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BALLS AND STRIKES

2021 // ISSUE I



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BALLS AND STRIKES

Official Publication of
USA Softball
2021 \ Issue I

Chief Executive Officer

Craig Cress

Editor

Morgan Palmer

Contributors

Katie Willis

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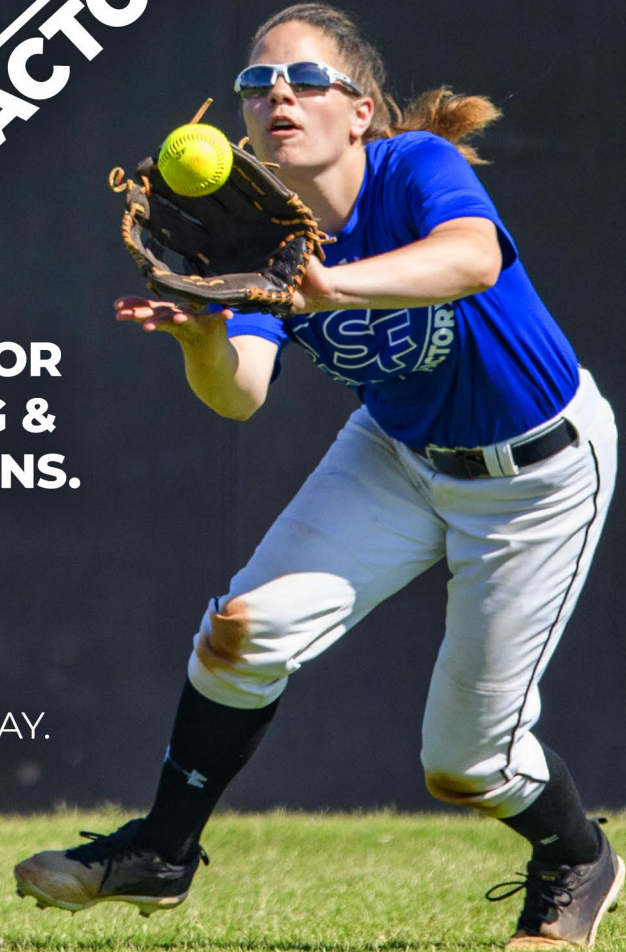


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NEWS & NOTES

GERI MAGWIRE APPOINTED TO USA SOFTBALL NATIONAL UMPIRE STAFF AS WESTERN TERRITORY DEPUTY DIRECTOR



USA Softball announced that Geri Magwire (Reno, Nev.) has been appointed to the USA Softball National Umpire Staff as the Western Territory Deputy Director. Magwire will assume responsibilities immediately and replace Christina Drumm, who has since been appointed Commissioner of USA Softball of Southern California.

"I'm very grateful to have been selected as Western Territory Deputy Director on the USA Softball National Umpire Staff,"

said Magwire. "It's an honor to be a part of such an exceptional and gifted team. I've been fortunate to have been given the opportunities I have within USA Softball to work and excel and travel outside the United States while representing USA Softball. I recognize the faith and trust USA Softball and Director of Umpires, Kevin Ryan, has placed in me by appointing me to this position. It's an incredible opportunity for me to give back to this amazing organization."

Magwire is an active member of USA Softball of Nevada and has served on the USA Softball Umpire Manual Committee for the past four years in addition to being involved in the Biennial USA Softball Umpire-In-Chief (UIC) Clinic. Prior to joining USA Softball of Nevada, Magwire served on the USA Softball of Arizona umpire staff where she played an instrumental role in the organization and administration of their informational website. A webmaster and clinician for the USA Softball of Arizona umpire program,

Magwire participated on various committees and assisted with the coordination of USA Softball National Umpire Schools held in Arizona. Magwire's contributions to the USA Softball of Arizona umpire program led to her being recognized as the USA Softball Umpire of the Month in June 2016 and presented with the USA Softball Award of Excellence for Region 13 in 2017.

Magwire has been a USA Softball umpire for over 25 years, and has worked six National Championships, including the Women's Major Fast Pitch, 18-Under Girls' Fast Pitch GOLD National Championships and multiple Junior Olympic (JO) Cups. A USA Softball Elite Umpire, Magwire garners a Gold level of Excellence in the Medals Program and is a member of the National Indicator Fraternity (NIF). Additionally, she received her World Baseball and Softball Confederation (WBSC) certification in 2002 and has since worked the USA Softball International Cup, the 2015 Junior Women's World Championship, 2016 Women's World Championship and 2017 Japan All-Star Series. Magwire was also selected to umpire the WBSC Americas Softball Olympic Qualifier in 2019, a qualifying tournament for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

Magwire is a graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science and Engineering. Outside of USA Softball, Magwire is a software engineer working in design automation for Amkor Technology. Magwire can be contacted at gmagwireusasoftball@gmail.com.

NEWS & NOTES

BEN CRENSHAW NAMED COMMISSIONER FOR USA SOFTBALL OF KENTUCKY

USA Softball announced that Ben Crenshaw (Calvert City, Ky.) has been appointed Commissioner of USA Softball of Kentucky and will assume his responsibilities immediately.

“I’m extremely honored to be selected as the Commissioner of USA Softball of Kentucky,” said Crenshaw. “This is a new year and a new beginning for USA Softball of Kentucky. I look forward to working with Kentucky’s dedicated and passionate staff to build a foundation based on the excellent culture of USA Softball while working to grow the game in our state.”

Crenshaw has been a USA Softball umpire since 1994 and became an administrator in the umpiring program in 2017. During his umpire tenure with USA Softball of Kentucky, Crenshaw umpired various National Championships, State Tournaments and local tournaments in addition to his previous role as Fast Pitch Umpire-In-Chief (UIC). In that position, Crenshaw managed umpire training camps and played a key role in the state-wide growth of Elite Umpire registrations.

Outside of USA Softball, Crenshaw has stayed involved in sports through umpiring Division I softball and coaching.

For more information on USA Softball of Kentucky, please reach out to Ben at bencrenshaw3@gmail.com or by calling (270) 210-1223.



DONN ADDANTE ELECTED TO USA SOFTBALL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Donn Addante (Lakewood, Ohio) has been re-elected as the USA Softball Board of Directors At-Large Member, USA Softball announced. Currently serving as the Central Atlantic Regional Director, Donn’s appointment comes as a result of the recent BOD election.

“My goal on the USA Softball Board of Directors is to thoroughly study all issues of concern relating to the Board in effort to make decisions that are best for USA Softball,” said Donn. “As the At-Large Representative, I aim to include all Council Members’ views and welcome concerns, feedback and questions.”

In addition to serving as the USA Softball Central Atlantic Regional Director, Donn’s involvement with USA Softball spans a total of 35 years and includes roles within the Legislative, Commissioner Appointments, Membership, Equipment Standards, Ethics Committee and Hall of Fame Committee. Donn has competed in two USA Softball Men’s Class C National Championships as a former athlete and has served as a USA Softball representative at nine National Championships in addition to assisting on various organizing committees for National Championships held in the Cleveland Metro area.

Outside of USA Softball, Donn has worked at the Cleveland Division of Recreation, where he held the positions of Assistant Manager of Organized Sports and Manager of Estabrook Recreation Center. Donn can be reached at donnaddante@msn.com.



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FACES ON THE FIELD



PATRICK, 19

Chelmsford, MA

USA Softball of
Massachusetts

HIS START

I started training in February 2018 and began umpiring during that summer

WHAT DIVISION HE UMPIRES

Youth Fastpitch

FAVORITE THING ABOUT UMPIRING

My favorite thing about umpiring softball is knowing the differences between its rules compared to baseball. My sister always played baseball and when she transferred to softball in seventh grade, I decided I would begin umpiring softball and started learning the rules as soon as possible.

HIS GOALS

I would like to be invited to officiate at USA Softball National Championships at some point in my umpiring career.

BEST EXPERIENCE

My best experience in USA Softball was umpiring with the same partner for the whole day on the same field. We had a few games off to get refueled and rehydrated and got right back out on the field. I got to the field at 6:45am and worked off/on until I left at approximately 8:30pm.

PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT

I am most proud of my April 2019 selection for USA Softball's "Blue of the Month."

TOUGHEST OBSTACLE

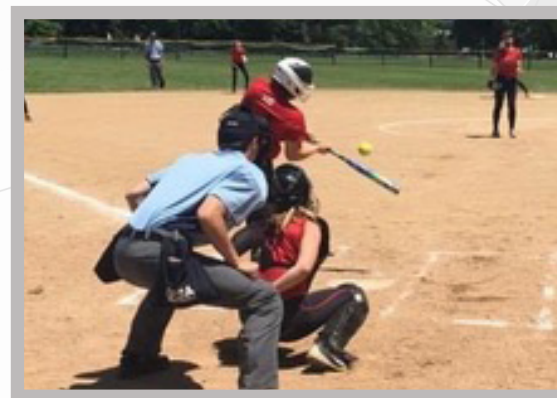
After three years of umpiring baseball, I decided to take on softball as well. I went through training in February, March and April of 2018 and began umpiring tournaments in May. I started with 10-Under then 12-Under before my assignor felt that I could do some 14-Under games as well. Being a 16-year-old at the time, it was always in the back of my mind that I may not be taken seriously and/or be seen as "too young" to be umpiring a game with girls that are two years younger than me. I soon realized that if I dressed cleanly (following USA Softball's dress code) and knew the rule book inside and out, then I could confidently step on the field with anyone.

USA SOFTBALL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP/STATE TOURNAMENT EXPERIENCE

I have worked two USA Softball State Tournaments over the last three years.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT UMPIRING USA SOFTBALL

My favorite thing about umpiring for USA Softball is waking up early on the weekends, heading to awesome softball complexes in the Greater Lowell, Massachusetts area and meeting/working with some great people.



FACES ON THE FIELD



MIA, 16

Smithfield, RI
Smithfield Storm
USA Softball of
Rhode Island

HER START

I started playing recreational ball at five years old and travel ball when I turned six.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT PLAYING SOFTBALL

My most favorite thing about playing softball is being in a team environment, both on and off the field. The experiences I learned from my participation in softball has motivated me to become a better student (as part of the educational team), a better athlete (to help my team succeed) and most importantly a better daughter and friend to my family and friends. I have made some incredible relationships and have helped others through some tough times throughout the years while my fellow teammates have equally helped me through some pretty tough times as well. I have bonded well with every player on the teams I've played on to ensure new players always feel included. I consider softball my extended family for sure.

HER GOALS

To be the best player I can be and to set a good example for others, whether it is with hustling, playing well, effort or sportsmanship.

BEST EXPERIENCE

My first homerun. It was pretty awesome!

PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT

My most notable accomplishment was probably when I did not make the 16U team as a first year 16U player. You're probably thinking "how can this be an accomplishment". I love the game of softball and wanted to stay local in Smithfield so I brushed myself off and was courageous enough to try out for our 18U team as a 16-year-old. Not only did I make this team, but I was also the starting shortstop and batted first in the line-up. I did not get discouraged after being cut. Instead, I was determined to push myself out of my comfort zone and it was the best decision I ever made. I also met some incredible and talented coaches and players at this level. Never have I ever felt so appreciated for my level of play and effort I displayed on that field. It was one of the best years ever for me playing softball.

TOUGHEST OBSTACLE

The toughest obstacle I had to overcome was being overlooked by some teams and coaches in my past. However, I continued to work hard and have since gotten incredible feedback regarding my stellar playing, hustle and effort. That is what pushes me to never give up on the game I love.

ROLE MODEL IN THE GAME

My role models are the umpires. They are there with us in the cold, rain, heat and take a lot of unpleasanties from coaches, players, parents, etc. To expose themselves to this with every game, they must really love the game and do it for those players who appreciate them. Without them we cannot play, they settle differences and show control and leadership on the field. Kudos to them for everything they do.

MORE FROM MIA

I want players to know that just because you do not make a team, just working hard and never give up on the game we all love. Obstacles and challenges will always happen in life and the way you react to those little setbacks could make you a stronger, better and kinder person. Never give up!

START YOUR COACHING JOURNEY

#NFCADay is April 17

Coaches are the lifeline of our sport. Help us celebrate #NFCADay, an annual event focused on recognizing and growing the coaching profession and propelling the sport forward!



Photos by Jade Hewitt/USA Softball

On **April 12-19**, the NFCA is offering **50 percent** off first-time memberships.

Go to [NFCA.org](https://www.nfca.org) and use promo code **NFCADAY2021**.

For ideas and resources to plan your own #NFCADay celebration, visit [NFCA.org/nfca-day](https://www.nfca.org/nfca-day)

[NFCA.org](https://www.nfca.org)



[NFCAevents.org](https://www.nfca.org/nfca-events)

The National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) is the professional growth organization for fastpitch softball coaches from all competitive levels of play with over 5,500 members.

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LiFT™ -13

-13 LITE WEIGHT BAT TECHNOLOGY

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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...."

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...."



MODEL LLFP13 - \$49.99

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- New Lightning Lite™ Frame -13 Aluminum Technology - Max bat speed, see pitches longer, more plate coverage
- 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

FACES ON THE FIELD



ELIZABETH, 30

Sioux Falls, SD

USA Softball of
South Dakota

HER START

I started umpiring in 2006 while I was still playing.

WHAT DIVISION SHE UMPIRES

Youth Fastpitch

FAVORITE THING ABOUT UMPIRING

Giving back to the game.

HER GOALS

To help train the new umpires coming up behind me and showing by example in all aspects.

BEST EXPERIENCE

Working Championship Day of the 18-Under GOLD National Championships. I was selected to umpire the quarterfinal game in 2019.

PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT

Being a member of the Elite Umpire Program.

TOUGHEST OBSTACLE

Learning how to adapt my umpiring after a bad ankle injury in High School.

USA SOFTBALL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP/STATE TOURNAMENT EXPERIENCE

I have umpired in nine National Championships.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT UMPIRING USA SOFTBALL

The challenge and experience of umpiring at the highest level.

MORE FROM ELIZABETH

I would like to say thank you to everyone who has helped me through the years.

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fly the friendly skiesSM

UNITED



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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!

Getting softball umpires ready for the 2021 season.

@HASTINGSREC19



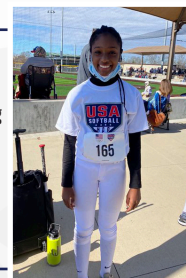
Blessed to have the opportunity to represent Region 4 on the USA Regional Team. Very excited to take this new journey with these girls! Let's go! #USASoftball

@KALEIGHSTEVERSO



Despite the cold weather, I left it all on the field! I'm so proud of myself and my teammates! Back at it tomorrow morning @USASoftball #chasingolympicdreams #USASoftball #alwaysinthefight

@AMARIADAMS01



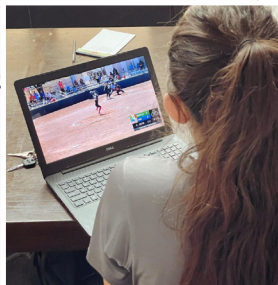
Next tourney is 2 weekends away, but you can bet Arkansas SWAT 10 will be jonesin' for another gold ring! #fastpitch #fastpitchsoftball#usasoftball #usasoftballofarkansas#arkansassoftball #10u #arkansaswat#arkansaswat10

@SWAT10MARLEE



More ball 🟡 Catching the last 🇺🇸 vs 🇮🇹 game! She may or may not have scream super high pitched when I showed her Rachel Garcia 💙💛💛 liked her video! Thanks for making our girl's week! #lifewiththesanchez #softball#usasoftball #mexicosoftball #mygirl#aliyanatheleader #softballislife#springbreak #getbettereveryday

@S_SANCHEZ324



@USASoftball
#USASoftball



SOCIAL MEDIA: YOU POSTED IT!



If you know me you'll know I just love playing ball!! Being with my twin, my friends, my teammates makes me happy!! 2021 Softball journey has started off great!!

@FOREVERTWINPOWER



Diamond  Crushers #diamondcrushers10u played in their first tournament and took #1stplace  they won some hardware and took home Rings. We are thankful and blessed for each one of you girls. These girls played their hearts out and won smiling have fun with their #softballsisters.

@DIAMONDCRUSHERS10U



Long day of tryouts for this ball player... 6 hours later and she's still smiling. Now it's time to put in some work! #softballgirl #softball #usasoftball#putinwork #softballmom#blackgirlmagic

@DOCTORSVISIT4



RHP #33@wild_flower2007 camping today with USA Softball and OU Great Keilani Ricketts! #BeElite #OffSeasonwork #USASoftball

@TULSAELITEPARKER



Texas Glory 2930 wins the USA Softball Toys for Tots event in Ennis, TX. Great job, ladies! #fastpitchsoftball #fastpitch #softball #usasoftball #fastpitchlife #softballlife #softballgirls

@TEXASGLORY.FP



**@USASoftball
#USASoftball**

F21

BAT COLLECTION

READY TO LAUNCH



High Performance Program



The USA Softball High Performance Program (HPP) serves as a pipeline to the USA Softball National Teams Program. Inclusive to all that wish to participate, the HPP focuses on developing player skills, while teaching and growing the game of softball in the Junior Olympic (JO) Girls' Fast Pitch division.

The HPP consists of four levels: local area identifiers, local area invitational tryouts, regional team events and USA Softball Junior Women's National Team (JWNT) age-specific tryouts. Athletes first participate in identifiers and tryouts at the local level with the top athletes named to their respective area pool. From the area, teams are formed to participate in regional events and athletes that stand out as the most elite then advance for possible national team trial, pool, or team participation. Following the JWNT selection process, athletes officially named to the JWNT would represent the U.S. at a World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) international event.

Participating athletes are evaluated based on their performances at each tryout with additional metric testing being included for athletes who are selected to attend the JWNT tryouts. Through such evaluation, placement, training and re-evaluation each year, the HPP can identify athletes for advancement consideration and work to discover future Women's National Team athletes.

What are the benefits to participating in the High Performance Program?

1. The opportunity to train and play with the best local players in your age group.
2. Quality instruction: Learn from USA Softball's top coaches in your area.
3. Quality competition: Games against other state area HPP teams.
4. Exposure to national team coaches and selection committee members.
5. The opportunity to represent one's state area, region, or country in competition.

How do I participate in the High Performance Program?

The HPP is broken into different state areas. HPP Identifiers for each age group will be held in those areas followed by try-outs on an annual basis. Age groups and try-out dates may be different from area to area, based on seasonal and state considerations. You should first search for your state area and then contact your local area program coordinator for identifier information if you have questions. [Click here to find a list of identifiers.](#)

Additional information for the High Performance Program can be found at HPP.USASoftball.com.





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To find out more or to join for just \$100, contact us at (405) 425-3422, LegacyClub@softball.org or visit USASoftball.com and select Legacy Club under the Team USA tab.





NATIONAL TEAMS UPDATE

Women's National Team Resumes Preparation on the #RoadToTokyo

The U.S. Women's National Team (WNT) has resumed preparation for the highly anticipated Tokyo Olympic Games, which has been rescheduled for July 23 - Aug. 8, 2021 following its postponement due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Reuniting for the first time since last March when the "Stand Beside Her" tour, presented by MLB was cancelled, the WNT kicked off the 2021 season with a mid-January training camp held at Florida Southern College in Lakeland, Fla. followed by another training camp held at the Texas Rangers MLB Youth Academy in Dallas, TX Feb 1-12. With a renewed focus on claiming a fourth Olympic Gold Medal, members of the Red, White and Blue took part in a series of workouts, practice sessions and simulated game situations throughout the two training sessions.

Team USA continued their preparations in a March training camp, which included a three-game series against Team Mexico, three exhibition matchups against the University of South Florida (USF) and a solo contest against the University of Florida as part of the 2021 Stand Beside Her tour, presented by MLB. The world-ranked No. 1 U.S. WNT claimed the series against No. 5 Mexico with three-straight wins, followed with three wins against USF and a shutout against Florida to post a 7-0 record. The games marked one-year since the Red, White and Blue returned to competition following the postponement of the pre-Olympic Stand Beside Her tour, presented by MLB, last year.



With less than four months until the Tokyo Olympic Games, the U.S. WNT will continue training sessions with additional informational being announced at a later date.

The 18-player roster is currently without Rachel Garcia, Dejah Mulipola and Bubba Nickles as well as assistant coaches Laura Berg, Howard Dobson, Tairia Flowers and Heather Tarr who all remain with their respective collegiate teams.



Lakeland Training Camp



Dallas Training Camp



Clearwater Training Camp





NATIONAL TEAMS UPDATE

USA Softball Announces Head Coaches for Men's National Team Program

USA Softball is proud to announce the selection of Ron Hackett (Richmond, Va.), Tim Lyon (South Jordan, Utah) and Tony Aresco (Stonham, Mass.) as Head Coaches for the USA Softball Men's National Team (MNT) program. Selected from the USA Softball MNT Coaching Pool, Hackett will serve as Head Coach for the MNT while Lyon and Aresco will lead the U-23 and U-18 Men's National Teams, respectively.

"Congratulations to all three coaches on this much-deserved selection as a Head Coach for each of our Men's National Team Programs," said USA Softball Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Craig Cress. "The Men's National Team program has made great strides in developing talent across the U.S. while providing as many opportunities as possible for athletes to compete at a high level. We look forward to having Coach Hackett at the helm of the Men's National Team in addition to Coach Lyon and Coach Aresco leading the way for the U-23 and U-18 programs."



Hackett has been involved with USA Softball as both an athlete or coach since 1991. As a player, Hackett competed at the grassroots level in the Men's Open/Major division for Jac n Do's Pizza and continued his playing career through 2002 for teams in the Philadelphia area. Following his playing career, Hackett went on to manage ESA Team in (2013-14) and the Northeast Drillers (2015-16) before joining the coaching staff for the Hallman Twins (2017-current), where he has helped lead the team to two third-place finishes at the USA Softball Men's Major National Championship (2018-2019). Hackett joined the MNT as an Assistant Coach in 2019 and has helped lead the Red, White and Blue to a second-place finish at the Pan American Games and a fifth-place finish at the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) World Cup during the 2019 season. Hackett was named Head Coach at the end of 2019 upon Coach Gregg Leathers retirement and has led the team in events throughout the United States in 2020.

"It is an absolute pleasure to remain Head Coach for the Men's National Team for the upcoming cycle," said Hackett. "I look forward to continuing the work needed as we strive for a gold medal in 2022 at the World Championships in New Zealand. I also look forward to expanding our efforts to identify and develop players across the country in striving to attain our goal as a top tier organization in Men's Fastpitch for years to come."

Lyon has been tabbed Head Coach for the inaugural U-23 MNT, marking his seventh stint as Head Coach for the Men's National Team program. Lyon first joined the USA Softball Men's National Team Program as an Assistant Coach for the National Team Festival and Pan American Qualifier (1998) and International Softball Federation (ISF) Men's World Championship (2000) where Team USA earned the Bronze Medal. Selected as Head Coach for the MNT in 2001, Lyon later led the program to their first playoff round appearance since 1985 and a 5-3 record en route to a fifth-place finish at the 2012 World Championship. Two years later at the 2014 edition, the U.S. squad finished with a 7-4 record and a consolation championship under Lyon's leadership.



"It is an honor to be chosen to help build the first-ever U-23 Men's National Team," said Lyon. "I believe we have a good pool of players to work with but are always looking for anyone that would like to be considered. We have a lot of work ahead of us as we prepare to qualify for the World Championships in 2022. I am looking forward to working with the USA Softball community to launch this new international division."

NATIONAL TEAMS UPDATE

Tony Aresco joins the U-18 MNT with more than 30 years of experience coaching Men's Fast Pitch and has led his teams to four USA Softball National Championships. A member of the 1998 MNT athlete pool, Aresco began his coaching tenure with USA Softball in 2018 as a Junior Men's National Team Assistant Coach and has been part of two U-18 WBSC Men's Softball World Cup (World Championship) coaching staffs.

"I am incredibly excited and humbled for the opportunity to lead the U-18 Men's National Team, and the chance to compete and represent the United States on the highest stage," said Aresco. "Having been involved as a player and now coach, I have a tremendous amount of respect for the coaches and players within USA Softball and am ready to build a foundation where we can be a contender and consistently compete among the best. I want our program to make USA proud both on and off the field with consistent excellence. I'm very grateful to the USA Softball staff and Men's National Team Selection Committee for this opportunity."



Interested athletes must complete the U-18 Men's National Team Interest Form OR U-23 Men's National Team Interest Form, and a member of the Men's National Team coaching staff will contact you.

For more information on the USA Softball National Team program, please visit USASoftball.com



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2021 GOLD

Salem, Virginia set to host 2021 GOLD National Championships

USA Softball officially announced details for the 2021 USA Softball 16-Under and 18-Under GOLD National Championships, the pinnacle of Junior Olympic (JO) Championship Play. Hosted by USA Softball of Virginia, elite teams from across the United States will once again have the opportunity to compete for a coveted USA Softball GOLD National Championship title in their respective division. Slated for July 18-24, games will be played across three locations in Salem, Virginia: Botetourt Sports Complex, Burton Softball Field and James Moyer Sports Complex. For more information, teams can [visit the 2021 GOLD Nationals event page.](#)

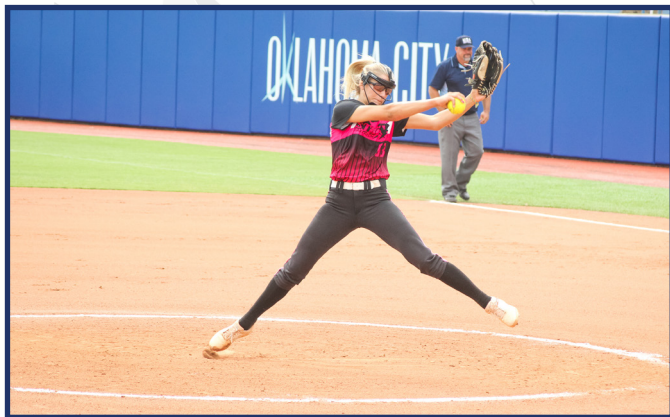
“The Roanoke Valley in Virginia is pleased to host the 2021 USA Softball 16U & 18U GOLD National Championships,” said USA Softball of Virginia Commissioner, John McPhail. “The Roanoke Valley has hosted 56 USA Softball National Championships (formerly ASA) and we believe that you will find our staff qualified and able to assist you. Our facilities are some of the best in the country with the Botetourt Sports Complex winning ASA Complex of the Year for 2012 and the Moyer Sports Complex winning ASA

Complex of the Year for 2011. Four Parks and Recreation Departments that include the City of Salem, City of Roanoke, Roanoke County, and Botetourt County along with USA Softball of Piedmont Virginia and Virginia’s Blue Ridge will come together to bring you this prestigious event.”

The 2021 GOLD National Championships will include 48 berths for each competing division with each team earning a berth through a network of regional qualifying tournaments and through allocated berths.



Qualifying tournaments can be found [HERE](#) >>



2021 GOLD



At the 2020 GOLD Nationals, the 16-Under division saw Hotshots Premier Nelson bring home the Championship title with an impressive 10-1 record through double elimination bracket play, dropping their solo loss to Texas Bombers Burgess before battling through the loser's bracket with seven-straight wins to advance to the Championship finale where they would best California Breeze Birch, 5-2, for the 16-Under GOLD Nationals Championship title. Birmingham Thunderbolts claimed the 18-Under

division title in complete dominance, tallying an undefeated 6-0 record through double-elimination bracket play before dropping the Championship contest, 5-4, against Hotshots Premier Dumezich to force the if-necessary game. With everything on the line in the winner-take-all contest, both teams were strong in the circle and kept battling offensively, but it was Birmingham Thunderbolts who came out on top with a 3-2 victory to claim the 18-Under GOLD Nationals Championship trophy.



2021 JUNIOR OLYMPIC CUP



Columbus, Georgia to host 2021 USA Softball Junior Olympic Cup

USA Softball announced that the 2021 USA Softball Junior Olympic (JO) Cup will be held in Columbus, Ga. June 19-25. The 14-Under division will kick off the tournament at Idle Hour Sports Complex before joining the 16-Under and 18-Under divisions at South Commons Complex, where a 2021 Junior Olympic Champion will be crowned in their respective age divisions.

[Click here to visit the 2021 USA Softball Junior Olympic Cup event page >>](#)

A recipient of the 2019 Complex of the year, presented by Stabilizer Solutions, South Commons 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.

“The Sports Council of Columbus, Georgia is elated to host the 2021 USA Softball Junior Olympic Cup,” said Columbus, GA Sports Council Executive Director, Merri Sherman. South Commons Softball Complex has seen some of the best in the world compete and we look forward to continuing that legacy when the JO teams take the fields. Players and fans will enjoy the many restaurants and amenities our vibrant city has to offer. To everyone involved—players, coaches, support staff and fans—I offer the sincere hospitality for which our city has become so well known.”

Created in 2015, the USA Softball JO Cup serves as an opportunity for evaluation by the USA Softball coaching staff and the Women’s National Team Selection Committee (WNTSC). The inaugural USA Softball JO Cup included a total of 32 teams competing in the 18-Under division and has since grown to include a 16-Under division the past five years (2016-2020) and 14-Under division the past three years (2018-2020).





2021 JUNIOR OLYMPIC CUP

"I am really excited to have our top Michigan Finesse teams participating in the 2021 USA Softball JO Cup," said Michigan Finesse Head Coach, Donny Dreher. "Ninety-six teams over three age groups at one great complex. It's the perfect format for players and college coaches."

The 2021 JO Cup will include a total of 96 teams across the 14-Under, 16-Under and 18-Under divisions. It will feature a five-game guarantee with three pool play games and a double-elimination bracket into a single Championship Game per division. A blind draw will be conducted for bracket play with protection given to the first and second-place finishers from the 2020 USA Softball JO Cup.

"The 2020 JO Cup for us was an amazing experience," said Lady Lightning Gold DPS Corn Head Coach, John Corn. "From the fields, to the staff, to the umpires, everything was done professionally. We really appreciate the opportunity to play and look forward to returning in 2021."

A host to a variety of events through the years, including the 2019 USA Softball International Cup, South Commons Complex is a premier park containing eight softball fields, which includes a five-field hub with a roundhouse and a three-field fan with a stadium, indoor score booth, concessions and restrooms. After undergoing a multi-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, updated umpire rooms, press box and skyboxes.


"Bringing this prestigious event to the site of the first Olympic Softball competition back in 1996 is exciting news for USA Softball of Georgia," said USA Softball of Georgia JO Commissioner, Ernie Yarbrough. "In addition to being the venue for previous international competition, Columbus is the host city for our high school state championships and many NCAA invitational events. The Columbus Sports Council, Columbus Parks & Recreation, and the Columbus City Government do a terrific job of hosting events of this magnitude."



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BORDER BATTLE TO BE HELD AT USA SOFTBALL HALL OF FAME COMPLEX

USA Softball is proud to announce that the 2021 edition of Border Battle, an annual international slow pitch event

that features the USA Softball and Canada Slow Pitch National Teams, will be held at the USA Softball Hall of Fame Complex in Oklahoma City, Okla. Slated for Sept. 10-12, 2021, the USA Softball Men's Slow Pitch National Team (MSPNT), Women's Slow Pitch National Team (WSPNT), Men's Futures Slow Pitch National Team (Men's Futures), and Women's Futures Slow Pitch National Team (Women's Futures) will compete in three days of action against Canada's Men's and Women's Slow Pitch National Teams as well as grassroots clubs.

"We're excited to bring Border Battle XII and the Slow Pitch Showdown back to Oklahoma City," said USA Softball Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Craig Cress. **"Coming off a season where we dealt with the impact of COVID-19, we look forward to welcoming this prestigious slow pitch event back to the USA Softball Hall of Fame Complex for the first time since the completion of stadium construction."**

The three-day event will begin with a series of exhibition games followed by the Slow Pitch Showdown, pitting the U.S. Slow Pitch National Teams (Men's and Women's) against their respective U.S.

Futures Teams (Men's and Women's). Capping off the weekend will be the annual Border Battle contest between Team USA and Team Canada, set for Sunday, Sept. 12 at the Softball Capital of the World®.

Despite the cancellation of the 2020 Border Battle due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the USA Softball Slow Pitch National Teams competed in the Slow Pitch Showdown at Space Coast Stadium where the MSPNT and WSPNT each finished victorious, defeating the Men's Futures, 21-10, and the Women's Futures, 9-4, respectively.

Since the creation of Border Battle in 2009, the U.S. MSPNT boasts a 9-2 record over Canada's Men's Slow Pitch National Team while the U.S. WSPNT holds a 2-1 record over the Canada Women's Slow Pitch National Team since adding the Women's division to Border Battle in 2017.

For more information on Border Battle XII, please visit USASoftball.com.





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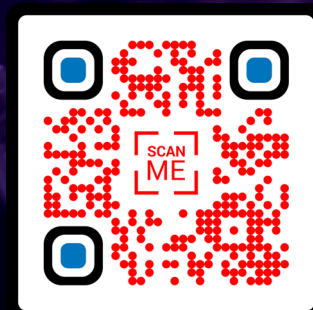
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2021 UIC CLINIC RECAP

USA Softball concluded 2021 Biennial Umpire-In-Chief Clinic with Regional Awards of Excellence Presentation

The 2021 Biennial Umpire-In-Chief (UIC) Clinic was held virtually through scheduled Zoom sessions Feb. 2-15 with over 700 umpires from around the country attending as the USA Softball Umpire program covered a wide variety of topics through breakout sessions.

All breakout sessions for the UIC Clinic were recorded and can be viewed by clicking <<HERE>>

"The first-ever virtual UIC Clinic was a great success," said Director of Umpires, Kevin Ryan. "Participation was excellent throughout the entire clinic and those who attended provided positive feedback as we work on continuing to improve the umpire program. The entire National Umpire Staff did a great job with all facets of the clinic. We are extremely grateful for Bollinger Insurance allowing us to host this clinic at no cost for all attendees. I would also like to thank Hal Van Ryswyk for acting as the main administrator in carrying out this clinic virtually. I am proud of the success of this year's UIC Clinic and look forward to the upcoming 2021 season!"

Participation was virtual and topics included understanding rules, mechanics and evaluations as well as what it takes to be an Elite umpire and National Championship UIC. Despite not meeting together in person, USA Softball umpires still heard from both President Rodney Cobb and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Craig Cress.

President Cobb provided insight on how the umpire program can prepare for the upcoming 2021 season as the effects of COVID-19 continue.

"USA Softball has remained fluid and flexible in the times of COVID-19 and I think it is important for our umpires to continue that route as we enter into the 2021 season," said Cobb. "As long as you're willing and capable to make the changes that need to be made and work through the process, I am cautiously optimistic that 2021 will be a successful season!"

CEO Cress praised the response and great strides that USA Softball members have made despite the unprecedented times of COVID-19. Acknowledging the impact of the cancellation of various events and National Championships, Cress expressed his appreciation for the umpire program and their continued dedication to the sport.

"I want to personally say thank you to each and every one of our umpires," said Cress. "If it weren't for umpires, we wouldn't have a game; it would be just a scrimmage. Your role on the field does not go unnoticed, in a positive way, and we greatly appreciate you and all the work you put into our sport."

The UIC Clinic was highlighted by the Regional Awards of Excellence, which honors excellence in rule knowledge and application as well as continued support and dedication to USA Softball.

The following individuals received Awards of Excellence for their respective regions:

- Region 1 – Lynne Nemeth
USA Softball of New York
- Region 2 – Art Dietrich
USA Softball of North Carolina
- Region 3 – Dave Swanson
USA Softball of Tennessee
- Region 4 – Chris McGee
USA Softball of Mississippi
- Region 5 – John Baca
USA Softball of New Mexico
- Region 6 – Paul Tomazzoli
USA Softball of Illinois
- Region 7 – Christine Hoit
USA Softball of Nebraska
- Region 8 – Chad Mitchell
USA Softball of Wisconsin
- Region 9 – Randy Homer
USA Softball of Idaho
- Region 10 – Ranier "Wink" Winckelmann
USA Softball of Central California

USA Softball would like to thank sponsors RPS Bollinger Insurance and Markel for their continued support of the game of softball and the UIC Clinic.

For more information on the USA Softball umpire program, please visit USASoftball.com.



UMPIRE AWARDS PROGRAM ADDITIONS

USA Softball, the National Governing Body of Softball in the United States, announced that a number of umpires have been honored for their years of service and expertise by becoming members of the USA Softball Umpire Awards Program. One of the nation's largest officiating organizations, USA Softball umpires are nationally recognized as the most trained and proficient in the sport and have the opportunity to be recognized for their dedication to the sport through three available outlets: the Medals Program, the National Indicator Fraternity and the Elite Umpire Program.

[Click here to view National Indicator Fraternity \(NIF\) Additions](#)

The National Indicator Fraternity was founded in 1986 and honors those individuals who have advanced to the next level in the umpire program. In order to obtain membership into the National Indicator Fraternity, umpires must have been registered for at least seven years and have umpired or served as a National Championship Umpire-in-Chief (UIC) or Assistant UIC at three USA Softball National Championships. Members of the National Indicator Fraternity receive a certificate, membership card, luggage tag and a pin.

[Click here to view Medals Program Additions](#)

One of the more popular programs for USA Softball umpires, the Medals Program launched in 1999 and rewards umpires for their years of service who have not been assigned to a Regional or National Championship. With four levels for this program, the Medals Program encompasses all levels of umpires who support the USA Softball program, whether at the local or national level. Umpires who have been registered for three years (Blue Level), five years (Bronze Level), seven years (Silver Level) or more than seven years (Gold Level) can apply to the Medals Program. Members of the Medals Program receive a ball cap, certificate and pin which symbolizes their achievement, and a variety of leisure wear, jewelry and trophies are available for purchase.

[Click here to view Elite Umpire Additions](#)

Launched in 2003, the Elite Umpire Program is the highest honor a USA Softball umpire can obtain other than selection into the National Softball Hall of Fame. To become eligible, an umpire must have been registered for at least seven years, be a current member who is in good standing and participated in at least four National Championships (two of which must have been in the same category of play and from an upper-level qualifying National Championship). Umpires can apply for either Fast Pitch, Slow Pitch and Modified Pitch, and those who are selected will receive a ball cap, membership card, a certificate and pin.

For more information on the USA Softball Umpire Program, please visit USASoftball.com.



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COLLEGE CORNER

#RedWhiteandCollege SPOTLIGHT

See how members of the U.S. Olympic Softball Team are making an impact at their respective schools this NCAA Softball season!



Rachel Garcia
UCLA
Redshirt Senior
Pitcher/1B

Garcia leads the UCLA pitching staff with a 0.29 ERA and a 4-0 record while cumulating 49 strikeouts in 24 innings. At the plate, Garcia has gone yard four times while racking up a .464 batting average.



Bubba Nickles
UCLA
Redshirt Senior
Utility

Nickles has made an appearance in all 20 games for the Bruins. Offensively, she is in the Top 3 in hits (24), doubles (6), homeruns (4) and is leading the team in RBI's (22).



Dejah Mulipola
Arizona
Redshirt Senior
Catcher

Mulipola leads the Wildcat offense with nine homeruns and a 1.067 slugging percentage. Her best performances of the 2021 season came against Seattle University and University of South Florida where she went 2-for-3 with two homeruns in both games.

#RedWhiteandCollege

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**Stats are as of March 24, 2021*

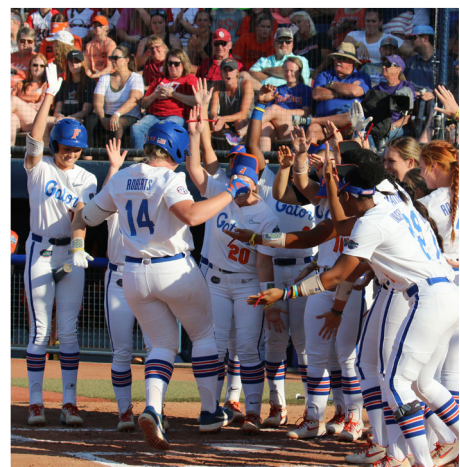
COLLEGE CORNER

2021 NCAA COLLEGE RANKINGS

During the NCAA Division I Softball season, USA Softball in conjunction with ESPN.com, distributes a weekly Top 25 poll. The poll is voted on by coaching representatives from 10 Division I Conferences in the 10 USA Softball Regions as well as members of National and Local media who consistently cover Division I softball across the country.



[Click here to view the ESPN.com/USA Softball Collegiate Top 25 Poll](#)



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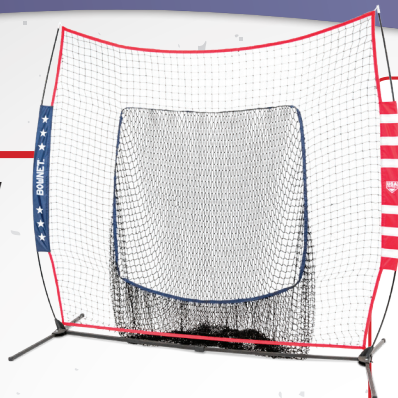


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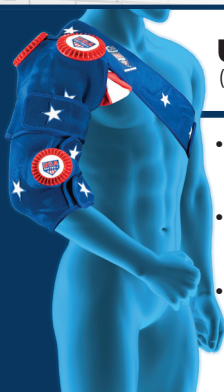
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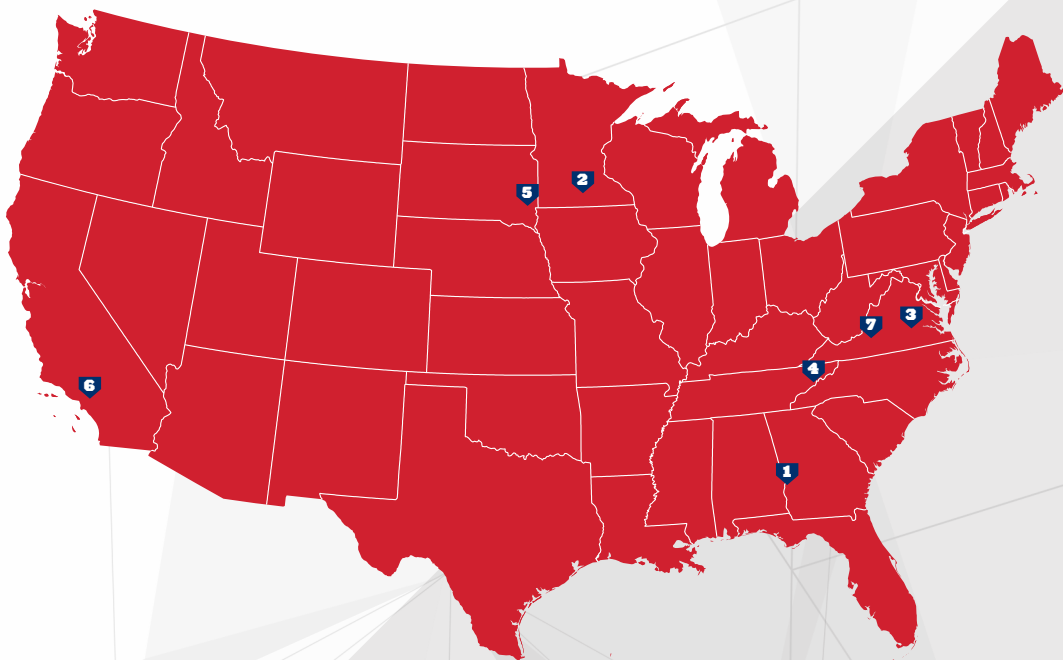
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2021 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

MAP OUT YOUR ROAD TO A 2021 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Details for the 2021 USA Softball Girls' Class A Fast Pitch National Championships and GOLD National Championships in the Girls' Junior Olympic (JO) Division have been announced. Spread across six states, teams will once again have the opportunity to compete for a coveted USA Softball National Championship title in their respective division.

The 2021 Championship season for the USA Softball Junior Olympic Program is right around the corner! Start mapping out your road to a National Championship!



CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS

1. USA Softball Girls' Fast Pitch 10-Under Class A East Fast Pitch National Championship
July 22-25 | Columbus, GA.
2. USA Softball Girls' Fast Pitch 10-Under Class A West Fast Pitch National Championship
July 22-25 | North Mankato, Minn.
3. USA Softball Girls' Fast Pitch 12-Under Class A Fast Pitch National Championship
July 20-25 | Richmond, Va.
4. USA Softball Girls' Fast Pitch 14-Under Class A Fast Pitch National Championship
July 19-25 | Johnson City, Tenn.
5. USA Softball Girls' Fast Pitch 16-Under Class A Fast Pitch National Championship
July 25-Aug. 1 | Sioux Falls, S.D.
6. USA Softball Girls' Fast Pitch 18-Under Class A Fast Pitch National Championship
July 19-24 | La Habra, Calif.
7. USA Softball Girls' Fast Pitch 16-Under and 18-Under GOLD National Championships
July 18-24 | Salem, Va.

Additional details for the 2021 USA Softball Girls' Class A Fast Pitch National Championships and GOLD National Championships in the Girls' JO division can be found on USASoftball.com!

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**TOP 50
PLAYER OF THE YEAR
WATCH LIST**



**PLAYER
★ ★ OF THE ★ ★
YEAR**

Thirty-three of the 2020 Top 50 “Watch List” athletes joined 17 other student-athletes on the “Watch-List” for the 2021 USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year award. Announced by USA Softball, the National Governing Body of Softball in the United States, the USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year award enters its 19th season and recognizes outstanding athletic achievement by Division I female collegiate softball players across the country.

Click here for the 2021 USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year “Watch List”

Previous recipients of the USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year award, the most prestigious individual honor in NCAA Division I Softball, are UCLA catcher Stacey Nuve-man (2002), Texas pitcher Cat Osterman (2003, 2005 and 2006), Florida State pitcher Jessica Van der Linden (2004), Tennessee pitcher Monica Abbott (2007), Virginia Tech pitcher Angela Tincher (2008), Washington pitcher Danielle Lawrie (2009 and 2010), Stanford shortstop Ashley Hansen (2011), Oklahoma's Keilani Ricketts (2012 and 2013), Florida State's Lacey Waldrop (2014), Florida's Lauren Haeger (2015), Michigan's Sierra Romero (2016), Florida's Kelly Barnhill (2017) and UCLA's Rachel Garcia (2018 and 2019). Due to the shortened 2020 season because of the CO-VID-19 global pandemic, a 2020 recipient was not chosen.

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**TOP 50
PLAYER OF THE YEAR
WATCH LIST**



Nineteen student-athletes join the preseason “Watch List” for their fifth year following the National Collegiate Athletic Association’s (NCAA) decision to grant 2020 spring athletes an extra year of eligibility due to COVID-19. Also included in the “Watch List” are 11 seniors, 15 juniors and five sophomores, with freshman ineligible for consideration. (Freshman can be considered for the USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year award once they have competed at the collegiate level). Athletes named to the “Watch List” represent 28 NCAA Division I universities and 13 athletic conferences. UCLA leads the way among universities with six athlete representatives, while Washington and Alabama each have four athletes on the “Watch List”. Represented with three athletes apiece are Arizona, Mississippi State, Oklahoma and Texas. The Pac-12 conference is represented by six member-schools followed by five college programs from the Southeastern Conference (SEC), and three schools apiece from the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) and Big 12 conference.

The Top 25 Finalists for the 2021 USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year award will be announced April 21. While an athlete does not have to be on the “Watch List” to be considered for the Top 25, the eventual USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year will come from the Top 25 Finalists. The Top 10 Finalists will be announced May 5 and the Top 3 announced May 19. The 2021 USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year will be revealed June 1.

In addition to bestowing the USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year award, USA Softball is now in its 19th season of presenting the ESPN.com/USA Softball Collegiate Top 25 Poll which is announced Tuesdays during the regular season. The preseason ESPN.com/USA Softball Collegiate Top 25 Poll was released Jan. 26 with UCLA, Washington, Arizona, Oklahoma and LSU taking the Top 5 spots respectively.

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UMPIRE SPOTLIGHT

USA SOFTBALL OF IDAHO UMPIRE MICHAEL ELKINS SHARES HIS LIFE JOURNEY TO BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE USA SOFTBALL UMPIRE PROGRAM



My life journey started on August 31, 1989 in Colorado Springs, at the Air Force Academy where my father was stationed. It was a normal birth with no complications. A year and a half later, my father was transferred to Fairbanks, Alaska and the family went with him.

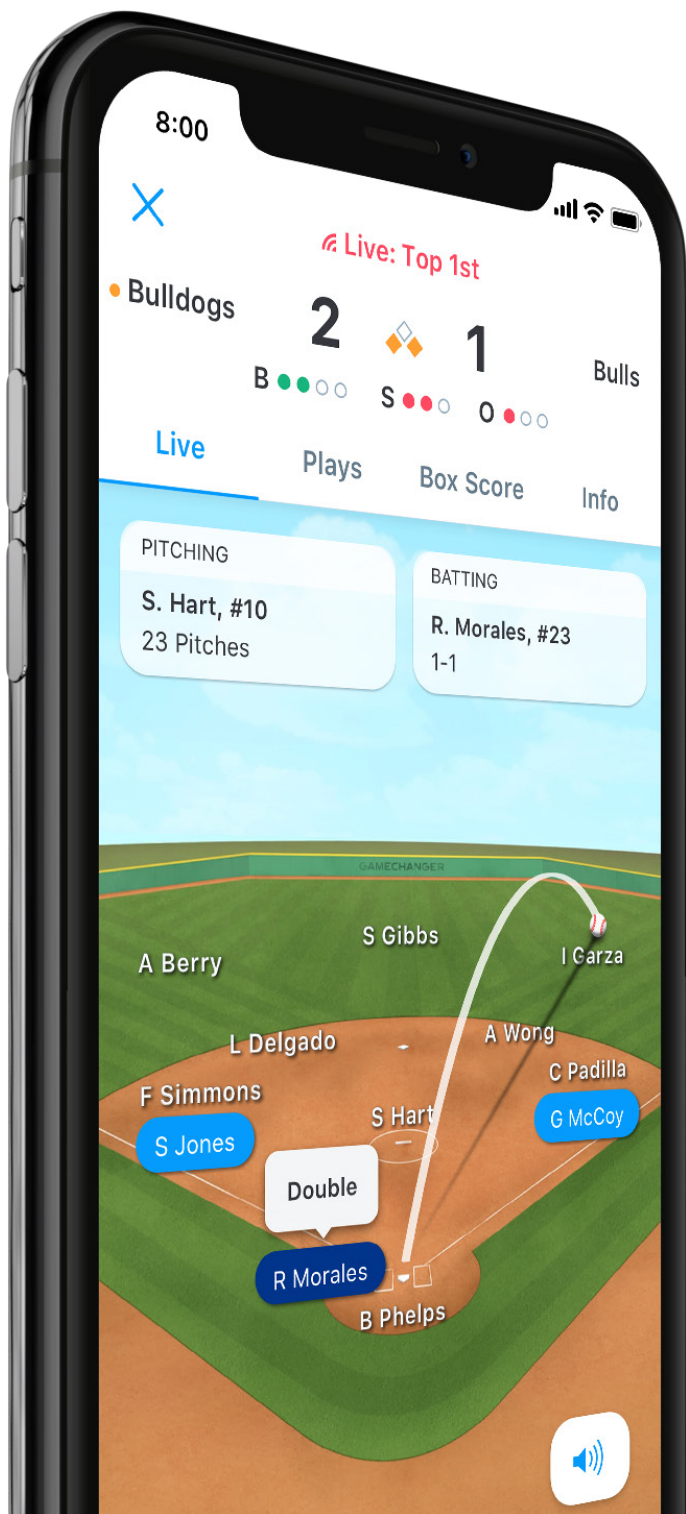
At the age of two I got a serious ear infection that caused my hearing to be diagnosed as legally deaf. This hearing issue delayed my cognitive learning process. When I started elementary school, I was tested and placed into Special Education due to being behind the learning curve. I then was put on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This written document is to help parents have goals and a plan for the student to educationally catch up with their peers and to have success in their future adult lives.

On my first IEP it was written that I would not amount to anything in my life. This was not very optimistic for the Special Education Team and something that should never be written in a plan that is designed to give hope and a path for students to succeed. The impact of this would later motivate me to prove them wrong, to prove that I could make something of myself.

I was in Special Education during my elementary schooling as my family traveled with my dad when he was transferred to Germany, Mississippi, and finally Idaho. In the sixth grade I was reevaluated and, in my first big step to proving them wrong, I passed out of the Special Education Services. School was a challenge though. Due to my years in Special Education, I struggled with pace, therefore it took me a lot longer to get things accomplished academically and stay at each grade level. I also struggled with confidence issues. Though I had these challenges, I continued to press on and graduated high school knowing I wanted to prove them wrong.

At the age of 19, I served a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This mission helped me with my confidence and self-worth while also allowing me to pick up a passion for teaching. After returning home I had a desire to teach and decided to enroll in college in pursuit to become a Special Education Teacher. It was my desire to help students, like me, to achieve beyond what people expected of them and to reach their desired goals. Though it has taken me a long time to graduate, I've never given up, because I wanted to prove them wrong.

Sports has always played an important role while growing up. It was the one thing where I felt comfortable and confident. It gave me a sense of joy and happiness that would help me through some tough times with depression in my life. My first semester in college, I took a basketball refereeing class and this began my passion for officiating.



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UMPIRE SPOTLIGHT



***FOR THOSE WHO STRUGGLE
ACADEMICALLY OR WERE TOLD THEY
WEREN'T GOING TO AMOUNT TO ANYTHING I
SAY TO YOU, "PROVE THEM WRONG" AND WORK
HARD TO ACCOMPLISH GOALS.***

I started officiating high school basketball, baseball and softball and a year later, I was introduced to USA Softball and started traveling out of state to work tournaments. It was then that I found out the potential of what USA Softball umpiring could offer me and how it could help me grow. Not to mention what I could achieve and continue to prove.

From that day forward I have set many goals for myself and with the help of many mentors, I have achieved many of them. Though I have many goals to still accomplish, one thing that is certain is that I have definitely amounted to something in my life and have proved those who wrote my first IEP that they were wrong.

For those who struggle academically or were told they weren't going to amount to anything I say to you, "prove them wrong" and work hard to accomplish goals.

I am Michael Elkins! I am a USA Softball Elite Umpire!



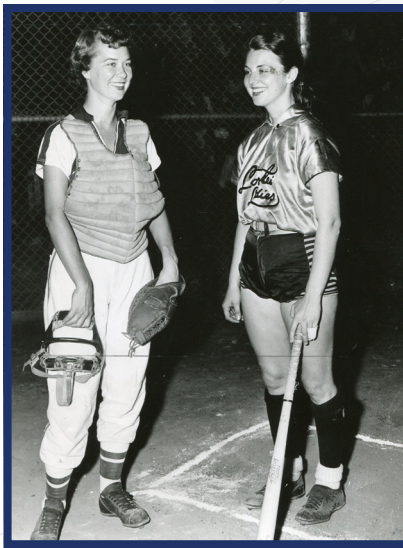
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FROM THE VAULT



A member of the GE Men's Industrial team batting at the 1982 Men's Major Industrial National Championship.



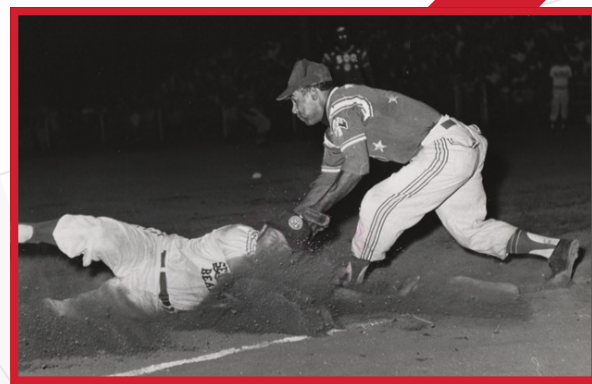
Bonnie Roberts and Frances Wallace have a quick laugh. Circa 1954.



Things have come a long way since the USA Softball Hall of Fame Complex was built! Check out the entrance of the USA Softball (ASA) National Office in 1989 during the Olympic Festival.



Harvey Holcomb runs out a hit during a game.



Safe! An athlete on the SealMasters softball club dives into third safely.

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FROM THE VAULT



Gary Hanke, a member of the Local 57 softball team, boasted some serious guitar skills in addition to his fast pitch abilities!



Iva Poston of the Tucson Ramblers takes a picture before a game.



Bill Griglock, a manager for the Raybestos Cardinals, takes a picture for the team's program.



Members of the PBSW Ramblers take a fun picture for a team program.



An early look at construction on the USA Softball (ASA) National Office in Oklahoma City.

USA SOFTBALL TRIVIA

**IN THE SPIRIT OF THE UPCOMING
TOKYO OLYMPIC GAMES,
HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW
SOFTBALL'S HISTORY?**

QUESTION 1

What year did softball first make its Olympic debut?

- A. 1996
- B. 2000
- C. 1992
- D. 2004

QUESTION 2

Which Olympic team was coined "The Real Dream Team" and was inducted into the United States Olympic & Paralympic Hall of Fame?

- A. 1996
- B. 2000
- C. 2012
- D. 2004

QUESTION 3

Who is USA Softball's only four-time Olympian?

Hint: She currently serves as an assistant coach for the 2020-21 Women's National Team.

- A. Lisa Fernandez
- B. Laura Berg
- C. Crystl Bustos
- D. Dot Richardson

QUESTION 4

How many Gold Medals does Team USA currently possess?

- A. 1
- B. 4
- C. 3
- D. 2

QUESTION 5

The 2020-21 U.S. Olympic Team is made up of 18 athletes, including three individuals currently competing with their Division I program: Bubba Nickles, Rachel Garcia and Dejah Mulipola. What conference do they compete in?

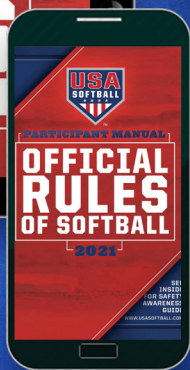
- A. SEC
- B. Pac-12
- C. ACC
- D. Sun Belt

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