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BALLS AND STRIKES

2019 // ISSUE IV



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BALLS AND STRIKES

Official Publication of
USA Softball
2019 \ Issue IV

Chief Executive Officer
Craig Cress

Editor
Codi Warren

Contributors

USA Softball President Rodney Cobb
Morgan Palmer
Katie Willis
Cat Osterman
Haylie McCleney
Valerie Arioto
Delaney Spaulding
Gil Saenz

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THE LINEUP

- 4** Letter from the President
- 6** News & Notes
- 10** USA Softball of Ohio Makes Dream a Reality
- 13** Annual Meeting Recap
- 16** Social Media – Let's Hear from You!
- 18** Tokyo 2020 Olympics on the Horizon
- 20** Athlete Holiday Favorites
- 23** National Softball Hall of Fame – 2019 Inductees
- 25** National Umpire Schools
- 26** Umpiring – a Family Affair
- 28** Stand Beside Her Tour
- 31** 2020 WNT Assistant Coaches Announced
- 32** OKC and Broken Arrow to host 2020 GOLD
- 35** Get to know the Bad News Bosons
- 37** U-18 MNT Earn Wild Card
- 39** U-18 WNT Qualify for World Cup
- 40** South Commons Softball Complex Named Complex of the Year
- 45** Map Out Your Road to a 2020 National Championship
- 50** 2020 HOF Class Announced
- 52** Despite Limitations, Umpire Finds Way to Stay Involved in the Game
- 55** From the Vault
- 56** Spot the Difference

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Greetings USA Softball Council Members and fans everywhere -

I am very proud to be addressing you as the new President of USA Softball. I have been involved with the ASA, now USA Softball, for a long time and it is exciting to me that 2020 will be our 87th year of providing opportunities to all who wish to participate in our wonderful sport, but none of it would exist if it were not for all of you; the players, coaches, sponsors, umpires and administrators that make up our membership.

Heading into a new decade of our sport's growth, 2020 is a big year for many reasons. Excitement continues to grow at all levels across the world for softball's return to the Olympic Games. After qualifying in 2018 by claiming Gold at the WBSC World Championship, the 18-member Women's National Team roster, including the three replacement players, was chosen in October in Oklahoma City and have begun preparing to go on tour next year leading up to their time in Japan. Thank you to all those that have gotten behind and supported this fantastic group, whether it be by hosting the team for exhibition games as part of the Stand Beside Her Tour, giving to the Legacy Club and Endowment Fund or simply spreading the word about the big things happening.

The world will come together for the Olympic Games in Tokyo, but softball will continue to be played at all levels throughout our country. From the grassroots level to international stage, USA Softball is the pipeline and we could very easily be witnessing future Olympians at our local tournaments and National Championships that take place across the country each year. It's important that all those that want to play the game have the opportunity to do so, and that they can continue dreaming and reaching new heights on the field.

There is no doubt USA Softball is committed to all facets of the game. Beginning at our grassroots, our local associations continue to offer various classifications of play in recreation leagues as well as competitive tournaments, across all disciplines of the sport to include Fast Pitch, Slow Pitch and Modified. If you want to play softball, there's a place for you with USA Softball.

Our Umpire Program continues to set the standard by which all other programs are measured. Working with our Allied Members at the high school and college levels, we continue to look for innovative ways to train our umpires to be the best in the country, regardless of whether they are working a high-level National Championship or the Wednesday night league at the local Park and Rec. To the players, the game they are playing in is the most important game there is, and we want you to have the best officiating no matter what level of ball you play.

USA Softball is also the leader when it comes to training coaches in our Junior Olympic (JO) program. The continuing education of coaches and other volunteers involved in the program through the ACE Program, concussion training and the SafeSport program is paramount to building healthy, productive and confident youth in a safe environment.

Our Adult Program, once the backbone of our association, has seen a continuing decline in numbers over the last decade and a half. We need to understand why that is happening and what we need to do to make our sport more attractive to those younger generations.

We cannot overlook our other National Teams whose players and coaches work just as hard to achieve their ultimate goal and dedicate time away from their jobs and families to represent the United States of America. Our Men's National Team placed fifth at the World Championships in Prague, Czech Republic and about a month later, reached the medal stand at the Pan American Games in Lima, Peru for the first time since 2003. Our U-19 Women's National Team took home the Gold at the inaugural WBSC World Cup in Irvine, Calif, which shows the depth and future of the program. We fielded and sent a U-17 Women's and Men's National Team to Barranquilla, Colombia and Guatemala City, Guatemala, respectively, to qualify for their 2020 World Cups. The U-17 Women claimed Gold and finished with a perfect 8-0 record, while the Men, despite finishing in fifth and not qualifying, was awarded the Wild Card bid at the WBSC Congress. Finally, both our Men's and Women's Slow Pitch National Teams and Futures Teams participated and claimed the Border Battle title over Canada.

All of this does not come without cost. Supporting all of these teams at a level they deserve is an expensive proposition. To that end you can help by making a donation to the USA Softball Legacy Club, which helps provide much needed funding. Go to USASoftballLegacyClub.com for information on how you can help support our National Teams.

Lastly, thank you to the Council, Board and National Office for what you do to make USA Softball what it is today!

Rodney Collet



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NEWS & NOTES



USA SOFTBALL SET TO KICK OFF “STAND BESIDE HER” TOUR FOR 2020 U.S. OLYMPIC SOFTBALL TEAM

USA Softball announced the “Stand Beside Her” tour, a series of competitions and training opportunities for the 2020 USA Softball Women’s National Team (WNT) as they prepare for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. The “Stand Beside Her” message encourages fans everywhere to stand united in their support of the WNT and the United States in their journey to the Olympic Games. Visit StandBesideHerTour.com for a complete schedule, including dates and locations!

LOOKING BACK AT THE III WBSC CONGRESS

World Baseball Softball Confederation President Riccardo Fracarri looked back at a successful third Congress for the WBSC, which was held in Sakai City, Japan from November 19-21, 2019. USA Softball representatives who attended the III WBSC Congress included Chief Executive Officer Craig Cress, President Rodney Cobb and International Consultant Ray Gutierrez.

Items specifically relating to USA Softball included:

- Recognition for hosting the 2019 U-19 Women’s World Cup in Irvine, Calif.
- Julie Johnson (USA Softball Umpire) was selected for the WBSC Hall of Fame
- The WBSC Executive Board awarded the U-18 Men’s National Team the Wild Card for the 2020 U-18 Men’s World Cup set to be held in Palmerston North, New Zealand Feb. 22 – March 1

Additionally, the below individuals were presented individual awards for 2018-2019:

- 2018 Softball Coach of the Year: Ken Eriksen (Women’s National Team, 2018 WBSC World Champion)
- 2018 Softball Athlete of the Year: Haylie McCleney (Women’s National Team, 2018 WBSC World Champion)
- 2019 Softball Umpire of the Year: David Selden III (USA Softball of Michigan, 2018 U-19 Men’s World Cup and 2019 Men’s World Cup umpire)



NEWS & NOTES



KRISTY RICH NAMED USA SOFTBALL OF MISSOURI COMMISSIONER

Rich began her career with USA Softball in 2003 when she was appointed to the USA Softball of Missouri Board and began her tenure as the JO Commissioner for the association. Six years later, Rich received her first appointment on the National Council for USA Softball and has served on a variety of Committees, including the Communications and Marketing Committee, JO Program Committee and Slow Pitch Ad Hoc Committee. In recent years, Rich also assisted with the USA Softball Slow Pitch National Team Program at the 2018 and 2019 editions of Border Battle.

Outside of USA Softball, Rich has been a member of the Missouri and National Parks & Recreation Associations since 1999. She graduated from the University of Central Missouri with a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism.

IMPACT CANOPY BECOMES LICENSED VENDOR OF USA SOFTBALL

Impact Canopy manufactures custom canopies, pop-up tents, banners, flags, inflatables, and additional branding for events and organizations. Impact Canopy was formed in 1999 and has over two decades of experience in manufacturing and distributing canopies, pop-up tents, banners, flags, inflatables and more to assist organizations with branding and signage. From custom-branded canopies in a variety of sizes to flags, banners, fencing and tabling, USA Softball members can have access to a wide variety of licensed items that are easy to assemble at exclusive pricing specific to USA Softball members and affiliates.

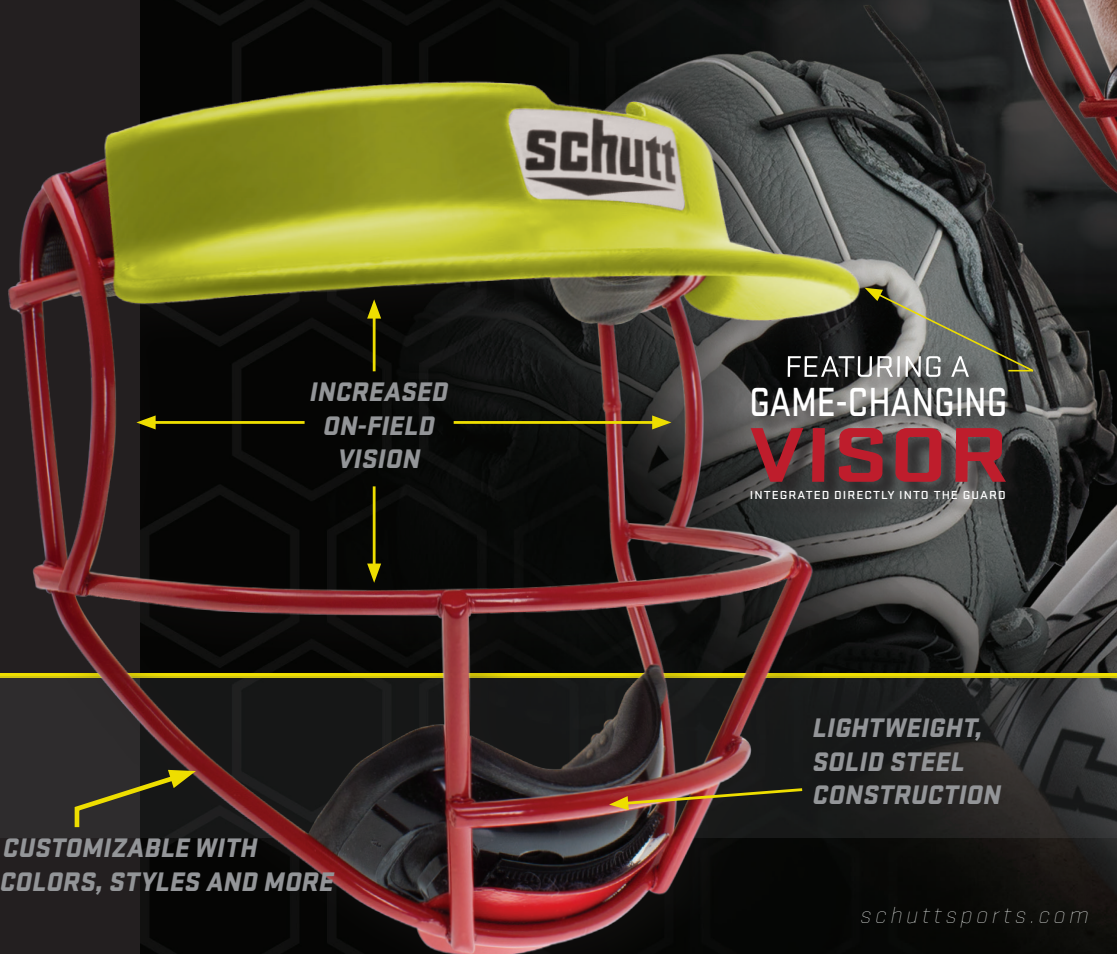


DARRIN DUISTERMARS NAMED USA SOFTBALL OF MICHIGAN COMMISSIONER

Duistermars began his career with USA Softball 20 years ago as an administrator at the local level with USA Softball of Michigan before joining the USA Softball National Council as an At-Large Player Rep in 2004. In his tenure with USA Softball, he has served on a variety of Committees, including the National Slow Pitch Classification, Player Rep and Slow Pitch Task Force. In recent years, Duistermars also assisted with the USA Softball Slow Pitch National Team Program at the 2018 and 2019 editions of Border Battle. Outside of USA Softball, Duistermars has served as the Parks & Recreation Director for Holland Charter Township since 1991.

ALL-NEW V1 / V2

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USA SOFTBALL OF OHIO MAKES DREAM A REALITY FOR 15-YEAR-OLD ASPIRING UMPIRE, MICHAEL POTTER

USA Softball of Ohio Umpire Mike Burwell and District Commissioner Warren Jones named Michael Potter an honorary USA Softball Umpire after noticing his countless hours of admirable dedication and enjoyment for our sport.

Michael, who has lived with Hydrocephalus and a shunt since infancy, gained a deep love for softball when he was six years old as he grew up watching his sister play in tournaments. He quickly took an interest with the umpires and began picking up their every move as well as the rules of the game. As time progressed, Michael took a step further into his love for umpiring and began setting up behind the backstop, counter in hand, while calling his own balls and strikes!

“His love for this sport and respect for the



umpires involved is really something special,” said his mother, Julie Potter. “He loves to introduce himself to the umpires before the game ... ‘Hey blue! I’m Mikey, if you need any help, I am here!’ ... It’s special to watch.”

One afternoon at a tournament, Michael became very ill and was rushed to the hospital where it was determined that his shunt was failing and was quickly sent into an emergency surgery. After the surgery, Michael spent a few days in the hospital but was mainly concerned with how quickly he could return to the softball fields to take back his spot behind the backstop -- and he did just that. Following his smooth and quick recovery, Michael quickly packed up his things and headed back to the softball fields to cheer on his sister and, of course, keep an eye on the umpires!

“It was that day that his dreams came true,” said his mother.

Mike Burwell and Warren Jones of USA Softball of Ohio met Michael at the fields and named him an honorary USA Softball Umpire -- making a dream a reality for Michael. He was given USA Softball umpire gear that he quickly changed into without any hesitation. With large bandages and stitches still on his head from his recent surgery, Michael ripped off his



hat and quickly replaced it with his new USA Softball Umpire hat, threw on his Umpire gear (pouch and all) and was ready to play ball!

“What a moment that was for him and for all of us,” said his mother. “He slept in the gear that night, wore it to the field the next day, wore it to school and continued to get in full gear for the remainder of fall softball games.”

Michael’s love for our sport never goes unnoticed. Along with this special moment, Michael has also been given the opportunity to do the coin flip and dust off the plate at a USA Softball tournament in Cleveland, Ohio. Each experience Michael has been given will be cherished forever, but the feeling of being called “Blue” in his USA Softball Umpire gear is a memory to last a lifetime.

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MOM'S RESPONSE... "MY DAUGHTER IS PLAYING FASTPITCH, SOCCER AND CHEERLEADING... SHE LIKES SOFTBALL, BUT I DON'T 100% KNOW IF SHE IS GOING TO PLAY NEXT SEASON OR NOT BUT I WANT TO GET HER A HIGH QUALITY FASTPITCH BAT SO SHE HAS FUN AND DOES WELL, BUT I DON'T WANT TO PAY TOO MUCH EITHER...."

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LLFP13
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PLAYER'S RESPONSE... "I AM PLAYING 8U FOR MY FIRST SEASON AND I REALLY NEED A BAT WITH A LARGE SWEETSPOT TO GIVE MYSELF THE BEST CHANCE OF GETTING SOLID HITS ON BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE PITCHES AS I LEARN HOW TO HIT A FASTPITCH BALL...."



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- High Strength Aircraft Alloy frame - Large sweetspot and good durability
- Approved by USASB, USSSA, NSA, ISA
- Meets all softball association standards
- 30"/17oz, 29"/16oz, 28"/15oz, 27"/14oz, 26"/13oz

ANNUAL MEETING RECAP



USA Softball concluded the 88th Annual Meeting held November 9-15 in Sparks, Nevada. Following the conclusion of the meeting, Rodney Cobb stepped into office as the President of USA Softball while Joe Patterson was announced as the President-Elect.

In addition to the change in leadership, USA Softball also conducted business throughout the 88th Annual Council Meeting, with highlights being the 39th Annual Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, the announcement of the 2020 Hall of Fame Class, the Wilson Sporting Goods Awards Luncheon and the selection of 2021 USA Softball National Championship sites. The 2020 USA Softball Women's National Team was onsite and introduced to the USA Softball Council by Head Coach Ken Eriksen.

ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

CONTINUED...



Kim Ng,
Major League
Baseball

USA SOFTBALL REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT ELECTIONS

Regional Vice Presidents were elected to the USA Softball Board of Directors (BOD) as Anna Louie (USA Softball of San Francisco Commissioner) will represent the Pacific Coast Region and Walker Clark (USA Softball of Arkansas Commissioner) will represent the South Region beginning in 2020, while Mary Mahoney (USA Softball of Kansas City Junior Olympic Commissioner) will represent the Mid-American Region for a one-year term. Re-elected to the BOD were John McPhail (USA Softball of Piedmont Virginia Junior Olympic Commissioner, Central Atlantic Region), Drew Wells (USA Softball of Texas At-Large Player Rep, Southwest Region), and Darrin Duistermars (USA Softball of Michigan At-Large Player Rep, Midwest Region).

Women's National Team Valerie Arioto, along with Chief Operating Officer John Miller and Past President John Gouveia, presented an autographed raffle prize to a council member.



2021 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS AWARDED

USA Softball Council Members awarded 2021 USA Softball National Championships for all divisions to play within USA Softball's grassroots programs, including Girls' Class A Fast Pitch National Championship Finals. With the announcement of the 2021 National Championship hosts, teams can begin their quest for the ultimate goal in softball: to hold up a USA Softball National Championship trophy.

[Click here to view a list of 2021 USA Softball National Championships](#)



Craig Cress, USA
Softball Chief
Executive Officer

2021 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS AWARDED

Announced during the 88th Annual Meeting, the National Softball Hall of Fame Class of 2020 inductees include: Doug Roberson (Slow Pitch Player), Carl Rose (Slow Pitch Player), Cecil Whitehead (Slow Pitch Player), Curtis Williams (Slow Pitch Player), Lovieanne Jung (Fast Pitch Player), Terry Muck (Fast Pitch Player), Bill Pfeiffer (Fast Pitch Player), Natasha Watley (Fast Pitch Player) and Phil Gutierrez (Meritorious Service).

Rodney Cobb,
USA Softball
President



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SOCIAL MEDIA:

LET'S HEAR FROM YOU!

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

Hanging out with 2 of my favorite Team USA players at the @USASoftball meetings. Thanks @catosterman and @hayliemac8 for the pic. #usasoftball @UASFSHOWCASES



@81TRECK

"@USASoftball In honor of softball returning to the Olympics, Arkansas Blast 007 dressed as Team USA for Halloween softball!!



@BRADLEYGOODIN

Just wanted to say I was very proud of each and every one of these girls for their work they put in this past Saturday!! Thanks @d1cabot and @USASoftball!! Also glad to team up and represent USA Softball of Arkansas!!!



@D1POZZA

Received my 15-year service award today from USA Softball. I'm honored to work with such a great organization and some pretty wonderful people. It has been a privilege to travel to some nice places to work and promote the game I love. #USASoftball #USASoftballMissouri



@KRISTYSOFTBALL1



You know you're in for greatness at the legendary @MichaelsRedHots when your order is the legendary @catosterman's #CharDogChicagoStyle #38! #USASoftball



@MOONPUP1

Pretty cool when your little girl comes in and says "Dad @madilyn_nickles and @raaacchhheell made the team" and then gets her USA Softball gear on for school. Congrats and thanks for being great examples! #USASoftball #BubbaBombsInTokyo #00K'ALL



@MICHAELACROUSE

USA Turner/Weaver softball joined forces with their local communities to gather clothes and household goods for the local Savers. We are so proud of these girls and their desire to leave their mark of service and love on their communities. Giving back to one's community is inherent in teams sports and we are proud to continue that tradition. #sheplayswewin #USASoftball #togetherwecandoanything



@USA_ATHLETICS_TURNER_WEAVER





A DANGEROUS LINEUP



**INTRODUCING
THE MIZUNO F19
FASTPITCH BAT LINEUP**

TOKYO 2020 OLYMPICS ON THE HORIZON

Team USA will join five countries at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games for softball's fifth Olympic appearance overall and first since 2008. As we approach July 22, let's take a sneak peek at some details you won't want to miss!



MEDALS

Take a close look at the official Tokyo 2020 medals! Resembling rough stones that have been polished and now shine, the design of the medals aims to reflect the themes of light, brilliance, diversity, hard work, and friendship.

photo credit: Tokyo2020.org



MEDALIST BOUQUETS

Get the first look at the Tokyo 2020 Medalist Bouquets!

photo credit: @Tokyo2020 (twitter)

STADIUMS

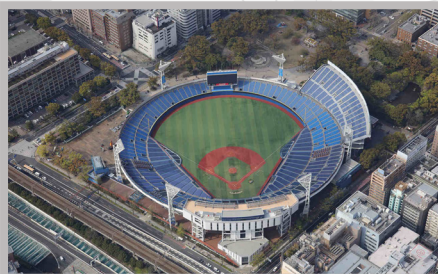
Fukushima Azuma Baseball Stadium

photo credit: Tokyo2020.org



Yokohama Baseball Stadium

photo credit: Tokyo2020.org



SCHEDULE

July 22 - Opening Round

July 23 - Opening Round

July 25 - Opening Round

July 26 - Opening Round

July 27 - Opening Round

July 28 - Medal Round

The first two days of competition (July 22-23) will take place at Fukushima Azuma Baseball Stadium, where the U.S. most recently played its final game of the 2018 Japan All-Star Series against world-ranked No. 2 Japan on June 23, 2018.

Following the Opening Ceremony on July 24, games will move to Yokohama Baseball Stadium. Team USA previously played at Yokohama Baseball Stadium for game three of the 2017 Japan All-Star Series on June 25, 2017.

Medal matches for softball will take place on July 28 with the Bronze Medal Game slated for 1 p.m. JST and the Gold Medal Game scheduled for 8 p.m. JST.



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ATHLETE HOLIDAY FAVORITES



CAT OSTERMAN



HAYLIE MCCLENEY



VALERIE ARIOTO



DELANEY SPAULDING



GIL SAENZ



MATT PALAZZO

FAVORITE HOLIDAY TRADITION

Cat Osterman: "Waking up Christmas morning and waiting at the top of the stairs for the 'OK' that we can come down. We still do this even as adults."

Haylie McCleney: "Decorating the tree and watching Christmas movies!"

Valerie Arioto: "Going to the movies on Christmas day as a family."

Delaney Spaulding: "Every Sunday before Christmas, my mom's side of the family gets together and makes homemade tamales! Over the years, we have extended it to more family and friends. It's a fun and delicious tradition!"

Gil Saenz: "I come from a big family, so our white elephant gift exchange is always a great time and a good laugh."

Matt Palazzo: "Going to Anna Maria Island with my wife and kids every Christmas."

MY HOLIDAY PLANS INCLUDE...

Cat Osterman: "Our family will have one last Christmas in our childhood home before my parents move. It will be awesome to wake up and sit at the top of the stairs one last time."

Haylie McCleney: "Spending time with my family in Florida and Alabama."

Valerie Arioto: "Staying local will all of my family!"

Delaney Spaulding: "Christmas Eve and Christmas morning at my parent's house with all the little ones, yummy breakfast and opening stockings and gifts, then a couple of us will go to Lake Arrowhead to relax at my Uncles."

Gil Saenz: "Visit my wife's family in Minnesota and go to the Minnesota Vikings game."

IF YOU COULD GO ANYWHERE FOR CHRISTMAS, WHERE WOULD YOU GO?

Cat Osterman: "I love spending Christmas in wintery places, so somewhere with snow. However, I'd also want to snowboard.... And that needs to wait till after July!"

Haylie McCleney: "New York City!"

Valerie Arioto: "I don't think I'd do anything different. I would still choose to stay home with my family. That's what the holidays are all about!"

Delaney Spaulding: "I have been wanting to experience NYC during Christmas since I can remember. Window shop, Christmas shows and ice skating at Rockefeller Center.... A dream!!"

Gil Saenz: "New York! I'd love to see the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center, Dyker Heights Christmas Lights and Christmas displays on 5th Ave. NYC embraces the holidays!"

ATHLETE HOLIDAY FAVORITES



CAT OSTERMAN



HAYLIE MCCLENEY



VALERIE ARIOTO



DELANEY SPAULDING



GIL SAENZ



MATT PALAZZO

FAVORITE ALL-TIME HOLIDAY MOVIE

Cat Osterman:
"The original Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer with Herby the Elf who wants to be a dentist."

Haylie McCleney: "Christmas Vacation"

Valerie Arioto:
"The Grinch"

Delaney Spaulding:
"Santa Claus 2"

Gil Saenz:
"Home Alone 1 and 2"

Matt Palazzo:
"Home Alone!"

FAVORITE HOLIDAY SONG

Cat Osterman:
"Last Christmas"

Haylie McCleney:
"Jingle Bell Rock"

Valerie Arioto:
"All I want for Christmas by Mariah Carey!"

Delaney Spaulding:
"Hallelujah by Pentatonix"

Gil Saenz:
"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas by Michael Bublé"

FAVORITE HOLIDAY SNACK

Cat Osterman:
"Peppermint Bark"

Haylie McCleney:
"Santa Cookies"

Valerie Arioto:
"Peppermint Bark"

Delaney Spaulding:
"Ghirardelli Peppermint Bark"

Gil Saenz:
"Buttercream frosted cookies! I'm not really a sweets person, but I can't get enough of those!"

WHAT'S ON YOUR CHRISTMAS WISH LIST?

Cat Osterman:
"Hydroflask and sweaters from Tall Boutique!"

Haylie McCleney:
"A Gold Medal"

Valerie Arioto:
"My wish list has changed as I've gotten older. This year, it's just to be present with family!"

Delaney Spaulding:
"For my sisters, brothers in law, nephews and niece to travel to Tokyo for the Olympics with Team USA!"

Gil Saenz:
"Anything related to my Jeep!"

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NATIONAL SOFTBALL HALL OF FAME 2019 INDUCTEES



The National Softball Hall of Fame welcomed eight new members as USA Softball held its 39th Annual Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. With nearly 500 friends, family members and administrators from all across the country in attendance, the ceremony honored the accomplishments, history-making moments and milestones of the eight inductees who helped shape the sport of softball.



Inducted in the 2019 class were:

RICK HAVERCROFT
Umpire

BRITT HIGHTOWER
Slow Pitch Player

WARREN JONES
Meritorious Service

TONY LAWS
Meritorious Service

JESSICA MENDOZA
Fast Pitch Player

MIKE NYE
Slow Pitch Player

RON PARNELL
Slow Pitch Player

JOEY L. RICH
Commissioner



2019 NATIONAL HALL OF FAME CLASS VIDEO

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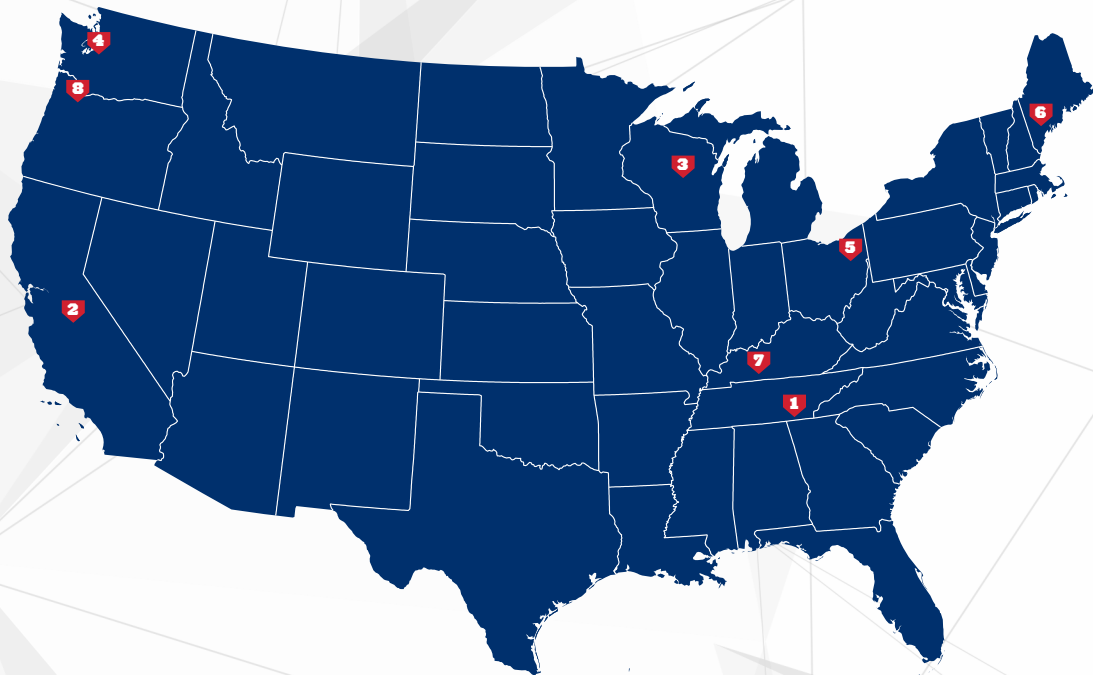


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The purpose of a USA Softball National Umpire School is to develop each student's individual talents and skills as an umpire. We realize that you have the pride and attitude it takes to become one of the best softball umpires in the nation. Our goal is to bring out the best in your talent and ability.

Each USA Softball National Umpire School is run by a team of no less than three National Umpire staff members. Each member is an experienced instructor with a boundless knowledge of all aspects of the game of softball. With a ratio of at least one clinician per 25 students, each participant will receive hands-on personal instruction throughout the school. At the Fast Pitch Advanced Umpire School, instruction is focused on fast pitch only while the ratio is one instructor per 10 students.



1. January 24-26	Chattanooga, Tennessee	Region 3	Ed Rowe	423-355-3002
2. January 24-26	Clovis, California	Region 10	Wink Winkelmann	559-583-9335
3. February 21-13	Stevens Point, Wisconsin	Region 8	Matt Disher	715-498-8000
4. February 21-23	Auburn, Washington	Region 9	Greg Forinash	206-227-2346
5. March 6-8	Massillon, Ohio	Region 2	Warren Jones	419-651-3335
6. March 20-23	Auburn, Maine	Region 1	Dave Mulcahy	207-240-2599
7. June 18-21	Bowling Green, Kentucky	Fast Pitch Camp	Ben Crenshaw	270-210-1223
8. June 25-28	Portland, Oregon	Slow Pitch Camp	David Waite	503-329-1012



FAMILY MEMBERS SHARING THE FIELD AS USA SOFTBALL UMPIRES

The USA Softball umpire program is among the nation's largest officiating organizations with over 26,000 officials actively involved each year. USA Softball umpires are nationally recognized as the best trained and proficient in the sport and are involved in competition starting with league play, city, state and national championships. Ultimately, USA Softball umpires could officiate events such as World Championships, Pan American Games and Olympic competitions. These USA Softball Umpires provide a special element to our program, not only by providing USA Softball tournaments with elite officiating but doing so with their family members alongside them.



The Burgoon Family from Olathe, Kan., a USA Softball Umpire family of five.

(Left to Right) -- Trinity (daughter), Mike (father), Miranda (daughter), Annette (mother) and Cody (son)



A father and his two sons spend time together on the softball field as USA Softball Umpires.

(Left to Right) -- Pete Jackson (father), Garren Jackson (son), Grayden Jackson (son)



Two father and son USA Softball Umpire duos from Kansas City, Kan. and Olathe, Kan.

LEFT: (Left to Right) -- Gabriel Frias (son) and George Frias (father)
 RIGHT: (Left to Right) -- Greg Escobar (son) and Greg Escobar (father) -- Olathe, Kan.



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From the east coast to the west coast, the Women's National Team is coming to a city near YOU as part of the "Stand Beside Her" tour!

The "Stand Beside Her" tour is a series of competitions and training opportunities for the 2020 USA Softball Women's National Team as they prepare for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. The "Stand Beside Her" message encourages fans everywhere to stand united in their support of the WNT and the United States in their journey to the Olympic Games.

The "Stand Beside Her" tour evokes a powerful message of unity aimed to inspire communities to stand beside HER – the members of the WNT, America and the future generation of female athletes.

With the return of softball to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games program, the "Stand Beside Her" tour provides much-needed training and competition for the 2020 WNT in their preparation for the Olympic Games while also giving fans a chance to watch the Red, White and Blue in person. Olympic competition will start July 22, 2020 with the Gold Medal Game being played on July 28.



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ASSISTANT COACHES FOR 2020 WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM ANNOUNCED



LAURA BERG

Berg has been involved with USA Softball as both an athlete or coach since 1994. As a player, 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, the National Softball Hall of Fame member also played in four World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) World Championships and three Pan American Championships, all of which were Gold Medal finishes.

Berg joined the WNT coaching staff in 2012 and has helped lead the Red, White and Blue to a WBSC World Championship Gold Medal (2018) and a Pan American Games Gold Medal (2019). Berg also has previous experience with the Junior Women's National Team (JWNT) program, serving as the Head Coach for the 2017 JWNT that earned Gold at the WBSC Junior Women's World Championship (JWWC) in Clearwater, Fla. and as an Assistant Coach for the 2013 JWNT that earned a Silver Medal at the WBSC JWWC in Brampton, Ontario, Canada.

"I'm so thankful for the opportunity to work with this incredible team and coaching staff," said Berg.

HOWARD DOBSON

Dobson is making his ninth appearance as an Assistant Coach for the WNT program after serving on the coaching staff since 2012. In his tenure with USA Softball, Dobson has contributed to two WBSC World Championship Gold Medal finishes in addition to a Gold Medal at the Lima 2019 Pan American Games.

At the collegiate level, Dobson has held an Assistant Coach position at LSU since June of 2011. Since taking the reins of the Tiger offense, Dobson has helped produce some of the most prolific hitting teams in program history.

"I am tremendously honored and humbled to be a part of the 2020 U.S. Olympic coaching staff," said Dobson. "I look forward to helping the athletes achieve their goal of returning the Gold Medal back to where it belongs! I am very appreciative of the sacrifices my family, LSU Head Coach Beth Torina, and staff have made to allow me to pursue this endeavor. Thank you to the Selection Committee for the time and effort they have put in for making this dream a reality. I look forward to working with Head Coach Ken Eriksen and competing to be the best in the world!"



TAIRIA FLOWERS

Flowers, a two-time Olympian, has been involved with USA Softball since 2001 as both a player and coach. As a player on the WNT, Flowers helped the United States to a perfect record and Gold Medal at the 2004 Athens Olympics, and to a Silver Medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. She also won Gold Medals at the 2002 and 2006 WBSC Women's World Championships and the 2003 and 2007 Pan American Games.

Following the conclusion of her playing career, Flowers took her talents to the WNT coaching pool where she has served in a variety of roles since the 2011 season. She was a member of coaching staffs that led the WNT to the 2011 Guadalajara Pan American Games Gold Medal and 2019 Lima Pan American Games Gold Medal. Flowers also led the 2015 and 2013 JWNT programs that earned Gold and Silver at the WBSC JWWC, respectively.

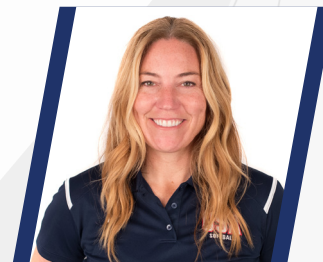
"I am so thankful for this opportunity," said Flowers. "I have been in this program for a long time, both as an athlete and coach, and have loved every second of it. We have an amazing group of people that surround us and it's going to be a great ride."

HEATHER TARR

In 2017, Tarr joined the USA Softball program as an Assistant Coach for the WNT and helped guide the 2017 roster to a Gold Medal finish at the Pan American Championship in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Returning to the coaching staff in 2018, Tarr once again had a Gold Medal season with the WNT who captured a Gold Medal at the WBSC World Championship. In 2019, Tarr served as the Head Coach for a history-making U-19 WNT that earned a Bronze Medal at the USA Softball International Cup, the first for a JWNT program, and a Gold Medal finish at the WBSC U-19 Women's Softball World Cup.

As a player, Tarr was a four-year letter-winner at Washington. A part of Washington's first team to reach the NCAA Women's College World Series (WCWS), Tarr helped the Huskies earn a runner-up finish in 1996 and a third-place finish in 1997. In her four years, Tarr earned three Pac-12 All-Academic merits and was named First-Team All-Pac-12 three times.

"I am honored to be part of this coaching staff," said Tarr. "The 2020 team has great chemistry and they are hungry for information. I am eager to continue the journey with USA Softball and see how good we can get in pursuit of the Gold Medal this coming July."



OKC AND BROKEN ARROW TO HOST 2020 GOLD NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS



USA Softball announced the locations for the 2020 USA Softball GOLD National Championships, the pinnacle of Junior Olympic (JO) Championship Play. Taking place July 19-25, 2020, the 16-Under Fast Pitch GOLD National Championship will be held at Arrowhead Park in Broken Arrow, Okla., while the 18-Under division will take place at USA Softball Hall of Fame Complex in Oklahoma City, Okla.

Arrowhead Park has hosted some of the largest, most prestigious national tournaments for softball, including the 2014 and 2016 16-Under GOLD National Championships. The 40-acre park features 12 lighted softball fields with permanent 200-foot fencing, a one-mile walking trail, ample parking, great concession stand hospitality, park benches and picnic tables, and a playground for all visitors. The park has been nationally recognized for its quality facility standards for girls' softball and is known to create a great atmosphere for endless softball competition.

The USA Softball Hall of Fame Complex, often referred to as The Softball Capital of the World®, has played host to the best softball competition in the world such as the NCAA Women's College

World Series (WCWS) and the USA Softball International Cup. The 18-Under division GOLD National Championship will be the first grassroots National Championship held at the newly renovated complex, which brings an additional 4,000 seats to USA Softball Hall of Fame Stadium – OGE Energy Field. The four-field complex is located in the heart of the OKC Adventure District, offering many nearby activities for all visitors.

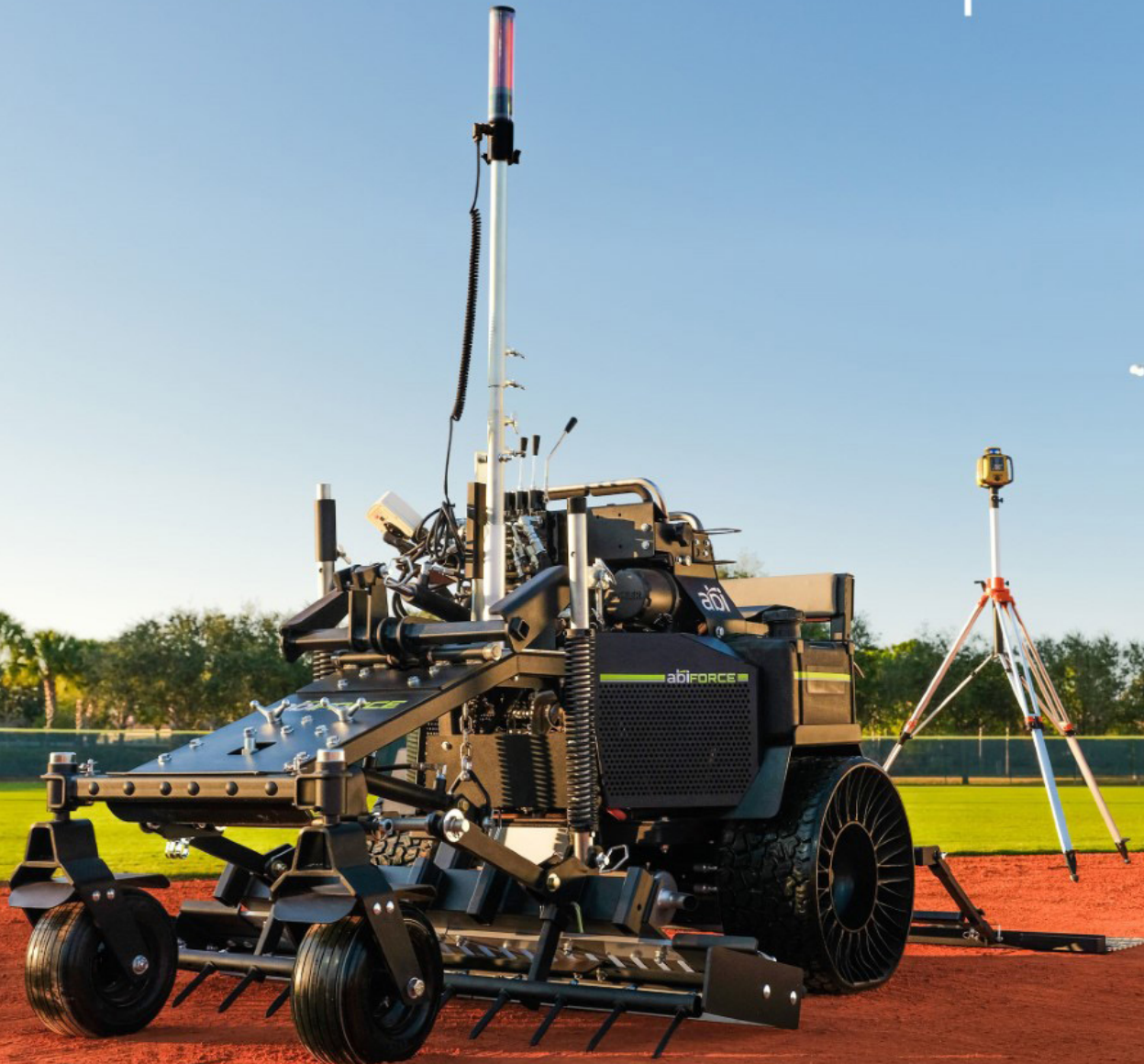
The 2020 GOLD National Championships includes 48 berths for each competing division with each team earning a berth through a network of Regional qualifying tournaments and through allocated berths.

At the 2019 GOLD Nationals, the 16-Under division saw Tulsa Elite OKC Walde bring home the Championship title with an undefeated 6-0 record on their journey to the trophy, beating Wichita Mustangs, 9-5, in their final contest. Excel Elite Williams claimed the 18-Under division title in complete dominance, outscoring their opponents 55-15 and recording three run-rule victories, one being in the Championship game as they forced Texas Blaze Elite Lindsey to a 11-1 run-rule.



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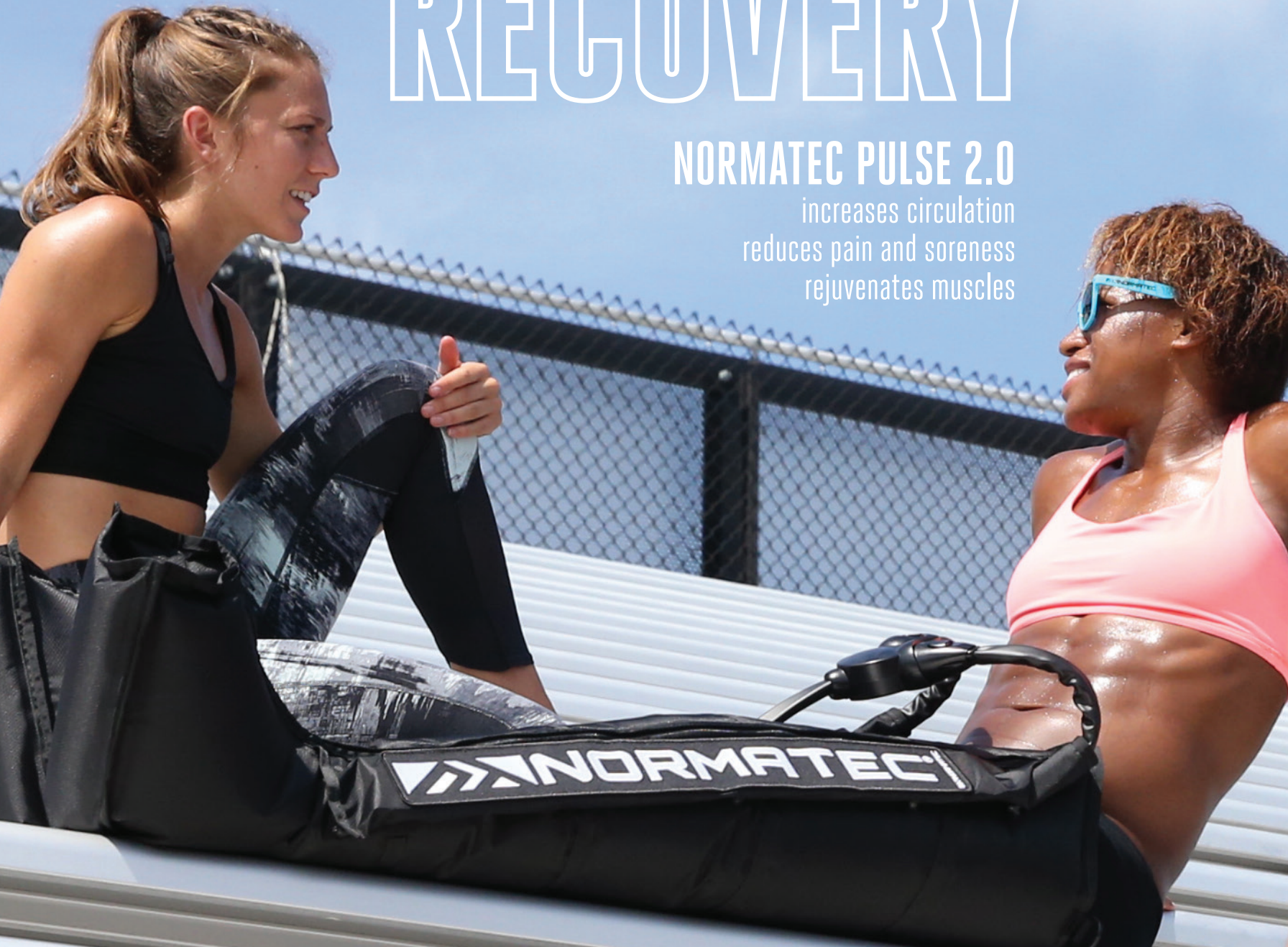
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BAD NEWS BOSONS

SHOW REMARKABLE IMPROVEMENT THROUGH NINE YEARS OF COMPETITION IN USA SOFTBALL OF SACRAMENTO LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

As a nine-year competitor in the League Championship Series (LCS), an Adult Men's Slow Pitch tournament sanctioned by USA Softball of Sacramento, a group of softball-playing astrophysicists and other scientists known as the Bad News Bosons went from being the worst team in 2010 to being crowned Champions in 2019.

The USA Softball of Sacramento LCS, now in its 34th year, includes local winners from 32 different park and recreation agencies in the Sacramento region. A unique event not designed for the normal tournament team, the LCS is a weekend-long double-elimination tournament set to crown a "champion of champions." The tournament runs five divisions – two Co-Ed, one Rec, an American division which is sometimes split into two subdivisions, and one National. Through the Bad News Bosons LCS appearances, the team has participated in the Rec and American divisions.

Although playing softball does not take a rocket scientist, members of this team are just that. Originating in 2009 when University of California (UC) Davis physics professor, Dan Cebra, and his astrophysics graduate students began playing in local tournaments, the Bad News Bosons also dedicate their team's startup to a bond between baseball fans, a way to re-live some of their previous baseball careers, and a place to simply showcase their athletic skill.

Throughout the years, many players have left the team while others have joined, with the majority of the team still consisting of science graduate students, post-doctorate students and industry professionals such as physicists, engineers, computer scientists and biologists. Five players from the original 2009 squad remain on the 2019 Bad News Bosons Championship team.

The Bad News Bosons certainly use their science knowledge to plan their game in a very methodical and analytical way, but their athletic backgrounds are what truly get the job done. For instance, the Bosons strategically plan their batting order to maximize their use of speed, power, plate patience, on-base-percentage and contact hitting that they have on the

team. They also position their defense based on what they know about their opponents' hitters. Once their strategy is put into place, the Bad News Bosons use their athleticism to execute the game plan.

"There really is no sport better suited to combine athleticism and smarts like baseball/softball to maximize success," said Bad News Bosons team member and manager, Rob Mathieu.

A year after the start-up of the Bad News Bosons, the organization began competing in the LCS in 2010 in the Rec division. A rough start for the Bad News Bosons, the team consistently fell far short in the tournament, recording only one win in their first five years of LCS competition.

A year of improvement came in 2015 as the team advanced to the Sunday rounds for the first time, claiming third place in the Rec division. In 2016, the Bad News Bosons advanced to a higher division of play – the American South division. The team took a tough loss in their first game of the tournament but bounced back with five straight wins before falling to Foul Ballz in the Championship game, landing them in second place. The following two seasons weren't so hot for the Bad News Bosons, losing two straight games in the 2017 LCS and failing to qualify for the 2018 tournament.

A year of change, improvement and pure joy, the 2019 season was one the Bad News Bosons will cherish forever. After the addition of some key players and new talent, the team won their summer league and earned an invite to the LCS American South Division, where they recorded an undefeated 5-0 record to clinch their first-ever LCS Championship trophy while also earning them the most improved team in the LCS.

The Bad News Bosons dominated in their first game of the tournament, recording their first-ever Saturday morning win with a 17-7 victory over the Elk Grove Diamond Dawgs. After a no-show forfeit from their second opponent, the Bad News Bosons notched their second win of the tournament without effort. Their third match of the tournament was sent into extra innings against Purple Reign after two back-and-forth innings

knotted the score at 11 in the seventh inning and 13 in the eighth inning. The Bad News Bosons took the final lead in the top of the ninth, tacking on three runs to make the score 16-13. Purple Reign pushed one across in the bottom half of the frame but a ground out and two fly outs ended the inning, earning the Bad News Bosons a 16-14 victory.

The semifinal game was another nail-biter for the Bad News Bosons, but a seventh inning, three-run walk-off home run advanced the Bad News Bosons to the Championship Game with an 18-16 win over Imperious Rex Tattoo. The Championship contest featured a rematch against the Rex Tattoos, but the Bad News Bosons proved victorious with a 19-9 Championship victory.

The Bad News Bosons offense exploded through the tournament, combining for 70 runs and nine home runs in their five-game journey to the top. A team effort from the Bad News Bosons offense, each team member safely reached base at least once in their 2019 LCS appearance, with Gabe Gutierrez leading the offense with five home runs while Dusty Stolp, John Markley (3-run walk-off in the semifinals), Caton Mande and Chad Trevisan each contributed with one a piece. Trevisan also hit for the cycle in the Championship contest.

"We played our most complete set of games that we've probably ever played, with consistent, powerful and high scoring offense, shut-down defense, exceptional baserunning and absolutely masterful pitching," said Rob Mathieu. "We have never had a stretch where we put it all together like this, and what a time to make it happen."



Bad News Bosons 2019 LCS Championship Team Members: Alex Timmons, Gabe Gutierrez, Brian Lemaux, Caton Mande, John Markley, Chad Trevisan, Curtis Harrington, Andy Greenawalt, Dave Collins, Andrew Bradshaw, Travis Schmidt, Dusty Stolp, Noah Pflueger-Peters, Rob Mathieu and Dan Cebra.

The image features a light gray background with a white central area. The top and bottom corners are decorated with gold confetti and fern-like patterns. A thin black horizontal line runs across the middle of the page, passing behind the main title.

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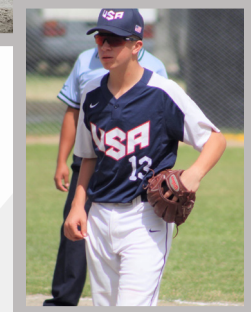
1 Myriad Gardens, Oklahoma City, OK 73102

U-18 MEN'S NATIONAL TEAM EARN WILD CARD FOR 2020 U-18 MEN'S SOFTBALL WORLD CUP

After finishing fifth at the 2019 U-17 Men's Softball Pan American Championship, the Red, White and Blue fell just short of a qualifying berth and applied for the Wild Card bid ahead of the III World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Congress. Among the key events and wild cards announced by the WBSC Executive Board at the 2019 Congress in Sakai, Japan, the USA Softball U-18 Men's National Team was awarded the wild card for the 2020 U-18 Men's Softball World Cup.

The U.S. will join 11 other countries (Argentina, Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Guatemala, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore and South Africa) at the U-18 Men's Softball World Cup set to take place February 22 - March 1, 2020 in Palmerston, New Zealand.

The U-18 MNT will be composed of members from the 2019 squad that traveled to Guatemala City for the U-17 Men's Softball Pan American Championship where the U.S. finished in fifth place with a 3-3 record, just shy of earning a spot in the Playoff Rounds. The Red, White and Blue compiled a .232 batting average, 35 hits and 30 RBI, while the pitching staff issued 22 strikeouts over the six-game outing.



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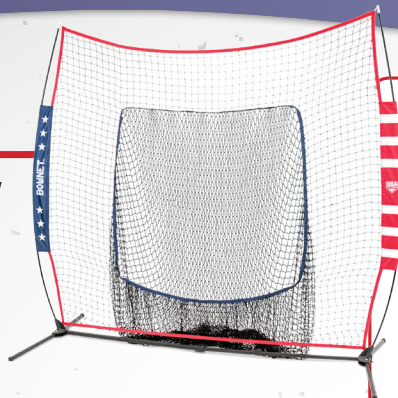


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USA Ball Bag

(BN-BALL BAG USA SB)

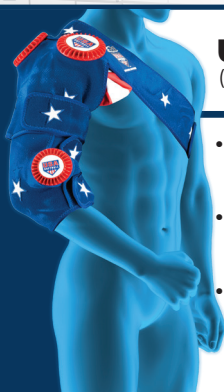
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U-18 WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM EARN BERTH FOR 2020 U-18 WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

After finishing atop the podium at the 2019 U-17 Women's Pan American Championship, the Red, White and Blue earned a berth to the 2020 U-18 Women's World Cup.

The U-18 WNT will include members from the 2019 squad that traveled to Barranquilla, Colombia for the U-17 Women's Pan American Championship where the U.S. recorded an undefeated 8-0 record to secure the gold medal. The Red, White and Blue outscored their opponents 74-9 with five of their eight contests ending by way of run rule. The U.S. offense combined for a .430 batting average with 83 hits and 67 RBI while the pitching staff compiled 60 strikeouts in 44 innings.





SOUTH COMMONS SOFTBALL COMPLEX NAMED 2019 COMPLEX OF THE YEAR

After undergoing a multi-million-dollar renovation in a mere six months and successfully hosting the 2019 USA Softball International Cup, South Commons Softball Complex was awarded the 2019 Complex of the Year, presented by Stabilizer Solutions, Inc. South Commons Softball Complex received their award at the 88th USA Softball Annual Council Meeting in Sparks, Nevada.

“Congrats to South Commons Softball Complex on winning the 2019 USA Softball Complex of the Year,” said USA Softball Managing Director of Membership Services, Rich Cress. “South Commons does a great job of ensuring their facility is in prime condition for each event they host. Whether hosting a grassroots event, local event or a National Team event, the South Commons staff, tournament directors and field crew offer nothing but the best for the players, fans and umpires.”

The South Commons Softball Complex is most notably known for hosting the historic 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games for the sport of softball, where the Red, White and Blue claimed the first-ever Olympic Gold Medal. A host for a variety of events throughout the year, the South Commons Softball Complex has hosted the NFCA Leadoff Classic, Sidney Cooper Invitational, National Club Softball Association (NCSA) World Series and annually hosts the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) State Softball Championships.

South Commons most recently held the 2019 USA Softball International Cup where over 9,900 fans enjoyed a week-long competition of international play resulting in the USA Softball Women’s National Team taking home the Gold and the U-19 Women’s National Team earning the Bronze Medal.

“USA Softball of Georgia wants to thank USA Softball for selecting South Commons Softball Complex as the Complex of the Year,” said USA Softball of Georgia Commissioner, Al Dattolo. “After undergoing extensive renovations, this is an award which is greatly deserved and appreciated by the city of Columbus.”

South Commons Softball Complex is an eight-field complex, which includes a five-field hub with a roundhouse and a three-field fan with a stadium, indoor score booths, concessions and restrooms. After undergoing a \$4.8 million-dollar renovation, the South Commons softball facilities are unparalleled in the region. The renovations included new LED lighting, new scoreboards, field drainage systems, stadium seats, fencing, renovated restrooms and concessions, paint, sidewalks, ADA compliant ramps, netting, Wi-Fi and internet access, and updated umpire rooms, press box and skyboxes.

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TrueSport champions the positive values and life lessons learned through youth sport. TrueSport inspires athletes, coaches, parents, and administrators to change the culture of youth sport through active engagement and thoughtful curriculum based on cornerstone lessons of sportsmanship, character-building, and clean and healthy performance, while also creating leaders across communities through sport.

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Winning the right way – with respect and gratitude for teammates, coaches, parents, and competitors.
- **CHARACTER BUILDING**
Using the sport experience to develop positive whole-life attitudes and behaviors: perseverance, courage, honesty, and more.
- **HEALTHY PERFORMANCE**
Wellness-centric lifestyles that fuel athletic and personal success – in sport and in everyday life.

TrueSport is all about the true essence of sport – integrity, respect, teamwork, courage, and responsibility.

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EVEN WHEN IT'S TOUGH.**



TrueSport

In case you missed it, check out a few of the expert-driven articles brought to USA Softball by TrueSport!

How to Create Strong Habits to Help Your Athletes Achieve Goals

- Teach goal-setting basics
- Consider the ABC'S
- Not all goals are created equal
- Define those good habits
- Show the importance of specific habits
- Avoid external rewards
- Chart Progress

Pivoting for the Goal: How to Help Athletes Through Mid-Season Adjustments

- Explain that progress is success too
- Talk about goals early and often
- Set different types of goals for one season
- Ask 'What if results didn't matter?'
- Provide constant feedback

What You Can Do to Stop the Cycle of Disrespect in Sports

- Focus on your behavior first
- Pre-set boundaries and rules
- Validate your athlete's emotions
- Help your athlete, but don't take over
- Reassess the sport

For more articles and materials, visit USA Softball.com or TrueSport's comprehensive LEARN resource.

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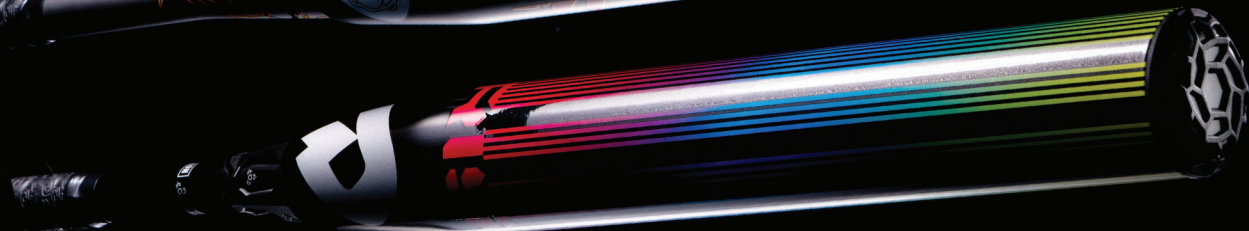
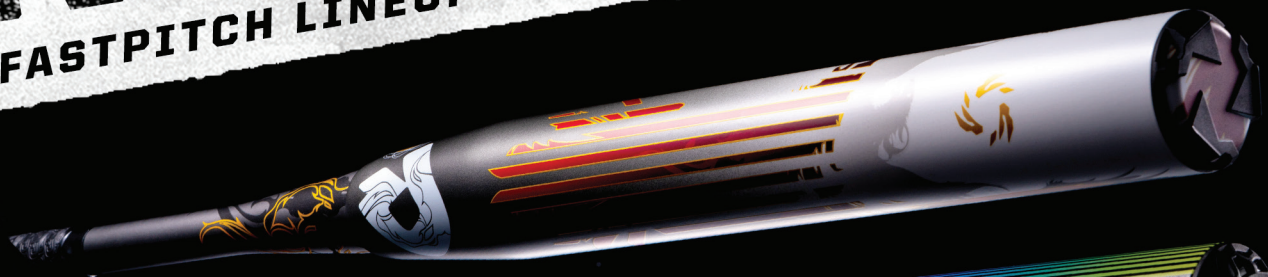
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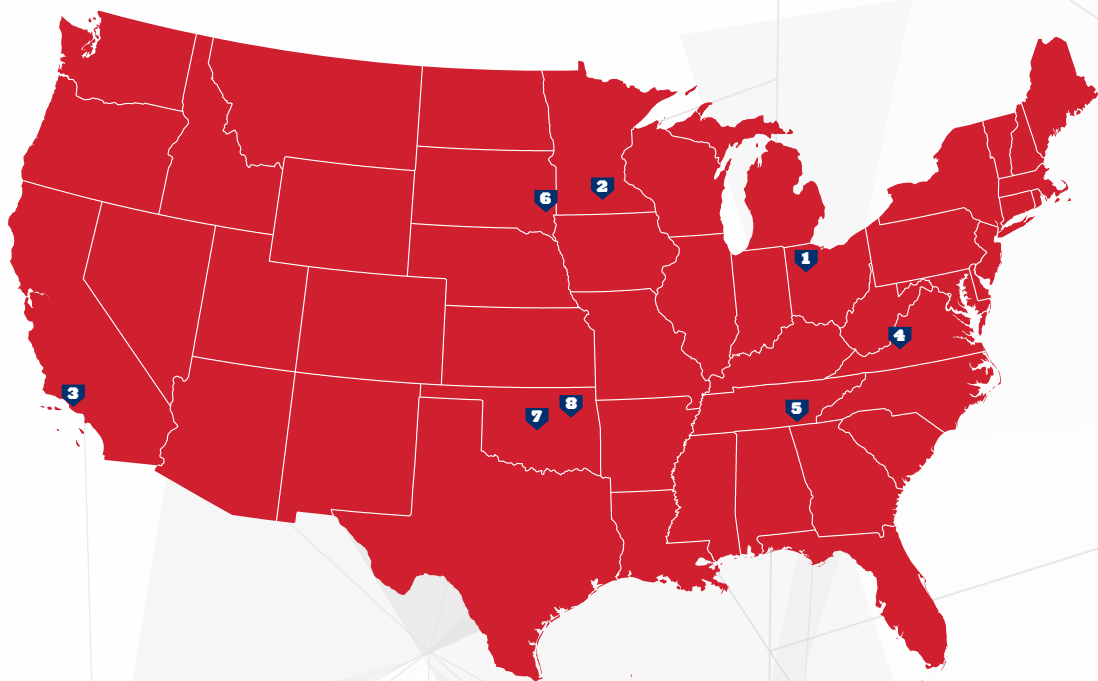


MAP OUT YOUR ROAD TO A 2020 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Each year, teams within USA Softball's Junior Olympic (JO) program complete their season the last two weeks of July at USA Softball JO National Championships. USA Softball conducts over 100 National Championships in each of its major disciplines of the sport – slow pitch, fast pitch and modified pitch. Champions go home as the unchallenged best team in the nation for their respected division each year!

The 2020 Championship Season for the USA Softball Junior Olympic Program is right around the corner! Start mapping out your road to a National Championship!

For a complete listing of USA Softball National Championships, visit USASoftball.com!



CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS

1. USA Fast Pitch Girls' Class A 10-Under East
7/29-8/2 - Findlay, Ohio
2. USA Fast Pitch Girls' Class A 10-Under West
7/22-7/26 - North Mankato, Minnesota
3. USA Fast Pitch Girls' Class A 12-Under
7/27-8/7 - Camarillo, California
4. USA Fast Pitch Girls' Class A 14-Under
7/19-7/26 - Salem, Virginia
5. USA Fast Pitch Girls' Class A 16-Under
7/19-7/26 - Chattanooga, Tennessee
6. USA Fast Pitch Girls' Class A 18-Under
7/20-7/26 - Sioux Falls, South Dakota
7. USA Girls' GOLD 18-Under
7/19-7/25 - Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
8. USA Girls' GOLD 16-Under
7/19-7/25 - Broken Arrow, Oklahoma

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DESPITE LIMITATIONS JORDAN KOSKAMP FINDS A WAY TO STAY INVOLVED IN THE GAME



USA Softball of Texas umpire, Jordan Koskamp, brings a special element to being a part of the USA Softball umpire program despite limitations he has experienced from an early age. Jordan was diagnosed with Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis (JRA) at the age of one and underwent multiple surgeries throughout his childhood. He continues to experience arthritis in his everyday life, but never lets that stop him from doing what he loves -- being a USA Softball umpire.

"I experience arthritis in all of my joints which usually leads to inflammation, centered mostly around my knees and ankles," said Koskamp.

"It definitely affects day-to-day life, especially after a long day of officiating or being on my feet for multiple hours at a time."

Jordan's childhood Doctors and Rheumatologists suggested that he stick to water activities or biking to eliminate some of his joint pressure, but he never did like that recommendation. Instead, Jordan grew up playing soccer, basketball, and flag football - all sports that were not particularly easy on the joints.

"Once I got involved in those sports, I just didn't know how to give it up," he said. "I eventually just decided that being involved in basketball

and umpiring is something I'll do for as long as I can."

In addition to being a USA Softball umpire, Jordan also coaches basketball and officiates high school and college softball. "I'm a big sports guy," he noted. "Whether it's watching, playing, coaching, or officiating, I just love being a part of sports."

Jordan joined the USA Softball umpire program in 2017 and has since umpired in Florida and currently in Texas.

"USA Softball has given me so many great opportunities to travel and meet some great people while officiating such a great sport. The umpire program has great leaders that are always fun to work with and learn from. I just greatly appreciate the opportunities being a USA Softball umpire has given me," said Koskamp.

Above all, Jordan admires and enjoys the competition in softball and how meaningful each and every game is to him. Although he will not always be able to umpire our sport, he is sure to enjoy the moments he has on the field while he can. Sports truly are an integral part of life for so many people, and for Jordan, being able to play a role in that journey for young athletes is more than worth it.

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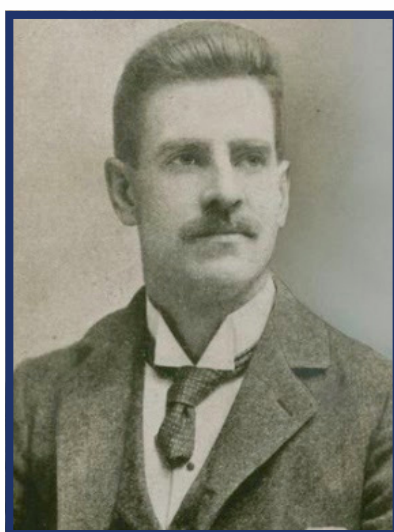
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FROM THE VAULT

THE ORIGIN OF SOFTBALL



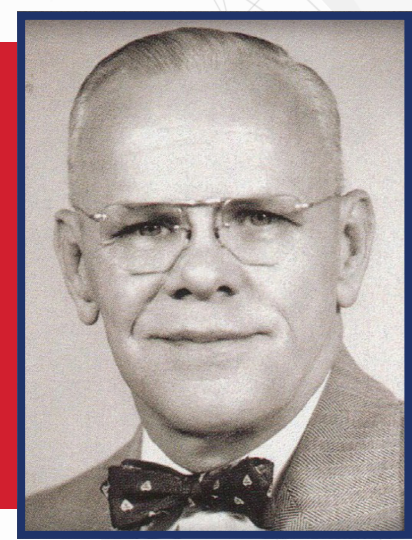
The sport of softball began in 1887 in Chicago, Illinois, as a group of Yale and Harvard alumni unknowingly formed an idea together following a football game. The idea started with a Yale fan tossing a boxing glove to a nearby Harvard alumni, George Hancock, who quickly tried to hit the thrown glove back at the Yale supporter with a stick -- and just like that, the game of softball was invented.

Hancock immediately suggested a game of indoor baseball, tying together the laces of the boxing glove for a ball and using a piece of chalk to mark off home plate, three bases, and a pitcher's mound. It was with that idea that Hancock and his friends invented a sport that would continue to grow in popularity to where today more than 40 million people enjoy playing it each summer, making softball the No. 1 team participant sport in the United States.

THE HISTORY OF THE NAME OF OUR SPORT

- | | | |
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In 1926, Walter Hakanson suggested the name "softball".





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