



CHAMP'S CHATTER

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ISF XII WORLD MEN'S SOFTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP - FRIDAY, JULY 17 EDITION



Welcome softball fans, to the ISF XII World Men's Softball Championship. Saskatoon is very proud to be hosting this event for the second time. It is the only Canadian city to host the Men's World Championship.

The sport of softball has been around for 122 years and is played in more than 114 countries on four continents throughout the world. The ISF Men's World Softball Championship has been going strong since 1966, so the fans are in for a real treat of ten days of the greatest softball in the world.

Throughout this event, fans will see some pitchers throwing in excess of 80 miles per hour and the ball exploding off the hitters' bats in an around 85mph. Thus the games will be fast, action packed and intense. Sit back and enjoy!

Today's schedule features some very interesting matchups as well as the pageantry of the opening ceremonies. The full slate of games illustrate the true international flavor of this event, as it will feature a series of cross continent match ups.

1	10:00	<i>Botswana</i>	vs	<i>Denmark</i>	GHP
2	11:00	<i>Great Britain</i>	vs	<i>Philippines</i>	BVI
3	12:00	<i>Czech Republic</i>	vs	<i>South Africa</i>	GHP
4	1:00	<i>Australia</i>	vs	<i>Venezuela</i>	BVI
5	2:00	<i>Puerto Rico</i>	vs	<i>Indonesia</i>	GHP
6	3:00	<i>Japan</i>	vs	<i>Mexico</i>	BVI
	5:30	Opening Ceremonies		BVI	
7	7:00	<i>Argentina</i>	vs	<i>Canada</i>	BVI
8	9:00	<i>United States</i>	vs	<i>New Zealand</i>	BVI

The opening ceremonies are scheduled to begin at 5:30 pm at what may well be Canada's premier softball stadium, Bob Van Impe Stadium. An expected capacity crowd of approximately 7500 of Canada's most knowledgeable softball fans as well as supporters of the sport from other countries will take in a proud moment in Saskatoon's sport history. Dignitaries will include Softball Canada President **Kevin Quinn**, ISF President **Don Porter**, and special guest **Mike Chambers**, President of the Canadian Olympic Committee. His presence is a major boost for softball as the sport is presently in a competition for reinstatement into the 2016 Olympic Games.

Local fans will appreciate the involvement of Canada's first three members of the ISF Hall of Fame who all hail from Saskatoon: **Bob Van Impe**, **Gene McWillie**, and **Ed Bitz**. Hometown hero **Trevor Ethier**, Team Canada pitcher, will be called upon to give the athletes' oath as he returns to the diamonds just blocks away from where he grew up playing softball.

Following the ceremony, fans will be treated to two great games featuring four of the top seven ranked teams in the world. At 7:00, second-ranked Canada will show all off the hard work the National Men's Team Program have put in over the last four years, as it take on seventh-ranked Argentina. Argentina's team includes Lucas Mata, one of the best pitchers in the world and presently playing tournaments with the Saskatoon Aspen Interiors. The second game features the two winningest countries in ISF Men's World Championship history. At 9:00, the United States will play the three-time defending champion New Zealand.

ISF XI MEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL STANDINGS

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Round-Robin</u>	<u>Playoffs</u>	<u>Total</u>
1	New Zealand	6-1	3-0	9-1
2	Canada	6-1	2-2	8-3
3	Australia	5-2	3-1	8-3
4	USA	6-0	1-2	7-2
5	Japan	5-1	0-2	5-3
6	Samoa	4-3	1-1	5-4
7	Czech Republic	4-2	0-1	4-3
8	Argentina	3-3	0-1	3-4
9	Great Britain	2-4		
10	Philippines	2-5		
11	Venezuela	2-5		
12	South Africa	2-5		
13	Botswana	1-5		
14	Netherlands	1-6		
15	Hong Kong	0-6		

TEAM PROFILES

It is always a challenge to profile teams in an event like this. I will profile some of the major contenders now and hope to add information on the other teams throughout the championship.



When profiling the teams at this year's World Championship you must start with the Black Sox from New

Zealand. One cannot look past the tradition of winning they have in their program. New Zealand has been in the final in the last six World Championships winning four, including the last three in a row. They will feature a strong pitching staff with veteran **Marty Grant** being joined by **Jeremy Manley**, **Heinie Shannon** and **Thomas Enoka**. For Grant this will be his fourth world championship tournament. Had injury not ruled him out on the eve of the 2004 event in Christchurch it would have been his fifth. They will be strong again at the plate, with the return of a number of key veterans such as **Jarrad Martin**, **Brad Rona** and **Travis Wilson** who has highest batting average at the ISC World Tournament over the past seven years (2002-2008). They were part of the group that set a World Men's Championship record in Christchurch in 2004, with a team .404 batting average.



Canada will be looking to avenge the loss they received at the hands of the Black Sox in the previous World Championship final. The team will feature a balanced attack with great pitching and a very capable

offense. The pitching staff includes the two top pitchers at the last year's International Softball Congress World Tournament, **Dean Holoien** and **Todd Martin**. Saskatoon native **Trevor Ethier** will add some youth to go along with a veteran laden staff. To help out at the plate Canada will count on a strong core of veterans like **Dale Levy**, **Keith MacKintosh** and **Sean O'Brien** who were all part of Saskatoon Aspen Interiors Canadian Championship team last year, as well as 15 year National Team veteran **Colin Abbot**. They will create a powerful mix to go along with a group of talented young players like smooth swinging **Derek Mayson**, **Stephen Mullaley** and **Ian Fehrman**.



According to many softball insiders Australia is the team to watch, as it is loaded with young talent, as demonstrated by their four consecutive World Junior Championships. They

boast two of the strongest pitchers in the championship; flame throwers **Andrew Kirkpatrick** and **Adam Folkard**. Kirkpatrick recorded 6 wins at the last world championship and had some playing time in Saskatoon with the Diamondbacks in 2003. Folkard is considered by many to be the hardest throwing pitcher in the world. The core of the team is made up of players that made their debuts between 2001 and 2003, including Kirkpatrick, **Jeff Goolagong**, **Nathan Jones**, **Michael Tanner** and **Zenon Winters**. Kirkpatrick, Tanner and Winters were a part of Australia's gold medal winning team at the 2001 Junior Men's World Championship held in Sydney. This young squad will look for leadership from catcher **Mike Harrow**, for whom it will be his fifth senior World Championship, equaling the record for any male or female in the history of Australian softball. **Terry Downes** is another player with plenty of experience, making his debut for the Steelers in 1995; this will be his fourth appearance at a senior World Championship.



Although the USA Softball Men's National Fast Pitch Team is one of the most decorated in the world; it has been 21 years since

the Americans stood atop the World Championship podium. The program has won five gold medals (1966, 1968, 1976, 1980 and 1988), one silver (1972) and three bronze (1984, 1992 and 2000). In 2004, Team USA finished a disappointing fourth, "We've got a good mix of guys that will make us competitive with the best teams in the world," Coach Pete Turner said. "We have some great hitters but if our bats are struggling, it's not game over for us. We have a strong pitching staff that I think can carry us through." Coach Turner will look to **Kyle Magnuson**, **Nate Devine** and **Frank DeGroat** to lead their offense, while **Travis Pryce** and Canadian born **Paul Koert** will be tough on opposition batters.



Japan finished fifth in Christchurch in 2004, finishing with an overall record of 5 win 3 losses. Japan's three

losses came to strong teams from Canada, USA and Australia. In 2007 Japan won the ISF World Softball Cup in Czechoslovakia, in which Canada did not attend. They lost a 4-2 decision to USA in the preliminary round but came back to record a 12-2 playoff win, along with 2-0 victory in the final. Look for Japan to be led at the plate by **sluggers: Hiraku Yokoyama, Shuhei Suzuki, and Yu Nishimori.** Yokoyama hit an amazing .560 in 29 plate appearances at the World Cup. On the mound Japan will be led by **Kazutaka Murasato, Kunihiko Iida and Tatsuya Hamaguchi.** Murasato went a perfect 3-0 at the World Cup, giving up only 2 earned runs in 14 innings. He recorded the victory over USA starter Travis Price in the semi final pitching a perfect 4 innings on the way to the 12-2 win. Look for big things from Kunihiko Iida who shut out the Americans in the final game.

Czech Republic – The Czech National Team is presently the best team in Europe. It has won the European Championship Gold medal five times since 1997. The team was coached by Australian **Mike Stapleton** from 1997-2000, who recorded this team's best result ever, 6th place in ISF Men's World Championship in 2000. Other placings were 13th in 1992 in Manila, 12th in 1996 in Midland Michigan, and 7th in 2004 in Christchurch. They will be led in the circle by **Lubos Vrbensky** who has pitched in 3 World Championships and 3 ISC tournaments. At the plate the Czechs will rely on veteran **Patrik Kolkus** who is the only Czech player to become a member of the ISC tournament all-star team. They have a total of eight players who have played in the ISC World tournament. This top quality fastpitch experience will make them a formidable opponent for any team.

Argentina Because the sport is small in Argentina it's National Team has been making a number of trips to North America to help develop the program. They were eighth in the last World Championship, while fifth is their best showing, coming at the 1992 tournament in Manila,

Philippines. Pitching will be a real strength as there are about a half of dozen Argentinean pitchers on club teams throughout North America. The best by far, is Lucas Mata, who pitches tournament action for Saskatoon Aspen and is considered to be one of the premier pitchers in the world.

World Sr. Men Rankings

(National Teams – as reported in The Inside Curve)

1 New Zealand	2 Canada	3 Australia
4 Japan	5 Venezuela	6 Argentina
7 USA	8 Czech Republic	9 Denmark
10 Cuba	11 Puerto Rico	12 Mexico

Special Promotions for Students and Seniors

The organizing committee of the International Softball Federation XII Men's World Championship is pleased to include even more value for the fans. Monday, July 20 is Senior's Day at the World Championship. To show our appreciation to all seniors, everyone 65 years or older can watch a full day of the world greatest softball for just \$10.

Wednesday, July 22 will feature our Students' Day promotion. All students can enter the two greatest softball facilities in the world for the day, for just \$10 with their student's card. Passes for Senior Day and as Students Day in the Park are available at the gate.

PRE-EVENT EXHIBITION GAME RESULTS

Wed. July 15 – Glenn Reeve Field

3:00pm	United States 6	Philippines 2
5:00pm	Australia 7	Philippines 0
7:00pm	Bruno Merchants 1	United States 0.
4:30pm	Venezuela 9	Denmark 2
6:30pm	Venezuela 8	Denmark 0
2:00pm	Great Britain 4	South Africa 3
4:00pm	Czech Republic 4	Great Britain 1
6:30pm	Czech Republic 5	South Africa 1
7:00pm	Australia 7 Sask. Sr.	Diamondbacks 2

Prince Albert

Game 1	Canada 7	Japan 0
Game 2	Canada 2	Japan 0

Thursday, July 16, 2009 Glenn Reeve Field

3:00	United States vs. Czech Republic	N/A
5:00pm	Sr. Diamondbacks 1	United States 0
7:00pm	Czech Republic 7	Diamondback 0

SALUTE TO THE CREW IN BLUE - A FEW FACTS ON THE WORKING UMPIRES

LOU DAVIS: A veteran umpire of 21 years from Nova Scotia. An educator who works with deaf and hard of hearing students.

LEIGH EVANS: Leigh is from Australia, and if you've got problems with your Toyota, talk to him afterwards because he's the service manager of a Toyota dealership. A veteran who has been behind the plate for 20 years. Leigh has a son Andrew who was a member of the gold medal winning Under 19 team at the World Junior Softball Championships last year in Whitehorse.

JUAN FAJARDO: He was born in the United States but now lives in Mexico. Is an accountant and has umpired 18 years. He is the Secretary of Social Development for the State of Campeche and is also Director of Umpires in the Mexican Federation of Softball.

BOB HENNING: Bob is from Vancouver but for the past 25 years has done missionary work with children and orphans in Latin America. He started umpiring way back in 1967 in little league and is the veteran of the Canadian crew. He has been around the world umpiring and teaching.

JAN HORA: Jan is from Czech Republic and the beautiful city of Prague. He's a civil engineer and is a veteran of the European Men's championships. He is the Czech's Softball Association Umpire In Chief.

JENS JAKOBSEN: Jens is from Copenhagen, Denmark. He formerly owned a number of drugstores, but now is into computers, owning a Danish web page, and a company that imports and sells softball equipment. He was a member of Team Denmark as a player at the 1988 World Championships in Saskatoon. Presently he is Umpire in Chief for Denmark and has worked many European Championships.

REINALDO LANZAVECCHIA: Reinaldo is from Argentina. He is a Physical Education Teacher, and has been umpiring for 16 years.

SHIGEO KAMAT: Shigeo is a retired policeman from Japan. He has umpired at the ISF level since 1998, including both the Men's and Women's World Junior Championships and the World University Championship.

KEITH KEARNEY: Keith is an educator from Texas who has been umpiring for the past 26 years. He has umpired at the college level, as well as a dozen USA Men's Championships, World University Games and the Pan American Games.

GIANLUCA MAGNANI: Gianluca is from Italy, and is a "smoothie" in that he's operations manager for a

company that sells olive oil. He likes softball, fishing and opera and is a pretty good darts player. He has been around the world as an umpire, including the Beijing Olympic Games and numerous European Championships. Oh yes, he's also single.

VINCENT MAOENG: Happy birthday Vincent, who turns 46 on MONDAY, JULY 19TH. He works for a South African explosives company as an education and training officer. He has been behind the plate for 20 years and is the Umpire in Chief for Softball South Africa. Vincent has umpired in two previous Men's World Championships as well as the Olympic Games in Athens.

MIKE MCFARLANE: Mike is from Christchurch, NZ. He owns a painting company with his brother, who was a former Team New Zealand player. Has been an umpire for 14 seasons.

FRANK OMOE: Frank is from Edmonton, who recently retired after 35 years as a teacher and school principal. He has umpired 22 years, done several Canadian championships, as well as ISF Women's World Championships and the Three Nations Challenge.

ARMANDO RODREGIZ: Armando is from Venezuela and has been ISF certified for 16 years

GARY SKJERVEN: Gary is from Balcarres Saskatchewan and, is a grain company manager who has been umpiring 20 years. He has umpired at the World Junior Men's, World University Games and the Canada Cup and is doing his first World Men's Championship.

WU TAMAKI: Wu is a human resources advisor in the New Zealand school system. He likes a lot of things besides softball, including rugby, mountain biking and ball room dancing. Has been an ISC umpire for the past six years and umpired at the World Championship in 2004 in his home country. He was also with the umpiring crew in the Beijing Olympics.

SCOTT THOMAS: He is from Oklahoma, who goes by the nickname Hookeye because he is blind in one eye, having lost his sight in his right eye in a fishing accident at age 15. He builds flight simulators for military and commercial airlines and been behind the plate 26 years. He has been an ISC umpire for 11 years and was at the 2003 Pan Am Games.

SANTOS VASQUEZ: From Puerto Rico, and has umpired for three decades, including Caribbean, an American and world championships, as well as the Olympics in 2004 in Athens.