am proud to be a positive role model for other diabetics and teammates. I have published a dozen freelance articles about sports and diabetes in national magazines, newsletters, websites and newspapers.

BEST EXPERIENCE PLAYING
Taking the field with my two sons on four teams in three different leagues. One of my sons is also a Type 1 diabetic. Also, throwing 11 strikeouts in one game.

GOAL
My goal is to continue to play and umpire for SW Umpires for as long as I can. I like to help players improve their skills, knowledge of the rules and playing as a team. "The only thing slow about slow pitch is the pitch!"

FUN FACTS
Since 1974, I have refereed and umpired high school varsity football, basketball, baseball, softball and track in Iowa and Arizona...all while being a Type 1 diabetic. This exercise has helped me be successful in treating diabetes. One of my published freelance articles is titled "I Get Paid to Exercise!"
OLIVIA, 14
Forston, Ga. • Georgia Intensity - Song
Girls’ 16-Under Fast Pitch • Third Base

HER START
I started T-ball when I was five because my parents signed me up. I tried
dance, gymnastics and cheer but decided I liked this game the best. I also
feel like the game likes me.

PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT
My commitment to the game (weekend tournaments, weekday work-outs
and field practices while maintaining a high GPA in all Honors classes my
freshman year of high school). Also my resilience in tough situations.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT SOFTBALL
Being proud of the challenges that I have had to overcome that can be
applied to everyday life. Also it’s just fun to play!

BEST ADVICE
You don’t have to be the best, you just have to give your best!

TOUGHEST OBSTACLE
My struggle of being a confident and consistent hitter.

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
EVERY DONOR MAKES A DIFFERENCE.
BE A PART OF OUR LEGACY!

To find out more or to join for just $100, contact us at (405) 425-3422, LegacyClub@softball.org or visit USASoftball.com and select Legacy Club under the Team USA tab.
The ASA/USA Softball National Office staff welcomed two additions as Stacey Hepp and Katie Willis were welcomed to Oklahoma City in January. Hepp (Lakeland, Fla.) came on board as the Managing Director of Marketing while Willis (Elyria, Ohio) was hired as the Communications Coordinator. Learn more about Hepp and Willis on page 61.

Championship season is almost upon us! Have you mapped out your road to a 2016 ASA/USA Softball National Championship? Finding a qualifier near you has never been easier! Teams can find a breakdown of both National and Regional Qualifiers online at ASAUSASoftball.com!
LAURA BERG TO LEAD 2017 USA SOFTBALL JUNIOR WOMEN’S NATIONAL TEAM

Three-time Olympic Gold Medalist Laura Berg (Corvalis, Ore.) has been selected as the Head Coach for the 2017 USA Softball Junior Women's National Team. USA Softball's only four-time Olympian, Berg has served on the Women’s National Team coaching staff since 2012 and is currently in her fourth season as the Head Coach at Oregon State University. Read more about Laura Berg and find out the complete coaching staff for the 2017 Junior Women’s National Team on page 31.

ALL-SESSION WORLD CUP XI AND BORDER BATTLE VIII TICKETS NOW ON SALE!

The world’s best softball will return to Oklahoma City this summer July 4-10! Back and bigger than ever, the World Cup of Softball XI will be highlighted by the top 10 teams in the world while both Canada and the USA Softball Men's Slow Pitch National Team will return for Border Battle VIII. This marks the first time since 2013 that the ASA Hall of Fame Complex has hosted the annual international softball events.

TAKE SOFTBALL WITH YOU ON THE GO WITH OFFICIAL MOBILE APPS!

Be prepared this season with the Official Rules of Softball mobile app! From rules to National Umpire Staff contact information, staying in the know has never been easier!

Don’t get lost in the shuffle this summer while on the road! Stay current by receiving breaking news, including competition results, Team USA announcements and ASA/USA Softball stories across the country. Download the ASA/USA Softball’s Mobile App today for live streaming, photo galleries and more.

Click here to purchase your tickets today!

CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD!
Take advantage of partner travel discounts.

Fly United

fly the friendly skies℠
YOU SAID IT, WE READ IT!

If there’s one thing we love at ASA/USA Softball, it’s interacting with softball fans from around the world! With a strong following on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, here’s a collection of some of our favorite comments we have received from our followers!

On the ASA/USA Softball Umpires selected for WBSC World Championships: Congratulations on your assignments. All are great representatives of ASA/USA Softball.

– Sandra Allan

Seeing on @ASAUSASoftball app that @JennieFinch will HOST 2016 season for @Softball360tv MADE MY DAY!

– @OdelNadine

On a photo of the ASA Hall of Fame Complex: Was at the Hall of Fame museum and stadium today, fell in love completely!

– @shelbikay_afl

On a photo of opening season at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex: 10 days till our first practice of this season! @ames.morgan I feel improvement in my bones!

– @a.n.d.r.e.a.n.n.a.24

I’ve watched the ASA/USA Softball snapchat story at least 12x today

– @liv_lyf_16

On a throwback photo of the 2008 U.S. Olympic Bound 4 Beijing Tour: Y’all were an awesome team!!!!!

– Mary Flores

On a photo of an athlete with dirt all over from diving headfirst: I always tell my girls their uniforms look better with diamond dirt all over them. #getdirty

– @shenaniganery

Happy Leap Day from the NY Rockers. #Together @PFXAthletics @ASAUSASoftball @DrDotShortstop

– @NYROCKERSBLUM

Be sure to "Like" our pages or tweet at us for a chance to see your posts in the next issue!
RPS Bollinger and ASA ~
Teaming up together for more than 50 years!

Let our team help you insure your teams!

THREE EASY WAYS TO INSURE SOFTBALL:

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
3. Visit the RPSBollinger.com website and click Amateur Softball Association
The 2016 Official Rules of Softball are now available for purchase on the Apple and Android platforms. The user-interactive application contains the complete version of the 2016 Official Rules of Softball and also has a searchable option.

By downloading this app, all participants of softball, including umpires, coaches, parents, players and fans have the ability to access the official rules wherever they are at this season. With more than 1,500 downloads/active users in its second year, more and more are starting to recognize the value of having this great tool available to them at the tap of a finger. Downloading the app includes an annual fee of $15, which expires when the new version becomes available.

In addition to the 2016 Official Rules of Softball app, ASA/USA Softball also offers a web-based search feature for all iPhone, iPad, Blackberry, Android, Windows phones and tablet users. From any of the devices listed, visit m.asasoftball.com and you will be directed to a mobile-friendly version of ASA/USA Softball’s website. The web-based search feature is available for an annual subscription for $4.95.

M.asasoftball.com also allows users to quickly access relevant material that users may need at the softball field, including tournament information and certified equipment.

The 2016 Official Rules of Softball also joins the recently released USA Softball Mobile App, which is available for free on iOS and Android platforms for both smartphones and tablets. Fans who download this app will have complete access to athlete stories, photos, videos and social media in addition to reading about the latest in breaking news for Team USA. For tournaments taking place at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex, users are able to search for the field and watch the live stream on their screens. Those interested can also locate membership benefits of playing ASA/USA Softball, including information on how to register as a team, player, coach or umpire, and donation opportunities for supporting ASA/USA Softball. Head on over to the next page to find out why you should download the USA Softball Mobile App today!
WHY DOWNLOAD THE USA SOFTBALL MOBILE APP?

1. **RECEIVE** the latest in breaking news, including competition results, Team USA announcements and ASA/USA Softball stories across the country.

2. **WATCH** the live-stream from ASA/USA Softball events across the U.S. or search through the video library for previous World Cup, National Championships and behind-the-scenes content.

3. **FOLLOW** members of the USA Softball National Teams on social media.

4. **VIEW** photo galleries, athlete profiles and more.

5. **LOCATE** an ASA/USA Softball event near you, including Team USA tour stops, international competitions and ASA Hall of Fame Complex events.

6. **SHOP** at the official ASA/USA Softball online store: SoftballOutlet.com.

7. **SUPPORT** USA Softball through donation opportunities to help keep athletes in the Red, White and Blue.

What are you waiting for? **DOWNLOAD the app today!**
Proud to be a part of every line drive, stolen base and home run.
INFIELD CONDITIONS: STABILIZED

Arizona State University
2008 National Champions
Farrington Stadium, Tempe, AZ
For 14-straight weeks, ASA/USA Softball and ESPN release a Top 25 Collegiate Poll with the final ESPN.com/USA Softball Collegiate Top 25 poll coming after the conclusion of the 2016 NCAA Women’s College World Series. Visit www.ASAUSASoftball.com each Tuesday to view the current Top 25 poll as well as the weekly USA Softball National Collegiate Player of the Week.

As only the third team in NCAA softball history to claim back-to-back NCAA Women’s College World Series Championships, the Florida Gators have defended the coveted No. 1 spot in every poll for the 2016 season.

Share the experience with softball fans from across the country June 2-8 in Oklahoma City. Tickets are now on sale, click here to secure your championship experience!

**2016 USA SOFTBALL NATIONAL COLLEGIATE PLAYERS OF THE WEEK**

**Week 1 (Feb. 11-14):** Lexie Elkins – Louisiana-Lafayette - Senior - Catcher – Victoria, Texas  
**Week 3 (Feb. 22-28):** Sierra Hyland – Cal Poly - Junior - Pitcher – Visalia, Calif.  
**Co-Week 4 (Feb. 29-March 6):** Molly Hutchison – NC State - Junior – Catcher/Outfield – San Diego, Calif.  
**Co-Week 4 (Feb. 29-March 6):** Sierra Romero – Michigan - Senior - Infield – Murrieta, Calif.  
**Week 5 (March 7-13):** Bianka Bell – LSU - Senior - Infield – Tampa, Florida  
**Week 6 (March 14-20):** Hannah Day – Troy - Senior - Outfield – Crestview, Fla.
2016 COLLEGE SOFTBALL TELEVISION SCHEDULE

Coming off last season’s Women’s College World Series record ratings, ESPN will offer its most comprehensive NCAA Division I Softball schedule in 2016 with more than 600 games carried across ESPN, ESPN2, ESPNU, SEC Network, Longhorn Network, ESPN3, and SEC Network +. The regular season concludes with championship games from the ACC, American, Atlantic Sun, Big South, Horizon League, Mid-American Conference, Missouri Valley, SEC, Southern and Southland conferences, leading into the NCAA Division I Softball Championship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>GAME</th>
<th>NETWORK</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar-16</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
<td>No. 20 Tennessee at No. 1 Florida</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar-16</td>
<td>5 p.m.</td>
<td>Mississippi Valley State at Texas Southern</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar-16</td>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>No. 1 Florida at No. 6 LSU</td>
<td>ESPN2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9 p.m.</td>
<td>No. 24 Texas at No. 22 Baylor</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<td>Apr-16</td>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>No. 2 Alabama at No. 1 Florida</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<td>10:30 p.m.</td>
<td>No. 15 UCLA at No. 8 Oregon</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<td>Apr-16</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
<td>Ole Miss at Mississippi State</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<td>Apr-16</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
<td>Coastal Carolina at Winthrop</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<td>Apr-16</td>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>No. 9 Texas A&amp;M at No. 20 Tennessee</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>NC State at No. 12 Florida State</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<td>6 p.m.</td>
<td>No. 16 Kentucky at No. 6 LSU</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>No. 11 Georgia at No. 14 Missouri</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr-16</td>
<td>3 p.m.</td>
<td>No. 13 Oklahoma at No. 22 Baylor</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4 p.m.</td>
<td>NC State at No. 12 Florida State</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<td>Apr-16</td>
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<td>No. 20 Tennessee at No. 11 Georgia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3 p.m.</td>
<td>No. 24 Texas at No. 13 Oklahoma</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<td>Apr-16</td>
<td>2 p.m.</td>
<td>No. 11 Georgia at No. 4 Auburn</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4:30 p.m.</td>
<td>No. 13 Oklahoma at No. 20 Tennessee</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5 p.m.</td>
<td>No. 15 UCLA at No. 18 Arizona</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<td>Apr-16</td>
<td>3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>No. 25 Notre Dame at North Carolina</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5 p.m.</td>
<td>No. 15 UCLA at No. 18 Arizona</td>
<td>ESPN2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr-16</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
<td>No. 25 Notre Dame at North Carolina</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<td>Apr-16</td>
<td>6 p.m.</td>
<td>Long Beach State at Cal State Fullerton</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Long Beach State at Cal State Fullerton</td>
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<td>Apr-16</td>
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<td>Bethune-Cookman at Florida A&amp;M</td>
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<td>Apr-16</td>
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<td>No. 6 LSU at Arkansas</td>
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<td>8 p.m.</td>
<td>No. 4 Auburn at No. 20 Tennessee</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<td>May-16</td>
<td>3 p.m.</td>
<td>No. 18 Arizona at No. 8 Oregon</td>
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<td>UCF at USF</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>No. 4 Auburn at No. 20 Tennessee</td>
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<td>May-16</td>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>No. 11 Georgia at No. 2 Alabama</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 p.m.</td>
<td>No. 9 Texas A&amp;M at No. 4 Auburn</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3 p.m.</td>
<td>South Carolina at No. 14 Missouri</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<tr>
<td>May-16</td>
<td>3 p.m.</td>
<td>SEC Tournament</td>
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<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>SEC Tournament</td>
<td>ESPNU</td>
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<td>May-16</td>
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<td>American Championship</td>
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<td>ACC Championship</td>
<td>ESPN</td>
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<td>5 p.m.</td>
<td>SEC Championship</td>
<td>ESPN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-16</td>
<td>10 a.m.</td>
<td>SWAC Softball Championship</td>
<td>ESPNU**</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Live on ESPN3 at 8:30 p.m.  **Live on ESPN3 on May 14 at 3 p.m.  Rankings based on Week 3 of the ESPN.com/USA Softball Collegiate Top 25 Poll.
The most prestigious individual honor in NCAA Division I Softball, the USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year award recognizes outstanding athletic achievement by Division I female collegiate softball players across the country. Check out the list of the Top 50 ‘Watch List’ athletes below!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Alaynie Page</td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
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<td>Erika Piancastelli</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>Jessica Burroughs</td>
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<td>27.</td>
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<td>Notre Dame</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>Kasey Cooper</td>
<td>Auburn</td>
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<td>Katiyana Mauga</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>Kayla Bonstrom</td>
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<td>31.</td>
<td>Kelly Christner</td>
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<td>32.</td>
<td>Kelsey Stewart</td>
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<td>33.</td>
<td>Kiki Stokes</td>
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<td>Kristen Brown</td>
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<td>Kylee Hanson</td>
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<td>36.</td>
<td>Lexi Shubert</td>
<td>USC Upstate</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
<td>Junior</td>
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<td>37.</td>
<td>Lexie Elkins</td>
<td>ULL</td>
<td>Catcher</td>
<td>Senior</td>
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<td>38.</td>
<td>Lindsey Stephens</td>
<td>Texas</td>
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<td>40.</td>
<td>Megan Good</td>
<td>James Madison</td>
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<td>41.</td>
<td>Missy Taukeiaho</td>
<td>Cal State Fullerton</td>
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<td>42.</td>
<td>Morgan Zerkle</td>
<td>Marshall</td>
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<td>Junior</td>
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<td>43.</td>
<td>Paige Parker</td>
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<td>44.</td>
<td>Rainey Gaffin</td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
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<td>45.</td>
<td>Sara Groenwegen</td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
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<td>46.</td>
<td>Shelby Friedenberg</td>
<td>Baylor</td>
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<td>47.</td>
<td>Shelby Turnier</td>
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<td>48.</td>
<td>Shellie Landry</td>
<td>Louisiana-Lafayette</td>
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<td>49.</td>
<td>Sierra Romero</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>Outfield</td>
<td>Senior</td>
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<tr>
<td>50.</td>
<td>Torrian Wright</td>
<td>Savannah State</td>
<td>Infield</td>
<td>Senior</td>
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</table>
Are You Wearing the Best?

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ASA/USA Softball celebrated 13 members from all four territories for their service to the organization at the Junior Olympic (JO) awards banquet Feb. 6 in Oklahoma City. The banquet was part of a two-day instructional workshop sponsored by RPS Bollinger Insurance which aimed towards strengthening the organization’s JO program.

By attending the JO workshop, leaders across the country at their local association level were able to discuss information and exchange ideas in order to plan for the future of the program. To start off the event, ASA/USA Softball President, Warren Jones joined Executive Director, Craig Cress, to address those who attended. A variety of all-group and breakout sessions took place, which included presentations from National Office Staff focusing on RegisterASA updates, live streaming, and marketing to name a few. The workshop is a great learning experience for both newcomers and veterans as many ideas are discussed.

Highlighting the JO Workshop was the Years of Service banquet, where David Ethier of Rhode Island ASA was honored for his 25 years of commitment to the JO program. Twelve other members were recognized, including two, Brenda Petty and Renee Williams, for 20 years, six for 10 years and four that have served five years.

Concluding the weekend was an open discussion for all participants followed by a dinner at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex Fieldhouse and tours of the newly-renovated stadium. The JO Workshop is held every other year in Oklahoma City, rotating with the Umpire-in-Chief Clinic.
WHERE WILL YOU QUALIFY FOR SLOW PITCH CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON?

Wanting to play at the historic ASA Hall of Fame Complex this year for an adult slow pitch National Championship but aren’t quite sure where to find a qualifying tournament? Don’t worry, we’ve got you covered! Below you’ll find a list of qualifying tournaments for both the Men’s Class C National Championship and the Super Slow Pitch National Championship this fall in Oklahoma City.

### 2016 MEN’S CLASS C SLOW PITCH CHAMPIONSHIPS QUALIFIERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>TOURNAMENT</th>
<th>CONTACT</th>
<th>PHONE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 19-21</td>
<td>Naples, FL</td>
<td>Florida ASA Winter National Invitational</td>
<td>Xavier Medina</td>
<td>786.231.9990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>Lancaster, CA</td>
<td>“C” National Invitational</td>
<td>Jay Arredondo</td>
<td>909.809.8693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 19-20</td>
<td>Oklahoma City, OK</td>
<td>Combat Capital City Classic</td>
<td>Rich Cress</td>
<td>405.425.3442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2</td>
<td>Lancaster, CA</td>
<td>“C” National Invitational</td>
<td>Jay Arredondo</td>
<td>909.809.8693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 3</td>
<td>Lancaster, CA</td>
<td>“C” National Invitational</td>
<td>Jay Arredondo</td>
<td>909.809.8693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 22-24</td>
<td>Hanover, MN</td>
<td>Hanover Early Bird</td>
<td>Ryan Anderson</td>
<td>612.801.3026</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 6-8</td>
<td>Owatonna, MN</td>
<td>Corky’s Early Bird</td>
<td>Loren Dietz</td>
<td>507.456.2618</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 14</td>
<td>Rancho Cucamonga, CA</td>
<td>“C” National Invitational</td>
<td>Jay Arredondo</td>
<td>909.809.8693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 14-15</td>
<td>Plant City, FL</td>
<td>Florida ASA National Qualifier</td>
<td>Xavier Medina</td>
<td>786.231.9990</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 20-22</td>
<td>Des Moines, IA</td>
<td>Bud Classic</td>
<td>Pat McNulty</td>
<td>612.701.4859</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 3-5</td>
<td>Shakopee, MN</td>
<td>Shakopee Lions</td>
<td>Pat Balvance</td>
<td>952.250.1750</td>
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<td>June 4-5</td>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tom Topping</td>
<td>319.330.7030</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 18-19</td>
<td>Naples, FL</td>
<td>Florida ASA State</td>
<td>Xavier Medina</td>
<td>786.231.9990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 18-19</td>
<td>Savage, MN</td>
<td>Big Kids Sporting Goods</td>
<td>Scott Johnson</td>
<td>612.701.4859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 24-26</td>
<td>Honolulu, HI</td>
<td>ASA Hawaii Men’s C State</td>
<td>Stan Mahelona</td>
<td>808.227.7826</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 29-31</td>
<td>Burlington, IA</td>
<td>Class C National Qualifier</td>
<td>Tom Topping</td>
<td>319.330.7030</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 6-7</td>
<td>Bismarck, ND</td>
<td>NDASA MSP C State</td>
<td>Scott Kinnischtzke</td>
<td>701.527.5538</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 20-21</td>
<td>Bryan, TX</td>
<td>Texas ASA State/National Qualifier</td>
<td>Mike Rodgers</td>
<td>281.451.6010</td>
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### 2016 SUPER SLOW PITCH CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFIERS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>TOURNAMENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 19-20</td>
<td>Oklahoma City, OK</td>
<td>Combat Capital City Classic</td>
<td>Rich Cress</td>
<td>405.425.3442</td>
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<td>May 6-8</td>
<td>Owatonna, MN</td>
<td>Corky’s Early Bird Classic</td>
<td>Loren Dietz</td>
<td>507.456.2618</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 20-22</td>
<td>Des Moines, IA</td>
<td>Budweiser Classic</td>
<td>Pat McNulty</td>
<td>515.331.4494</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 27-29</td>
<td>Bowling Green, KY</td>
<td>Western KY Memorial Maddness</td>
<td>Brenda Petty</td>
<td>270.779.2689</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 24-26</td>
<td>Bismarck, ND</td>
<td>McQuades</td>
<td>Jack Jones</td>
<td>701.426.8700</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 30-31</td>
<td>Plano, TX</td>
<td>ASA/USA Softball Qualifier</td>
<td>Dave Devine</td>
<td>817.690.9553</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>Information Coming Soon</td>
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<tr>
<td>SoCal</td>
<td>Information Coming Soon</td>
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# Athlete Spotlight

We asked members of our National Teams what are some of their favorite things...and this is how they responded!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Last Guilty Pleasure</strong></th>
<th><strong>Best Vacation You’ve Ever Had</strong></th>
<th><strong>Favorite Movie of All Time</strong></th>
<th><strong>Favorite Sport Besides Softball</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cookies – always cookies</td>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>Miracle</td>
<td>Volleyball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My grandma’s cooking and baking</td>
<td>Cruise to the Bahamas with my family and entire high school softball team</td>
<td>Fool’s Gold</td>
<td>Football</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing the last peanut butter cookie</td>
<td>Michigan for tryouts</td>
<td>National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation</td>
<td>Hockey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cake</td>
<td>Going to Florida with family</td>
<td>The Green Mile</td>
<td>Baseball</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Aubree Munro**
USA Softball Women’s National Team

**Morgan Zerkle**
USA Softball Women’s Elite Team

**Kelly Beam**
USA Softball Junior Men’s National Team

**Peyton Hall**
USA Softball Junior Men’s National Team
Three-time Olympic Gold Medalist Laura Berg has been selected to lead the 2017 USA Softball Junior Women’s National Team next summer as the U.S. looks to defend their Gold Medal finish at the 2015 World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Junior Women’s World Championship. USA Softball’s only four-time Olympian, Berg recently finished her fourth season as an Assistant Coach with the USA Softball Women’s National Team. As a member of the coaching staff, Berg helped lead the Red, White and Blue to three Gold Medal finishes at the World Cup of Softball, two WBSC World Championship Silver Medals and a Silver at the Toronto 2015 Pan American Games. Berg also has previous experience with the JWNT program as an Assistant Coach for the 2013 JWNT that earned a Silver Medal at the 2013 WBSC JWWC in Brampton, Ontario, Canada.

As a player on the USA Softball Women’s National Team, Berg is one of four women who hold three Olympic Gold Medals. Considered to be one of the greatest outfielders to ever play the game, Berg helped the United States to a Gold Medal at the 1996, 2000 and 2004 Olympic Games and also holds an Olympic Silver Medal from the 2008 Beijing Olympics. In addition to competing in four Olympic Games, Berg also played in four WBSC World Championships, and three Pan American Championships, all of which were Gold Medal finishes.

Berg is currently in her fourth season as the Head Coach at Oregon State University. Prior to her duties at Oregon State, she spent time as an Assistant Coach at her alma mater, Fresno State.

In addition to Berg’s selection as the Head Coach for the 2017 JWNT, the complete coaching staff has also been selected. Joining Berg as Assistant Coaches are Trisha Ford (Fremont, Calif./head coach at Fresno State), Kristie Fox (San Diego, Calif./head coach at UT- Arlington), and John Rittman (Valencia, Calif./Softball Consultant).

Athletes for the 2017 USA Softball JWNT will be selected at a later date following a National Team Selection Camp.

“I’m very excited to lead the Junior Women’s National Team and honored to once again wear the Red, White and Blue. I’m looking forward to working with a special group of young athletes that will have an unforgettable experience as we defend Team USA’s Gold Medal finish at the 2015 WBSC JWWC. Go USA!”
Do your Players Have All-Star Talent?

ASA/USA Softball encourages you to Host MLB® Pitch Hit & Run™ and let your girls showcase their softball skills!

SIGN UP TODAY at PitchHitRun.com
and allow your kids the chance to advance all the way to the PHR National Finals during MLB® All-Star Week.
Open to GIRLS AGES 7-14
visit PitchHitRun.com to register

Email us at PitchHitRun@mlb.com
Arguably one of the most recognized athletes in the sport of softball, Jennie Finch will host the 2016 season of Softball 360 TV, a syndicated TV show that is entering its 12th season. Named to the USA Softball Women's National Team in 2001, Finch competed for the Red, White and Blue through her retirement in 2010. At the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, Finch was 2-0 from the circle en route to a Gold Medal finish for the U.S. Women. At the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, Finch compiled another 2-0 performance as the U.S. claimed Silver at the sport's last Olympic Games. In addition to her Olympic accolades, Finch is a four-time World Cup of Softball Gold Medalist, three-time World Champion and two-time Pan American Games Gold Medalist as a member of Team USA.

Softball 360 features several ASA/USA Softball sanctioned teams, events, features and programs across the country. From Adult and Junior Olympic (JO) tournaments both in fast pitch and slow pitch, accompanied by umpires and administration stories, the show will take an in-depth look at several of the opportunities playing ASA/USA Softball can provide. Softball 360 is also the home of the ASA Long Haul Bombers Stadium Power Tour that travels to approximately eight Major League Baseball (MLB) stadiums throughout the country showcasing some of the best hitters in the game in a competitive series seeking the Manufacturers Cup title.

“I’m happy to be part of Softball 360 and their coverage of our sport. They are a wonderful resource, and I am looking forward to working with them to share all the exciting things going on in the softball community.” -- Jennie Finch
### 2016 SOFTBALL 360 TV SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>EVENT &amp; LOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2-5</td>
<td>WNT Selection Camp and JMNT Training – Irvine, CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 22</td>
<td>BOMBERS – Great American Ballpark - Cincinnati, OH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 28</td>
<td>BOMBERS – Turner Field – Atlanta, GA</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 27-29</td>
<td>ASA Western Nationals – Sacramento, CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 1-8</td>
<td>NCAA WCWS/USA Athletes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 8</td>
<td>BOMBERS – Petco Park – San Diego, CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 12</td>
<td>BOMBERS – Marlins Park – Tampa, FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 16</td>
<td>BOMBERS – Target Field – Minneapolis, MN</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 20-26</td>
<td>USA vs Japan All-Star Series – Tokyo, Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 25-26</td>
<td>McQuades Charity Softball Tournament</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 3-10</td>
<td>Border Battle/World Cup of Softball XI - OKC</td>
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<td>July 17-23</td>
<td>16U GOLD Nationals – Broken Arrow, OK</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18U GOLD Nationals – OKC, OK</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 22-30</td>
<td>WBSC JMWC – Midland, MI</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 24-30</td>
<td>USA Softball J0 Cup – Marietta, GA</td>
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<td>August 11-13</td>
<td>ASA Boys Slow Pitch Nationals – Canton, OH</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 26</td>
<td>BOMBERS – Minute Maid Park – Houston, TX</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 10</td>
<td>BOMBERS FINALS – Marlins Park – Miami, FL</td>
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<td>September 29</td>
<td>ASA Slow Pitch Championships</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TENTATIVE ASA LONG HAUL BOMBERS STOPS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St. Paul Saints – CHS Field – St. Paul, MN</td>
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Seven umpires from the United States received the highest honor in international softball after being selected to represent ASA/USA Softball internationally at the 2016 World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Women’s and Junior Men’s World Championship.

Slated for July 15-24 in Surrey, B.C., Canada, three U.S. umpires have been assigned to the WBSC Women’s World Championship: Laura Head (Signal Hill, Calif.), Geri Magwire (Tempe, Ariz.) and Steve McCown (Wylie, Texas). Head and Magwire have recent international experience, having served on the umpiring staff for the 2015 WBSC Junior Women’s World Championship in Oklahoma City, Okla. In addition to the umpire assignments, Chris Drumm (San Louis Rey, Calif.) has been appointed as an Assistant Umpire-in-Chief (UIC) for the Women’s World Championship.

An additional four umpires have been selected to the WBSC Junior Men’s World Championship staff, which will be held July 22-30 in Midland, Mich. James Connors (Manchester, Mich.), Jerry Norris (Belle Center, Ohio), Kevin Wallace (Shipman, Ill.) and Sean Wells (Renton, Wash.) will represent the United States on home soil while ASA/USA Softball Director of Umpires Kevin Ryan will also serve as an Assistant UIC for the Championship.
ASA/USA SOFTBALL LAUNCHES “UMPIRE OF THE MONTH” PROGRAM

ASA/USA Softball would like to spotlight one of many dedicated umpires it has around the country to show what it means to be an umpire – that it’s more than just showing up and judging the play of the game.

The very foundation of ASA/USA Softball is the umpire that is dedicated, hardworking and willing to do any game at any time. That describes Vancouver, Wash. umpire Steve Fuller - “The Workhorse.” As Art Corral, Steve’s District Umpire Association President stated, “Steve always answered the bell when called upon. If not already scheduled, ‘Just when and where and I will be there’ was his response. He was a good man, a good friend to many and a dedicated umpire.”

Steve was an umpire that loved to help others and be a part of anything that would improve umpiring for others. In seven years, he made great strides in his umpiring career by being assigned to three state tournaments, one regional tournament and one ASA/USA Softball National Championship. Steve is a member of the Washington Indicator Club and at the March, 2015 ASA/USA Softball National Umpire School in Hillsboro, Ore. Steve received the 2015 Washington ASA/USA Softball Terry Vance ‘Workhorse’ Award.

His daughter, Shelly, and sons, Justin and Jeff, along with his wife Dixie, were the cornerstones of his life. Steve was extremely proud of his daughter-in-law, Traci Fuller, who is the head softball coach at Lower Columbia College and currently in her fourth year coaching.

Scott Webb, his district Umpire-in-Chief (UIC) said, “Steve's a UIC's pinch hitter, umpire's friend and a coach's nightmare!”

On March 5, 2016, Steve was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer that had spread through his stomach and into his liver. Twenty days later, Steve was assigned to work the big game in the sky.
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MATT PALAZZO
MALE FAST PITCH ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

- Five-time member of Team USA
- Played in every game for Team USA during 2015 season
- Led team with 10 hits

2015 STATS
.250 BATTING AVERAGE, 4 RBI, 1 HR, 9 RUNS

FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

KELLY FOX

- Two-time member of Team USA
- WBSC World Championship Silver Medalist
- Pan American Games Silver Medalist
- Two-time World Cup of Softball Champion

2015 STATS
.378 BATTING AVERAGE, 12 RBI, 11 RUNS, 4 HR

JUNIOR FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

ALYSSA PALOMINO

- First-time member of Team USA
- WBSC Junior Women’s World Championship Gold Medalist
- Shattered the WBSC Junior Women’s World Championship record books with 27 RBI

2015 STATS
.396 BATTING AVERAGE, 28 RBI, 18 RUNS, 5 HR

DENNY CRINE
MALE SLOW PITCH ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

- Two-time member of Team USA
- Two-time Border Battle Champion
- Four-time ASA Stadium Power Tour champion

2015 STATS
.680 BATTING AVERAGE, 7 HR, 1.560 SLUGGING PCT.
Back for year No. 2, the USA Softball JO Cup heads to the south this July 25-30. Launched in 2015 for its inaugural season, the USA Softball JO Cup is bigger than ever with the addition of a 16-Under division.

"When we launched the USA Softball JO Cup, we listened to our customers, teams and coaches and tried to give them what they desired," said ASA/USA Softball Director of Championships Chris Sebren. "We had a great event for our 18-Under teams in Chino Hills, Calif. and have built off that success with ongoing discussions over the last several months with our coaches. Adding the 16-Under age division to provide additional National Team identification opportunities came out of those discussions, so we are moving forward with that division for this coming year."

Invitations went out at the beginning of the 2016 season to the top teams in the 16-Under and 18-Under divisions, with almost 30 teams slated to compete in each division. A National Invitational Tournament (NIT), the USA Softball JO Cup will follow a five-game guarantee, blind-draw tournament format. Once pool play is completed, teams will enter into bracket play to compete for a prize pool with the top finishers receiving a cash donation award back to their respective 501c3 program.

In addition to competing for a prize pool, participating teams will also have the opportunity to compete in front of members of the Women’s National Team Selection Committee (WNTSC). With the possibility of softball and baseball returning to the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, this tournament will further serve as an identification tournament for the USA Softball National Team Program.

"The addition of a 16-Under Division allows ASA/USA Softball to provide another great opportunity for our Team USA Coaching Staff to evaluate potential Junior and National Team talent," said USA Softball Women’s National Team Head Coach Ken Eriksen. "It doesn’t get any better than seeing this talent pool in a very competitive environment."
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The Pac-12 conference has always displayed a strong presence in the softball world – however in recent years, the SEC has come out to stake a claim as the leader in NCAA Division I play.

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The world’s best softball will return to Oklahoma City this summer with the World Cup of Softball XI and Border Battle VIII taking over the ASA Hall of Fame Complex from July 4-10. Highlighted by the top 10 teams in the world, the week-long event returns to Oklahoma City for the first time since 2013 bigger and better than ever! With a record-13 countries slated to participate, tickets are on sale by phone at 800-654-8337 or online at ASAUSASoftball.com.

The 2016 World Cup, a WBSC-sanctioned event, features the top eight finalists from the 2014 WBSC World Championship: No. 1 ranked Japan, No. 2 USA, No. 3 Australia, No. 4 Canada, No. 5 Chinese Taipei, No. 6 Netherlands, No. 7 China and No. 8 New Zealand. Also scheduled to participate are Czech Republic, Mexico, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Venezuela and the USA Women’s Elite Team.

The eighth-annual Men’s Border Battle Slow Pitch game will also return to Oklahoma City for the first time since 2013 on Wednesday, July 6 when the USA Men’s Slow Pitch National Team takes the field against Canada in Border Battle VIII. Team USA captured their sixth Border Battle win in 2015 with a 22-7 win over Canada in Midland, Mich. In addition to the Border Battle, 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 Oklahoma City in the Slow Pitch Showdown on July 5.

All-session tickets, which are $175 for Gold Pass reserved seating and $60 for general admission seating, can be purchased by phone at 800-654-8337 or online at ASAUSASoftball.com. Gold Pass all-session tickets include a USA Softball hat, World Cup XI program, a personalized name slide on the videoboard at OGE Energy Field, exclusive parking and advanced autograph sessions. Fans that hold the Gold Pass All-Session ticket will have open seating in the Gold Pass section (click here to view seating chart). Single session Gold Pass and general admission tickets will go on sale in early June.
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With a new year comes another great string of events to be played in Oklahoma City at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex. Following recent stadium renovations and a brand new construction of underground locker rooms for teams, added hospitality suites and a host of other additions to benefit all those who visit, it’s the year of the return for some events. Oklahoma City, known as the softball capital of the world, will play host to the NCAA Women’s College World Series (WCWS), World Cup XI, Border Battle VIII and five ASA/USA Softball Hall of Fame National Qualifiers.

In its 26th-straight year being played in Oklahoma City, the NCAA WCWS will return June 2-8, 2016 and feature the top contenders in college softball. Fans saw Florida earn its second-straight championship title last year after defeating Michigan in the final game, 4-1. Florida will be competing with UCLA to tie their record...
of three-straight championship wins, which was accomplished in 1988-90 where the first two were held in Sunnyvale, Calif. Since the first game in OKC in 1990, Arizona holds the majority of championship wins (8), while UCLA sits closely behind with seven of their own. Arizona State, Florida and Oklahoma each have two, while five teams have made it to the winner’s circle just once: Alabama, California, Fresno State, Michigan and Washington. What teams will we see this year?

The World Cup of Softball will be returning to OKC July 5-10, after having been played in Irvine, Calif. the past two years due to the stadium renovations. Last year, the No. 1-seeded USA Softball Women’s National Team came out on top in its 6-1 win over No. 2-seed Japan.

The Border Battle will also feature top-notch competition by the USA Softball Men’s Slow Pitch National Team, who takes the field against Canada on July 6. Team USA captured its sixth Border Battle win in 2015 with a 22-7 win over Canada in Midland, Mich. The Men’s Slow Pitch National Team and Futures National Team will also be competing in a series of exhibition games July 4-6.

Five ASA/USA Softball Hall of Fame (HOF) National Qualifiers will showcase young talent, from 10-under teams to 18-under. The first HOF qualifier will be held June 17-19 for the 14U teams, while the 10U teams will start June 19. Later in the month, the 16U qualifier will be played June 23-25, with the 18U qualifier will follow right after on June 25. Kicking off July will be the last of the qualifiers in the 12U age level.

Whether as a player, coach, umpire or fan, there’s plenty of softball to come and enjoy this summer in Oklahoma City!

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Each year, members of the USA Softball Women’s National Team (WNT) are selected to represent the United States after participating in a WNT Selection Camp. Among those fortunate enough to make the 2016 squad – Janie Takeda.

Born and raised in Placentia, Calif., Takeda grew up around the game of softball and chose to follow in the footsteps of her two older sisters, Michelle and Allison, who both played the sport. When the 5’7” outfielder reached the age of 12, Takeda says she almost quit from being ‘too burnt out’ but kept at it, and by the time she turned 14, made it her goal to play Pac-12 ball. After a successful senior year at El Dorado High, she joined the Oregon Ducks, who finished at No. 7 in the last year’s ESPN.com/USA Softball Collegiate Top 25 Poll.

“The most memorable game in my career (thus far) was during my freshman year of college when we were playing the University of Texas in Super Regionals,” Takeda said. “Oregon hadn’t been to the NCAA Women’s College World Series (WCWS) since 1989 and we were determined to get there. I specifically remember Game 2 (vs. Texas) because we had lost Game 1 and were close to our season ending. (In Game 2), we went into extra innings and I had not gotten a hit in either game. Coach (Mike) White told me that it didn’t matter what I had done leading up to that moment – I just needed to get on base. I led off the inning and hit a one-bouncer to the third baseman and beat it out. Then, I stole second, stole third, and scored on a sac-fly. We won that game and Game 3, and went to the WCWS. Our team

Story continues on next page >
was very scrappy that year. It was such a great ride.”

Takeda remembers a lot of great moments throughout her softball career, but one thing had always proved troublesome while she was playing – her “delicate” labrum, as her doctors have described it. Originally hurting it her senior year of high school, she continued to play, even after her shoulder subluxed more than six times throughout her freshman and sophomore years on the Pac-12 team. Shoulder subluxation occurs when the shoulder separates and the humerus has been displaced from the socket. As a result, Takeda had her first labral repair surgery in the summer of 2013 and recalls having a seamless junior year. A few weeks into her senior year however, Takeda dove into second base during a game against San Diego State shortly after it had rained. That action reignited her sensitive labrum and a month later, her shoulder was forced out of its socket following a collision with center field. This time, Takeda became nauseous and scared. After missing two weeks, including the Ducks’ series against the UCLA Bruins, she returned for the remainder of her senior season. But, it didn’t stop there. Takeda’s shoulder subluxed one more time while she was asleep this past summer. It was inevitable – a trip to the surgeon was a must. The diagnosis? It was going to pop out again, it was just a matter of when. Takeda underwent her second labral repair surgery last September and is now in the midst of recovering and preparing for the upcoming season.

What did she say about returning to the game of softball? “(WNT Head) Coach (Ken) Eriksen says all the time that college is the minor leagues,” Takeda said. “I want to play in the major leagues. I know there is so much more I have to learn about all facets of the game and if I quit now, who knows if I would ever realize my full potential. I love the game of softball and I think I can be a lot better at it.”

At the end of her recovery process, Takeda will start her second year as one of 18 chosen to be on the WNT this summer. Takeda will join the rest of her teammates as they make two trips to Japan, compete in a World Championship and travel to four different U.S. cities, in addition to a series of exhibition games. Fans in Oklahoma City will get the opportunity to catch Takeda and the WNT in action this July at the World Cup of Softball, an international softball event that will bring the world’s best softball teams to the softball capital of the world.

“(Through this experience), I’ve learned about patience and trusting that everything happens for a reason,” said Takeda. “My faith has been a huge factor in getting me through the challenging times that I’ve faced with my shoulder and in all areas of life. Whether or not I like it or not, I’m injured. What I choose to do with this opportunity is up to me. I can be negative about it and get frustrated, which I do from time to time, or I can accept it and learn more about myself and who I want to become.”

Since returning home to Orange County, Takeda has spent her time working at church, gaining a community and coaching at Biola University.

“David Mikula, my sports psychologist at Oregon, once told me, ‘Usually the moment is pretty okay,’” said Takeda. “...and that reminds me that I’m usually either worried about the future or worried about the past, but if I’m in the present moment, most of the time, I’m just fine.”

“(Through this experience), I’ve learned about patience and trusting that everything happens for a reason,” said Takeda. “My faith has been a huge factor in getting me through the challenging times that I’ve faced with my shoulder and in all areas of life.”
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JUNIOR MEN PREPARE TO TAKE ON THE WORLD

Members of the 2016 USA Softball Junior Men’s National Team headed to sunny Southern California in January to participate in a two-day training camp. Held at Bill Barber Park in Irvine, Calif., members participated in a series of drills, simulated game situations and scrimmages in preparation for the 2016 international season. Check out the video below to get an inside look at the team’s preparation!
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ASA/USA Softball welcomed Stacey Hepp and Katie Willis to the National Office in Oklahoma City in January. Read more about the new additions below!

**Stacey Hepp – Managing Director of Marketing**

Hepp comes to ASA/USA Softball with more than 15 years of experience, with expertise in event marketing and business development. Her most recent role as an account executive for Radio Disney Charlotte, a division of The Walt Disney Company, allowed her to plan and create successful campaigns for a diverse clientele base. Her track record also includes work for USA Canoe/Kayak, Walt Disney World, Harrah’s Entertainment, Orlando Conference Management Group, MostlyChocolate.com and Dillsboro Chocolate Factory.

“I am so very excited to be joining the ASA/USA Softball family. As the National Governing Body for softball, ASA/USA Softball has a long and rich history with amazing athletes and role models. The National Office Staff continues to keep things moving forward with the latest trends in technology, allowing for even greater engagement for fans and partners. I am humbled for the opportunity, thrilled by the challenge, and look forward to working with the National Office Staff, all the amazing programs ASA/USA Softball offers to its members and the associations nationwide.”

**Katie Willis – Communications Coordinator**

Willis comes to ASA/USA Softball with more than four years of experience after most recently working for the San Diego State Athletics Media Relations Department, where she was a student assistant. In her role, she served as one of the primary contacts for women’s cross country and track and field in addition to writing and posting website content for other Aztec athletic teams. Willis combines her recent experience with past internships at Fox Sports San Diego, the San Diego Hall of Champions, Coronado Speed Festival and the Rock Church where she was able to develop further skills in marketing, public relations and event management.

“I’m grateful for the opportunity to begin a new chapter here in Oklahoma City at the National Office for ASA/USA Softball. I’m looking forward to promoting our organization and continuing the efforts of enhancing the quality of the game and the service ASA/USA Softball provides to athletes around the country. I feel fortunate and blessed to be part of this organization and can’t thank my support system of family, friends and mentors for their encouragement and guidance along the way.”
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Jennifer Cutler of Frost Cutlery was named the 1982 Women’s Class A Slow Pitch MVP and Home Run Champion.

(L to R) China, USA and Japan line up for the playing of the National Anthem during the 1988 Tri-Nationals, which were held at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex.

Attendees of an ASA/USA Softball Umpire Clinic pay close attention to instructors.

Members of the 1985 USA Softball Junior Men’s National Team, which earned the Silver Medal at the 1985 WBSC Junior Men’s World Championship in Fargo, N.D.

Fans catch a game in 1963 at a Jones Beach, N.Y. softball field.
Balls and Strikes Trivia

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 ASA/USA Softball.

1. Who was the Week 2 USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Week?

2. Name one of the stops on the ASA Stadium Power Tour for the ASA Long Haul Bombers.

3. Who was the 2015 USA Softball Female Athlete of the Year?

4. Where will the 2016 18U GOLD Nationals be held?

5. Who was the MVP of the 1982 Women’s Class A Slow Pitch National Championship?
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