

BALLS AND STRIKES

2020// ISSUE II

GOING OPPO ON THE 2020 CURVEBALL.

HOW USA SOFTBALL MEMBERS
ARE STAYING CONNECTED
THROUGH THE PANDEMIC



 **SOFTBALL**



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BALLS AND STRIKES

Official Publication of
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2020 \ Issue II

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Greetings USA Softball Council Members and fans everywhere,

It's hard to believe that we are halfway through 2020 with all that has happened in our world. Although there is still some uncertainty around the globe as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have continued conversations to determine safe courses of action that we as USA Softball can do for our sport. From National Championships, Hall of Fame Complex events and more, it may not be the summer we had originally planned on – but it will showcase how the community and sport can come together and do what's best for all participants.

When deciding on resuming play in your specific area, USA Softball will continue to recommend that the USA Softball community follow the guidelines set by the World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), your state's public health department and other county and/or local authorities including school districts and government agencies. USA Softball did release a set of guidelines titled "Back to the Ballpark"

which are recommended practices for restarting USA Softball events. Be aware that USA Softball cannot dictate when local state and metro associations can start playing softball during the COVID-19 pandemic, and starting play will be determined by state/metro associations working with their local governmental agencies. Teams coming from other areas within a state or crossing states lines should respect and follow their local governmental agency restrictions (where they reside) before signing up for tournaments.

Regarding 2020 National Championships, all host organizations are currently assessing the COVID-19 restrictions within their respective states, counties, cities and associations prior to making a final decision on hosting. If any 2020 USA Softball National Championships are not held because of restrictions due to COVID-19 put in place by a government agency, the hosting state/metro association will be offered the right of first refusal to host their respective National Championship in 2022.

I would be remiss if I did not briefly address the social injustice issue that is facing our country. There is no place in our country, or the world for that matter, for such social injustice and racism. USA Softball came out with a statement condemning racism and support for inclusiveness and I support it totally. All people deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. While

sports, and our game of softball, cannot solve the country's problem, we can all be a part of the solution. Our game of softball has been and will continue to be an example of all people being able to come together and play a game that shows that respect, dignity and inclusiveness to each participant. Let us all do our part.

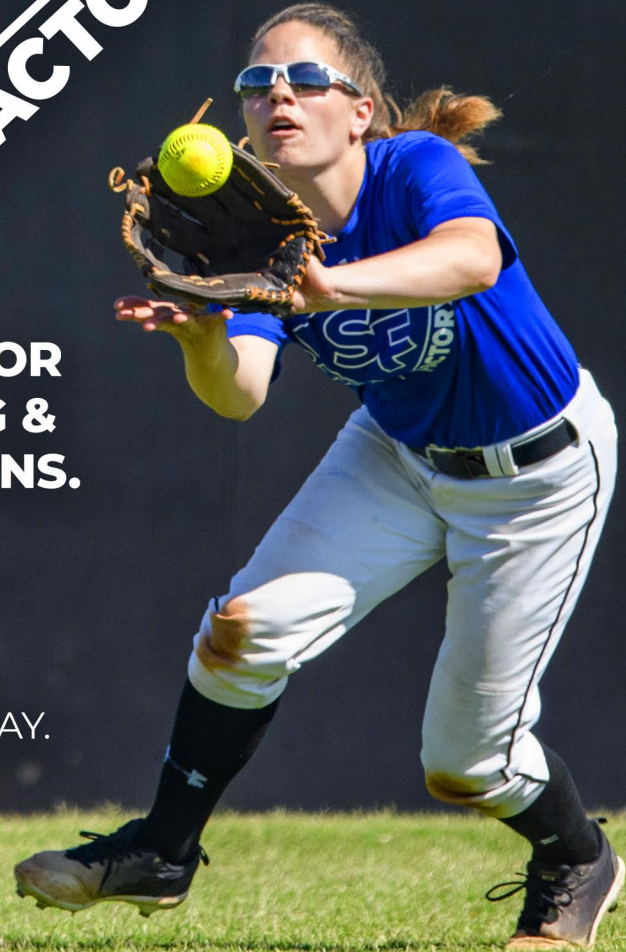
As always, please know that if you ever need anything, I am a phone call or email away and am always interested in hearing what others have to say.

Thank you and stay safe,



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NEWS & NOTES

TOKYO OLYMPIC, PARALYMPIC GAMES AWARDED NEW DATES: JULY 23 AND AUG. 24, 2021

By: Chris McDougall

Following a full one-year postponement, the Olympic Games Tokyo will take place July 23-Aug. 8, 2021, with the Paralympic Games to follow Aug. 24-Sept. 5, 2021.

The announcement of the new dates comes six days after the International Olympic Committee took the unprecedented step on March 24 of delaying the Tokyo Games in response to the global coronavirus pandemic. The International Paralympic Committee announced the Tokyo Paralympic Games would be pushed back as well.

The Olympic Games were originally set for July 24-Aug. 9, with the Paralympic Games running Aug. 25-Sept. 6. They will now take place exactly one year later, though starting one day earlier to line up with the calendar (Olympic Games begin on a Friday and the Paralympic Games on a Tuesday).

The decision was made by the IOC, IPC, Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee, Tokyo metropolitan government and government of Japan, and supported by the International Summer Olympic Sport Federations and National Olympic Committees. The three main principles outlined behind the new dates are the maximum time possible to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, safeguarding the interests of the athletes and Olympic sport, and coinciding with the international sport calendar as best as possible.

Since the first modern Olympic Games in 1896, the Summer Games have been held every four years except in 1916, 1940 and 1944, when the events were canceled due to war. The 1940 and 1944 Winter Games were also canceled.



2008 Getty Images

Although the IOC has had to change host cities, it has never had to postpone the Games outside of their designated year.

Perhaps the closest parallel to the current situation in Olympic history was in 1994, when the Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway, were held just two years after the previous Winter Games in Albertville, France. However, that decision had been made nearly a decade earlier. The IOC voted in 1986 to split the Summer and Winter Games into different years, with Lillehammer being the first in the new system.

IOC President Thomas Bach called the Olympic Games “the most complex event on this planet,” and the Tokyo 2020 postponement creates a multitude of new challenges. Organizers and Japanese officials now face the gargantuan task of resetting logistics relating to venues and so much more.

[Click here to read more on TeamUSA.org >>](#)



NEWS & NOTES

USA SOFTBALL TEAMS UP TO PROVIDE COVID-19 RESOURCES FOR MEMBERS DURING GLOBAL PANDEMIC

Under the #PlayItSafeAtHome campaign which has united all those across the country to play it safe at home until play can resume, USA Softball provided various resources for members and the greater softball community. From educational articles, activities for kids, at-home drills, and the latest 'Back to the Ballpark' guidelines, resources continue to be publicly available for all who need them.



'Back to the Ballpark' Guidelines

In these unprecedented times, USA Softball strives to protect the integrity of the game while also providing a safe environment for all involved.

The items listed in the "Back to the Ballpark Recommendations" are recommended practices for restarting USA Softball events. State/Metro Associations, Recreational Leagues, Tournament Hosts, Staff, Athletes, Coaches, Parents, and spectators shall continue to follow Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Federal, State and Local governmental guidelines.

USA Softball cannot dictate when local state and metro associations can start playing softball during the COVID-19 pandemic. Starting play will be determined by state/metro associations working with their local governmental agencies. Teams coming from other areas within a state or crossing states lines should respect and follow their local governmental agency restrictions (where they reside) before signing up for tournaments.

We will continue our mission to develop, administer and promote the sport of softball to provide opportunities for participation and the best possible experience for those involved.

This is a working document that will have to be very fluid as CDC, Federal, State and Local governmental agencies find their way through the COVID-19 pandemic in allowing youth sports to start back playing again.

[Click here to view the COVID-19 Resources page >>](#)

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FACES ON THE FIELD



GRACE, 34

Massachusetts
Southern Area Softball
Umpires Association
USA Softball of
Massachusetts

HER START I began umpiring in 2001 when I was playing my last year for the 14U division. I was invited to a training course by an umpire whose daughter was my teammate. I fell in love with it and have been umpiring ever since!

WHAT DIVISION SHE UMPIRES Over the years, I have umpired a few 18+ and 23+ tournaments, but the majority of my games are youth fastpitch. Over the years, have umpired over 1000 games in divisions 8U through 18U.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT UMPIRING My favorite thing about umpiring softball is the championship game environment in a youth tournament on a Sunday. As an umpire, you inadvertently watch the stories of these teams throughout the weekend and you cannot help but be invested in the outcome of the tournament.

HER GOALS

- Attend a National Umpire School and Umpire in a National tournament.
- Achieve Gold Medal recognition in the USA Softball Umpire Medals Program.
- Advance the game of softball as an active member of my community.

BEST EXPERIENCE As a player, my best experience was winning the 14U State Tournament from the loser's bracket in 2001. As an umpire, it is the on-going opportunity to provide services, focused on the player and the quality of the game, to the local programs I have been a part of for over 25 years.

PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT I am most proud of being elected the first female Board President of my local umpiring association.

TOUGHEST OBSTACLE Being a female umpire. I am confident in my ability to umpire and am dedicated to improving each season. Presentation, game management, mechanics and rule application are critical tools umpires must understand and implement in order to provide consistency and quality service. Softball players have an inherent knowledge of the rules and instinctual judgment and are encouraged to learn more about becoming an official. Being a female umpire is my greatest achievement and a huge part of my identity.

MORE ABOUT GRACE

- I have proudly achieved Bronze Medal Recognition in the Medals Program.
- Over the years I have umpired in three Massachusetts State Tournaments including 14U, 12U and even 8U. More recently, I have umpired College Showcase Tournaments and am grateful to USA Softball of Massachusetts for the opportunity. My first showcase, I umpired 10 games in 2 days and even my parents came to enjoy the competition. I thoroughly enjoy Showcase softball because it is a beautiful combination of elite skill and leisure ball.

HER FAVORITE THING ABOUT UMPIRING FOR USA SOFTBALL

The vision of USA Softball is to be the standard of excellence in the sport. I greatly respect the organization and am honored to be a part of it. USA Softball has provided me many opportunities over the years and, in turn, I strive to provide the best possible experience for those involved.



FACES ON THE FIELD

JUSTIN, 41

Arkansas
USA Softball of Arkansas



HIS START

Off and on since I was 14.

WHAT DIVISION HE UMPIRES

Youth Fast Pitch

FAVORITE THING ABOUT UMPIRING

Being around fellow umpires and meeting new ones.

HIS GOALS

Just to get better every game. Hopefully to work the USA Softball JO Cup and get WBSC certified.

BEST EXPERIENCE

18-Under National Championship in Montgomery, AL, last year. It was just a fun week.

PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT

Being selected to umpire a USA Olympic Team exhibition game and a Gold National Championship.

TOUGHEST OBSTACLE

The time away from work and family.

HIS FAVORITE THING ABOUT UMPIRING FOR USA SOFTBALL

The reputation that USA Softball has. The best teams in the nation play USA Softball. Other organizations come and go but USA Softball has never wavered.

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COACH'S RESPONSE... "GIRLS 10 AND UNDER ARE JUST LEARNING THE GAME OF FASTPITCH. THEY WANT FAST BAT SPEED SO THEY CAN WAIT ON A PITCH AND SEE IT LONGER BUT STILL HAVE A QUICK BAT THROUGH THE ZONE."

\$\$ AFFORDABLE BAT PERFORMANCE & TECHNOLOGY

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...."

LIGHTNING
LLFP13
LITE™ -13



XL EXTRA LARGE SWEETSPOT

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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- Meets all softball association standards
- 30"/17oz, 29"/16oz, 28"/15oz, 27"/14oz, 26"/13oz

#PLAYITSAFEATHOME WITH USA SOFTBALL

Although this is not the spring anyone had in mind, USA Softball members from across the globe are working together to #PlayItSafeAtHome during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Softball teams throughout our local associations came together to send creative photo reminders to #PlayItSafeAtHome now so we can play together again soon!



USA Softball of Southern California's 12U San Pedro Elite



USA Softball of Dallas/Fort Worth's Texas Glory



USA Softball of Kansas City's Phenom Fastpitch

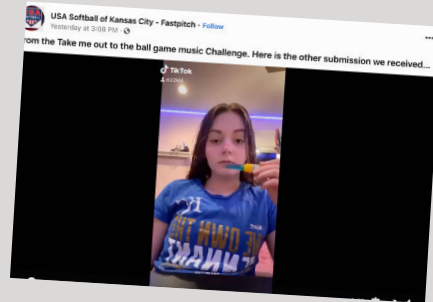
Through team Zoom sessions, videos, and sing-alongs, USA Softball members found fun ways to stay connected while playing it safe at home!"

USA SOFTBALL OF KANSAS CITY

USA Softball of Kansas City umpire, Mike Dryer, sings a quarantine sing along to bring a smile to everyone's face!



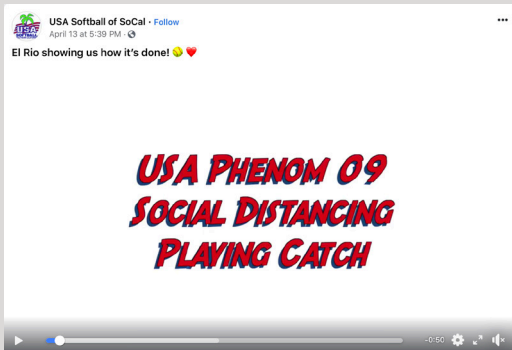
USA Softball of Kansas City's Patriots and Originals took on the weekly challenge of singing Take Me Out to the Ball Game during a team Zoom session.



#PLAYITSAFEATHOME WITH USA SOFTBALL

USA SOFTBALL OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

USA Softball of Southern California's USA Phenom 09 find ways to continue working hard while staying safe at home.



USA Softball of Southern California's West Valley Girls play some virtual catch as they #PlayItSafeAtHome.



USA SOFTBALL OF ALABAMA

USA Softball of Alabama's Fosters Pride had some virtual fun while social distancing during COVID-19.



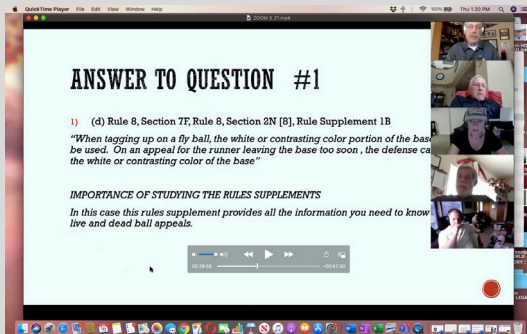
USA SOFTBALL TWITTER SHOUT OUTS

The 12U Diamond Chix virtually prepare to get back on the field as they #PlayItSafeAtHome!



USA SOFTBALL OF WASHINGTON, UMPIRES

USA Softball umpires join a Zoom meeting to stay engaged with the game during the COVID-19 global pandemic, with special guests USA Softball of Washington District 9 Umpire-in-Chief, John Wright, and Director of Umpires, Kevin Ryan.



On or off the field, USA Softball members around the country are working together to stay connected. Share how you and your teammates are working together to #PlayItSafeAtHome.

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SOCIAL MEDIA: YOU POSTED IT!



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!

She's only 7, but she's a conqueror! Jolee on top of Guadalupe Peak, the tallest mountain in Texas at 8,750 ft. while reppin @usasoftball and @jfinch27. Behind her is looking back down at the top of El Capitan.



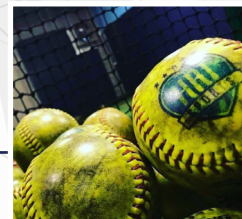
@THE_ALPINE_DADDY

Bella loves to play softball on the 6U Pink Unicorns team. She also loves taking care of her garden and animals. 🥰🐣🐶



@ALAMEDAGIRLS_SOFTBALL

Hard work NEVER sleeps- not even during quarantine!



@HRT_SPORTS_

my type of friends 💖

@_ELLIE_MARTINEZ



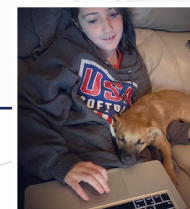
Cause softball moms take care of softball moms!!
#softball #softballobsessed
#fastpitch
#usasoftball
#tokyo2020
#butnot2020

@ANNIESUEF



Online school is exhausting 🤔

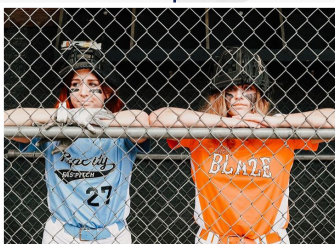
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F21

BAT COLLECTION

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USASoftballEducation.com: **AT-HOME DRILLS**

Athletes across the country have the opportunity to perfect their skills while they **#PlayItSafeAtHome** by tuning into the newly uploaded at-home drills featuring Women's National Team athletes!



Former Women's National Team Member Katie Cochran gives advice on how to improve visualization and positive thinking while practicing at home for the return to the field.

Women's National Team Member Ali Aguilar demonstrates how to work on ground balls while you #PlayItSafeAtHome. All you need is a wall and a ball.



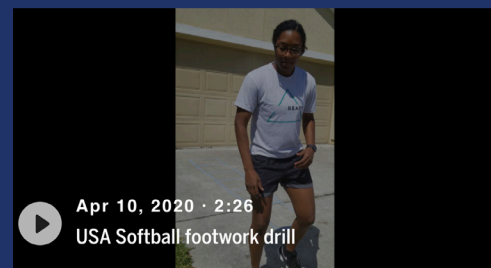
Women's National Team Member Janie Reed demonstrates outfield drills that can be done in your backyard. All you need is a ball and a glove.

USASoftballEducation.com: **AT-HOME DRILLS**

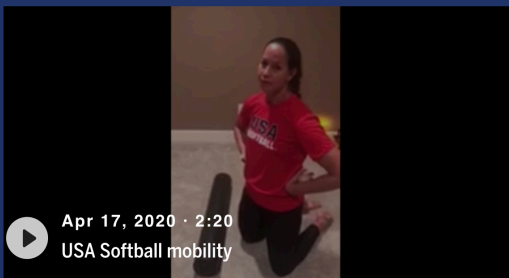
Women's National Team Member Aubree Munro shares an easy catching drill that can be done from the comfort of your couch.



Women's National Team Member Keilani Ricketts breaks down a pitching drill that can be done solo while you #PlayItSafeAtHome.



Women's National Team Member Michelle Moultrie breaks down some at-home footwork that can help improve quickness and explosiveness while staying safe at home.



Women's National Team Member Cat Osterman shares her secrets on how to improve mobility while continuing to #PlayItSafeAtHome.

For more at-home drills and tips
CLICK HERE >>



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TRUESPORT: QUARANTINE TIPS



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT, CHECK OUT A FEW OF THE EXPERT-DRIVEN ARTICLES BROUGHT TO USA SOFTBALL BY TRUESPORT!

COMMUNICATING ABOUT COVID-19: HOW TO KEEP KIDS CALM AND ACCOUNTABLE

- *USE THIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY*
- *UNDERSTAND YOUR ROLE*
- *ADD CONTEXT*
- *CHECK FOR MISINFORMATION*
- *LEAD WITH EMPATHY*
- *DON'T OVERSHARE STRESSFUL DETAILS*

Q TIPS: COPING WITH QUARANTINE LIFE - DR. KEVIN CHAPMAN'S TIPS

F.I.G.H.T.

- FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL RIGHT NOW*
- IDENTIFY NEGATIVE THOUGHTS*
- GENERATE ALTERNATIVE THOUGHTS*
- HIGHLY ADAPTIVE BEHAVIORS*
- TEACH SOMEONE ELSE TO DO THE SAME THING*

KEEPING KIDS ACTIVE AND HEALTHY DURING QUARANTINE

- *TALK TO YOUR ATHLETES*
- *BE EMPATHETIC*
- *ENCOURAGE YOUR ATHLETES TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH TEAMMATES*
- *KEEP THEM MOVING INSIDE*
- *WORK ON MENTAL SKILLS*
- *FIND SOME ONLINE RESOURCES FOR YOUR ATHLETES*
- *GIVE ATHLETES "HEALTHY LIVING" AND "CONTINUING ED" ASSIGNMENTS*
- *LIMIT COVID-19 SCREEN TIME*
- *KEEP THEM MOVING OUTSIDE*
- *ESTABLISH ROUTINES*
- *AVOID BOREDOM SNACKING*
- *CATCH UP ON SLEEP*

TRUESPORT: QUARANTINE TIPS



Q TIPS: COPING WITH QUARANTINE LIFE - NADIA KYBA ON MINDFULNESS

- *BE GRATEFUL*
- *GO OUTSIDE*
- *BE MINDFUL SEVERAL TIMES A DAY*

Q TIPS: COPING WITH QUARANTINE LIFE - NADIA KYBA ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- *USE "I STATEMENTS"*
- *TALK ABOUT HOW YOU'RE FEELING*
- *USE "RIGHT NOW" STATEMENTS*

Q TIPS: COPING WITH QUARANTINE LIFE - NADIA KYBA ON BOUNDARIES

- *CREATE A STRONG SCHEDULE FOR THE DAY*
- *GO TO DIFFERENT PARTS OF YOUR HOUSE*
- *COME BACK TOGETHER FOR MEALS*

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HOW WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM MEMBERS STAY ACTIVE, TRAIN AND CONNECT DURING COVID-19



No gym? No problem.

With many gyms and workout facilities closed, athletes have had to get creative with their workouts. See how the team has adapted their exercises to get their workouts in at home.



"TED talk Tuesdays"

Members of the Women's National Team know that even if you can't be with your teammates physically - that doesn't mean you can't continue to grow your bond as a team.

"We have been staying connected via virtual calls just as players, and then we have team calls as well, so I think we're doing a really good job of staying connected," said Valerie Arioto in a recent article by Team USA. "Even with so much uncertainty, we can still be getting better, we can still be growing our bonds, trying to see the positive in some of this."

Dubbed "TED talk Tuesdays", a different player usually leads the conversation on a subject of their choosing. Whether it's telling jokes, talking about mental and physical preparation, or learning a new TikTok dance, these weekly group video chats are an important bonding opportunity for the team.

At Home Drills

While many cities and states around the country begin easing social distancing restrictions, the return to training and the ballpark could still be impacted. That's why members of the Women's National Team have provided free, easy-to-do drills that can be done from your home. From ground balls and footwork to mobility and visualization drills, learn from some of the world's best to up your game!

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STAYING ACTIVE DURING COVID19

by Michele Latimer, MA, ATC, LAT, CES

Schools and community centers are closed. Sports leagues are suspended, and the youth of America are home all day. As the world lives through this historic viral pandemic of COVID-19, it becomes important and necessary to try to find some semblance of normalcy. With sports being put on a standstill and the population required to shelter at home, our daily routines have been disrupted in an instant. The world in a sense, has stood still. Now, more than ever before, it becomes important to maintain a level of physical activity. Exercising regularly helps not only with our physical health, but also with our mental health which becomes increasingly important during these times of social isolation. Maintaining an exercise program also aids in a return to sport to avoid complete detraining and starting over from scratch.



The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that children ages 6 to 17 should engage in 60 minutes (1 hour) of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity each day. These activities should be composed of both aerobic activity, what we refer to as cardio, as well as strength-based activities. Of the 60 minutes per day, the majority of the activity should be aerobic (cardio) in nature and at least 3x/week. The remainder of the 60-minute session should incorporate muscle-strengthening activity and should be done at least 3x/week. Having to stay at home allows for some creativity and variety in activities to use to get some exercise. Physical activity can help to boost the immune system, warding off infections and illness. Regular exercise also has brain health benefits, including improved cognition such as academic performance and memory.

Activities should always begin with a proper warm-up and activation of muscles to be used. This should begin with general movements to increase blood flow to muscles and then gradually become more sport specific movements to prepare the body to move as it will in your training session. Upon completion of the workout, recovery becomes an important consideration. A cool down, as well as foam rolling and stretching should be utilized to help recover the body from the workout session. In the section to follow, some ideas for indoor and outdoor aerobic or cardio workouts are provided.



STAYING ACTIVE DURING COVID19

INDOOR ACTIVITY IDEAS

YOGA

WALK BRISKLY
AROUND THE HOUSE/
UP & DOWN STAIRS
FOR 10-15 MINUTES;
2-3X/DAY

**HAVE A DANCE
PARTY**

JUMP ROPE



**DO AN
EXERCISE
VIDEO**

USE HOME CARDIO
MACHINES IF YOU
HAVE THEM



CREATE YOUR OWN
HIIT WORKOUT
(JUMPING JACKS,
BURPEES, ETC.)

**STRENGTH
TRAINING**

OUTDOOR IDEAS (Following appropriate CDC guidelines for COVID19 considerations)



**WALKING THE
DOG**

**BICYCLE
RIDING**

SKATEBOARD

ROLLERBLADE

SCOOTER

**PLAY ACTIVE
GAMES IN
BACKYARD**

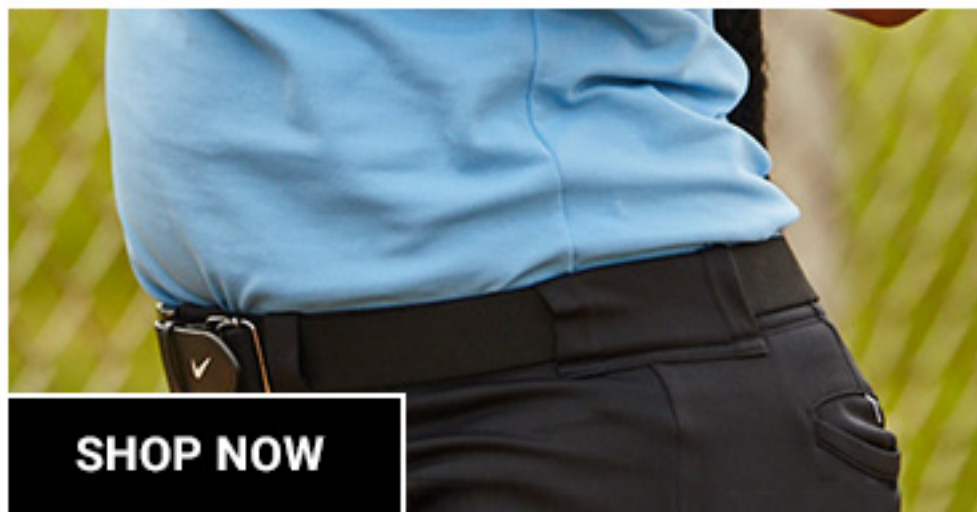
CREATE YOUR OWN
HIIT WORKOUT
(JUMPING JACKS,
BURPEES, ETC.)

EXPLORE LOCAL
NATURE PARKS
(AS ALLOWABLE BY COVID19
CONSIDERATIONS)

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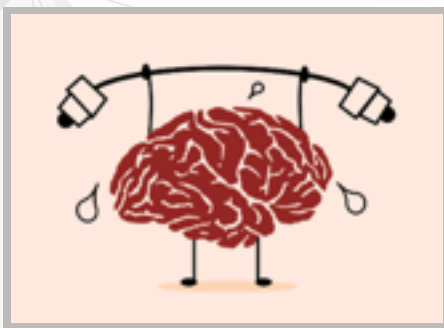
STAYING ACTIVE DURING COVID19

Part of an effective workout program needs to include strength training components. Even with some gyms beginning their process of re-opening, there are multiple alternatives to use at home to achieve the same resistance workouts while minimizing your risk. Listed in the section below are some recommendations for household items that can be used if you don't have free weights or strength equipment to get a great workout in at home.

WEIGHT ROOM/GYM SUBSTITUTIONS

BACKPACK WITH ROCKS/BOOKS IN IT	WATER BOTTLES	GALLON JUGS	WALL (WALL PUSH-UPS)	CHAIR
STAIRS	BAGS OF MULCH	SANDBAGS	COOLERS	COUCH
NON-PERISHABLE CANS	LAUNDRY BASKET FILLED WITH ITEMS	SPORTS BALLS (BASKETBALL, SOCCER, ETC.)	LIFTING A SMALL PET OR SIBLING	TOWELS (FOR EXERCISES NEEDING SLIDING)

As with any exercise program, it is always important to consult your physician before beginning a new program. Additionally, look for trusted and reliable sports performance professionals to help build and guide your workout programs. If you are inexperienced with certain strength training movements, consult these professionals before attempting them, as form is of the utmost importance to avoid injury. You can download various apps to help with Yoga, HIIT workouts, and various other workout programs. As you do return to public gyms, be considerate of COVID19 recommendations of social distancing and sanitizing equipment between uses.



Physical activity has been shown to also effect aspects of our mental health. Regular exercise can have a profoundly positive impact on depression, anxiety, ADHD, and stress reduction. It has also been shown to improve memory, improve sleep quality, and boost your overall mood. One Harvard University School of Public Health study found that running for 15 minutes a day or walking for an hour reduces the risk of major depression by 26%. Certainly, during this time of establishing a new “normal” in our daily lives and routines, mental health must be of the utmost concern. It's crucial to monitor your loved ones for signs and symptoms of anxiety and depression, especially with young athletes having their sports taken away and being isolated from their peers due to stay at home requirements. If you do suspect someone is dealing with a mental health concern, please call 911, or consult your local crisis centers or other mental health resources.



STAYING ACTIVE DURING COVID19



As was mentioned earlier, it is very important to maintain some capacity of physical activity during this time of global pandemic. As youth athletes are permitted to return to more normal routines of daily sport it is necessary to have kept a level of activity so that they are not returning to sport and attempting to go 100% without a base, which can result in increases in musculoskeletal injuries. To help prevent injuries, activity programs should include components for injury prevention and mobility. A trusted and reliable sports performance professional, Athletic Trainer, Physical Therapist, or Physician should be consulted before beginning any exercise program.

COVID-19 changed our lives significantly. Our daily normal has been shifted and may likely take some time to get back on track. In the meantime, however, it is crucially important to remain physically active whether at home or outside while maintaining best practices from the CDC for preventing the spread of COVID-19. Physical activity provides physiological benefits, mental health benefits, and keeps a solid base for return to sport. Keeping active will inevitably help us to endure these tumultuous times and be best prepared for returning to normal life.

Michele Latimer is a registered Athletic Trainer who has worked at the University of South Florida as an Athletic Trainer since 2007. Currently serving as the Senior Associate Athletic Trainer for softball, Latimer has served as the ATC for the USA Softball Women's National Team since 2012. She has also worked alongside Women's Professional Soccer players, serving as the sports medicine liaison for the Chicago Red Stars during the team's training trip to Tampa in the spring of 2010. Earning her Master of Arts in Exercise Science in May, 2009, Latimer graduated Summa Cum Laude from East Carolina University, receiving her Bachelor of Science degree in Athletic Training. Latimer holds certification as a drug/breath alcohol tester, IV therapy administrator and American Heart BLS (basic life support) Instructor. In addition to being a registered Florida Athletic Trainer, she is a member of the Southeast Athletic Trainer's Association, Athletic Trainer's Association of Florida and National Athletic Trainer's Association.





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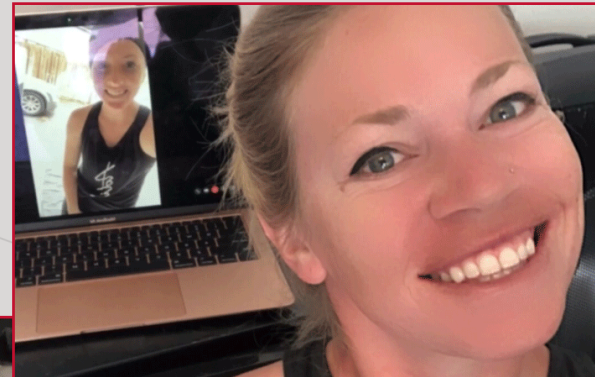
Who do you get support from while working out from home? Is it your dog like Ben Dunn of the 2020 Men's Slow Pitch National Team?



CHECK OUT HIS #PLAYITSAFEATHOME WORKOUT HERE! >>

Have you kept your teammates accountable like Shelby Engle and Shayna Finley from the 2020 Women's Slow Pitch National Team?

YOU CAN SEE HOW THESE TWO HAVE MANAGED TO WORKOUT TOGETHER DESPITE QUARANTINE HERE! >>



How have you used your creativity to stay sharp while you #PlayItSafeAtHome? 2020 Women's Slow Pitch National Team member Kelly Park is practicing her hand-eye coordination with a trampoline!

YOU CAN SEE HER HOME DRILL HERE! >>



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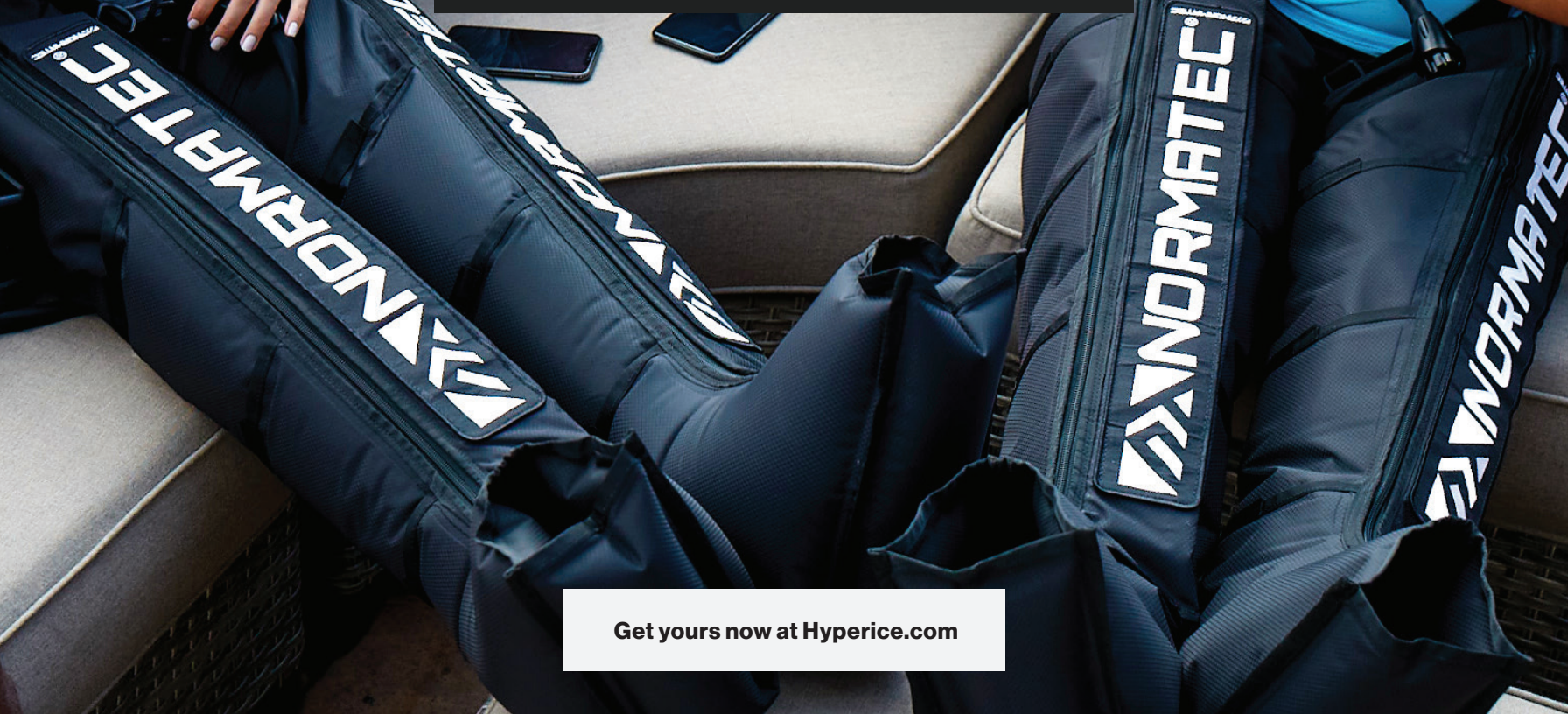
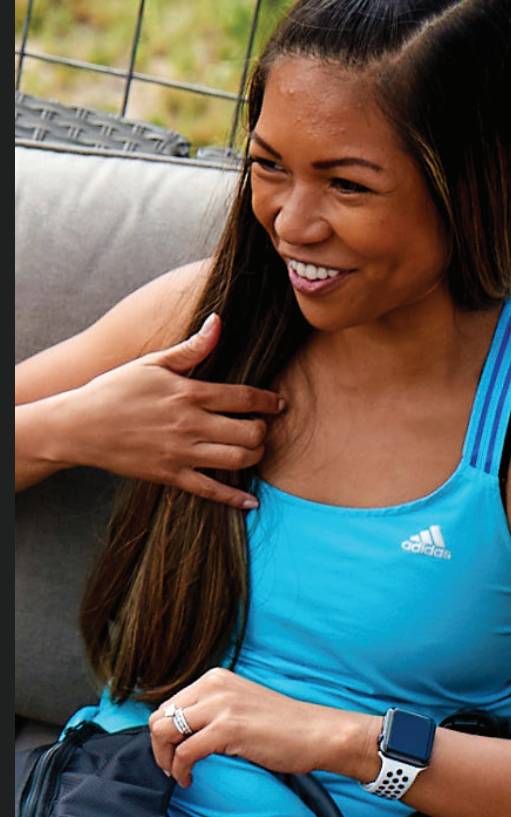


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HOW CAN ATHLETES DEAL WITH PERSONAL AND/OR LIFE CHALLENGES?

Jim Bauman, Licensed Sports Psychologist

During this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, social media platforms are flooded with self-help ideas about “how to get through” these challenging times. However, exceptional people, of all ages, are not satisfied with “just getting through.” Instead, exceptional people know they will move from the “now normal” toward a “new normal” and that they will learn more life skills, as a result.

A successful and easily applied strategy to dealing with personal and/or life challenges is an Acceptance and Commitment approach, developed by Steven Hayes in 1982. For the purposes of this article, his approach will be presented in 6 steps and in the context of softball.

Step 1: ACCEPTANCE Humans are genetically programmed, to some extent, to avoid challenges or problems, like COVID-19, negative life experiences, or even being behind in a softball game. However, for now, the first step is to accept that fact, yet keep battling, rather than submit to helplessness and hopelessness. This step begins the process. “Stuff happens, we aren’t frozen by the circumstances, and we run toward the noise!”

Step 2: CLEAR UP YOUR FOCUS When life and sports get uncertain, our minds can speed-up, maybe overwhelm us, and cause us to entirely focus on the presenting problem. It is important to slow down, identify what we know, what is relevant, what’s in our control to deal with the problem, and become solution-oriented.

Step 3: BE PRESENT There is a tendency, under stressful times, to focus on what we think or feel we have lost (past) and could lose (future). For sure, as we get older and just navigate through life, there will be changes to what we are accustomed. For example, think about changing teams or even grades in school. Life is about change, but we can best adapt to that change by staying in the current moment and solving today’s issues.

Step 4: CONNECTING WITH OTHERS “Physical Social Distancing” is clearly an unfamiliar interpersonal experience for us all. We are creatures of contact. One of the benefits of team sports is structured face-to-face and physical contact (pats on the helmet, high 5’s, dugout/field chatter, connecting with fans, etc.). The USA Softball Women’s National Team members stay connected with weekly “Ted Talks” that each player creates and presents on their team platform. They are maintaining their connections to share experiences, get new ideas about moving forward, and finding other helpful resources.

Step 5: YOUR VALUES Revisit what is important to you. What do you value (family, friends, health, connections, faith, etc.)? Make a list of them and put them somewhere in plain sight. This list serves as a visual reminder of who you are, what’s important to you, and a commitment to maintain them both.

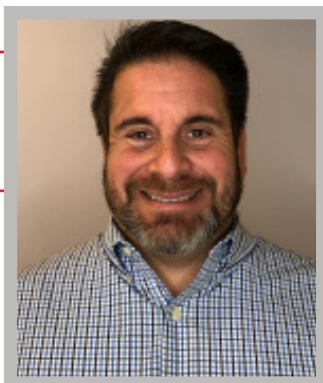
Step 6: COMMITMENT TO ACTION Identify and take behavioral action steps that you can and will take to being solution-oriented, acting upon what you can control, maintaining a state of optimism, handling today’s tasks, adapting to new or changing challenges, and staying connected to others to help them or ask for help.

About Dr. Jim Bauman

Dr. Jim Bauman is a licensed psychologist who has spent decades working with some of the world’s elite athletes as a Sport & Human Performance Psychologist. Beginning his career at Washington State University (1989-1999) as a sport psychologist, he worked with the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee for 10 years (1999-2009) as a Senior Sport Psychologist. Most recently, Bauman returned to the University of

Washington (2009-2011) and the University of Virginia (2011-2015) in addition to consulting various athlete’s and National Governing Bodies competing at the Olympic Games, including two with the U.S. Olympic Softball Teams in 2004 and 2008. A licensed psychologist in California, New York, Virginia and Washington, Bauman has also developed working relationships with the Navy Special Warfare School (SEALs).

FACES ON THE FIELD



STAN, 50

Connecticut

USA Softball of Connecticut

HIS START

1988

WHAT DIVISION HE UMPIRES

Mostly Adult Slow Pitch: Women, Men & Coed. I also umpire some Youth Girls Slow Pitch.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT UMPIRING

Meeting new people and forming friendships.

HIS GOALS

To do my best each game - to be in the right position and always use my strong vocals.

BEST EXPERIENCE

Two things come to mind. My first year umpiring I had the privilege of umpiring my Dad's game. The other would be the time I had two runners coming into home pretty much inches between each other and having OUT calls for both! Very Carlton Fisk-like!

PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT

Umpiring my first National in Kentucky in September 2003. It was a great place and we were treated so well.

MORE ABOUT STAN

- Proud Gold member in the Medals program and a NIF Umpire since 2013.
- I have worked State, Regionals and five National tournaments. I also umpired the 1995 Special Olympics World Games in New Haven, CT.

HIS FAVORITE THING ABOUT UMPIRING FOR USA SOFTBALL

I say this often, but it's about the people! I am a people person and I enjoy the interacting on the field and off the field. A big part of my friendship circle has come through USA Softball over the 31 years of games. I never played the game (shocks a lot of people) but I grew up in the sport following my father to games as a kid. I always wanted to be an umpire, truly this is my dream "job".

WHAT ADVICE HE WOULD GIVE

I would tell the younger generation of umpires to be there for the love of the game. Make friends, but also know how to separate that when on the field. Most importantly, have FUN! It's a life changing achievement.

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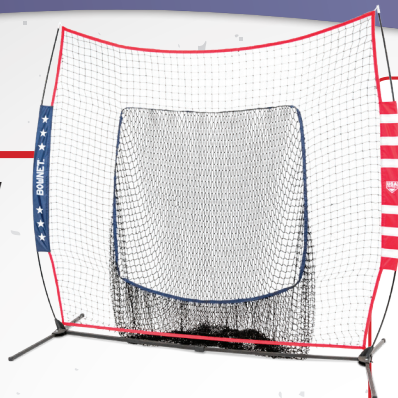


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USA Ball Bag

(BN-BALL BAG USA SB)

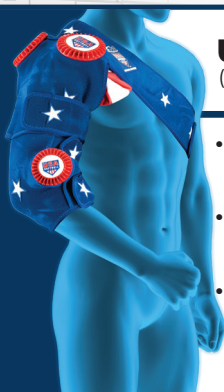
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HALL OF FAME STADIUM CONSTRUCTION

While you #PlayItSafeAtHome, the USA Softball Hall of Fame Stadium continues its progress to be ready to play on when we all come back!

March 19 - The sand base was installed on OGE Energy Field



April 6 - The 300' foul poles were installed



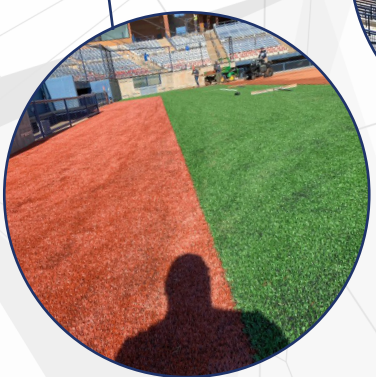
April 16 - The asphalt base for the synthetic turf and home plate were set, see the videos here! >>

April 18 - The final layer of asphalt went down and was put through a water test, see the video here! >>

April 21 - The sod began to be laid on OGE Energy Field

April 30 - New dirt and turf were added

May 4 - The first cut on the outfield grass was completed



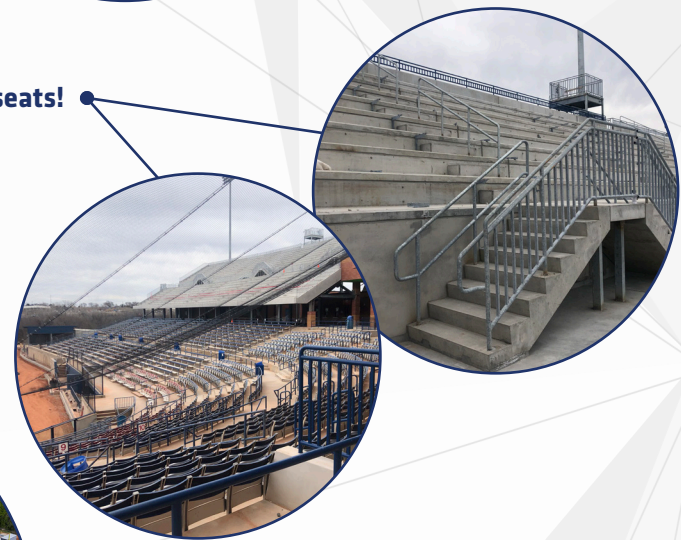
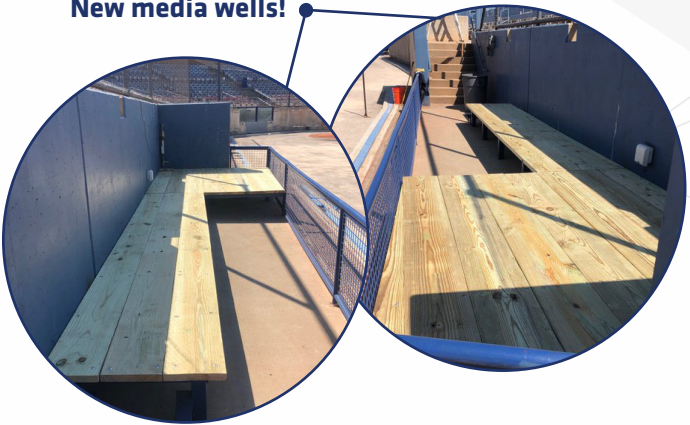
HALL OF FAME STADIUM CONSTRUCTION

New media wells!

New locker rooms!

New bathrooms!

New seats!



For continued updates visit USA Softball
HOF Complex Field Crew on Twitter:
[@HOF_FieldCrew](https://twitter.com/HOF_FieldCrew)

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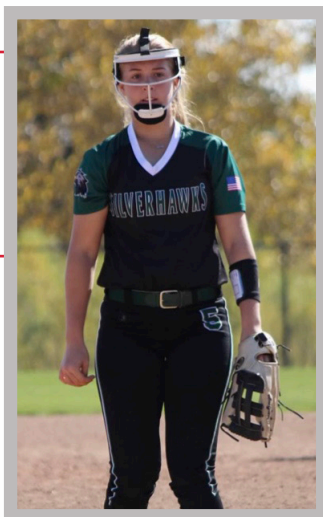
exclusive tournament management system, to find a USA Softball tournament near you! From easy-to-access brackets, text alerts and Power Rankings, check out these special features and more today!



The screenshot shows the USA Softball website interface. At the top left is the USA Softball logo. To its right is the text "USA SOFTBALL™". Below this is a navigation bar with the text "Welcome to TournamentUSA Softball" and a small USA Softball logo. Underneath is a prompt "Please select a division:" followed by seven buttons: "Adult Fastpitch", "Girls Fastpitch", "Boys Fastpitch", "Adult Slowpitch", "Girls Slowpitch", "Boys Slowpitch", and "Boys Baseball".

**Visit TournamentUSAsoftball.com to
find a tournament near you!**

FACES ON THE FIELD



GRACE, 16

Illinois

St. Charles Silverhawks
16-Under Fast Pitch

Pitcher

HER START

I began playing t-ball when I was little. I have been playing softball for almost 11 years and I love playing.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT PLAYING SOFTBALL

Some of my favorite things about softball is the competition. Playing against another team is so fun and you learn new things and can gain new skills. Also meeting amazing people. I have met so many people over the years because of softball and I love them all. The amount of friends I have made because of softball is crazy. It's like gaining family members, so I guess you could say I have a pretty big softball family. They are always there for me through the good and the bad.

HER GOALS

My goals in softball are to get better and to play in college. By getting better I hope to be better. Playing in college has always been my dream. I've watched a lot of college games and the Women's College World Series. The girls that are playing have a passion for the game, and I want to have that.

BEST EXPERIENCE

My best experience in softball is playing in the championship games. Those are the best. There is a kind of pressure that feels good.

PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT

One accomplishment I am proud of is working hard to get on Varsity my freshman year and this year.

TOUGHEST OBSTACLE

One of the toughest obstacles I have had to overcome is being told that I would never be successful in softball. Being told that I would never be successful in softball at a young age destroyed me, but I worked harder to get better. My 12U coach never played me, I always sat on the bench. Now I am a starter for my travel team and I couldn't be more proud of myself.

HER ROLE MODELS IN THE GAME

My biggest role models are my coaches. They teach me so much and I don't know what I would do without them.

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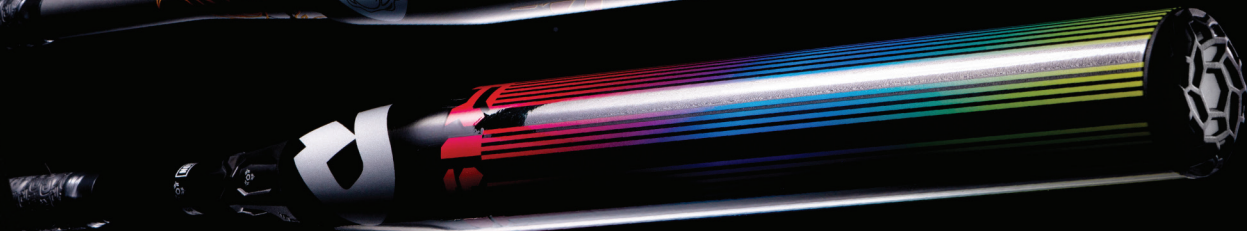
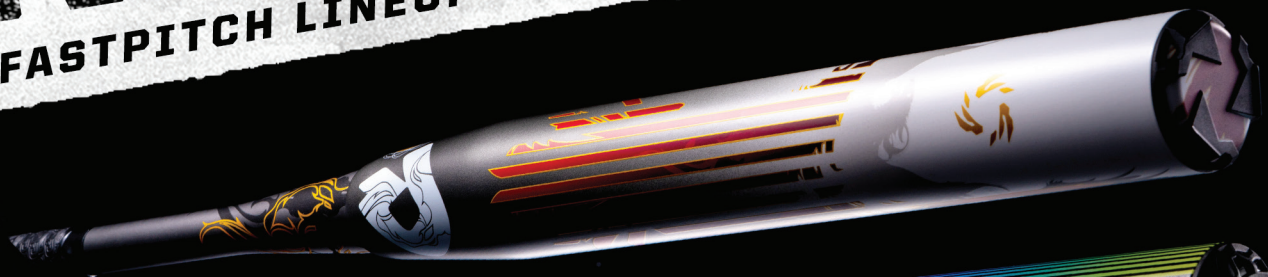
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10 TIPS TO STAY MENTALLY READY IN A PANDEMIC Becky Snow, Champions Mentality Consulting

Being away from our teams, slowing down, and staying in one place may feel unnatural, but with the right mindset you can still thrive in the present. It is an ideal time to work on your mental game.

1

GRIEVE WHAT YOU HAVE LOST.

2

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL.

3

DEVELOP YOUR IDENTITY.

4

BUILD DAILY ROUTINES TO WIN THE DAY.

5

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10 TIPS TO STAY MENTALLY READY IN A PANDEMIC

6 MASTER YOUR SLOW STEADY BREATH.

7 USE IMAGERY.

8 BE PRESENT, BE MINDFUL.

9 USE VIDEO OF PHYSICAL SKILLS TO IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL SKILLS.

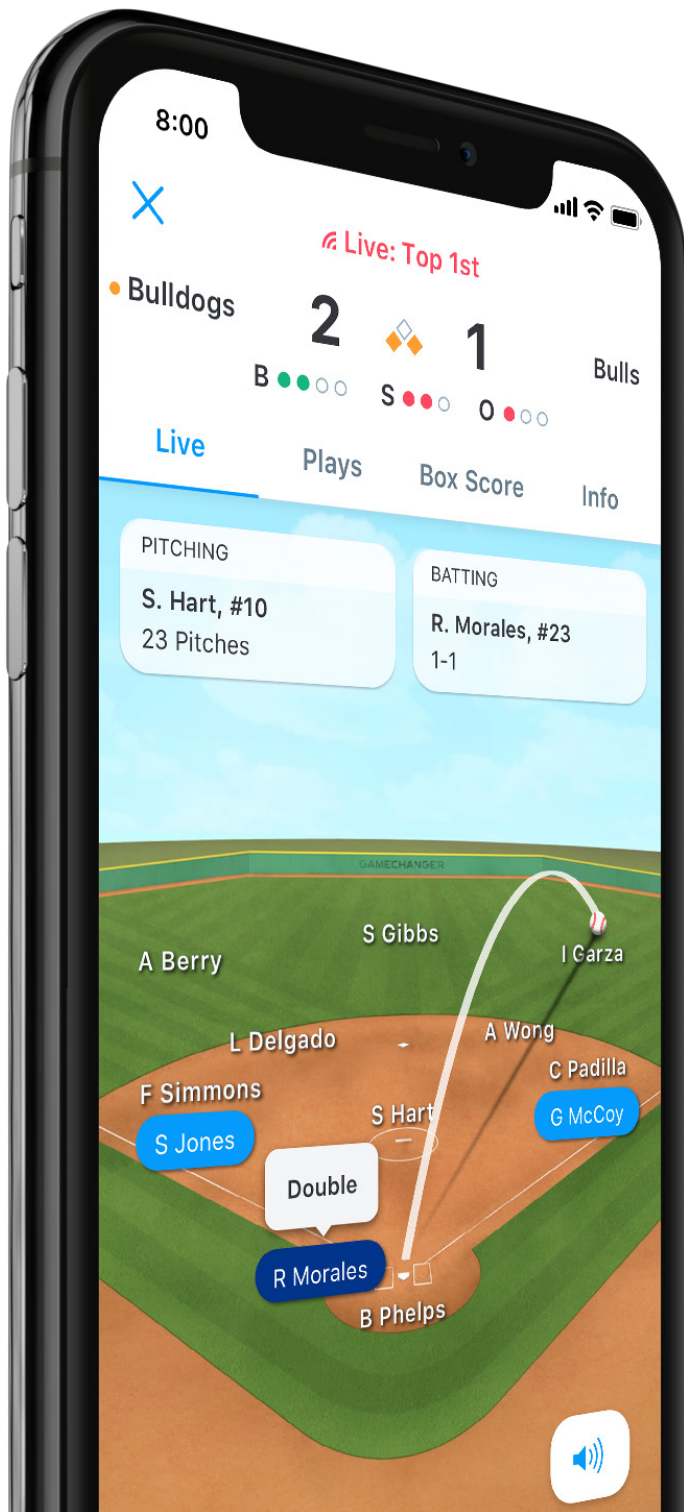
10 SET DAILY AND WEEKLY GOALS.



ABOUT CHAMPIONS MENTALITY / BECKY SNOW, CMPC

Champions Mentality Consulting was developed to be a service to athletes, performers, speakers, or anyone who needs guidance on employing the proper mental skills to enhance their performance. Coach Becky Snow, CMPC, began her journey into consulting after competing as an elite athlete in both basketball and softball at the collegiate level, followed by span of six years of women's full contact football in the NWFA, WFA, and IWFL. She also played soccer, baseball, tennis and field hockey while growing up. She learned how to change her own mentality during her senior year competing in college basketball after many years of unknowingly holding herself back. Additionally, she strives to aid anyone who wants to be better at something, change paths, take new risks, and grow as an individual. She embraces the motto of "Be Better", knowing that each day we can strive to be better than the day before, our last attempt, our last success, or something brand new that we may have been afraid of going after. She also has a passion for aiding athletes who are transitioning out of sport and struggling to find new identity after their competitive days have concluded.

[Click here to read the full article written by Becky Snow, CMPC. >>](#)



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FROM THE VAULT

1979 PAN AMERICAN GAMES



Team USA finished with a record of 13-1 on their way to the gold at the 1979 Pan American Games in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The team allowed only two runs the entire tournament, a 2-1 loss to eventual third-place Belize. In the championship game, Team USA beat host Puerto Rico 2-0 to win the inaugural Pan American softball tournament. Team USA has since won eight of the last ten Pan American softball tournaments.



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FROM THE VAULT

1994 ISF WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP



The 1994 ISF Women's World Championship for softball was held July 29 - August 7, 1994, in St. John's Newfoundland. Team USA won its third consecutive title with a 6-0 victory over China, the team allowed just three runs while scoring 59 runs during the tournament. The first five-placed teams qualified for the inaugural Olympic softball games held in 1996 at Atlanta, Georgia.



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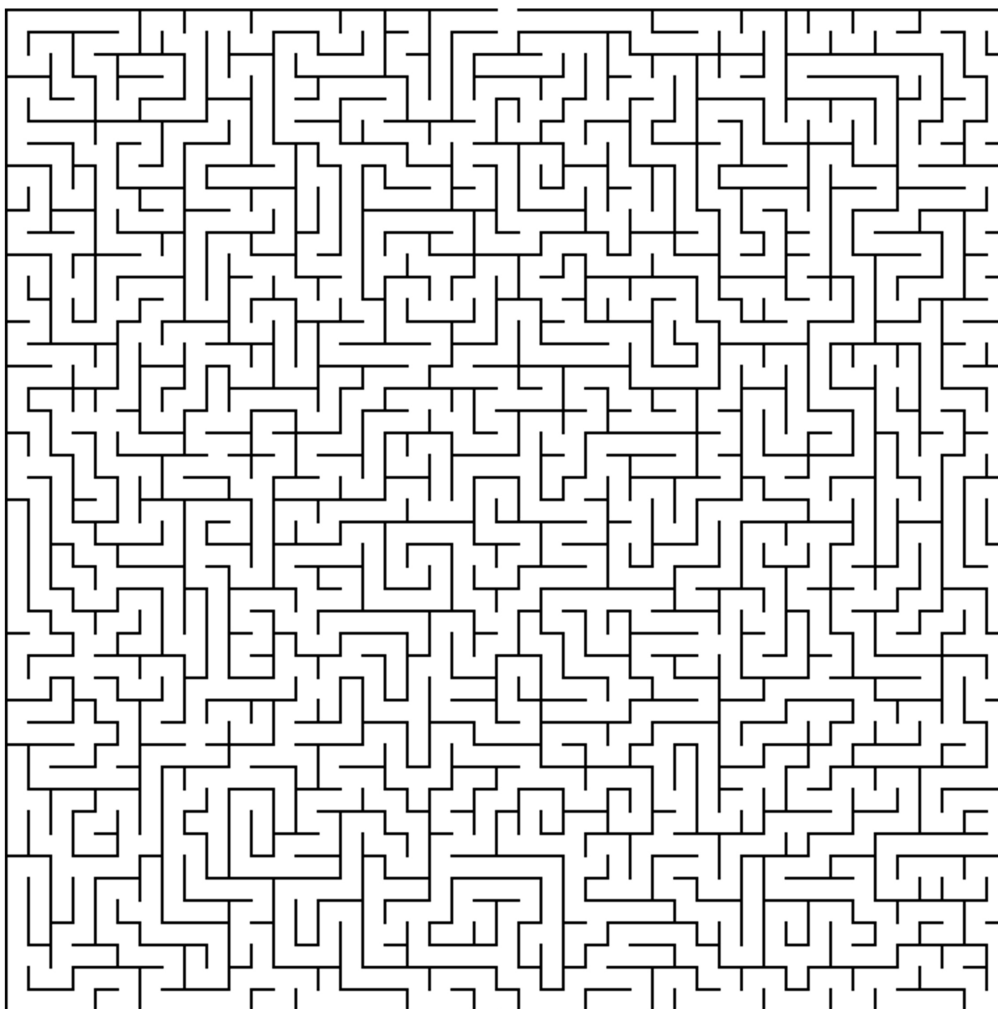


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