

ISF UPDATE

25 September 2012

BIG PARTICIPATION IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS SOFTBALL

According to data from Special Olympics International (SOI), close to 80 thousand Special Olympics athletes in 69 programs in 30 countries participated in softball last year, reflecting an increase of almost 2,000 athletes over 2010. In 2011, at the venue used for the 2004 Olympic softball competition in Greece, eight teams competed in the softball tournament at the Special Olympics World Summer Games. SOI hopes to increase that to a 12-team global tournament by the next World Summer Games, in 2015 in Los Angeles.

This popularity was exemplified in the large turnout for the 2012 Special Olympics North America Softball Invitational Tournament that took place this past weekend in the United States. Some 400 athletes across 33 teams representing 16 states from the host country, plus Canada, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico participated. As Special Olympics is an International Softball Federation development partner, ISF President Don Porter went to the tournament and took part in opening ceremonies (see accompanying photo) and ISF Director of Competition Laurie Gouthro was on-hand as well. Olympic softball gold medalist Amanda Freed (Team USA, 2004) was the Opening Ceremonies master of ceremonies. Olympic gymnast Bart Conner was in attendance too, as was Oklahoma County Commissioner Willa Johnson and USA Softball Director of Membership Services Craig Cress.



Photo by Rachel House

CANADA WON MEN'S EVENT

Canada dethroned defending champion Venezuela on Saturday at the VIII Pan American Men's Softball Championship. The seven-day, ten-team fast pitch event was played in Medellin, Colombia and served as the Americas qualifier for the ISF XIII Men's World Championship scheduled for March in New Zealand. Canada had been beaten by Venezuela during the preliminary round and again in the first (place) versus second (place) game, but – after having just defeated Argentina, 2-0 – turned the tables on Venezuela thanks to a complete-game, four-hit, eight strikeout performance from pitcher Andy Skelton. Others that participated in addition to the above three were (alphabetically) the Bahamas, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. Besides Canada, Venezuela, and Argentina, both Mexico and Colombia qualified for the March event in New Zealand, meaning Colombia will make their first-ever ISF men's world championship appearance.



*Canada celebrates their Pan American Men's Championship title.
(Photo courtesy of Gustavo Calume)*

SUBSTANTIAL AID FOR UMPIRES


Four ISF umpire certification seminars are scheduled over the next four months. With details available in the Courses/Clinics portion of the Umpiring section of www.ISFsoftball.org, the scheduled sessions include: October 21-28 in Japan, November 13-18 in Venezuela, November 19-26 in Guatemala, and January 14-20 in the USA. To help prepare, men and women around the world aiming to become certified to officiate in ISF tournaments are encouraged to utilize ISF UmpSchool, which is accessible via the ad for it in the right-hand column on any page in the Umpiring section of the ISF website.

THREE HONORED IN NEW ZEALAND

Softball New Zealand recently held a dinner to celebrate the organization's 75th anniversary. In addition to handing out their yearly awards, the national governing body there also honored their three 2011 ISF Hall of Fame electees, Russell Moffatt (meritorious service), Robert "Chubb" Tangaroa (player), and 2000 Olympian Gina Weber. The event was held at the Sports House in Lower Hutt City before 120 attendees.



*(left to right) Russell Moffatt, Softball New Zealand Chairman Rex Capil, Gina Weber
(Photo courtesy of Softball New Zealand)*

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