

World Softball

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Going to Guadalajara

Softball's 9th Appearance at the Pan American Games

guadalajara 2011

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Covering All The Bases

ON THE FIELD, OFF THE FIELD, WE ARE ON THE WEB!



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President's Message

While softball continues efforts to regain Olympic status we also are continuing and intensifying efforts for changes in competition events to provide for quality and increase in global participation.

Youth development is also high on the radar as we increase support for youth softball in the schools by continuing to provide educational materials and softball equipment as well as working with the International University Sports Federation (FISU) by holding University Championships.

Efforts continue to bring more opportunities for females to participate in softball, through competitions as athletes and coaches, as well as roles as umpires, administrators, and leaders in national and international positions.

Major events fast approaching on the calendar this year are the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens, the Pan American Games in Guadalajara, the Junior Women's World Championship in Cape Town, and the All-Africa Games in Maputo.

Along with the above are many national, regional and multi-sport events being organized on all continents that encompass the many disciplines of our sport, including fast, modified, and slow pitch, coed play, arena (indoor), beach, and wheelchair softball.

Inside this issue of World Softball are a wide range of softball happenings. Also keep up with the many activities and competitions by visiting the ISF website, along with our other online homes on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Calendar of Events



International Softball Federation®

2011

10TH ISF SENIOR WORLD CUP
SALEM, VA. (USA); JUNE 10-12

ISF MEN'S WORLD CUP
PRAGUE, CZE.; JUNE 13-19

SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD SUMMER GAMES
ATHENS, GRE.; JUNE 25-JULY 4

**CANADIAN OPEN WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL
FASTPITCH CHAMPIONSHIP**
SURREY, BC; JULY 9-17

WORLD CUP OF SOFTBALL 6
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (USA); JULY 21-25

WORLD POLICE & FIRE GAMES
NEW YORK, USA; AUG. 26-SEP. 5

10TH ALL-AFRICA GAMES (Women's Softball)
MAPUTO, MOZ; SEP. 3-18

XVI PAN AMERICAN GAMES (Women's Softball)
GUADALAJARA, MEX; OCT. 13-30

XXV ISF CONGRESS
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (USA); OCT. 27-30

26TH SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES (Men's & Women's Softball)
PALEMBANG, INA; NOV. 11-25

ISF IX JR. WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (19-and-under)
CAPE TOWN, S.A.; DEC. 6-17

2012

**ISF COED SLOW PITCH WORLD CUP AND ISF/ISSA MASTERS/SENIORS
INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS**
PLANT CITY, FL (USA); JAN. 26-29

ISF XIII WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
WHITEHORSE, YUKON, CAN.; JULY 13-22

III WORLD UNIVERSITY SOFTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP
COLORADO SPRINGS, COL. (USA); AUG. 2-11

12TH WORLD FIREFIGHTERS GAMES
SYDNEY, AUS.; OCT. 19-28

ISF IX JR. MEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (19-and-under)
PARANÁ, ARG. (dates TBA)



Arena (indoor) softball is a discipline that is rapidly growing in popularity – particularly in Europe. (Photo by Peter Blomqvist)

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GOING TO GUADALAJARA



With so many multi-sports Games on the international sporting landscape, arguments stretch around the globe as to which are the most prestigious or the biggest. Regardless of where it falls on those subjective scales, the Pan American Games is by all means in the conversation.

Softball has been a part of the event for over 30 years now. Men and women began showcasing their skills in the fast pitch discipline at the 1979 Pan American Games in Puerto Rico, and the sport has been there – every four years – ever since.

True, the men were left off the 2007 programme and will be on the sidelines again when this year's event takes place in Guadalajara, Mexico, in October, but International Softball Federation President Don Porter said that he is, "confident that the men will be back on the field at the 2015 edition in Toronto, Ontario, Canada."

In the meantime, eight women's teams are hard at work in their preparations to go for the gold in Guadalajara.

They will make the argument – especially the many who are first-timers – that there is a lot of prestige about the Pan American Games, beginning with getting to wear a softball uniform with their country's name across the chest.

One might make the case that for Mexico there is heightened interest in being ready for the seven days of play, and not just because they're the host. A women's national team from Mexico has not participated in any of the previous (eight) Pan American Games softball competitions.

In addition to the host, this year's field includes Argentina, Canada, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, USA, and Venezuela.



The stadium in Mexico where the women's softball competition will take place during the Pan American Games. (Photo courtesy of Pan American Games Organizing Committee)

Besides Mexico's debut, another subplot to this year's competition is the likely unspoken desire that Canada and Venezuela will have to beat one another. At the 2007 Pan American Games, bad weather resulted in unsuitable playing conditions, canceling the final games. As a result, Canada and Venezuela were given silver medals. Had they been able to play their game, one would've advanced to the gold medal game against Team USA while the loser would've gotten the bronze medals. So although it was Mother Nature that impacted their final standing, each surely will want to show that they're the true silver – or gold! – medalist.

Continued on page 4

GOING TO GUADALAJARA cont.

Meanwhile, Team USA comes in not only looking to repeat as gold medalists (they had been unbeaten at the 2007 event when the bad weather came), but faces the pressure of fielding a completely overhauled lineup. This year the Americans lost eight members of the 2010 world champion team to the U.S. pro league, plus pitcher Jennie Finch to retirement.



There were plenty of high-fives for Canada at last year's world championship after their best finish in over 20 years. They'll hope for similar success in Mexico. (Photo from Caracas Organizing Committee)

Speaking of last year's ISF world championship, Cuba likely will take to the field in Mexico with a bad taste in their mouth from having finished one game out of the last playoff spot in 2010. One of the blemishes on their record was a 6-0 loss to Canada.

The Dominican Republic (2nd place), Mexico (fifth), Puerto Rico (fourth), and Venezuela (1st) all competed in last year's Central American & Caribbean Games softball competition, so there are definitely some established rivalries within the region.

It all sets up for what should be a highly competitive and entertaining week of high-level women's international softball, and thus cause for new debate on this highly-respected multi-sport Games.

LOOKING BACK

Past Pan American Games (women's) softball medalists

2007

Gold: USA
Silver: Canada
Bronze: Venezuela

2003

Gold: USA
Silver: Canada
Bronze: Dominican Republic

1999

Gold: USA
Silver: Canada
Bronze: Cuba

1995

Gold: USA
Silver: Puerto Rico
Bronze: Cuba

1991

Gold: USA
Silver: Canada
Bronze: Cuba

1987

Gold: USA
Silver: Puerto Rico
Bronze: Canada

1983

Gold: Canada
Silver: USA
Bronze: Belize

1979

Gold: USA
Silver: Puerto Rico
Bronze: Belize

MORE EXPOSURE FOR MORE DISCIPLINES



Special Olympics
WORLD SUMMER GAMES
ATHENS 2011

There is always lots of softball being played around the world, regardless of what the calendar says. But during the cover dates of this issue of World Softball in particular, the sport will be on display in a variety of forms.

Those not as familiar with the sport – whether they realize it or not – are most likely to have seen fast pitch played, either in person or on TV. But, slow pitch has tremendous participation, and the International Softball Federation is also actively promoting modified pitch, arena (indoor) softball, wheelchair softball, and beach softball.

The 10th ISF Senior World Cup (June 10-12 in Salem, Virginia, USA) is not only a huge slow pitch tournament, in terms of participation numbers, but also shines a light on those who are competing. Softball can be enjoyed by boys, girls, men, and women of all ages, and the Senior World Cup is a perfect example of the game not just being for youth and juniors. Despite the fact that over the last few years the event has lowered the age limits so as to include women (age) 40-and-over and men 35-and-over, the biggest makeup of the tournament is usually 55-and-over, going all the way up to a 70+ division.



Action from the first-ever Senior World Cup. This year's will be the tenth. (Photo courtesy of ISSA)

From June 25-July 4 the Special Olympics World Summer Games will be held in Athens, Greece, with softball among the 22 sports to be contested. This is just one more demonstration of the ISF's desire to have softball accessible to anyone who wants to play the game that is in 127 countries around the world. For those participants, the event will be extra special as the softball competition will take place in the same venue where the 2004 Olympic softball games were played.

Then, from June 28-July 3 a men's modified pitch event will take place in Aruba. For the fifth consecutive year the Champ of Champs tournament will be held, with good international participation. At a minimum, the following were expected to participate, in addition, of course, to teams from Aruba: Curacao, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Holland, USA, and Venezuela. The organizers were planning for a 12-team tournament.

The 8th European Coed Slow Pitch Championship is scheduled for July 18-23, with this year's edition set to take place in Bulgaria. Participation was expected from the host country, the Czech Republic, Germany, Great Britain, Guernsey, Ireland, and Slovenia.

The ISF is in the planning stages of two slow pitch events to run concurrently in January (2012) at the world headquarters in Plant City, Florida (USA).

Some notable non-fast pitch activity that already took place this year includes the annual Indoor Cup, which was held in the Netherlands in January. Sixteen teams competed, with one of two entries from the Czech Republic coming out on top. Other participants were from Germany, Great Britain, and the USA, plus, of course, the host country.



Action during the 2011 Sweden Indoor Open. (Photo by Peter Blomqvist)

And, in late February, the annual Indoor Open was held in Enköping with six teams (all from Sweden) participating. Of note was the tournament's Best Pitcher award going to Nina Sarajärvi, who was making a comeback after arm surgery.

Softball is all around you, indoors and out, in many forms.

GROWING SOFTBALL – ON THE FIELD AND ONLINE

Sport has been just one of countless areas of interest that has benefitted from today's technology and the advancements in online opportunities.

Of course, social media is all the rage nowadays, and the International Softball Federation has immersed itself into different such areas where fans, players, parents, coaches, umpires, and administrators can all engage with the sport that they are so passionate about.

A check of some of the data shows great response from the worldwide softball community.

At the time this article was written the ISF YouTube channel had over 115,000 Total Upload Views, with new subscribers still coming on quite regularly. (Visit www.youtube.com/ISFsoftball)



On Twitter (follow @ISFsoftball) the world governing body is for all intents and purposes attracting new followers daily. That conclusion would likely be drawn just by looking at the list of known countries from where people or organizations are following the ISF: Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, Guatemala, Ireland, Italy, (South) Korea, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, the Philippines, South Africa, Spain, the UK, the United States, and Venezuela.



The story is the same, if not bigger, actually, on Facebook – which, in fairness, had launched well before the ISF page on Twitter. The numbers – again, from around the world – show significant followers both at facebook.com/ISFsoftball as well as facebook.com/BackSoftball, which is impressive since the latter (Olympic reinstatement campaign for the 2016 Games) effectively ended in August 2009, yet new people continue to come onboard to that page.



Of course the home base, so to speak, is the world governing body's official website, www.ISFsoftball.org, where a recent study showed that despite the sport not being returned to the Olympic programme, interest in softball did not decrease in terms of 2009 site traffic versus the numbers for 2010.

Meanwhile, one of the ISF's member national federations has unveiled their plans to utilize the power of the Internet to try to grow their on-field numbers.

The Danish Softball Federation has launched a new online promotion strategy seeking to promote fast pitch softball in Denmark through social media and web tv productions.

Softball has about 1,000 players in Denmark, making the potential very big.

Both the men and the under-19 junior men's national teams are defending European Champions, however, exposure and branding of the teams and players had been at a minimum up until the recent launch.

At the beginning of the year, the Danish Softball Federation was one of five federations who won an award given out by the National Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation of Denmark. The prize was financial support to carry out a web tv project. The Danish Softball Federation's project is called 'Fastpitch Softball Stars.'

GROWING SOFTBALL – ON THE FIELD AND ONLINE cont.



The project's goal is to showcase the stars of Danish softball, in particular the under-19 junior men, who will be defending their European Championship title in the summer of 2011.

The 'Fastpitch Softball Stars' web tv productions will follow the team in their preparations for the Championship and during the tournament week in the Czech Republic. By going behind the scenes and giving personal views and unique insights into the world of this national team, the hope is to elevate the players to star status and thereby strengthen the image of the sport.

A separate social media strategy has been developed and a Facebook fan page has been set up. The web tv productions will be launched via Facebook during May, June, July and August 2011.

As a part of the project, the Danish Softball Federation has purchased two video cameras for the clubs to borrow. Web tv courses will be offered and the goal is for all Danish softball clubs to have made at least one web tv production by 2012. An interactive website gathers all social media in a new web design that enables players to submit player profiles, game results, and statistics.

With all these actions, the Danish Softball Federation hopes to increase the knowledge and the brand of fast pitch softball in Denmark.

Truly the sport of softball is growing in popularity the same way that digital and social media initiatives are.

Christina Laub Frank contributed to this article.

SIGHTS SET ON 2020

Following the August 2009 recommendation by the International Olympic Committee Executive Board that two sports – neither of which were softball – be put forward to the IOC Session that October as recommendations for voting onto the 2016 Summer Games programme, many people (many people) wondered what would become of softball.

International Softball Federation President Don Porter was quick to tell all doubters that the sport would certainly continue. And without question it certainly has. The sport didn't die, nor did its Olympic dream.

Vast amounts of work continued since that decision almost two years ago, and getting added to it now are re-dedicated efforts to convince the IOC that softball should return to the Olympic programme, where it had solidly established itself at the 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008 Games in Atlanta, Sydney, Athens, and Beijing, respectively.

The ISF has set up an Olympic Legacy Committee, with the world governing body's secretary general, Ms. Low Beng Choo (Malaysia) as the chair.

As April came to a close and this issue of World Softball was in the works, Ms. Low set out a plan for the committee to review and provide feedback on. Additionally, the document was circulated among the ISF's member national federations.

At the same time, the IOC had provided a seven-page questionnaire as part of the preparations that they are beginning toward identifying one sport, this time, that in 2013 will be voted on for adding to the programme of the 2020 Summer Olympics.

It's a long road – again – but one well worth journeying.

"The bottom line continues to be the dreams of the young athletes," Mr. Porter said. "We have to continue doing everything in our power to give them the best possible chance of being able to compete on the world's stage, just as those before them were able to."

The ISF president added that, "Just like last time, with our BackSoftball campaign, we are again going to spread the message that our sport is a clean sport, with no positive doping tests in our four Olympic appearances, and that the best athletes in our sport do go to the Games. These are trying times economically, so we also want to show the IOC that ours is not an expensive sport to stage."

As was the case with the aforementioned BackSoftball campaign, the efforts toward the 2013 vote will again involve off-field participation by current and former Olympic softball athletes, plus, of course, administrators from softball and others in the worldwide sporting community, as well as media members, government officials, and individuals from the corporate sector.

Softball supporters – players, parents, fans, coaches, umpires, administrators – can contribute to the campaign through the Donate button on www.youtube.com/ISFsoftball (the ISF is a non-profit corporation) [501(c)(3)].



ISF Secretary General Ms. Low Beng Choo heads up the world governing body's new Olympic Legacy Committee.

U.S. WILL HOST 2012 WORLD UNIVERSITY CHAMPIONSHIP

As World Softball went into production the International Softball Federation was announcing the dates and host site for the III World University Softball Championship.

The tournament will take place in the United States from August 2-11, 2012, at the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs.

In making the announcement ISF President Don Porter said, "We are very happy to have the details for this event finalized so that we can begin working toward another significant competition opportunity for our young athletes. This is also an important step as it relates to the World University Games programme. Colorado Springs will be a great host and I know the FISU (International University Sports Federation) officials will see the appeal of softball that has made it such a global sport."

The 1st World University Softball Championship (2004) had taken place in the U.S. at the ISF's world headquarters complex in Plant City, Florida, while the second (2006) was staged in Taiwan. As 2008 was an Olympic year for softball, no university event was planned then.

"FISU is pleased that University Softball returns on the WUC program. So far we had two successful World University Softball Championships. With the WUC Softball returning to the home of softball, we are confident that the third edition will be a professionally staged event and together with our partner, the International Softball Federation, we are looking forward to seeing our student-athletes shine on the diamond," WUC Director Laurent Briel stated.

The games next year will take place at the University's Four Diamond Sports Complex, which has hosted several NCAA Division II playoffs.

"We are thrilled to be able to host the superb World University Softball Championship next summer," said Colorado Springs Sports Corp Chairman Dave Palenchar. "This is a significant honor for Colorado Springs and enhances its respected reputation as a superb host for major international and domestic amateur sports events."

The host school's chancellor, Pam Shockley-Zalabak, added, "We know our University family will support the athletes and officials and welcome them to our campus and the city."

The event is open to all student-athletes that have not been out of a university or its equivalent for more than a year and that are between 17 and 28 years old. Any association which belongs to FISU may enter a team (women's fast pitch). Entries are accepted from any country which is eligible for the Olympic Games and from any national federation that is affiliated to the ISF.

Colorado Springs was awarded the event after a formal presentation (to FISU) in Erzurum, Turkey, by its delegation led by El Pomar Foundation CEO & Chairman and USOC President Emeritus Bill Hybl, U.S. International University Sports Federation Secretary General Stan Brassie, Mr. Palenchar, and Sports Corp President and CEO Tom Osborne.

The Colorado Springs bid was presented by the Sports Corp with the support and coordination from the USIUSF, United States Olympic Committee, UCCS, the U.S. Air Force Academy, and El Pomar Foundation.

Both the first and second World University Softball Championships saw the United States defeat Chinese Taipei in the gold medal game. Japan won the bronze medal both times.



Rebecca Soumeru is shown here playing for the Netherlands at the 1st World University Softball Championship. She went on to pitch at the 2008 Olympic softball competition in China. (Photo by Jeff Fay/Hollowtree Images)



Behind The Plate

Bob Stanton, ISF Director of Umpires

It is often said that you cannot teach judgement. I disagree. There are many things we can do to improve our judgement. The major element in judgement is proper positioning. If you do not see the play properly it is difficult to make the right judgement. Like any decision you make, the more facts you have, the better decision you will make.

Working the plate requires that you see the entire strike zone. We teach the staggered stance using heel to toe with good plate alignment (center of the body aligned slightly off-center of the front edge of home plate). This will assist with judging inside and outside pitches. Proper eye height at the top of the strike zone so you are looking down through the zone will provide the best look at the top and bottom of the strike zone.

Working the bases requires that you keep the four elements in front of you, the ball, the base or play, the defensive player, and the offensive player. We recommend that you get to a point that is 90 degrees to the throw on a force play and 90 degrees to the path of the runner on a force play. Proper distances on a force play or a tag play are also important.

So how do we improve judgment? First, we have to get to the best position possible to see the play. We do not take a position to see a play because that is the spot on a diagram contained in an umpire manual. Such diagrams are only a reference point that helps guide us to getting to the right position. We must always let the play dictate the best position to be in. The ball, the players, and the location of where the play will take place will tell us where to be, not a diagram.

Once we get in the proper position, whether at the plate or on the bases, it is our knowledge and experience that takes over and renders our judgement on the facts as we see them. To improve our judgement, we then must improve our knowledge and gain more experience. Rule knowledge is one area that should be easy to improve. Studying the rules to gain an understanding of the spirit and intent of the rules takes effort. It is more than understanding the words, it is digging deeper to understand why the rule exists and why it was written the way it was. Knowing how to interpret what you see as it relates to the rules is part of the judgement you need to use when making a call.



Malcolm Gladwell in his book "Blink" talks of the ability of art experts to make a snap decision on whether a painting is a forgery or not. They follow their instincts. What takes them just a matter of seconds would take a non-expert months to figure out after tests and sifting through the facts. This instinct is the brain sifting through the fact, eliminating what is not relevant and isolating only the most important of facts. He says that these experts have developed their instincts only after years and years of study and practice. He is often quoted as saying, "It takes 10,000 hours of practice to become an expert." So if you want to improve your judgement, practice, practice, practice and rely on your instincts. Let your expertise take over. If your instincts are telling you it is a strike, then it probably is. If your expertise says it is an out, it

probably is.

Remember, however, good practice is what counts. In order for you to know that those 10,000 hours of practice are taking you in the right direction, you need help. We can validate our practice with observation and feedback. Watch others work, see what their strike zone is, see how they handle close plays, see how they deal with a tag play or a force play. Watch for feedback on your own use of judgement – do catchers or batters look back at you on your strike calls? Are pitchers always giving you a look? Do players overreact on safe or out calls? While some of this could be just emotions, it can also be a sign that you are not calling the game the way the players expect it to be called. Ask your fellow umpires for feedback on your judgement. Find a mentor.

Judgement is an individual thing; however, we can borrow from others as we develop our own judgement skills. No one is perfect, but we can all work on trying to get there.



2011 ISF Umpires Certification Clinic, Oceania
Front: Phil Waller, Scott Rindfleisch Tricia Sibraa, Leigh Evans, Mark Porteous.
Centre: Darren Sibraa, Ian Frame, Jason Carter, Howard Watt, Jeremy England, Ron Houison, Helen Strauss, Stacey Loveridge, Wayne Saunders.
Back: Yvonne Kahler, Amanda Houison Bob Stanton, Riki Tourangi, Dave Shedlock



The participants in and instructors from an ISF umpire certification seminar held in February in Queensland, Australia. (Photo by Wies Fajzullin)



News & Notes



The European Softball Federation held their annual Congress in February in Belgium. There were 21 countries represented and International Softball Federation President Don Porter was on-hand as well. The delegates voted unanimously for Ms. Francesca Fabretto (ITA) as the new ESF Secretary General, following last year's retirement of Mr. Patrice Bienfait (FRA) from the position. The Congress also allotted various 2011 events to different organizers and Malta won (over the Netherlands) in a vote for the 2012 ESF Congress host. See the full calendar of events and learn more about the ESF at www.europeansoftball.org.

See the full calendar of events and learn more about the ESF at www.europeansoftball.org.

In the latter part of March a three-day extraordinary meeting of the Pan American Softball Confederation (CONPASA) was held. Representatives from 22 national federations from the Americas came to Valencia, Venezuela, as did ISF President Don Porter. Many subjects were discussed including preparations for the softball competition at the Pan American Games in Guadalajara, Mexico, in October, plus coaching and umpiring seminars and the ISF's development program. Chairing the meetings was CONPASA President Jesús Suniaga (VEN), who is also an ISF VP/Latin America. Also among those in attendance were ISF VP/Latin America Antonio Morales (COL), ISF Board of Directors Athlete Representative Maria Soto (VEN), and International Olympic Committee Member Melitón Sánchez (PAN).



A group shot of the meeting attendees in Valencia.



One of the memorabilia photos added to the ISF website.

The ISF made an addition to its official website as part of ongoing efforts to properly represent the world governing body and the sport's history. In the Hall of Fame section of www.ISFsoftball.org there are now pictures of various historic memorabilia on display in the headquarters in Plant City, Florida. It is anticipated that these items will eventually end up in the Hall of Fame & Museum that the ISF hopes to create at the facility.

Representatives from the ISF were on the move in March and April. The International Sports Press Association held their annual Congress in Seoul, Korea. ISF Director of Communications Bruce Wawrzyniak attended and served this year as the U.S. delegate. He also attended the continental section meeting of AIPS America. Wawrzyniak is an AIPS member.



The following month in London the SportAccord convention was held. ISF President Don Porter and Secretary General Ms. Low Beng Choo were both on-hand. The week-long gathering brings many groups together, including the International Olympic Committee, the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations and their winter counterparts, SportAccord (formerly the General Association of International Sports Federations), and the Association of Recognized International Sports Federations.

The VI Central American Junior Women's Championship was held in Guatemala in April. Mexico participated for the first time at that event and won the fast pitch tournament with a victory over the host country, who was the defending champion from the 2009 edition in Nicaragua. The 2011 bronze medals went to Nicaragua, with Belize finishing fourth and El Salvador fifth. The participants were from the (age) 19-and-under category.



The victorious Mexico team posing with their medals and first place trophy. (Photo courtesy of Guatemala Softball Association)

As part of their preparations for major tournaments this year, Argentina hosted the Florida Tech University softball team in Buenos Aires for six days of competition in March. The host country's women's national team is preparing for the Pan American Games softball competition in Mexico in October, but won just one of five games against Florida Tech. The Argentina junior women's national team will compete this December in South Africa at the ISF IX Jr. Women's World Championship, but also posted just a single victory against two losses in head-to-head action with Florida Tech. Next year teams from around the world will travel to Argentina for the ISF IX Jr. Men's World Championship in Paraná.



An Argentina batter watches a pitch come in during a game against Florida Tech University. (Photo by Peloteros del Sur)

Sommaire français

EN BREF

Le numéro de mai-août de World Softball commence par le message du Président de la Fédération internationale de softball Don Porter, qui cette fois-ci, couvre une grande variété de sujets. Il débute en soulignant les efforts déployés pour parvenir à la réinstallation olympique, puis poursuit avec d'autres activités variées qui continuent à se dérouler.

Par exemple, M Porter exprime le désir du softball d'offrir des opportunités croissantes à la jeunesse. Il indique de même que l'organisme mondial de régie du sport veut offrir encore plus d'avenues pour les filles et les femmes pour qu'elles pratiquent le sport, que ce soit comme athlète, entraîneure, arbitre ou administratrice. Il souligne quelques-uns des principaux événements du calendrier de compétition de softball en 2011, dont les Jeux d'été mondiaux des Olympiques spéciaux, les Jeux Panaméricains, le IXe Championnat du monde jr féminin de la FIS et les Jeux Africains. Dans un même ordre d'idées, le Président de la FIS souligne que "de nombreux événements nationaux, régionaux et multisports sont en préparation sur tous les continents, (englobant) les nombreuses disciplines de notre sport dont le softball de balle rapide, de balle modifiée et de balle lente, le jeu mixte, en aréna (intérieur), de plage et en fauteuil roulant." Il termine encourageant le lecteur à continuer à suivre le softball et ses compétitions sur le site www.ISFsoftball.org de même que "nos autres accueils en ligne sur Facebook, Twitter, et YouTube."



Le premier article – comme l'indique la page couverture – est un aperçu des prochains Jeux Panaméricains d'octobre au Mexique. Cela marquera la neuvième édition de suite de l'événement multisports ayant le softball à son programme, bien que pour la deuxième fois consécutive, seul le softball féminin de balle rapide sera présenté. La balle rapide masculine, toutefois – selon le Président de la FIS – sera de retour en 2015 à Toronto.

La Compétition de softball des Jeux Panaméricains de 2011 sera disputée entre l'Argentine, le Canada, Cuba, la République Dominicaine, le Mexique, Puerto Rico, les É-U et le Venezuela. Ce sera la première fois que l'équipe féminine du Mexique participe à la



compétition de softball des Jeux Panaméricains. Et une autre histoire à surveiller est vraisemblablement le désir non avoué qu'auront le Canada et le Venezuela de l'emporter l'un sur l'autre. Aux Jeux Panaméricains de 2007, les mauvaises conditions météorologiques ont provoqué des conditions de jeu telles que les parties finales ont été annulées. En conséquence, le Canada et le Venezuela se sont vu remettre des médailles d'argent. S'il avait été possible de jouer leur partie, l'une des deux serait avancée à la partie comptant pour la médaille d'or contre l'Équipe des É.-U., et l'autre aurait obtenu la médaille de bronze. Ainsi, malgré l'impact de mère nature sur leur classement final, chaque équipe voudra sûrement montrer qu'elle était la vraie médaillée d'argent – ou d'or!

Pour sa part, Équipe É.-U. cherche non seulement à mériter de nouveau la médaille d'or (l'équipe a été invaincue à l'événement de 2007, malgré les mauvaises conditions météo), mais est confrontée à la pression d'une équipe complètement reconstituée. Cette année, les Étasuniennes ont perdu huit membres de l'équipe championne du monde de 2010 au profit de la ligue professionnelle des É.-U., et en plus, la lanceuse Jennie Finch qui a pris sa retraite.

Puis suit une histoire des diverses disciplines du softball, dont quelques-unes seront au cœur des activités durant la période couverte par ce numéro de World Softball. Par exemple, la 10e Coupe du monde senior de la FIS (du 10 au 12 juin à Salem, Virginie, É.-U.) est un énorme tournoi de balle lente pour les participants qui dans l'ensemble, sont âgés de 50 ans et plus.

Du 25 juin au 4 juillet, les Jeux d'été mondiaux des Olympiques spéciaux auront lieu à Athènes, en Grèce, le softball étant l'un des 22 sports au programme. Ceci n'est qu'une démonstration de plus du désir de la FIS de rendre le softball accessible à toute personne qui veut pratiquer le sport qu'on pratique dans 127 pays à travers le monde. L'événement sera super spécial pour ces participants puisque la compétition de softball se déroulera dans les mêmes installations que les parties de softball des Jeux Olympiques de 2004.

L'article fait aussi allusion à un tournoi masculin de lancer modifié qui aura lieu à Aruba (du 28 juin au 3 juillet), où une bonne participation internationale est attendue. De plus, le 8e Championnat européen de balle lente mixte est fixé du 18 au 23 juillet et l'édition de cette année aura lieu en Bulgarie. La FIS en est aux stades de planification de deux événements de balle lente qui auront lieu simultanément en janvier (2012) à nos quartiers généraux mondiaux à Plant City, Floride (É.-U.). L'article se termine avec des indications relatives au softball en aréna (à l'intérieur) qui a été joué tant aux Pays Bas qu'en Suède.

On retrouve ensuite un rapport des diverses activités de softball hors terrain – particulièrement, en ligne. Pour commencer, il y a des références sur www.youtube.com/ISFsoftball avec un total de 115 000 téléchargements visionnés et sur Twitter (@ISFsoftball) avec des adeptes de toutes les cinq régions (Afrique, Amériques, Asie, Europe, et Océanie). Plus, un intérêt significatif se manifeste sur www.facebook.com/ISFsoftball et le "sport's Olympic ouster" (en 2009) pour lequel l'intérêt ne diminue pas, puisqu'on constate que le nombre de consultation n'a pas baissé à www.ISFsoftball.org en 2010.

L'article souligne une initiative de la Fédération Danoise de softball, qui a mis au point un projet de web télé du nom de 'Fastpitch Softball Stars.' Le but du projet est de montrer les étoiles du softball danois, particulièrement les jeunes hommes de moins de 19 ans qui défendront leur titre de Champions européens à l'été de 2011. Une stratégie sociale séparée a été développée et une page d'amateurs Facebook a été mise au point. Les productions de web télé seront lancées via Facebook durant mai, juin, juillet et août 2011.



Le magazine poursuit sur un écrit portant sur les efforts déployés pour mettre de l'avant une nouvelle campagne de réinstallation olympique, qui culminerait avec le vote du Comité international olympique en 2013 en vue du programme des Jeux d'été de 2020. La Secrétaire générale de la FIS Mme Low Beng Choo est la présidente du nouveau Comité héritage olympique que l'organisme de régie a mis sur pied. Elle a établi un plan qui a circulé parmi les membres du comité pour examen.



Et, la FIS a répondu à un questionnaire de sept pages que le CIO a fourni comme faisant partie des préparatifs établis dans l'intention d'identifier un sport pour les Olympiques qui auront lieu dans neuf ans. L'article mentionne aussi que, "Les efforts en vue du vote de 2013 nécessiteront de nouveau la participation hors terrain des athlètes actuels et des anciennes athlètes de softball olympique, en plus, naturellement, des administrateurs de softball et d'autres personnes de la communauté mondiale du sport, de même que des membres des médias, des membres des gouvernements et des individus du secteur des grandes entreprises."

Comme l'annonce en a été faite pendant la production de ce numéro de World Softball, un rapport complet vient ensuite sur les 11es Championnats mondiaux de softball universitaire dont l'organisation a été attribuée à Colorado Springs, Colorado (É.-U.), du 2 au 11 août 2012. Le tournoi aura lieu à l'Université du Colorado, de Colorado Springs. Les 1ers Championnats du monde de softball universitaire (2004) avaient eu lieu aux É.-U., au complexe mondial du quartier général de la FIS, à Plant City, Floride, alors que le second (2006) avait été tenu à Taiwan. Comme 2008 était une année olympique pour le softball, aucun événement universitaire n'avait alors été planifié. La "FISU est ravie que le softball universitaire retourne au programme des CMU. Jusqu'à présent, nous avons eu deux Championnats mondiaux de softball universitaire réussis. Alors que le CMU de softball revient au pays du softball, nous sommes sûrs que la troisième édition sera un événement organisé de façon professionnelle et qu'ensemble, avec notre partenaire, la Fédération internationale de softball, nous sommes impatients de voir nos étudiants-athlètes briller sur le losange," a déclaré Laurent Briel, Directeur des CMU.



Le Directeur des arbitres, Bob Stanton présente ensuite sa chronique "Behind the Plate". Dans ce numéro, il écrit: "On dit souvent qu'on ne peut pas enseigner le jugement. Je ne suis pas d'accord. Il y a plusieurs choses que nous pouvons faire pour améliorer notre jugement. L'élément principal du jugement est de se placer correctement en bonne position. Si vous ne pouvez pas bien voir le jeu, il est difficile de bien juger. Comme toutes les décisions que vous prenez, plus vous avez de faits, meilleure est votre décision... Le jugement est une chose individuelle; toutefois, nous pouvons emprunter des autres pour développer nos propres habiletés de jugement. Personne n'est parfait, mais nous pouvons tous travailler à le devenir."

À la fin de cette édition, vous trouverez la page habituelle News & Notes. En voici la liste:

La Fédération européenne de softball a tenu son Congrès annuel en février en Belgique. 21 pays étaient représentés et le Président de la Fédération internationale de softball Don Porter était aussi sur place. Les délégués ont élu unanimement Mme Francesca Fabretto (ITA) comme nouvelle Secrétaire générale de la FUS, après la retraite, l'année dernière, de M Patrice Bienfait (FRA) de ce poste. Le Congrès a aussi accordé l'organisation des événements de 2011 à différents organisateurs et Malte s'est vu confier (sur les Pays Bas) par vote, l'organisation du Congrès de la FUS de 2012.



Ensuite vient l'article sur la rencontre extraordinaire de trois jours de la Confédération Panaméricaine de softball (CONPASA) qui a eu lieu en mars. Des représentants des 22 fédérations membres sont venus à Valencia, au Venezuela, tout comme le Président de la FIS, Don Porter. La présidence de la rencontre avait été confiée au Président de CONPASA Jesús Suniaga (VEN), qui est aussi VP de la FIS pour l'Amérique latine. Étaient aussi dans l'assistance, le VP de la FIS pour l'Amérique latine Antonio Morales (COL), Maria Soto (VEN), membre du Conseil d'administration de la FIS et représentante des athlètes et Melitón Sánchez qui est membre du Comité olympique international (PAN).

Une troisième nouvelle brève indique que la FIS a apporté une addition à son site web officiel dans le cadre de ses efforts constants visant à représenter l'organisme de régie et l'histoire du sport. Dans la section Temple de la renommée de www.ISFsoftball.org il y a des photos de divers souvenirs historiques en montre aux quartiers généraux à Plant City, Floride. Il est à prévoir que ces articles se retrouveront éventuellement au Temple de la renommée et au Musée que la FIS espère créer à ses installations.

Vient ensuite un rapport des représentants de la FIS sur la route en mars et avril. La "International Sports Press Association" a tenu son Congrès annuel à Séoul, en Corée. Le Directeur des communications de la FIS Bruce Wawrzyniak y a assisté et il était le délégué des É.-U. de cette année. Il a aussi assisté à la réunion de la section continentale de l'AIPS America (Association nationale des journalistes sportifs). Wawrzyniak est membre de l'AIPS. Le mois suivant, à Londres, s'est tenu le Congrès SportAccord. Le Président de la FIS Don Porter et la Secrétaire générale Low Beng Choo étaient tous deux présents.



Puis on peut lire un résumé du IVe Championnat junior féminin de l'Amérique centrale qui a eu lieu au Guatemala en avril. Le Mexique participait pour la première fois à cet événement et a remporté le tournoi de balle rapide par une victoire sur le pays hôte, dont l'équipe était la championne en titre de l'édition de 2009 tenue au Nicaragua. Les médaillées de bronze proviennent du Nicaragua, Belize a terminé quatrième et Le Salvador cinquième. Les participantes appartenaient à la catégorie d'âge 19 et moins.

L'article final rapporte que – dans le cadre de sa préparation en vue des tournois importants de cette année – l'Argentine a reçu l'équipe de softball de l'Université Florida Tech à Buenos Aires pour six jours de compétition en mars.

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