Manager Denny Bruckert guided the New York Gremlins through the loser’s bracket and four consecutive wins on Sunday, July 29 in Ashland, Ohio to capture his seventh ASA Men’s Major Fast Pitch Championship. Bruckert, a long time manager and former USA Softball Men's National Team Manager, will be inducted into the ASA Hall of Fame in November in Dallas, Texas.

When asked to put the victory into words after his team defeated Hill United Chiefs 7-4 and 9-4 in the ‘if necessary’ game, Bruckert stated “this is as good as it gets.” He further stated that winning his seventh ASA National Title was special as the ASA Major is a coveted title and a meaningful win for his team.

After being dropped into the loser’s bracket earlier in the tournament by the Chiefs, the Gremlins worked their way through the bracket to meet back up with the Chiefs in the Championship Game. Andrew Kirkpatrick took to the circle for the Gremlins to face fellow Australian and Chiefs’ hurler, Adam Folkard. Kirkpatrick retired the side in the first and the Gremlins scored early and often as they plated four runs in the first. Folkard was not sharp in the first inning as he gave up three hits and three walks as the Gremlins sent nine to the plate.

The Chiefs got one back in the second inning on a double and an error. Kirkpatrick helped his own cause with an RBI single in the second that plated Mathieu Roy who had led off the second with a double. Kirkpatrick took a 5-1 lead into the third but was touched for a solo shot from Brad Ezekal making it a 5-2 lead for the Gremlins midway through the third.

The score remained the same until the sixth when the Chiefs made it a tight game by scoring two runs on a Nick Shailes single and a two-run shot from Steve Mullaley. After retiring the first
Liz Scott wins “Title IX Today” Scholarship
Receives $999.99 from ASA/USA Softball

On June 30 during the Title IX Celebration Game in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Liz Scott from Kenosha, Wisconsin won the Title IX Today Scholarship for $999.99, presented by ASA/USA Softball. As part of a video entry contest, all athletes who were participating in the 18-Under Hall of Fame Qualifier were encouraged to submit a three to five minute video explaining how Title IX has affected them today. The winner would receive a scholarship to the school of their choice for $999.99 in honor of Title IX.

“This gives me and every girl the opportunity in America chance to be an athlete,” Scott stated in her video.

Liz Scott pictured with members from the Women’s National Team after receiving her scholarship check.

A note from The Inside Pitch editor
Codi Warren

Welcome to the July 2012 edition of The Inside Pitch, the official newsletter of the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America.

What an amazing summer we’ve had at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex! With over 88 days of softball this summer, we at the National Office have definitely been busy! With the conclusion of the 18-Under GOLD National Championship, summer is officially over for us in Oklahoma City, however many of you are still holding National Championships or are about to host them within the next couple of weeks. For those of you who have Facebook or Twitter accounts, I encourage you to implement social media into your tournament. Whether it’s photos, weather updates or game updates, our fans and teams who are unable to attend these events greatly appreciate the updates. If you do not have a social media site or if you have questions, please feel free to reach out to me. Remember to encourage your teams to “tweet” about their experience using the hashtag #ASANationals!

Just as a reminder, if you would like to have a news item or photo included in The Inside Pitch, please send me an electronic copy by the 15th of every month at cwarren@softball.org. We are always happy to include news from our local associations and members! Any items not submitted by the deadline may not be included, so please plan ahead.

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two Gremlins batters in the sixth, Folkard walked Roy, who promptly stole second and scored on Calsey’s single. Another stolen base, a passed ball and an error gave the Gremlins an insurance run that pushed the score to 7-4. Kirkpatrick gave way to Bryan Newton in the seventh inning and he retired the side after giving up a lead-off single to preserve the win.

The “if necessary” game saw Bryan Newton take to the circle for the Gremlins and he was greeted with a first-pitch home run off the bat of Brad Ezekal. The Chiefs plated two more runs in the first and took a quick 3-0 lead. The Gremlins got one back in the bottom of the first against Adam Folkard on two hits, a walk and a wild pitch. The Chiefs collected two hits in the second but could not push across a run to extend their lead.

The Chiefs batted around in the second and scored six runs on three walks and three hits including a grand slam by Blair Ezekal. Adam Folkard was replaced in the circle by Mitch Hardy in the third.

Hardy kept the Gremlins off the board until the sixth. The Gremlins added to their 7-3 lead in the sixth by collecting two runs on three hits and pushing the lead to 9-3. Brad Ezekal drilled another solo shot for the Chiefs, his second in the game and third for the day in the top of the seventh. The Chiefs could not get any closer as Jeff Ellsworth and Nick Shailes hit pop outs to end the game giving the Gremlins the title by a score of 9-4.

The Gremlin’s Andrew Kirkpatrick received the Herb Dudley Outstanding Pitcher Award and Gremlin’s center fielder Mathieu Roy was named the tournament’s Most Valuable Player.

### Hall of Famer Margaret Dobson passes away at age 81

Dr. Margaret J. ‘Mugsy’ Dobson died peacefully on Friday, July 13, at the age of 81. Margaret was born on June 20, 1931, in Longview, Wash. to James Walter and Francis May (Howard) Dobson, the second of two children. The family moved to Vancouver where she attended school, graduating from Fort Vancouver High School in 1949. Margaret joined the Erv Lind Florists Softball Team as a teenager at the age of 18 and finished the 1950 national tournament with a record .615 batting average. That year she enrolled at Portland’s Vanport College. The college had no softball team but she earned a varsity letter playing for the baseball team, a feat that received mention in Time magazine.

Dr. Dobson’s accomplishments as an athlete are numerous and have been recognized as an inductee into the Portland Metropolitan Softball Hall of Fame, Oregon Sports Hall of Fame and the ASA National Softball Hall of Fame. She was a five time All-American Team member, held a .615 Tournament batting average record, played on three World Championship teams and was listed in Sports Illustrated Magazine as one of Oregon’s 50 Greatest Sports Figures of the 20th Century. In 1959, Margaret retired from softball to pursue a career in education. After earning a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Oregon in physical education, she taught at Lincoln High School for one year and then in 1955, joined the faculty at Portland State (College) University. Margaret also received her master’s degree and her doctorate degree from the University of Oregon. She attained full professor status at Portland State in 1968.

It was through her love for sports that she became committed to making sports available to all children. Through her doctoral studies research at the University of Wisconsin, the physical fitness tests for all U.S. public school children were developed and implemented. She met with Eunice Kennedy Shriver in 1962 and became an advocate and influential leader in instructing future educators the skills and techniques required to effectively work with special needs children. By 1968, the various special needs sports camps had grown into a global movement known today as the “Special Olympics.”

Dr. Dobson held numerous positions during her educational career at Portland State University including Associate Vice President for academic affairs, Assistant Vice President for academic affairs and Assistant Dean, School of Health and Physical Education. Dr. Dobson retired from Portland State University in 1990 as Executive Vice President Emerita. Margaret co-authored the book “Softball for Girls” with University of Oregon coach, Becky Sisley, in 1971. Since 1976, Portland State University has presented the Margaret J. Dobson award to the outstanding female athlete at the university.

Margaret’s greatest joys in retirement included her Snowbird Winters in Arizona and Hawaii. She loved sunshine and nature. Many an hour she spent gardening, flower arranging, golfing, traveling and socializing with her many friends. Margaret will be remembered for her kind and generous heart, great enthusiasm for life and a playful witty sense of humor.

During Margaret’s final days, her brother, Ed and sister-in-law, Jacque Dobson, along with long time friends, Norma Bartram, Alice Anne and Marie Gustafson and Vicki Osborne, kept vigil at her bedside. Margaret leaves behind her brother, Ed (wife, Jackie) Dobson; and nieces, Vikki Osborne, Kent, Wash., Shelley Ferguson, Vancouver, Laurie Freeman, Eureka, Calif. and Eddie Dobson, Gilbert, Ariz.; one nephew, Steven Dobson, Seattle; and numerous great-nieces and nephews. A private memorial Mass and burial service has been celebrated at St. John Fisher Catholic Church in respect to Margaret’s wishes. Online condolences can be submitted at: Facebook In memory of Margaret J. Dobson. Contributions in remembrance of Margaret may be made to Portland State University Women’s Athletic Program or the Special Olympics.
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Fernandez and 2004 U.S. Olympic Softball Team inducted into U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame

Three-time Olympic Gold Medalist Lisa Fernandez (Long Beach, Calif.) and the 2004 U.S. Olympic Softball Team were inducted into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame’s Class of 2012 by the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) on Thursday, July 12 at the Harris Theater in Chicago. Fernandez was one of six individuals who was honored in the individual category while the 2004 U.S. Olympic Softball Team was the only team honored.

The broadcast of the 2012 U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony presented by Allstate, hosted by Jimmy Roberts and Alex Flanagan, will be broadcasted on NBC Sports Network on Thursday, Aug. 23 at 7 p.m. ET.

CLICK HERE FOR PHOTOS FROM THE INDUCTION CEREMONY AND EVENTS

“It was such a spectacular two days seeing all my old teammates and coaches,” said three-time Gold Medalist Lori Harrigan. “What this team and staff did in Athens 2004 was incredible and something so magical in the Olympic movement and Olympic history. We are so grateful for this honor and to be recognized among some of the World’s best for our accomplishments.”

Recognizing the ongoing support that fans give U.S. Olympians, Paralympians and hopefuls in their training and competition, the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame presented by Allstate was one of the first major sports halls of fame to incorporate fan voting into the selection process. Fernandez and the 2004 team are the first softball athletes to be inducted into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame.

“I am completely overwhelmed by this honor,” said three-time Olympic Gold Medalist Lisa Fernandez. “Never did I ever think that playing the game of softball that I love so much would allow me to reach this level of accomplishment. This is bigger than anything I have dreamed of. What we have been able to accomplish as a sport is incredible. There is no greater honor than being inducted into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame.”

Members of the 2004 U.S. Olympic Softball Team are Laura Berg (Santa Fe Springs, Calif./Fresno State), Cristl Bustos (Canyon Country, Calif./Palm Beach Community College), Fernandez (Long Beach, Calif./UCLA), Jennie Finch (La Mirada, Calif./Arizona), Amanda Freed (Cypress, Calif./UCLA), Lori Harrigan (Las Vegas, Nev./UNLV), Lovieanne Jung (Fountain Valley, Calif./Arizona), Kelly Kretschman (Indian Harbour Beach, Fla./Alabama), Jessica Mendoza (Camarillo, Calif./Stanford), Tairia Mims Flowers (Tucson, Ariz./UCLA), Stacey Nuveman (La Verne, Calif./UCLA), Leah O’Brien-Amico (Chino Hills, Calif./Arizona), Cat Osterman (Houston, Texas/Texas), Jenny Topping (Whittier, Calif./Cal State Fullerton) and Natasha Watley (Irvine, Calif./UCLA). The three alternate members were Jaime Clark (Tustin, Calif./Washington), Nicole Giordano (Saugus, Calif./Arizona) and Lauren Lappin (Anaheim, Calif./Stanford). The team was coached by Mike Candrea (Tucson, Ariz./Arizona Head Coach) with assistant coaches Ken Eriksen (Tampa, Fla./South Florida Head Coach) and John Rittman (Palo Alto, Calif./Stanford Head Coach).

“It is an incredible honor for all of us to be inducted, together, into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame,” said three-time medal winner Stacey Nuveman. “Our Gold-Medal performance in Athens was truly a team effort, which makes this team honor very fitting. We had a special group and overcame very difficult circumstances to win in such a dominant fashion in 2004. I could not be more proud of our team and our accomplishments. Thanks to you the fans who voted for us!”
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Artifact of the Month!

Since softball has such a rich and vast history, we want to share with you some of the amazing artifacts we have deep within our collections. Stay tuned every month for a glimpse into our archives!

A $1.50 could buy you a few things these days: a bottle of soda, a value menu burger or fry, or even a candy bar. One thing you would not be able to purchase though is a ticket to a game. Tickets to the NCAA Women’s College World Series for a single session can run you well over $20, while tickets to the World Cup of Softball cost anywhere from $10-$25.

There was a time though when one could attend a softball game for $1.50. As you can see by these early ticket stubs, a person could go watch the top teams in the nation for as little as $1.51 a game!
ASA around the country! A look at the 2012 National Championships

Members of the Heartland Rage with Team USA members Amanda Chidester and Chelsea Thomas at the Opening Ceremony of the 16U National Championship in Montgomery, Ala.

Chelsea Thomas (L) and Amanda Chidester speak at the opening ceremony at the 16U National Championship.

Members from the Texas Impact left their shoes at home plate, signifying the end of their career in the 18U GOLD division. The Texas Impact battled through the losers bracket to claim second place at the GOLD National Championship in Oklahoma City.

The pitcher from the Crossfire delivers a pitch during the 14U Slow Pitch National Championship in Tupelo, Miss.

Members from the Missouri Firestix enjoying the 14U National Championships in Sioux Falls, S.D.
USA claims Border Battle IV with 32-21 come from behind victory

THE USA Softball Men's National Slow Pitch Team came from behind to defeat Canada, 32-21, on June 30 in the Border Battle IV at the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) Hall of Fame Stadium. The Americans used 34 hits to score the 32 runs and capitalized off of two key errors from Canada to capture Team USA's third Border Battle title in the event's four-year history. 

CLICK HERE FOR A BOX SCORE.

“We got off to a slow start coming out flat the first couple of innings,” said USA Head Coach Steve Shortland. “These guys showed some real heart in the way they battled back. I am really proud of the way they continued to fight and pulled out the win.”

Canada jumped out to an early 4-0 lead with three home runs in the top of the first inning. Two of the three home runs were solo shots, while Todd Cadenhead's two-run shot scored Frank Henry, who had reached on a double. Team USA cut the lead in half in the bottom of the first on a two-run home run from Brett Helmer (Cicero, N.Y.).

Canada tacked on three more runs in the top of the second as Jeff Gare and Al Blais reached on back-to-back singles before Chris Parr blasted the fourth home run of the game for the Canadians. A great defensive play from Don Dedonatis, Jr. (Kissimmee, Fla.) ended any additional threat from Canada as Team USA got out of the inning with a double play.

Team USA pitcher Andy Purcell (Kissimmee, Fla.) reached on a single to start the second and scored on Johnny McCraw’s (Lake Wylie, S.C.) home run to score two more runs for the Americans. Canada added two runs on an RBI double from Tim Bentley and a sacrifice fly from Gare to push its lead to 9-4 after three innings.

Canada then pushed across nine runs in the top of the fourth. Cadenhead hit his second multi-RBI-home run of the game and Parr added another one as the Canadians went up 18-4 after four innings.

The Americans mounted a comeback in the bottom of the fourth as Team USA exploded for 20 runs to take a 24-18 lead. Home runs from Kevin Rainwater (Kathleen, Ga.) Brian Wegman (Hamilton, Ohio), Purcell, Rick Baker (West Harrison, Ind.) and Dennis Rulli (Moorpark, Calif.) fueled the charge as two Canadian errors allowed 14 unearned runs to cross the plate.

Team USA added eight runs in the bottom of the sixth as home runs by Greg Connell (Moultrie, Ga.) and Rulli led to the 12-run lead. Following Canada’s nine-run fourth inning, Team USA held the Canadians to just three runs in the final three innings.

Geno Buck (Red Wing, Minn.) picked up the win for Team USA in relief. Buck pitched one inning, holding Canada to three runs on five hits. Parr picked up the loss for Canada, pitching 3.2 innings and allowing 24 runs on 22 hits.

Henry and Cadenhead each went 4-for-5 for Canada with three runs scored. Cadenhead’s three home runs and six RBI were the most by any player on the day. Connell went 4-for-5 for Team USA, as did R. Baker. Connell also had six RBI.
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Arizona Desert Thunder wins Arizona Desert Thunder wins
ASA 18 Under GOLD National ASA 18 Under GOLD National Championship
Championship

The ASA 18Under GOLD National Championship title is making its way to Arizona for the first time as the Arizona Desert Thunder claimed the 2012 title with a 2-1 win over the Texas Impact GOLD during the “if necessary” game at the ASA Hall of Fame Stadium July 28.

Box Score / Complete Bracket

“What a great accomplishment for our girls,” said AZ Desert Thunder Assistant Coach Lance Fowler. “After that first game, we had to wipe our slate clean and just start over. They’re a tough team and that first game we didn’t execute. We had a lot of opportunities we didn’t capitalize on and we had too many errors. That second game though, our intensity really picked up. This means a lot to our organization, especially since we are the first Arizona team to capture the title. I’m so proud of our girls, they deserve it.”

Scoreless through the first two innings, the visiting AZ Desert Thunder jumped on top 2-0 in the top of the third. Morgan McKeevers reached on an error, followed by an Erin Satterfield fielder’s choice. With two runners on, Darcy Taylor produced a two-run double, giving the Thunder its first two runs in nine innings of play.

In the circle, Kaitlin Wilson earned the win after pitching all seven innings and only giving up one run on four hits. The pitching of Wilson stifled the TX Impact batters until the sixth inning, when with two outs they rallied for one run. Reagan Boenker, who reached on a single, scored the lone run for TX Impact courtesy an Allie Piro fielder’s choice with bases loaded. Losing pitcher Katie Marks, who pitched her fifth game of the day, recorded the loss as AZ Desert Thunder connected on five hits on their road to the National Championship Title.

The 2013 18-Under GOLD National Championship will take place in Clearwater, Fla. July 22-27. For more information on this year’s 18-Under GOLD National Championship, please visit GOLD.ASASoftbal.com.

Texas Impact 6, AZ Desert Thunder 0

The Texas Impact (11-1) came to play as they forced an if-necessary game by shutting out undefeated AZ Desert Thunder (6-1) 6-0. Katie Marks collected her fourth win of the day by shutting out the Desert Thunder through all seven innings of play.

Texas Impact got on the board early, and scored in all but one inning on their road to the National Championship title. Collectively, the Impact put together seven hits.

Makayla McAdams was charged with her first loss of the tournament, giving up allowing six runs on seven hits.
The USA Softball Women’s National team scored two early runs and held on to beat Australia 3-0 in the Championship game of the 2012 World Cup of Softball presented by Lumber Liquidators.

Jackie Traina (Naples, Fla.) got the start in the circle for the USA National team. She entered the World Cup of Softball Championship with a 1.11 era for the tournament. Her international play dominance continued as she completed four innings only giving up one hit and striking out five.

In the first inning Kaitlin Cochran (Yorba Linda, Calif.) lead off with a single for the USA. Two batters later Stacy May-Johnson (Reno, Nevada) singled to give the Americans runners at first and second. From the five hole, Samantha Fischer (Simi Valley, Calif.) drove a ball over the center fielders head for a double and giving USA a 2-0 lead. It was Fischer’s fifth and sixth RBI of the 2012 World Cup.

“I just focused and tried to stay within myself,” said Fischer. “I was looking for my pitch. I went in the hole 0-2 but I found a pitch I could drive and fortunately it went over the fielders head.”

It became it a pitching duel in the second and third innings as both Traina and Australia pitcher Vanessa Anne Stokes retired six straight batters sending the game into the top of the fourth with USA still holding on to their 2-0 lead.

After a fourth Traina strike out to start the fourth, Australia’s Leigh Godfrey singled to left to end the no-hitter bid for the USA pitcher. A fielder’s choice and fly out to second ended Australia’s hopes of scoring any runs in the fourth.

Valerie Arioto (Pleasanton, Calif.) walked to start the bottom of the fourth but two strikeouts and a fly ball to third base ended the inning.

In the top of the fifth Keilani Ricketts (San Jose, Calif.) entered to pitch for Team USA. Continuing the dominance from the circle for the Americans, Ricketts retired the first three Australian batters she faced to send the game to the bottom of the inning.

With one out in the sixth, Fischer stepped back to the plate and picked up her second double of the night with another long fly ball to the fence in center field.

Amanda Chidester (Allen Park, Mich.) entered the batter’s box for the USA in the next at-bat. An error at third base put Chidester on first and gave the USA two runners for shortstop Molly Johnson (Lexington, Ky.). Johnson picked up a single to load the bases for the Red, White and Blue, however fly outs to first and second stranded the runners and ended the inning for the USA.

Entering the top of the seventh Ricketts returned to the circle for the USA to pick up three outs that would give her team the World Cup Championship. She did just that striking out two Australian batters and sitting down a third on a ground out to Johnson at shortstop.

With the win, the U.S. claimed their sixth World Cup of Softball title.
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Kaycee Clark of Midwest City, Okla., has joined the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America’s National Office staff as the Register ASA/Events Coordinator. Clark, who started with the National Office on June 22, will primarily assist with events, particularly in the management of tournaments at the Hall of Fame Complex including the ASA/USA Girls’ GOLD 18-Under Fast Pitch National Championship which is slated for July 22-28. Clark will also provide phone and e-mail support to Local ASA Associations using Register ASA to register individuals, teams and umpires.

Prior to joining the National Office staff, Clark was the Director of Softball Operations at the University of Oklahoma for six years. Clark also played collegiately for the Sooners, and was a member of the 2001 and 2002 NCAA Women’s College World Series (WCWS) teams. After her sophomore season with the Sooners, Clark transferred to the University of Central Florida, where she earned All-Tournament honors in the Atlantic Sun Conference in her junior season. Clark also has history with ASA/USA Softball. In 1999 she was a member of the U.S. Junior Women’s National Team that competed in Australia. After her playing days, she also helped coach several ASA teams and gave private hitting and fielding lessons.

“We’re excited to have Kaycee join the National Office staff,” said ASA/USA Softball Executive Director Ron Radigonda. “She has a variety of skills that will be a great asset to not only our event staff but also to our membership department. Her experiences as both an athlete and as the Director of Softball Operations at the University of Oklahoma are just some of the many strengths she brings to ASA/USA Softball. I think she will greatly benefit our organization and I am very excited about her future with us.”

Clark received her Bachelor’s degree from the University of Central Florida and will be graduating this Fall with her Masters degree in Higher Education with an emphasis in Intercollegiate Athletic Administration. She is engaged to fiancé Jeremy Boles, and they will be married July 20, 2013.

The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America announced the invitees to the 2012 USA Softball Men’s National Team Selection Camp being held in Ashland, Ohio, July 30 – August 1. These twenty-nine attendees will vie for one of the 17 roster spots on the 2013 USA Softball Men’s National Team roster, which will be announced September 1st.

Members of the 2013 Men’s National Team will participate in an invitational tournament in Orlando, Fla. January 16-20 before heading off to Auckland, New Zealand to compete in the International Softball Federation (ISF) XIII Men’s World Championship March 1-10, 2013.

The athletes who have accepted an invitation to try-out for the Men’s National Team are:

Joshua Johnson (Brooklyn, Wisc.), Sean Kelly (Marshall, Mich.), Travis Price (Orange, Calif.), Tyrone McKinney (Louisville, Ky.), Dave Lohman (Lindenhurst, N.Y.), Roman Foore (Boone, N.C.), Derrick Zechman (Watson Town, Penn.), Matt Palazzo (Des Moines, Iowa), Trevor Kelly (Marshall, Mich.), Camden Decker (Lake Zurich, Ill.), Bobby Rosthenhausler (Tucson, Ariz.), Zach Warne (Sioux Falls, S.D.), Marcus Tan (Union City, Calif.), Kevin Castillo (Long Beach, Calif.), Tommy Thompson (Baldwin, Wis.), Chase Turner (San Jose, Calif.), Jamie Garcia Jr. (Kansas City, Kan.), Adam LaLonde (Ashland, Ky.), Matt Ratliff (American Fork, Utah), Tommy Crouch (DeKalb, Ill.), Frank DeGroat (Ringwood, N.J.), Eddie Kettlehut (Canton, Mich.), Jesse Bullock (Riverton, Ut.), Golden San Roman (El Paso, Texas), Todd Schultz (Williamston, Mich.), Brandon Aman (Blaine, Minn.), Terry Luster (Bunceton, Mo.), BJ Gulick (Hammond, Wisc.), Travis DeJong (Hull, Iowa)
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DETERMINATION RINGS WITH EVERY HIT
Legendary coach and former ASA star Mary Nutter passes away

Mary Nutter, who started the National Sports Clinics (NSC) more than 25 years ago to provide softball coaches at all levels access to the highest quality instruction, died from a heart attack in the early morning hours of Tuesday, July 24, while vacationing in Colorado.

Nutter, who had a successful eight-year career as head coach at Pittsburg State (Kan.) prior to founding NSC, found her true calling in 1980 when she ran her first softball clinic in Kansas City while still coaching at Pittsburg State. In 1984, she moved her clinic to Chicago, and then expanded to three clinics in 1985. In 1987, National Sports Clinics was incorporated, and thousands of coaches have benefitted from her work.

Growing up in Michigan, Nutter was an outstanding player for the Lansing Laurels, an ASA Women's Major fastpitch team, and she spent one year (1976) as a player/coach for the Michigan Travelers of the Women's Professional Softball League. Nutter was twice named Women's Major first team All-American (1974 and 1975).

“Mary was the nicest, sweetest human being that I've ever been around and was a proud Spartan,” Michigan State Head Coach Jacquie Joseph said about Nutter who attended Michigan State. “She gave a lot to the game but gave even more to the human race. It's a profound loss.”

After going to school at Michigan State, Nutter began teaching in 1970 in Elsie, Michigan. She taught there until 1977 when she began her collegiate coaching career as a graduate assistant at Michigan State. She spent three seasons there before moving to Pittsburg State.

In 1981, she claimed her first of three NAIA District 10 championships and District 10 Coach of the Year awards. She was named District 10 Coach of the Year in 1981, 1982 and 1985. Her 1981 Pittsburg team finished fourth at the NAIA national championship, and overall, Nutter had a 204-125 record at the institution.

She also served as an assistant coach for the 1983 Pan American Tri-Nations team and as a member of the 1984 U.S. Pan American selection committee. She was honored in 1988 as an inductee of the NAIA Hall of Fame, and inducted into the NFCA Hall of Fame in 1997.

Besides running the National Sports Clinics, Nutter loved to cook and started a catering business with a friend about five years ago. To read more about Nutter in a question and answer feature written in 2009, click here.

South Dakota ASA awards 17 scholarships

The South Dakota ASA (SDASA) will be awarding 17 $500.00 scholarships August 15 to SDASA participants. Funds for the scholarships come from SDASA and Sioux Falls People for Youth who continue to contribute $2500 per year. Recipients of the scholarships are:

Emily Nichols (Sioux Falls, S.D.), Cassandra Kranz (Watertown, S.D.), Ashley Currey (Madison, S.D.), Kalie Maiden (Rapid City, S.D.), Kayla Plimpton (Lennox, S.D.), Erica Everson (Rapid City, S.D.), Leland Murran (Brandon, S.D.), Anna Cramer (Huron, S.D.), Jessica Kallas (Belle Fourche, S.D.), Chelsea Roseneau (Spearfish, S.D.), Katelyn Runge (Brookings, S.D.) and Carly Peterson (Sioux Falls, S.D.)

This year SD ASA, with partner SF People for Youth, awarded 17 scholarships at $500.00 each to graduating seniors who have played and/or umpired ASA softball for at least 3 years. The deadline to be considered for 2013 is March 1. To get the forms, go to http://www.sdasasoftball.org/forms/SCHOLARSHIP%20REDONE.pdf. Forms must be returned to

Youth Commissioner Carol Pipgras
804 S. Garfield
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
After joining the Women's National Team in 1983, Sheila Cornell Douty made quite a name for herself in the softball community. Not only did Cornell help lead the UCLA Bruins to two NCAA National Championships (1982, 1984), she also won seven ASA National Championships and 15 International titles. It's no wonder why for nearly two decades, Sheila was among the best softball players in the world. We recently spoke with Douty about her life after USA Softball:

**Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to us! After such a long career as an athlete, what have you been up to since retiring from softball?**

After the 2000 Olympic Games, I played one year in the Women's Professional Softball League (WPSL). I planned on training for the Athens Games, but ended up having to retire due to a neck injury. These days, I continue to do motivational speaking, and I am also getting back into speaking engagements for coaches and players clinics nationally and internationally. I got married after the 1996 Olympic Games, and have been able to finally spend time with my family which I missed so much of during my playing days. My three kids have since grown up and I now have seven grandchildren ranging from 4-12. The oldest one plays for Cal Lite fast pitch 14U in So Cal and is better than I was at that age! Two of the boys are already playing coach pitch/ and minor baseball, so between the three of them I am keeping busy watching lots of ball games!! I have recently put a batting cage in the backyard and am back helping with hitting instruction as well.

I have also been inducted into the ASA, ISF and Los Angeles Unified School District's Halls of Fame. In my spare time, I run my own business with my husband, Joel. We buy homes, fix them up and then either rent or sell them. My husband and I also try to make a trip to Hawaii each year for our anniversary where we like to spend time on our Houseboat in Lake Powell. We also spend a little time in Bullhead City, AZ on the Colorado River, and time on our boat in Long Beach. We love the water! Whether it's the lake, beach or a river!! We have also started to enjoy camping in our Fifth Wheel when time permits as well.

**What made you decide to play softball when you were younger?**

My family was always involved in sports activities. When I was 10 I moved to a new city, and my mom took my younger sister and me down to the local park and recreation and signed us up for everything she could so that we could meet new friends. I started playing softball, and was hooked right away. Even though I played just about every sport (basketball, soccer, volleyball, track and field, swimming, even water ballet), I always had a different passion for softball. By the time I was twelve, I went through umpire training and was umpiring for t-ball, and minor games too. You had to drag me off the ball field!! I was very fortunate at Woodland Hills Recreation Center to be coached by knowledgeable coaches who inspired me and continually made the game fun to learn and practice. I was fortunate to have grown up where I did as we played ASA ball right from the get go, and I was bit by the competitiveness of the game. Luckily we had very competitive teams to play against constantly at every level. I loved that it was a constantly changing entity and that you had to think on your feet depending on what the situation dictated. I also liked the fast pace and quickness of the game, in fact I still do!

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You’ve played for USA Softball in so many various events, including the Olympic Games, World Championships and Pan-American Games. With over 17 years as a member of Team USA, what would you say are some of your favorite memories?

I have so many great memories over the 17 years I was on the National Team. I still remember being at the Colorado Springs Olympic Training Center when they posted the list for the first National Team I made (1983 Pan American games). You have no idea how excited I was that I was going to be able to represent the USA playing ball!! Even so, there are a few that stand above the rest.

One of my fondest memories was lining up on the baseline for the first game of the 1996 Olympic Games against Puerto Rico and then taking the field. I had tears in my eyes, and had to keep pinching myself that it was true, I was finally competing at the Olympic games for the USA. My second favorite was hitting the home run against China that put us as the top seed going into the medal round in 1996. We were down by 1 run, and I came back from being down 0-2 in the count and battled one of the best non-American pitchers in the world. I think I floated around the bases on that one. It was absolutely awesome! My next would have to be wearing the first-ever Olympic Gold Medal for softball around my neck while watching our flag come up from behind the Columbus, GA stadium and hearing our National Anthem. I also can’t forget the feeling I had wearing the Gold Medal around my neck from the 2000 Olympic Games after we fought so hard to battle back after three straight losses. What a truly team effort throughout the medal rounds. I guess it’s true that the harder the challenge, the greater the victory!

**Do you still keep in contact with any of your former teammates?**

I still keep in contact with many of my teammates. The best part is that we are mostly the same. Though we may not have spoken for some time, when we see each other we pick up like no time has passed at all. There is always the comfortable feeling of family whenever I see or speak with any of my teammates. We all share a bond that will last our lifetimes.

**If you had to pick one thing that you believe is the best part about being a part of Team USA, what would you pick?**

The best part of being a USA softball player was the ability to represent an entire nation of individuals through our sport. It is
difficult to put into words the feeling that you get just being able to wear the letters USA across your chest. It carries with it such pride, honor, responsibility, and a whole lot of fun! I have been so fortunate to have traveled the world and experience different cultures just from playing a sport. It gives you a much better appreciation for just how great a country we live in and how many things we really take for granted. I have been so fortunate to have been given the platform and the ability to make a difference in the lives of others because of my ability to play an awesome game that was so much fun for me. It’s a privilege to inspire others to want to do better in their own lives, sometimes with just a few words and a smile. To see that sparkle of hope in someone else’s eyes from just taking a moment to share some encouragement and give an autograph. I have truly been blessed.

ASA/USA Softball raises $3,000 for Beat Autism Foundation with silent auction at World Cup of Softball

The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America and USA Softball will be donating $3,000 to the Beat Autism Foundation after raising funds with a silent auction during the World Cup VII in Oklahoma City this June. Based out of Louisville, Ky., the Beat Autism Foundation has had an on-going relationship with ASA/USA Softball since 2008 distributing beaded bracelets to NCAA Women’s College World Series teams, international teams, and fans across the country to create awareness.

“The impact that the Riggle family has made on the softball community has been incredible and our silent auction was just a simple way to give back to them as they give so much in fighting to find a cure to this disease that affects so many families across the country,” said ASA/USA Softball Director of Marketing Julie Bartel. “Special thanks to the generosity of the World Cup of Softball fans and supporters who purchased items at the auction.”

ASA/USA Softball conducted a three-day silent auction during this summer’s World Cup of Softball in Oklahoma City that included autographed items of current and former USA Softball players.

“On behalf of Beading to Beat Autism, we would like to thank ASA/USA Softball for their unprecedented and continued support in the battle to make a difference in the lives of children and families impacted by autism,” said David Riggle, President of the Beat Autism Foundation. “If wearing the ‘Team USA awareness bracelets’ during games were not enough, ASA/USA Softball went above and beyond with the surprise of a silent auction at the 2012 World Cup of Softball in

Michala with the check ASA/USA Softball sent in honor of their donation.

Oklahoma City. Once again, they have proven why they are the world-leaders in the softball community. Thanks again Team USA players past and present for your love and support of the two things dearest to Michala’s heart- finding the cure for autism and this wonderful game we call fast pitch.”

To learn more and donate, please visit http://www.beadingtobeatautism.org. The Michala Riggle Beat Autism Foundation Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, completely dedicated to promoting awareness, determining causation, treating and eradication the dreadful disorder of autism.

Sheila enjoying some fun in the sun while on vacation.
The participants during the Pitch, Hit and Run competition.

The 24 national finalists in the 2012 Aquafina Major League Baseball Pitch, Hit & Run (PHR) competition, the official youth skills competition of Major League Baseball (MLB), competed on July 9 at the National Finals. The competition prior to Gatorade All-Star Workout Day, on the field at Kauffman Stadium. More than 685,000 youth participated in over 4,000 competitions that took place across North America.

For the third year in a row, the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America teamed up with the MLB PHR team for a nationwide Girls Softball Division which allowed girls to compete and advance separately from the boys throughout the competition.

A complete list of finalists is below.

7-8 Year Old Girls Age Division

Name Hometown MLB Team
- Samantha Sherer Miramar Beach, FL Tampa Bay Rays
- Cadashia Collins Chattanooga, TN Atlanta Braves
- Lita Vorseth Mesa, AZ Arizona Diamondbacks

7-8 Year Old Boys Age Division

- Wyatt Humphrey Syracuse, UT Colorado Rockies
- Michael Easter Arcadia, CA Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim
- Brett Hall Cedar Park, TX Texas Rangers

9-10 Year Old Girls Age Division

- Avery Dowling Spring, TX Houston Astros
- Abby Larson Marlborough, MA Boston Red Sox
- Meghan Dougherty Rensselaer, NY New York Yankees

9-10 Year Old Boys Age Division

- John Howard Bobo Las Vegas, NV San Diego Padres
- Sam Stanford Los Angeles, CA Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim
- Dasan Brown Oakville, ON Toronto Blue Jays

11-12 Year Old Girls Age Division

- Sloan Hammons Valrico, FL Tampa Bay Rays
- Jordan Carlson Council Grove, KS Kansas City Royals
- Krystina Lorch Hemet, CA Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim

11-12 Year Old Boys Age Division

- Ty Bender Woodland, PA Pittsburgh Pirates
- Coy Bila Chadron, NE Colorado Rockies
- Kyler Fedko Gibsonia, PA Cleveland Indians

13-14 Year Old Girls Age Division

- Amber Dixon Wallace, NC Atlanta Braves
- Hannah Vera-Burgos Garden City, MI Detroit Tigers
- Kylee Sellers Hugo, OK Texas Rangers

13-14 Year Old Boys Age Division

- Tanner Blatt Opelika, AL Atlanta Braves
- Andrew Canady Port Orchard, WA Seattle Mariners
- Rogelio Macias Cudahy, WI Milwaukee Brewers

Pitch, Hit & Run (PHR) invites youth to demonstrate their skills by competing in pitching, hitting and running competitions. PHR participants can advance through four levels of competition, beginning at the local level, which can be hosted by organizations, leagues, or volunteers within a community, and continuing through sectional and team competitions. All 30 MLB Clubs hosted team championships at their ballparks on weekends from May 26 through June 24. The top three competitors nationwide from each age group (7-8, 9-10, 11-12 and 13-14) advance to the 2012 Aquafina Major League Baseball Pitch, Hit & Run National Finals.

In addition to the Aquafina Major League Baseball Pitch, Hit & Run National Finals, the 24 finalists made a special trip to MLB All-Star FanFest, an interactive baseball theme park and the largest baseball fan event in the world. Among its attractions are an exhibit from the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, batting cages, clinics from Major League legends, free autograph sessions with former Royals, MLB legends and Hall of Famers, memorabilia and much more.

Hannah Vera-Burgos during the hitting portion of the finals.
USA Softball Junior Men’s Fast Pitch conclude Michigan exhibition tour with 9-6 record

The USA Softball Junior Men’s National Team (JMNT) was eliminated from the Midland, Mich. tournament in a 5-1 loss to the Lightning of Marshall, Michigan on July 22. The loss concluded Team USA’s 10 day trek across Michigan as part of a selection and training camp as the JMNT prepares for the International Softball Federation (ISF) Junior Men’s World Championships, November 1-10 in Parana, Argentina.

The lone USA run scored in the third inning. Jordan Mellen (Payson, Utah) reached first on an error then later advanced on a walk to Nick Serrato (Corona, Calif.) and scored on a single by Joel Melendez (El Paso, Tex.).

Trailing by just 2-1 in the sixth inning, Mauro Olivarria (San Diego, Calif.) led off the inning with a triple. Melendez reached first on an error which put runners on first and third. Following two strikeouts, Jonathon Lynch (Cape Girardeau, Mo.) walked to load the bases but another strikeout ended the USA’s offensive threat.

USA Softball takes second at the ISF World Championship Finals

It took 10 innings for Japan to do what hadn’t been done in 21 years, defeat the United States in the finals of the International Softball Federation (ISF) World Championship. USA, the nine time defending World Champions, came up just short in the 2012 finals falling to Japan 2-1 on July 22.

Keilani Ricketts (San Jose, Calif.) got the start in the circle for the USA. The left hander threw nine and a third innings only giving up one run on four hits. Ricketts struck out 10 Japanese batters in the game. Jackie Traina (Naples, Fla.) and Chelsea Thomas (Pleasantville, Iowa) both entered in relief in the tenth before Ricketts returned to pick up the final out of the inning. Traina, having surrendered the go-ahead run in the tenth was credited with the loss for Team USA.

“It was a tough battle,” said Ricketts. “We fought them through ten innings and gave it 100 percent, we just came up a little short.”

Yukiko Ueno went the complete game in the circle for Japan only giving up one run on three hits and striking out eight USA batters.

The game was scoreless through the first eight innings of play. Japan’s Yamada lead off the first inning with a single but Ricketts didn’t allow anymore and the inning closed with the runner stranded. It wasn’t until the fourth inning that Japan got their second hit but Ricketts closed out the inning with a strikeout to preserve the no score tie.

Yamada got her second base hit of the game in the bottom of the fifth but again Ricketts and the USA defense clamped down and didn’t allow a run.

From the plate the USA struggled to get much going against Ueno for most of the day. Amanda Chidester (Allen Park, Mich.) got the first American base hit in the second but a fielder’s choice and a strikeout left the runner stranded.

Christi Orgeron (New Orleans, La.) gave Team USA life in the bottom of the sixth when she singled to get on base but two batters later Japan countered with a 5-4-3 double play to end the inning.

At the end of regulation neither team had managed to put a run on the board forcing the international tie breaker (ITB) rule to be implemented which meant each team would start their at-bats with a runner on second base.

In the top of the eighth with one out and their ITB runner still at second, Japan’s Yamada smashed what looked to be her third hit of the game but Michelle Moultrie (Jacksonville, Fla.) raced to the center field wall, stretched her arm across the fence and hauled in the would-be homer for the US’s second out of the inning. Later in the at-bat, a Japan runner attempted to steal third but was thrown out by USA catcher Ashley Holcombe (Fayetteville, Ga.) to end the top half of the inning.

Chidester started the bottom of the seventh on second base for the US but Ueno retired the first three batters of the inning to send the game to the ninth still tied at zero.

In the top of the ninth, a Japan sacrifice bunt advanced their ITB runner to third with one out. Two batters later Japan’s Furuta hit an RBI single to give them a 1-0 lead.

Orgeron started the bottom half of the ninth on second base for the US and a sacrifice bunt from Moultrie moved her to third. With two outs in the inning and Orgeron still standing on third, Lauren Gibson (Pasadena, Md.) singled to right field to even the score at one and send the game into a tenth inning.

In the top of the tenth Japan advanced their ITB runner to third with a sacrifice bunt. Two batters later Misa Okubo singled to score the run and give Japan their second lead of the day.

USA needed one run in the bottom of the tenth to extend the game but couldn’t get anything going and Japan went away with the 2-1 victory.

With the loss the 2012 USA Softball season comes to a close. USA finished the World Championships with a 9-1 record, outscoring their opponents 86-6.

For the year, the young squad finished with a 23-2 record with their only losses coming to Japan, first in the Canadian Open International and then here at the ISF World Championship.

Gibson finished the season with the highest batting average for the USA at .500. As a team the USA batters hit for a .359 average on the year.

From the circle the USA pitching staff finished with a combined 0.70 ERA. Ricketts lead the team in wins with nine.

USA will now turn its sights toward the 2014 ISF World Championships which are scheduled for August 13-23 in the Netherlands.
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