



**EUROPEAN  
SOFTBALL  
FEDERATION**

**NEWSFLASH**  
July 2012

## **ESF TOURNAMENTS ARE RUNNING SUCCESSFULLY**

*by Gabriel Waage, ESFVP Technical and Competitions*

ESF summer tournaments started successfully in Havlickuv Brod, Czech Republic. The U22 Girls Championship was played in a nice stadium with 7 nations participating.

From the beginning it was quite clear who would have been in the final. The Russian and Czech Teams were visible the strongest at the tournament.

The Question was who would win bronze, since three teams had the chance to get this color - Slovakia, Poland and France, who finally won the bronze.

A big improvement made Team Ukraine during the tournament, finishing 5th, which was a big success for them, when they defeated Poland and Slovakia on Saturday.

A lot of media representatives were at the tournament, including national Czech television.

Holland is hosting right now in the same week the European Championship Junior Girls (Rosmalen) and the European Championship Men (Amstelveen).

## **EUROPEAN SOFTBALL CAMP CHOCCEN**

*by Jaroslav Korcák, Vojtech Albrecht, Founders and Instructors*

The beautiful town of Chocen, East Bohemia, Czech Republic, hosted the 1st European Softball Camp.

Great sports facility with softball field and training softball field, baseball field, ice hockey stadium, fitness and tiny aquaworld served for 8 days for a group of camp participants from Czech Republic, Austria and Ukraine.

With the camps 3 basic pillars (to provide the best softball education possible in Europe, help participants with English communication in a multicultural softball family and have fun) elite softball coaches from Holland, USA and New Zealand came to teach the game of softball.

One of the thoughts behind the ESC's vision is to let participants choose whatever coach and skills they like and work on it hard. Every day had four training sessions.

For two of every days four training sessions every participant could have had sign-up for any of the three different practices led by 3 different coaches aimed on 3 different skills (e.g. pitching, power hitting, slapping).

Rosmalen will be the biggest tournament by the number of participants - in total 15 national teams are playing there.

This two Championships are the last Competitions by National Teams for the Season.

August is the month of the ESF cups. The ESF will produce a Promotion Video at the European Cup Coed Slowpitch and will broadcast 4 live games from the European Super Cup Men, held in Prague.

The new format of the European Super Cup Men (ECM and ECWCM as one competition) with a round robin and a double elimination system. will be played for the very first time. 17 Clubs will participate.

Another new event in 2012 will be hosted in Collecchio, Italy the European Massimo Romeo Youth Trophy under 13 Girls. Opening this competition to all teams contributed to increase the number of participants by 100%.

All games can be watched live via Play By Play at ESF website easily from home, but if you are close to any Tournament come and feel the spirit of the games in the stadium.

Every session was composed of different mix of practices so that everyone could find what he or she likes.

Besides softball training, the participants enjoyed an opening day BBQ, fitness training in the gym, spend some time at the pool-side, watched NCAA College World Series softball game, played bowling and had fun at the Last Night's buffet and party.

The participants will also obtain a certificate for the ESC 1st participants. The European softball camp had a very positive response among people who took part. "I will definitely come back next year and bring more of my teammates," says Tadeas, 17 years old boy from Czech Republic.

"The camp was great, definitely the most intense possibility to learn softball in my life," adds 22 years old Galya from Ukraine.

Thanks goes also to Worth, Louisville Slugger and Rawlings that helped with the camps equipment for players.

The 2nd Annual European Softball Camp will be held from 21st to 28th of July 2013 in Chocen, Czech Republic. Find more at: [www.softballcamp.eu](http://www.softballcamp.eu).

## ESF JOINS TEAM USA FOR BORDER BATTLE IV TOUR

by John Austin, ESF Slow Pitch Development Commissioner

As part of the going relationship between the ESF and the ASA and our efforts to develop slow pitch softball, earlier this year the ASA extended an invitation to the ESF to participate in Team USA's promotional tour ahead of the Border Battle with Canada.

In my ESF Slow Pitch Development role I was happy to accept this invitation be a shadow assistant coach to the squad and joined Team USA in Bismarck, North Dakota for the start of a ten day tour of the mid-west.

I was joined on the tour by Marc Stein, a slow pitch tournament organiser from Austria as the ASA had extended him a private invitation.

The full USA squad comprised of Team USA (the official national squad) and the Futures (players tipped to be Team USA members in the future)

Bismarck hosts one of the largest (single sex) slowpitch tournament in the US, The McQuade. This year saw a massive 457 teams participating in a number of playing standard categories, from recreational up to major level. It was a hectic start to the tour with a number of "meet & greet" gatherings and autograph signing sessions.

The eve of the tournament saw Team USA play an exhibition game against a military all-star team (which Team USA won easily) followed by a "Home Run" Derby which was won by Team USA member Brian Wegman with a very impressive 17 home runs out of 20 attempts. Both exhibition events were supported by around 2500 – 3000 very enthusiastic spectators.

Following the completion of the exhibition activities, the Squad members were allowed to return to their private teams to compete in the McQuade tournament. What followed was a weekend of truly sublime softball skill and athleticism only matched by the enthusiasm of the spectators. It was which was a pleasure to witness

From Bismarck, we headed south to Sioux Falls, South Dakota (6 hours on the tour bus). There, the busy schedule continued with a number of PR activities that included, hospital visits, kids clinics,



and an exhibition game against a local all-star team (played on a baseball field, making my first base coaching a little more interesting!) followed by the usual autograph signing and "meet and greet" social activities.

Following the whirlwind stop in Sioux Falls, it was on the bus again for a 12 hour (4 movie) bus trip to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Once there, the established routine continued - training, PR activities (including hospital visits), interviews, ball and poster signing sessions, and practise games etc. at the ASA's very impressive "Home of Softball" complex.

During the tour's 4 day stay in Oklahoma City, there were two televised slots on ESPN. One reserved for the Border Battle itself, and the other being the mid-week clash of Team USA verses the Futures. It produced probably the best game of slow pitch softball that I've been lucky enough to witness. In an absolute nail biter of a game the Futures defeated Team USA 38-37. That's 75 runs folks! Now if you take away the maximum of 10 home runs per team, that still left a mouth-watering 55 runs from open play in 7 innings!

In the run up to the main event there were a number of full practise games. The Futures defeated both a local all-star team and Canada (despite an Irishman as 1st base coach!) and ended their



tour 3-0. Given the youth and talent on display from this squad, the future of Team USA looks very bright indeed. The Current Team USA bounced back to win against a Legends all-star team, and in the dress rehearsal of the Border Battle itself, defeated Canada.

After 9 hectic days on tour the Border Battle showdown had finally arrived. Canada, without a win in their warm up games, started this as rank under dogs, but proved worthy opponents and at one stage were within 4 runs of victory on the "run ahead" rule. But they couldn't cross that finishing line and succumbed to a sucker punch 20 run inning from Team USA that ultimately saw them go on and win 32-21.

### Role on Border Battle V

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ASA for their extremely generous hospitality during the tour. It was second to none. I'd also like to thank the squad members and management for making me feel so welcome and like productive members of the squad and also for allowing us unrestricted access to them. I'd also like to thank the ESF for enabling me participate in such an educational trip, which will go a long way towards developing slow pitch softball within Europe.

## PRAGUE SOFTBALL WEEK 2012

by Gabriel Waage

From June 28th until July 1st the City of Prague hosted, like in the years before, the Prague Softball Week.

The 14th Prague Softball Week took place at the Eagles Stadium 10 teams – 8 from abroad and 2 Czech ones participated



The Organizer were happy to welcome three teams from USA (2x AIST and USAAthletes) as well as the National Teams of Austria, Sweden, Slovakia and two club teams, Moscovia (Russia) and Haar Disciples (Germany).

The Czech Republic participated with their junior national team (Czech Republic U19) and Czech Republic under 22.

The teams were divided into two basic groups – group A (AIST Stars, Haar Disciples, Slovakia, Sweden and Czech Republic U19)

and group B (AIST Stripes, USAAthletes, Moscovia, Czech Republic U22 and Austria). E

specially the B pool was very competitive and we almost faced all teams with a record of 2 wins and 2 losses. Finally in the play off played all three American teams and the Haar Disciples from Germany with some American players.

Cross semifinals and finals brought very competitive and high level games. Before the final it was already clear that the AIST team will win the gold trophy - the only question was which AIST team. In the Gold Medal Game AIST Stars defeated AIST Stripes 2:1, which was the same result like last year, when Argentina won. Also all three individual trophies – Best Pitcher, Best Hitter and MVP – were won by AIST players.

Final standing:

1. AIST Stars
2. AIST Stripes
3. Haar Disciples
4. USA Athletes
5. Moscovia
6. Czech Republic U19
7. Austria
8. Sweden
9. Czech Republic U22
10. Slovakia

Also other amazing events were held in the Eagles Park during Pthe rague Softball Week. Spectators have seen individual contest for the hardest throw (Fire Ball) and the fastest runner (Express Derby). Fire ball contest won Mikelyn Messina (AIST Stripes) and Express Derby contest won Stephanie Watts (Haar Disciples).

Also an auction of historical baseball and softball artifacts was held during the event and all the income was given to support the youth selections. Finally also the big 30 year anniversary of the Eagles club was held during the Prague Softball Week.

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