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World Softball



ON TOP OF THE WORLD

Japan Wins ISF Women's World Championship



**JMWC
Preview
Page 6**

Covering All The Bases

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



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ON THE COVER:

During the closing ceremonies, Japan celebrates their gold medal finish at the ISF XIII Women's World Championship in July. (Photo by Justin Kennedy)



President's Message

As of this writing the 2012 Women's Fast Pitch World Championship in Whitehorse, Canada, is in the history books, with all five regions having been represented and a great and exciting final having taken place, with Japan gaining an extra innings win over the U.S., 2-1.

Preceding the world championship, regional and continental play provided opportunities for more teams and players to gain international experience.

Now, following Whitehorse, is the Junior Men's Fast Pitch World Championship in Paraná, Argentina, and close to a full complement of teams has qualified for this event in early November.

Looking ahead to the New Year, the Men's Fast Pitch World Championship will take place in Auckland, New Zealand, in March, which also looks for maximum entries.

As for off-the-field activities, since the election of Hall of Famers during the ISF Congress in 2011, many have been formally inducted in their home countries and others will be soon. A recap of the latest inductions can be found in this issue of World Softball.

Other highlights included in this issue of World Softball include the start of an "Olympic Flashback" series, beginning with softball's first play under the Olympic rings in Atlanta (Columbus) in 1996.

Softball is now moving again to seek the return of Olympic status, which will be formally decided in September of 2013 for the 2020 Summer Games. A new generation of athletes is hoping that the dream will return that eluded them in 2012 and 2016.

The ISF and its worldwide constituent members will also be working to restore that dream and make it become a reality.

Calendar of Events



In late June/early July, Brazil played in the World Cup of Softball for the first time.
(Photo courtesy of USA Softball)

2012

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

NOV. 1-10
ISF IX JR. MEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (19-and-under)
PARANÁ, ARG.

2013

JAN. 17-20
INTERNATIONAL MEN'S FASTPITCH SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT
ALTAMONTE SPRINGS, FL (USA)

MAR. 1-10
ISF XIII MEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
AUCKLAND, NZL

MAR. 3-15
10TH CENTRAL AMERICAN GAMES (Men's & Women's Softball)
SAN JOSE, C.R.

JULY 1-7
ISF X JR. WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
BRAMPTON, ONT. (CANADA)

JULY 18-30
19TH MACCABIAH GAMES (Men's & Women's Softball)
ISRAEL

JULY 25-AUG. 4
9th WORLD GAMES (Women's Softball)
CALI, COL.

AUG. 1-10
15TH WORLD POLICE & FIRE GAMES (Men's & Women's Softball)
BELFAST, N.IRE.

AUG. 2-11
8TH WORLD MASTERS GAMES (Men's & Women's Softball)
TORINO, ITA.

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ON TOP OF THE WORLD



Mexico was back playing in the women's world championship for the first time since 1990. (Photo by Justin Kennedy)

Japan's women's national softball team certainly has a flair for the dramatic.

Either that or they're trying to make a case for softball games being extended from the regulation seven innings.

Four years ago at the Olympics in Beijing, they lost a playoff game in nine innings, but bounced back – later that same day – and won a 12-inning affair to advance to the gold medal game, which they won the next day against Team USA. It was the equivalent of four games in two days, with Yukiko Ueno pitching all 28 innings for Japan.

This summer, the U.S. and Japan met in the title game of the Canadian Open International Fastpitch Championship and an extra inning was needed to settle that one, with Japan coming out on top, 9-6.

Then, at the ISF XIII Women's World Championship in Whitehorse, Yukon (Canada), on July 22, the longtime international softball rivals were the two left standing for the 66th game of the tournament, with nine days of play and 14 other national teams having come before them. Japan once again had the USA's number, both in the form of a 2-1 triumph and the game having gone more than seven innings again. The tenth inning would prove to be the last, and Ueno once again was victorious in the pitching circle, turning in a complete-game three-hitter, with eight strikeouts.

As if all of that weren't enough drama, not only did Japan have to defeat Australia earlier that afternoon, 2-0, just to advance to the gold medal game, but Ueno turned in a complete-game then as well. Her seven-inning four-hitter with nine strikeouts left the Aussies with the bronze medals.

The winning run in the gold medal game was produced in the top of the tenth when Haruna Sakamoto scored on a sacrifice bunt by Misa Okubo.

Ueno was far from the only one who had visions of Beijing 2008 dancing in her head. A total of 37 athletes playing in Whitehorse were holdovers from the Olympics four years earlier. In addition, three assistant coaches at the ISF event this summer had played in those Games in China.

The host Canada team, 2010 ISF Women's World Championship bronze medalists, made another strong showing, finishing fourth after a 3-1 loss to Australia that advanced the winners to the next day's "bronze medal game" against Japan.

Taking nothing away from fifth place finisher China, sixth place Netherlands was the latest international softball success story. Their program had made history by being a part of the first-ever Olympic softball competition (1996 in Atlanta), but then seemed to fade until a resurgence that saw them emerge as European champions and a spot back in the Games at Beijing 2008. Now they have become the team to beat on their continent as they tied their highest ever ISF women's world championship finish (1974) in Whitehorse, where they not only scored more runs than the eventual gold medalists but were fifth overall in fewest runs allowed.

Some other impressive numbers came from the batting leaders. In round robin play, Canadian outfielder Joey Lye hit .611 (11-for-18) and pitcher Stacie Townsend of Great Britain was close behind at .600 (9-for-15). (Canada also placed two others in the top five, Sheena Lawrick at .500 and Caitlin Lever at .476).

Another eye-catching statistic was the eyeballs that saw the games from Whitehorse. The local organizing committee joined with SportsCanada.tv in getting all 66 games webstreamed live during the tournament. (In fact, they were archived for later viewing as well.) This availability was well received, as viewers from 55 different countries throughout the world logged on to watch 2012 ISF women's world championship games.



The host team, Canada, was on their toes, ready for all challengers, but came up one spot short of repeating their bronze medal finish from 2010. (Photo by Justin Kennedy)



The world championship was another international competition experience and confidence builder for teams like South Africa. (Photo by Justin Kennedy)

ISF XIII WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP - FINAL STANDINGS

| Finish | Team | Round-Robin | Playoffs | Total | RF | RA |
|--------|----------------|-------------|----------|-------|----|----|
| 1 | Japan | 7-0 | 3-1 | 10-1 | 45 | 10 |
| 2 | USA | 7-0 | 2-1 | 9-1 | 86 | 6 |
| 3 | Australia | 5-2 | 3-1 | 8-3 | 61 | 16 |
| 4 | Canada | 6-1 | 1-2 | 7-3 | 53 | 15 |
| 5 | China | 6-1 | 0-2 | 6-3 | 20 | 24 |
| 6 | Netherlands | 5-2 | 1-1 | 6-3 | 49 | 18 |
| 7 | Chinese Taipei | 3-4 | 0-1 | 3-5 | 22 | 21 |
| 8 | Puerto Rico | 3-4 | 0-1 | 3-5 | 29 | 49 |
| 9 | Czech Republic | 3-4 | | | 23 | 33 |
| 10 | Italy | 3-4 | | | 22 | 39 |
| 11 | Great Britain | 2-5 | | | 12 | 30 |
| 12 | Venezuela | 2-5 | | | 33 | 33 |
| 13 | New Zealand | 2-5 | | | 18 | 35 |
| 14 | Argentina | 1-6 | | | 18 | 57 |
| 15 | South Africa | 1-6 | | | 10 | 62 |
| 16 | Mexico | 0-7 | | | 5 | 58 |

RF - runs for, RA - runs against

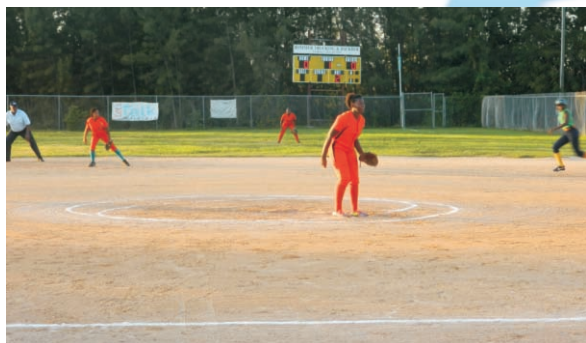
In addition to SportsCanada.tv, there was also a heavy presence for the tournament elsewhere on the Web. Of course there was an official event website (www.worldfastpitch2012.com) – which had live scoring during the games – plus a Twitter feed and a Facebook page.

Already a website has been set up for the next ISF women's world championship, which will take place in two years in the Netherlands (www.wcsoftball2014.com) (the site is presented in both English and Dutch).



Australia had plenty to cheer about, knowing 13 other teams would've loved to finish in third place. (Photo by Justin Kennedy)

WORLD SOFTBALL DAY CELEBRATED FOR EIGHTH STRAIGHT YEAR



Competition during World Softball Day in the Bahamas. (Photo courtesy of Bahamas Softball Federation)

It was June 13, 1991, when the International Olympic Committee announced that softball (women's fast pitch) would be added to the programme of the Summer Games, beginning with 1996 in Atlanta. So, it's a day in the sport's history well worth celebrating.

As such, International Softball Federation President Don Porter had announced back in early 2005 that starting with June 13th of that year, every June 13th would be known as "World Softball Day."

Fast forward to 2012 and the worldwide celebrations continue to be staged annually to mark the event.

This year the Bahamas Softball Federation held two women's fast pitch games in Nassau in conjunction with World Softball Day.

Meanwhile, the national federation in Finland had participants ranging in age from 11-44 playing slow pitch softball in honor of the occasion. The group played at the Ruskeasu Sports Field, approximately 4km north of downtown Helsinki.

The activity extended to yet another continent, as the Amateur Softball Association of the Philippines held an umpiring clinic on Plate Mechanics. The participants who joined in the clinic were officiating softball games during events ranging from the National Collegiate Games to the Philippine National Games, to name just two. All were given a certificate from ASAPHIL.



Participants in World Softball Day activities in Finland. (Photo courtesy of Finnish Softball Federation)



ASAPHIL President Jean Henri Lhuillier and Secretary General Danny Francisco with those who took part in the umpire clinic. (Photo courtesy of ASAPHIL)

Looking elsewhere on the globe, Senegal gathered approximately 60 kids of all ages at Ebbet's Field to teach them basic skills, after which two exhibition games were organized. Certificates of participation were provided. Two television channels and some journalists were present to cover the event as well.

As has become standard practice for them, Iran was once again active on World Softball Day. This time their national softball federation organized a special event at the Azadi sport complex, with sport officials and families of softball players present. Some friendly games and demonstrations of the sport for the attendees were staged.

Back in the Americas, the Turks & Caicos Softball Federation got in on World Softball Day as well, with a men's fast pitch game in Providenciales, and then a church co-ed slow pitch playoff game the next day.

During all this, the worldwide softball community was contributing on the ISF's official Facebook page, charting their location and activities. Posts came in ranging from France to the United States, South Africa, western Canada, Northern Ireland, and Australia.



A picture from what took place in Iran, who regularly organizes an on- or off-field event to coincide with the occasion. (Photo courtesy of Iran Softball Federation)



Boys and girls in Senegal learn basic softball skills during the federation's initiative to mark the sport's day. (Photo courtesy of Senegal Softball Federation)

It's never too early to start planning for next year. June 13, 2013, is World Softball Day. Celebrate the game!

2012 MIDDLE MONTHS WERE EVENT-FULL



Jenae Leles and Team USA successfully defended their World Cup of Softball title on their home turf. (Photo courtesy of USA Softball)

Since the last issue of World Softball (May-August 2012), the ISF XIII Women's World Championship (pg. 3) certainly wasn't the only event taking place on the softball fields.

For starters, two ISF-sanctioned (invitational) events were very much in the spotlight in late June/early July.

World Cup of Softball VII took place in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (USA), with six teams taking part, but two of them being first-time participants in the annual event. The five-day tournament played out in front of a worldwide audience thanks to extensive coverage on ESPN's worldwide family of networks and ESPN3.com. The host U.S. team took the title via a 3-0 shutout of Australia that saw three American pitchers combine for ten strikeouts and limit the Aussie bats to just one hit.

Earlier that day in the game to decide third and fourth place, Canada outlasted the Netherlands, 11-8, thanks in large part to infielder Jennifer Yee who went 3-for-5 at the plate, with four runs batted in (RBI) and two runs scored for the winners. The day had begun with the two first-time World Cup participants going head-to-head to decide fifth place. That ranking went to Puerto Rico as they got a balanced attack to down Brazil, 4-1.

From there four of the teams (Australia, Canada, Puerto Rico, and the U.S.) went to British Columbia for the Canadian Open International Fastpitch Championship where – in the top division – that quartet was joined by Japan, New Zealand, and Venezuela. That competition lasted six days and ended with Japan racking up five runs in the top of the eighth inning en route to a 9-6 win over Team USA. They had been tied, 4-4, after seven innings and combined for a game total of 20 hits. Japan lead-off hitter Misato Kawano finished 4-for-5 with three RBI and two runs scored.



Puerto Rico had a busy summer, playing in three straight international tournaments: the World Cup of Softball, the Canadian Open (above), and the ISF XIII Women's World Championship. (Photo by Rob Newell)

Happening almost at the same time was the 6th Champ of Champs tournament in Noord, Aruba. The seven-day men's modified pitch tournament featured 16 teams from eight different countries: Aruba, Bonaire, Colombia, Costa Rica, Curacao, Dominican Republic, the Netherlands, and Venezuela. The Federales team (Venezuela) successfully defended their title with a victory over the host team. International Olympic Committee Member Nicole Hoeverz was a guest of ISF President Don Porter at the tournament, which had games being broadcast live on radio.



At the VII Central American Jr. Women's Championship, El Salvador receives the first place trophy from Roberto Espinoza, the president of the host Nicaragua Softball Federation.

In late July, the XI European Men's Championship was held in Amstelveen, Netherlands, with the Czech Republic taking the title in what was a seven-team, five-day tournament. The winners posted a 9-2 victory over the host team after the Netherlands had advanced following a 5-2 triumph over Great Britain. The remainder of the standings showed Denmark finishing fourth, Croatia fifth, Belgium sixth, and Israel seventh. The results gave the top three finishers berths in the ISF XIII Men's World Championship next March in New Zealand.

Meanwhile, that same day in Rosmalen, Netherlands, the XII European Jr. Girls Championship wrapped up. The six-day competition had 15 teams participating, with the hosts coming out on top thanks to a 7-0 win over Germany, who earlier that day needed nine innings to get past Russia, 5-3. The order of finish for fourth place to 15th was as follows: Italy, Czech

Republic, Great Britain, Spain, Croatia, Belgium, Ukraine, France, Israel, Austria, Denmark, and Lithuania.

In August the focus shifted to Central America.

The VII Central American Jr. Women's Championship took place in Estelí, Nicaragua. The age 19-and-under fast pitch event had been held last year in Guatemala, with Mexico taking the title. This time there were two teams each from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua (Belize was to have participated as well but withdrew). El Salvador was this year's winner of the event, with Guatemala finishing second. The tournament, played this year over four days at the Eatelí Rufo Marín softball stadium, is staged by the Central American Softball Confederation (CONCASOFT).

And, from August 10-13, the VII Central American Women's Championship was held in San Jose, Costa Rica. Also put on by CONCASOFT, the fast pitch event had taken place in Guatemala the last time out (2011) and they proved to be this year's winners, finishing with a 5-1 won-lost record. The other participants (in order of finish) were Belize (5-1), Nicaragua (4-2), El Salvador (3-3), Panama (2-4), Honduras (1-5), and Costa Rica (0-6). (Guatemala was awarded first place as a result of having won the head-to-head with Belize.)



Mrs. Alba Quesada Rodríguez, Director of the Sport and Recreation Institute of Costa Rica, joins Costa Rica Softball Federation President Robert Castro Arias during the opening ceremonies of the VII Central American Women's Softball Championship.

Check the worldwide/regional calendar in the Events section of www.ISFsoftball.org – the sport is definitely in full swing.

CAN AUSSIE JUNIOR MEN REPEAT?



Australia will need their 'A' game in Argentina if they are to successfully defend their International Softball Federation Jr. Men's World Championship title. The ninth edition of the age 19-and-under fast pitch event will take place in Paraná from November 1-10. The biggest field in the event's history, 15 teams, will converge on the South American city that is just under 500 kilometers from Buenos Aires and is the capital of the Entre Ríos province.

When Australia captured gold at the last junior men's event – 2008 in Canada – there were 12 teams in total participating. As if more teams and the target on the backs that comes with being defending champions wasn't enough, it's also worth noting that unlike teams in the men's and women's world championships, there's bound to be much more turnover in the roster due to the age limit.

Furthermore, Australia did not by any means have an easy time taking the title four years ago. For example, in round robin play, their won-lost record of 10-1 was closely followed by 9-2 marks from Canada and Japan, plus an 8-3 record by New Zealand. And, the Aussies needed an extra inning to claim the championship, beating Canada 2-1 in the gold medal game.

That trio of usual suspects returns to challenge Australia as do seven other 2008 participants: Argentina, Czech Republic, Denmark, Mexico, South Africa, USA, and Venezuela. Meanwhile, the British Virgin Islands, Croatia, India, and Singapore will all make their ISF junior men's world championship debut. As a result, all five regions will be represented (Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania).

"The growth of the game is evident with new countries achieving qualification for a spot to participate," said ISF President Don Porter. "We are very fortunate that countries like the British Virgin Islands, Croatia, India, and Singapore have worked to elevate their play to this level as it should provide for good experience for the athletes."

There is also something to be said for having experience in hosting a major event such as a world championship. While this will be Argentina's first time staging one of the ISF's marquee tournaments, the competition will actually take place at the site of the 1995 Pan American Games softball competition. The Pan American Softball Championship was played there as well, in 1989. According to the Argentina Softball Confederation, softball began to be practiced in Paraná as far back as 1944.

To prepare for this year's ISF event, renovations to Nafaldo Cargnel Stadium were undertaken to meet the requirements of a world championship host venue. In extending the playing field, renewed electrical installations and lighting towers became necessary, plus the organizers carried out work on the Athlete High Performance Center, located behind center field and capable of providing accommodation for 120 people.

(The field "El Plumazo" is the diamond of one of the most successful and traditional softball teams in Argentina. Located across the Nafaldo Cargnel Stadium complex, "El Plumazo" will serve as Field #2 for the ISF world championship.)

As for their team on the field? Argentina finished in a three-way tie for fifth place at the junior men's world championship in 2008 and with the home crowd behind them certainly have their sights set on at least tying their all-time best finish at this ISF tournament, which was fourth place in 1997.

How will the team and the host city stand up under the world softball spotlight? Will Australia again be the last men standing on the final day? The worldwide softball community will be watching. There is an official tournament website (presented in both English and Spanish) at www.worldjuniorfastpitch2012.com plus a Facebook page, a Twitter feed, and a YouTube channel for the event.



Yaki is the official mascot for the tournament in Paraná.



During a visit in August to the site where the junior men's world championship will be played are (left to right): Sport Director of the World Championship Eduardo Sabaté, Argentina Softball Confederation President Jacinto Cipriotti, ISF Director of Competition Laurie Gouthro, Director of the Organization of the World Championship Carlos Migliavacca, and Director of Logistics and Supplies for the World Championship Luis Marizza. (Photo courtesy of Argentina Softball Confederation)

The umpires for the ISF IX Jr. Men's World Championship:

- Art BALSER (Croatia)
- Jamie BARBOSA (Brazil)
- Kevin BROOMHALL (Australia)
- Raul CAMILO GARRIDO (Cuba)
- Jeremy ENGLAND (New Zealand)
- George FINDLEY (Canada)
- Mauro FIORINI (Italy)
- Eric HAWTHORNE (USA)
- Daniel Boon Liang HENG (Singapore)
- Vladimir LISS (Czech Republic)
- Kyo MASUDA (Japan)
- Abel MATABOGE (Botswana)
- Noore NACERODIEN (South Africa)
- Javier PEÑARROYA (Argentina)
- Mark PORTEOUS (New Zealand)
- Aaron POULIN (Canada)
- Jose Amadis RANGEL MENDEZ (Venezuela)
- Jose R. RODRIGUEZ (Nicaragua)

HALL OF FAMERS HONORED, REMEMBERED



ISF VP/Oceania Darryl Clout (left) presents Bob Harrow with his Hall of Fame plaque. (Photo courtesy of Softball Australia)

In October 2011 at the International Softball Federation XXV Congress (held in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA), the newest class of ISF Hall of Famers was elected. Since the last issue of World Softball magazine was published, a good number of them have been formally inducted. Unfortunately, three previous inductees, however, have passed away.

Two separate ceremonies were held in Australia. The first was for Bob Harrow. At the time of his election to the Hall of Fame he had managed Australia's men's program for ten years. During that time the national team improved to a first-ever ISF men's world championship medal (bronze, 2004) and then first place finish (2009). Harrow had been inducted as a Life Member of Softball Australia in 2010, having devoted over 20 years of service to the sport in that country. ISF VP/Oceania Darryl Clout presided over Harrow's induction (but was himself also inducted that night into the Softball Australia Hall of Fame).

Soon thereafter the ISF Hall of Fame inductions took place in Melbourne, Victoria, for Aussie athlete electees Paul Maisey and Peta Edebone.

A veteran of 330 games for Australia (and captain from 2001 until her retirement in 2004), Edebone was a three-time Olympic medalist (1996 & 2000 – bronze, 2004 – silver) and played in three ISF women's world championships (1994, 1998, & 2002). She later served as the athlete representative on the ISF Executive Council. Maisey played in three ISF men's world championships (1996, 2000, & 2004) as well as the first-ever Men's Commonwealth Softball Championship. His Australia team won a silver medal at the latter event and bronze at the 2004 ISF tournament, which he had a .400 batting average at.



At the ceremony in Taipei City are (left to right) Ms. Hsia-ling Tai, Mrs. Tsem Yiau Show Tseng, Ms. Low Beng Choo, CTASA President Pan Yi Chuan, and Mr. Steven Huang

Around the same time, in ceremonies held in Taipei City, Hung-Cheng Tseng was posthumously inducted into the ISF Hall of Fame (coach category). Presided over by ISF Secretary General Ms. Low Beng Choo, the ceremony took place at the Sports Affairs Council, with Tsem Yiau Show Cheng accepting on behalf of her late husband, whose work spanned three decades. Minister of Sports Affairs Council, Executive Yuan, Ms. Hsia-ling Tai was on-hand along with the Chinese Taipei Amateur Softball Association's president, secretary general, and deputy secretary general, plus Softball Confederation of Asia (SCA) Life President Steven Huang and SCA Vice President Tommy Wang. In addition to many supporters, numerous media members were in attendance as well.

And, in mid-August, Ray Tilley (player) was formally inducted to the Hall of Fame during ceremonies held in his hometown of Woodstock, Ontario (Canada). ISF 1st Vice President Dale McMann was among the officials on-hand for the proceedings. An infielder and designated hitter, Tilley was a fixture on Canada's men's national team in the 1980s and 90s. He won four Pan American Games gold medals (1983, 1987, 1991, 1995) and won ISF men's world championship gold (1992), silver (1984), and bronze (1988) medals. Later he carried on as an assistant coach, beginning in 2001, and earned medals with the staff of the 2004 (silver) and 2009 (bronze) teams at the pinnacle ISF men's event.

Those that passed away during the cover dates of the last issue of World Softball were all Hall of Famers from the Administrator category.

Carlos Larrañaga Gomar was elected to the ISF Hall of Fame in 2007. He was the president of the Guatemala Softball Association from 1996-1999 and 2004-2007. He was also the president of the Central American Softball Confederation from 1996-2001 and the Central American vice president for the Pan American Softball Confederation from 1998-2004.

O.W. Bill Smith (United States) was the president of the Amateur Softball Association (1990-91) and Pan American Softball Confederation vice president. Mr. Smith was elected to the ISF Hall of Fame in 2001 and, having served as the state commissioner for Nebraska for more than 30 years, was inducted in 1986 into the ASA (National) Hall of Fame.

And, in June, Dr. Fernando Aren passed away in Argentina. He served on the ISF Board of Directors from 1994 through 2009 and was inducted into the ISF Hall of Fame in 1997. He also served as president of the Argentina Softball Confederation for over 45 years.

The trio is greatly missed by many.



(left to right) Hon. Dr. Daniel Johnson, MP, Minister of Youth Sports & Culture, Ms. Linda Ford, ISF Hall of Fame Inductee, Dame Marguerite Pindling, Deputy to the Governor General, Mr. Ali Culmer, ISF Hall of Fame Inductee, Mr. Dale McMann, ISF 1st Vice President, Mr. Burket Dorsett, President Bahamas Softball Federation

In June Linda Ford (player) and Alfred "Ali" Culmer (coach) were formally inducted into the ISF Hall of Fame in their home country of the Bahamas. ISF 1st Vice President Dale McMann was on-hand for the ceremony at Government House. According to the website tribune242.com, "Dozens of the biggest names in the sport, both locally and internationally, lauded the star studded player and manager for their long list of accomplishments." Ford played for over 30 years, including at the Pan American Games (2003), the first-ever World Games (1981), and two ISF women's world championships (1990 & 1994). Culmer coached the women's national team, including at two ISF world championships (1978 & 1982). He was later promoted to manager and also served as treasurer of the Bahamas Softball Federation.



(left to right) Softball Canada President Kevin Quinn, Ray Tilley, ISF 1st Vice President Dale McMann, Softball Canada CEO Hugh Mitchener (Photo courtesy of Softball Canada)

OLYMPIC FLASHBACK: 1996 – ATLANTA

(first in a four-part series)



It had been a long time coming.

To this day, International Softball Federation President Don Porter will still quickly tell you the exact number of years, days, and months it took to get softball into the Summer Olympics. It had been close to 30 years, but finally, on June 13, 1991, the International Olympic Committee announced that women's fast pitch would be a medal sport in the Games, effective with 1996 in Atlanta.

The next historic date would be July 21, 1996, when the United States and Puerto Rico would take the field at Golden Park in Columbus, Georgia. It wasn't so much who won or the final score or batting or pitching statistics so much as it was the fact that the sport had finally made it to the world's stage. By the time the gold medal game ended on July 30th, well over 135,000 fans had watched the exciting play by eight teams that equaled a resounding success for softball's Olympic debut.

While TV audiences tuned in around the world as well, the ISF president would later receive a handwritten note from Olympic broadcast chief Dick Ebersol of NBC Television, acknowledging that perhaps the coverage wasn't enough but that there would be "more in the future."

All those 120 athletes knew, however, was that they had just been a part of history. Australia, Canada, China, Chinese Taipei, Japan, the Netherlands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. had all competed in a 32-game softball tournament that would not only go into the heart of the sport's history, but be the catalyst for worldwide growth in softball.

Puerto Rico's Miriam "Betty" Segarra went down as the oldest participant, competing at 41 years, six months, and 14 days, more than twice the age of teammate Elba Eiffel Lebron, who set the mark as the youngest participant at 17 years, four months, 17 days. Chinese pitchers Liping He and Yaju Liu combined on the first no-hitter. The United States claimed softball's first-ever Olympic gold medal. The Americans recorded a 3-1 victory over China in the title game, after Australia had gained the bronze medals. And along the way, a lifetime of memories had been made.

For all the athletes that had visions of someday playing in the Olympics, the dream was now a reality. For the eight teams that emerged from qualifying tournaments to gain a berth in Atlanta, the hard work had paid off. And for Don Porter, ISF Secretary General Andrew Loechner, ISF 1st Vice President Clovis Lodewijks, and all the other officials that had worked so hard off the field for so many years, softball had now arrived as a world-class sport.

Mirroring the long lines outside Golden Park and the ticket scalpers trying to gain top dollar for admission to the softball games, even the media got caught up in the new kid on the block. Requests for credentials for the Columbus venue exceeded the 108 media positions originally available, so extra positions had to be set up.



As seen in this shot overlooking the stadium concourse, fans packed Golden Park in Columbus to watch the softball games.



The media really took to covering the Olympic softball competition. Worth noting is that #10 (far right) in this post-game press conference was Puerto Rico's Miriam Segarra, who would go down as the oldest Olympic softball participant (41½ years old).

Softball didn't need further affirmation that as a sport on the Olympic programme it was in its rightful place, but it came anyway in December of that year when the IOC confirmed that women's fast pitch would again be in the Games when the next Olympics took place, in Sydney, Australia (2000).

The IOC is big on legacy, and now, some 16 years after softball made its debut in the Summer Games, the very venue that hosted that historic tournament is still flourishing with activity – just like softball is in approximately 125 countries around the world.

SCHOOLS AMONG THOSE REAPING BENEFITS OF EQUIPMENT PROGRAM



Softball being played in Kosovo, thanks to equipment sent there by the ISF. (Photo courtesy of Kosovo Softball Federation)

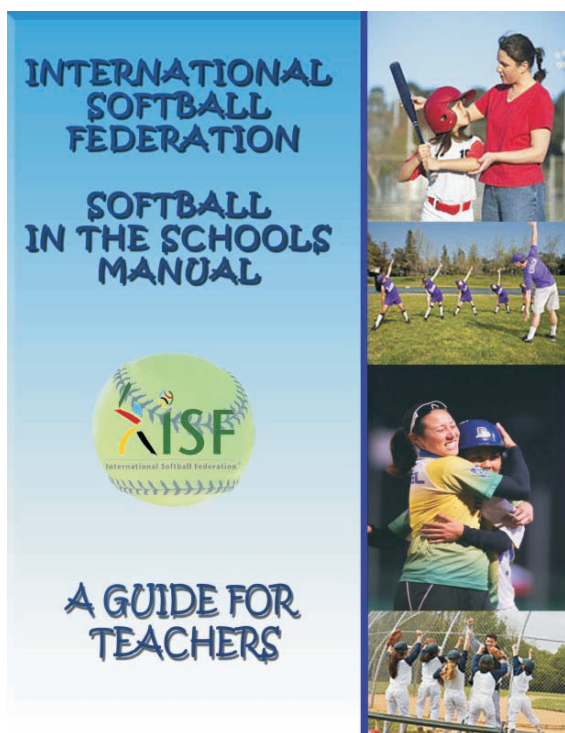
Elsewhere in this edition of World Softball are articles containing tournament results. And, of course, softball games have to have balls, strikes, and outs called, and rules enforced, so Director of Umpires Bob Stanton has his regular "Behind the Plate" column, this time talking about evaluating those men and women making the calls. But not unlike the merchandise vendor's old expression, 'You can't tell the players without a program,' you can't play the games without equipment!

As the International Softball Federation has shown through their transformable venues program and as some resourceful softball organizers have demonstrated in various parts of the world, the game really can be – for all intents and purposes – played just about anywhere. So the equipment is really the key. It doesn't matter if you've never even played softball before; you're still going to have to put your hands on a ball, a bat, hopefully a glove, and preferably a batting helmet.

To give as many boys, girls, men, and women around the world continued opportunities to play softball, the ISF has continued its long-standing development initiative, the equipment program. Through these efforts the world governing body has now sent equipment valued at approximately USD\$3.5 million to 101 countries around the world since 2002.

The ISF has been very proactive with another of its development efforts, the "Softball in the Schools" program, and the equipment that gets shipped is a major factor in helping students learn to play the sport.

While the ISF does accept used equipment, the primary source of the goods that it distributes is manufacturers that provide brand new softball gear so that the sport can continue to be developed in all five regions of the world (Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania). In the warehouse portion of its world headquarters complex in Plant City, Florida (USA), the ISF packs what are called "starter kits," filled with bats, balls, gloves, helmets, catching gear, and temporary bases so that, in theory, when a recipient opens the box at its destination country, there is enough for two teams to play a game on the spot.



The manual for teachers for the "Softball in the Schools" program.

Presently, all of the following contribute (brand new) equipment to the ISF for this purpose: Baden Sports, Combat, DeMarini, Easton, Louisville Slugger, Miken, Mizuno, and Worth. An impressive number of colleges/universities, individuals, and softball programs have donated used equipment over the years as well.

It's a common sight at the ISF facility to see trucks from various shippers coming in and out, either delivering equipment or picking up starter kits going to the likes of Afghanistan, Belize, Honduras, Kenya, Kosovo, Serbia, and Turkey, to name examples of recipients thus far in 2012.

It's ironic that at times the warehouse at the ISF can look like that of a sporting goods retailer, yet the world governing body prefers to see it more on the empty side, which means that that many more countries are being helped.

So long as the game continues to grow around the world, there will always be a call for more equipment, and the ISF is determined to continue its best efforts to lending such aid.



UMPIRE EVALUATIONS

A TEACHING TOOL OR A MEASURING TOOL

By: Bob Stanton, ISF Director of Umpires

Umpire evaluations have been the dread of both the evaluator and the umpire receiving the evaluation. One of the reasons for this feeling of dread is that as evaluators we are not accustomed to judging people and giving them feedback; as umpires being evaluated, we are not used to having someone critiquing our umpire mechanics and positioning. We are uncomfortable in these roles because we have not fully identified the purpose of the evaluation and since evaluations are usually not done on a regular basis it is a bit out of our comfort zone.

Evaluations really should be a conversation between two people: the evaluator, who has an objective of teaching or measuring, and the umpire, whose objective is either to learn or to advance. The evaluator must be someone who has knowledge of the proper mechanics and rule interpretations. The umpire must be someone willing to learn or to be measured on a scale of competencies.

When an evaluation is being carried out, the main objective of the evaluation, either learning or measuring, must be clearly identified and communicated to the umpire being evaluated. Depending on the main objective, the secondary objective of teaching or measuring can also exist but is not the main focus.

Evaluations for the purpose of learning should be less formal and actually are best done as a conversation with a written follow-up. Things that the umpire is doing well should be noted and discussed. Evaluators should use words of encouragement that will enforce the good habits that the umpire has. Things that the umpire needs to improve on should be discussed in terms of suggesting alternative mechanics and why they would assist the umpire in improving his or her umpiring skills.



When evaluating for the purposes of learning, it is not necessary to score (measure) the umpire in terms of numeric values or in terms of subjective word descriptive ratings such as "needs improvement, sufficient, good, or excellent." However, umpires will want some indication of whether they are improving from their last evaluation. If there is not a system for recording evaluations this is a somewhat difficult task, especially if the evaluator is not the same person. In cases where there is no earlier evaluation to reference, evaluators should only use measurement terms as a general indication of the level of ball the umpire is capable of officiating based on the evaluation being done.

Evaluations for the purposes of measurement are used either to advance the umpire to a higher level or to assign the umpire to a championship game. When evaluating for the purposes of measurement, there should be a clear statement of competencies against which the umpire is being measured. Whether using a numeric system or the more subjective word description, the umpire must be aware of what the numbers or subjective ratings mean. Within the ISF, we are moving to a numeric system of measuring.

The first step in converting to a numeric system was to identify a number of competencies that the ISF felt were necessary traits of a good umpire and that were measurable. Once the competencies are determined, a range of scores must be established, in our case from 0 – 10. Ten indicates that the umpire displays all the elements of the competencies and zero indicates the absence of any part of the competency being measured.

Having established the competencies and the scale range, the next step was to identify the score needed to advance or be considered for a Championship playoff game assignment. A mark of 90 out of a possible 100 has been established for ISF certification purposes as well as for assignment to a Championship playoff game.

A list of competencies and range of scoring will soon be available online at the ISF UmpSchool site. A list of competencies is provided to all umpires selected to umpire at a world championship and to all candidates attending an ISF certification seminar. The intention of a good evaluation for the purposes of measurement is for the umpire to know what is expected so that the umpire's performance can be measured on a scale of excellence.

There are many valid methods of evaluation and evaluation forms. The important thing is that the umpire knows the purpose of the evaluation and what are the performance expectations. For the evaluator, it is of utmost importance that the expectations are well known and understood and that the measurement is made on the accepted competencies and not on the evaluator's own preferences.

Evaluations are important in the advancement of umpiring skills. We need to continually undertake and participate in evaluations for learning and measurement. Keep up the good work.

NEWS & NOTES



Three members of the 2004 U.S. Olympic softball team, Jenny Topping, Amanda Freed, and Lovie Jung, at the induction ceremony. (Photo courtesy of USA Softball)

The 2004 American women's softball team that captured the gold medal in Athens and one of their pitchers, Lisa Fernandez, were inducted to the United States Olympic Hall of Fame in a July ceremony in Chicago. The U.S. softball athletes from the Olympics in Greece eight years ago were the only team honored, while Fernandez, a three-time Olympic gold medalist, was one of six individuals inducted. The ceremony was taped for an August broadcast on the NBC Sports Network.

In response to the demand for another men's international fastpitch tournament, the ISF, along with the Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA) and the International Sports Group Union announced such an event for January 17-20, 2013, in Florida (USA). This will also provide a tune-up for teams – that choose to go to Florida for it – that have qualified for the ISF XIII Men's World Championship less than two months later in New Zealand (March 1-10). At the time of the August announcement, the ASA indicated that the U.S. men's national team would compete in the January tournament.

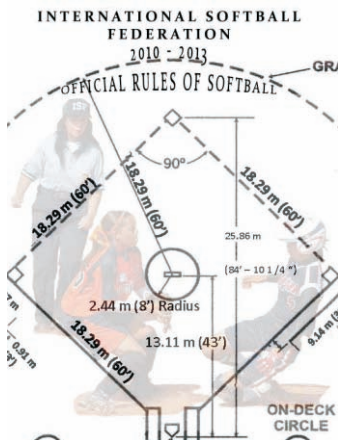


June 23rd in the United States marked the 40th anniversary of Title IX (legislation aimed at increasing gender-equity in higher education). That morning in Chicago during the Associated Press Sports Editors/Association of Women in Sports Media convention attended by International Softball Federation Director of Communications Bruce Wawrzyniak, a more than 75-minute panel discussion was held in recognition of the landmark. As shown in the photo at left, Ginny Georgantäs, who played on the 2004 Greek Olympic softball team at the Summer Games in Athens, served as the athlete representative on the panel.

The tenth annual SportAccord convention took place in May in Quebec City (Canada). International Softball Federation President Don Porter, Secretary General Ms. Low Beng Choo, 1st Vice President Dale McMann, and Director of Communications Bruce Wawrzyniak were all on-hand for the event. In addition to a stand in the exhibit hall, the ISF had a table in the "IF Zone." And, Canadian softball athlete Geneviève Houle was on-hand when the sport was featured in the new "Demo Zone." Softball was a part of numerous meetings throughout the week. And, Mr. Porter gave a report to the SportAccord General Assembly on the "Sporting Goods to Go" program and he presided over the Spirit of Sport awards presentation.



The ISF booth at the SportAccord convention in Quebec in May.



UmpSchool provides practice tests to help umpires learn the ISF rules.

ISF UmpSchool, the online resource for men and women around the world – whether ISF-certified or not – was re-launched in July. Found via links in the Umpiring section of www.ISFsoftball.org, the latest edition of the site features a new database of questions (bringing the overall total to roughly 2,400), a revised Case Book, an updated 3- and 4-umpire system mechanics document, and a new plate stance diagram. Done in cooperation with RuleBox Software, UmpSchool is built on the principal of providing access to tools for becoming a world-class umpire.

Support Our Sport



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Your purchase of ISF apparel and accessories helps the continued development and promotion of softball in the International Softball Federation's 127 member countries. The ISF is a non-profit corporation [501(c)(3)] committed to keeping boys, girls, men, and women on the field in nations from Anguilla to Zimbabwe. Buy (securely) online today!



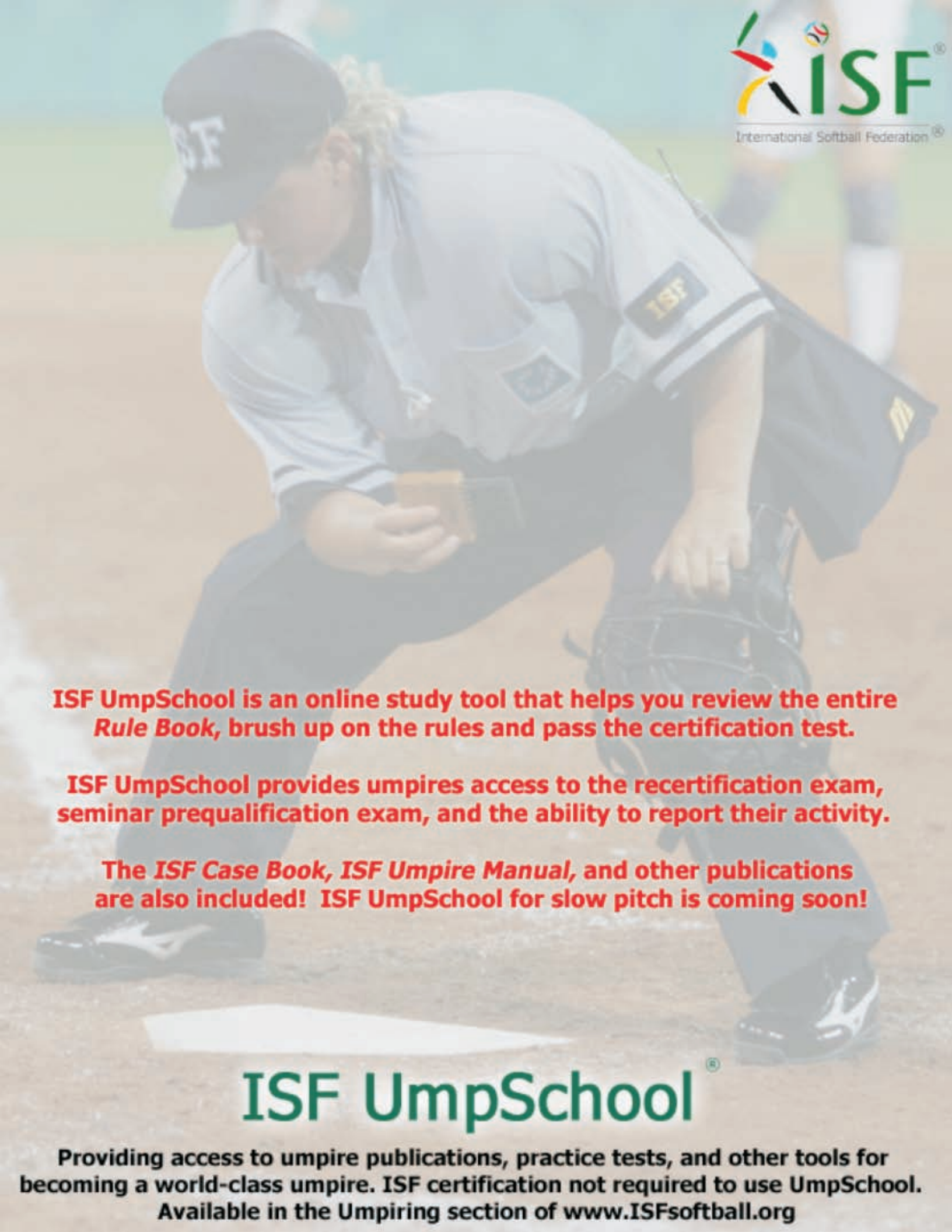


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