



CHAMP'S CHATTER

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ISF XII WORLD MEN'S SOFTBALL
CHAMPIONSHIP – SATURDAY, JULY 24 EDITION



It was another great night at the ball park, the excitement was every where. Eight great teams displayed a brilliant example of what makes this sport so special. When all the dust settled around BVI at about 1:00 am this morning, there were only six teams left. Mother Nature has cooperated and the fans have really come out. An estimated crowd of 6800 brings the tournament total to 41,000. To put that number into perspective the 50/50 draw last night was \$2400 and well over 5000 people stayed around until 12:30 to catch the last pitch. (Photo courtesy Shannon Melnyk Photography)



GAMES SUMMARIES

Japan rallies to nip Argentina

For Argentina to prevail, it would need a sterling mound performance from P **Lucas Mata**. Mata provided that, shrugging off the occasional DIP (dreaded illegal pitch) and contained Japan to three hits in four innings. His compatriots scored two in the B2 and another in B4 to lead 3-1.

With one out in the T5, DIP calls may have distracted Mata as Japan got back-to-back hits from **Matsuoka** and **Suzuki**, followed by well placed surprise bunt by #9 batter 2B **Masakazu Tsukamoto**. Japan had a run in and runners at 2nd and 3rd with one out. Mata closed the inning with a called strike three on Hiroshi and a ground ball out by **Yokoyama**.

After 4.5 innings - **Argentina 3 Japan 2.**

What appeared to be the game's pivotal events occurred in B5 when 2B **Pablo Montero** and C **Bruno Montroni** singled. SS **Gustavo Godoy** seized the moment and with a deft swing, dealt what appeared to be the death blow to Japan with a three-run automatic over the centre field fence. After five complete – **Argentina 6 Japan 2.** Japan's head coach **Yoshihiro Tange**, in a postgame interview stated, "When we were down 6-2, I reminded our pitchers that we must not allow any more runs, and that our team can pull together and still win this game." **How prophetic!**

T6 will be remembered by all three teams on the field – Argentina, Japan and the umpires. Mata was cruising through five innings giving up 2 runs on 5 hits. However, luck was about to intervene in favor of Japan. Some say that "luck occurs when preparation meets opportunity". No-one has ever inferred that Japan does not come to the park with preparation. Opportunity was looming. Down four runs, the disciplined Japanese batting order went to work. SS **Ryuji Hazeyama** walked and 1B **Yasumitsu Harada** singled. Then the fun began. DP **Kenji Nakamura** followed with a routine infield ground ball, flipped to 2B **Pablo Montero** who recorded an apparent out and whirled to throw to 1B to complete the double play. In the transfer from glove to hand, Montero dropped the ball. Controversy swirled and following a four-party umpire conference, the call was made - **ALL** runners safe. In the opinion of many fans, the "blue crew" had erred and become the "blew crew". **OPPORTUNITY #1** - bases loaded - no-body out. C **Yohei Ono** responded with a hit, scoring 2, leaving runners on the corners. Moments late, a Mata pitch was called DIP, Nakamura scored from 3rd on the call. **OPPORTUNITY #2** in a classic sacrifice scenario. 3b Masateru Matsuoka laid down a perfect bunt, advancing the tying run to second. LF **Shuhei Suzuki** rose to the occasion with a single and the game was tied 6-6 with a runner on first. Mata, disenchanted with the unraveling of the game, abandons the mound for relief P **Juan Potolicchio**, who faces

the #9 batter and a runner at first. **OPPORTUNITY #3** – more fundamental execution. **Masakazu Tsukamoto**, with two strikes on him fouled off a swinging bun before executing duplicate sacrifice. Next batter OF **Hiroshi Ishimuri** singles, to score the go-ahead run. Potolicchio strikes out Yokoyama to end the inning. B6, Argentina strands a pair. **Japan 7 Argentina 6** T7, Japan's SS **Hazeyama** leads off with a double, but advances no further. B7, down a run in its last batting, Argentina pinch-hitter **Jose Pintos** strokes a solid gapper that would be a double in most cases, save a dandy defensive backhand scoop by CF Yokoyama. OF **Mauricio Caceres** follows with a screamer to the hot corner off the 3B Matsuoka's glove – 2 on, one out. **Kazutaka Mukasato**, Japan's fifth pitcher is not fazed and works the count deep on the next two batters, striking out **Latasa** and inducing a **Coccia** ground ball for the hot corner force-out to end the game. End of the tournament for a gritty Argentinean squad that fell just short of advancing to Saturday. The host committee appreciates Argentina's participation in the tournament, congratulates them for their advancing to the playoff round, and wish the team members safe passage to South America

Hasta luego, amigos!

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
Japan	0	0	0	1	1	5	0	7	10	1
Argentina	0	2	0	1	3	0	0	6	8	2

WP: Tatsuya Hamaguchi LP: Lucas Mata

Venezuela's Alvarez sidelines Great Britain

Venezuela starting P **Erick Alvarez** provided his mates with an outstanding pitching performance, scattering five hits, striking out 9 and providing ample opportunity for his mates to put some runs on the board. Venezuela bats were alive and scored 7 runs which appeared to be ample for a six-inning mercy game. In B6, the Brits scored on **Cliff Evans** base hit with two out, followed by an outfield fly-ball error to force a 7th inning. Venezuela scored three in T7 and Britain replied with a pair in the bottom. Great Britain pitcher **James Darby** was effective early, with a variety of pitches resulting in five strikeouts in the first two innings. In T2, Darby was victimized by a pair of walks, one of which scored on a tough-chance infield error before the side was retired. As the game wore on, Darby tired, and the workload was huge, with 142 pitches and only 70 strikes. The number 5 position in Venezuelan's batting order (1B **John Zambrona**) was a perfect 5 for 5, drawing a base on balls in each plate appearance. The final 10-3 score was not indicative of the early play as the score was three-nil before Venezuela scored seven in the last two innings. Great Britain became darlings of the fans, enjoying the Brits ne'er say die attitude and come-from-behind heroics that propelled them into the championship playoffs. The host committee wishes the team well on its flight traversing the Atlantic and thank the players for loads of excitement and thrills in this year's event.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
Venezuela	0	1	0	2	0	4	3	10	8	2
Great Britain	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	4	3

WP: Erick Alvarez LP: James Darby

Folkard and "Bobby Ball" silence Sox

The fabled New York Yankees had "Billy ball". The Aussie Steelers combined "Bobby Ball" with P **Adam Folkard's** superb 2 hit performance to shut out undefeated New Zealand 7-0 in six innings. While the score does not suggest the competitive nature of the game, it was Aussie field manager **Bob Harrow**, who encouraged his fleet-of-foot well trained rabbits to run the bases aggressively to keep the pressure on the Black Sox defense. Uncharacteristically, the Black Sox committed six errors, a couple of the unforgiveable rookie league variety. The strategy was rewarded handsomely in B2 when DP **Tyron Bartorillo**, perched on 3B courtesy a Black Sox OF gaffe, and SS **Nathan Jones** on first, also courtesy a Kiwi infield error combined for a double steal. Bartorillo scored on a contested slide at the plate, opening the scoring and proved to be the only run that Folkard would need. Black Sox starter P Jeremy Manley was touched for a pair of first inning singles, but shut the door. In B2, Manley was victimized by his mate's sloppy play, and the go-ahead run was registered.

The score remained 1-0 through four and Folkard was in command, allowing only two runners. In T5, 3B **Brad Rona** opened with a walk, and when C **Pat Shannon** failed to sacrifice, his line shot to 1B **Mike Tanner** resulted in an easy double play. Following LF **Rhys Casley's** double (the only Kiwi to reach second base), Folkard struck out Stephen Ratu. New Zealand flirted with danger. Four Black Sox errors and Australia leaving 7 runners on board through four innings – the 1-0 score in favor Steelers was incomprehensible.

In B5, a first-batter infield-error opened the floodgates, as 2B **Nick Shailes'** bunt, and OF **Josh Davison's** hit scored two. 3B **Jeff Goolagong** walked, effecting a pitching change as **Heinie Shannon** relieved Manley. An infield hopper was neatly barehanded by 2B **Travis Wilson** to nail Davison at the plate and battery-mate brothers Shannon closed out the inning on a strikeout. **Australia 3 New Zealand 0** after 5 complete.

Folkard appear to gain energy and pitching intensity from his team-mates scoring success. He started the game throwing hard. With the single run lead, he was awesome, and with the 3-0 stake, he closed out the 6th inning with a pair of strike-outs at the top of the Kiwi order. The Aussie fans were ecstatic with the cheers of "Oye, Oye" filling the stadium. Steelers top of the order 1B **Mike Tanner** drew a walk, his second to go with his first inning hit, and back-to-back singles by CF **Zenon Winters** and 2B Shailes portended a big inning. With two out, 3B Goolagong brought the thousands of fans to their feet with a moon-shot launched to left field that easily cleared the fence.

Australia 7 New Zealand 0 - a mercy in six innings. Notwithstanding the half dozen errors by the Black Sox, there were plenty of defensive jewels in the game – Makea climbing the fence to rob Heath Wells of a memorable homer, Makea's throw to Wilson who relayed to the plate to cut down Goolagong; Wilson's bare-handed catch and throw nabbing Davison at the plate. Australia maintains double life, while New Zealand must now fashion a 4-game win streak to repeat as World Champions. The march will start today at **1:00 pm in the matchup with Japan**. In round robin play Thursday night, New Zealand beat Japan 5-3.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	R	H	E
New Zealand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6
Australia	0	1	0	0	2	4	7	8	1

WP: Adam Folkard LP: Jeremy Manley

Canadian comeback scuttles States

As charitable hosts, Canada spotted USA four big runs in the middle innings before roaring back with an awesome arsenal to win 6-4. In front of 6,800 fastball fans, the majority of whom hung tough into the wee hours of the morning, **USA** sent Lefty **Paul Koert** to the mound to tame the Canadian bats - and it worked for five innings. Only **OF Dale Levy** could muster a hit, plus three walks, two by **OF Ryan Wolfe** and one by **DP Colin Abbott**, all of whom were stranded.

For Canada, **P Sean Whitten** was exemplary, striking out seven into the 4th inning when he allowed **3B Matt Palazzo** to get on base. Canada field manager **Mark Smith** elected for a pitching change with **Trevor Ethier** taking charge. **1B Landy Rodriguez's** line drive hit to the right field gap scored Palazzo and Canada was down by one after four complete.

In T5, Canada went meekly. USA, pumped with the lead, kept the hammer down in B5 with **2B Steve Pinocchio** stretching a routine single into a spectacular double. **2B Blake Miller** gained first when hit by an Ethier pitch, and Smith came to the mound again. **P Dean Holoiien** was handed the ball with two runners on and one out, and made short work of USA pinch-hitter **Nate Devine** setting him down on strikes. Palazzo singled for USA's second run and **DP Chris Delarwelle** punctuated the inning with a double to the right-centre fence, scoring two more.

Fans were brought to their feet in T6 when pinch-hitter **Kevin Schellenberg** slashed a single past **3B Matt Palazzo** and **SS Ian Fehrman** lost one over the centre field bleachers to score two. Abbott then walked on five pitches and **Rob Giesbrecht** came in to run. **LF Steve Mullaley** dropped a single over shortstop and Canada had two on and none out. With one out, **1B Derek Mayson** lined to **LF Nate Devine**, who was blinded by the lights and was unable to corral the ball. **3B Craig Crawford's** timely grounder between first and second scored two and the game was knotted at 4 apiece. In B6 - **P Todd Martin** took the mound, gives up two base hits, but fans three to preserve the tie. In T7 Schellenberg again ignites the rally followed by hits by Fehrman and Mullaley to score two more. **Canada ahead 6-4.** In B7, USA will not die easily with two aboard, but Martin strikes out pinch-hitter **Frank DeGroat** to preserve the comeback and mini-miracle.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
Canada	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	6	8	0
United States	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	4	9	1

WP: Todd Martin LP: Paul Koert

What Happened to The Three Wise Men?? Predictions from Yesterday

Al Doran 4 for 4 He was Perfect. Did I just write that????

John Thompson and **Mark Loehndorf** both were 3 for 4 as they were without the "Steeler Savvy" that Al has.

PLAYOFF PREVIEW

1:00 – JAPAN VS NEW ZEALAND

John's Prediction – experience, depth and lesson-learned from last night will win the day for New Zealand to remain in the hunt for a medal. While Japan plays text-book softball, without an abundance of runners getting on board, it will be difficult to circle the bases. In a word – **sayonara Japan.**

Mark's Prediction – The Black Sox got out of the park in a hurry last obviously upset over being beaten and so badly.

There is too much pride in this crew to let it happen again.

Black Sox to the play at 8:30

Al's Prediction – He is with us Black Sox to win

3:30 – VENEZUELA VS UNITED STATES

John's Prediction – Venezuela keeps it simple – show up each day, send a quality pitcher to the mound and score some runs. A solid line-up that knows how to generate offence, and provide sound defense will get the job done today. It's the end of the line for United States whose six-game round-robin win streak provided double-life, and the final life-line will be severed today.

Mark's Prediction – Which American team will we see today? The tough and gritty team we saw for the first 5 innings last night that scrapped out 6 wins in the preliminary round. Or the inconsistent group that fell part vs. New Zealand and Canada in a couple of innings per game. I ma not sure it mater too much as the Venezuelan bats will handle who ever the Us throws at them as they will finish the tournament with their second straight loss.

Al's Prediction – He obviously sees something in the Americans we don't he takes the US.

6:30 - AUSTRALIA VS CANADA

John's Prediction - This should be a dandy, with both teams guaranteed a medal placement, and for the Aussie Steelers – their first. The edge goes to the Steelers whose pitching appears to be the most dominant in the tournament. Good 'D' should stifle good 'O'.

Mark's Prediction - The scare Team Canada got last night should wake them up offensively. He question is can they sufficiently hold down the Surging Steeler bats. Sean Whitten has looked great and he will enough get help from someone to lead Canada to victory and make sure the big comeback last night wasted.

Al's Prediction - He goes with his heart and against the team that made him perfect last night. He says Canada to win

8:30 - NEW ZEALAND VS VENEZUELA

John's Prediction- The Black Sox are not to be denied a medal. Lessons learned last night embarrassment will re-focus the Kiwis for a shot at the gold on Sunday.

Mark's Prediction – This is going to be a slugfest. New Zealand has lost their aura of invincibility and have come back to the pack. I have liked Venezuela from day 2, look for them to pull off the upset and give South America its first medal in the ISF Men's World Championship history.

Al's Prediction – New Zealand to beat the US. He doesn't wear that Black Sox hat for nothing, he knows the Sox

SOFTBALL IN 'TOON TOWN

By John Thompson

Saskatoon is centrally located in the heart of Saskatchewan somewhat mid-distance between Winnipeg and Edmonton. The name "Saskatoon" is derived from 'mis-sask-quah-toomina', the Cree Indian name for a local indigenous berry. It was incorporated as a city on May 26, 1906, and celebrated its 100th birthday in 2006. With a growing population of more than 210,000, the city is divided by the South Saskatchewan River which is crossed by seven bridges within the city. While the city aspires to a grid street system, the river provides challenging exceptions to the plan.

This softball championship week makes believers of any doubters who question that Saskatoon is one of the sunny-est cities in Canada. Softball players have already been adorned

by their share of the estimated 2,381 hours of annual sunshine. The yearly range for temperature is 30 degrees in summer (close to that this week!) and -30 in the dead of winter. BRRRR!

Saskatoon is a softball city and as one tours various sections of the municipality, softball diamonds abound in many open green spaces in the city.

To find a great softball facility, one need look no farther than Bob Van Impe Stadium in the heart of Gordon (Gordie) Howe Park in beautiful 'toon town.

With seating for 3,000 between 1b and 3b in the 18 levels of tiered seating, those who like being close the action have ideal sightlines. The infield conditions are perfect, with grounds crew providing meticulous grooming between games. To the delight of infielders, the western soil provides true bounces for the aluminum and titanium launched ground balls. Secondary bleachers down each foul line also seat another 750 each, while those wishing a more tranquil setting, and can relax in the outfield. Multiple sets of bleachers host hundreds more and are strategically positioned to collect automatic home runs that

clear the 250' fence that encircles a neatly manicured outfield. When crowds exceed the 5,000 capacity, plus lawn chairs and standing, for key games that are expected for this coming weekend, hard-core fans unable to get into the main facility can enjoy an extended view from the baseball stadium located 50 yards beyond left foul pole. With spacious professional dugouts appropriately positioned adjacent to first and third bases, and great office and viewing space at field level under the bleachers surrounding home plate, the media and administrators are located a short distance from the centre of the action. At diamond "B", Gordie Howe Park, a short 3 minute walk away, a similarly laid out mini version of BVI

Stadium hosted three games daily in the round robin portion of the schedule. All Championship playoff games will be held at BVI stadium.

John Thompson has travelled all the way from Kitchener Ontario to volunteer as guest writer for the Champ's Chatter. His informative and well thought commentary has been greatly appreciated.

TEAM BATTING	AB	AP	H	2B	3B	HR	W	K	OB%	Sac	SB	R	RBI	SA	BA
Venezuela	198	234	76	8	4	13	23	46	50	6	3	75	70	662	384
New Zealand	202	249	74	16	3	19	39	27	54	1	9	81	72	757	366
Canada	207	242	73	12	4	11	28	31	50	6	1	61	53	609	353
Japan	229	258	76	10	5	9	19	52	44	6	5	51	41	537	332
Australia	196	233	63	10	4	6	23	33	50	6	20	64	51	505	321
Puerto Rico	158	175	48	6	1	13	14	54	39	2	3	38	34	601	304
Argentina	174	204	51	10	2	9	22	43	43	5	3	40	36	529	293
United States	199	247	56	12	3	6	43	38	47	1	6	43	35	462	281
Great Britain	197	225	53	8	2	6	21	57	40	5	3	31	29	421	269
Czech	161	186	42	6	0	10	16	57	40	4	3	33	26	484	261
Mexico	176	205	42	6	0	11	21	52	38	3	2	31	27	460	239
Philippines	178	194	41	5	1	0	11	60	35	1	13	23	9	270	230
Denmark	155	184	35	6	0	2	18	45	41	2	3	19	17	303	226
Botswana	169	184	37	9	1	3	12	53	34	3	1	16	13	337	219
South Africa	134	157	25	1	0	5	18	54	34	2	5	23	21	306	187
Indonesia	118	131	19	1	2	0	8	47	24	4	1	2	1	203	161

Individual Batting		AB	AP	H	2B	3B	HR	W	K	OB%	Sac	SB	R	RBI	SA	BA
Brad Rona	New Zealand	18	27	10	3	0	1	9	2	74	0	3	11	7	889	556
Rhys Casley	New Zealand	15	19	8	2	0	0	4	2	63	0	2	3	5	667	533
Eduardo Galarza	Puerto Rico	17	18	9	0	0	5	1	3	56	0	0	7	8	1412	529
Nick Shailes	Australia	18	24	9	2	1	1	3	1	74	1	6	11	6	889	500
Arturo Acacio	Venezuela	16	16	8	1	1	0	0	2	50	0	1	4	3	688	500
Hiraku Yokoyama	Japan	22	27	11	2	2	0	2	6	54	3	1	7	4	773	500
Matt Palazzo	United States	20	24	10	2	0	3	4	2	67	0	0	8	8	1050	500