



# CHAMP'S CHATTER

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ISF XII WORLD MEN'S  
SOFTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP – SATURDAY, JUNE 18 EDITION



The ISF XII World Men's Softball Championship got off to a great start yesterday. An estimated crowd of 5500 watched the opening ceremonies and stayed to see Canada play Argentina. The crowd was particularly excited to see **Mike Chambers**, President of the Canadian Olympic Committee. His pledge of support for getting Women's Softball into the Olympic Games and Men's Softball into the Pan American Games was very warmly received.

The fans and tournament organizers were also very excited to see Mexico show up for its 3:00 game. On Thursday afternoon, the Mexicans were stuck in three different American airports hoping to join up in Minneapolis. However problems with their lack of visas meant the airlines would not allow them to go any further. Through the hard work of tournament organizers **Gary Armstrong** and **Drew Britz**, Canadian Customs officials finally agreed to let them in. However, for a long exasperating period of time the airline refused to budge. Just when things looked the bleakest there was some movement and by 4:00 they were on their way to Minneapolis. Nevertheless, they were not to arrive in Saskatoon until 1:00pm Friday. The whole team went directly to Bob Van Impe Stadium and made it to the diamond an hour later and in plenty of time to play. They were able to take advantage of the fact that the championship was running an hour late, so they got a chance to get acclimatized before they had to face a very tough Japanese team.

The team from Botswana was only a little more fortunate. The team arrived in Saskatoon without luggage, as it was stuck in Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris. That led to an amazing story of generosity and ingenuity. They were scheduled to take on Denmark in the first game of the tournament at 10:00 the next morning. With less than 12 hours before the first game the team was without gloves, bats, cleats and uniforms. **John Linklater** from Al Anderson's Source for Sports was sitting at the sponsor/team pre-championship social when he realized he could do something about this problem. As a result of a number of phone calls, along with the cooperation of his suppliers and a few contacts, he worked well into the morning to get the team outfitted. On Friday morning he sat in the stands with pride, watching Botswana play their hearts out in the equipment he got for them. The only thing that prevented a true Cinderella story was the fact that Denmark outscored them 4-1. However, John will be in the stands next game watching his newly adopted favorite when they play the Japanese tomorrow at 1:30

There were at least a couple other interesting games of note. In Game 4 at Bob Van Impe Stadium, Australia with their powerful pitching staff took on a determined Venezuela team. The man that many feel is the hardest thrower in the world **Adam Folkard** of Australia was one out from a perfect game. With two away in the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> and two strikes on **Carlos Ojeda**, the home plate umpire's call of strike three was overruled by the second base umpire's call of illegal pitch. Given a new life, Ojeda took full advantage and hit a single spoiling the perfect game. To drive the point home the next batter **Joe Vilchez** followed that up with another base hit. Both were later stranded, leaving Folkard with 15 strikeouts and a shutout.

Team Canada made a major player move just before the roster deadline. **Sean Whitten** was brought in to replace **Nick Underhill**. Nick received an unfortunate injury in the exhibition games in Prince Albert.

## PREDICTIONS FOR TODAY (Saturday July 18) by John Thompson

WINNERS IN UPPERCASE BOLD (Record to date 7-1)

**11:30 am** Venezuela vs. **ARGENTINA**  
**1:00 pm** Denmark vs. **UNITED STATES**  
**1:30 pm** Botswana vs. **JAPAN**  
**3:00 pm** **SOUTH AFRICA** vs. Indonesia  
**3:30 pm** Great Britain vs. **NEW ZEALAND**  
**5:30 pm** **MEXICO** vs. Philippines  
**6:30 pm** **CANADA** vs. Czech Republic  
**8:30 pm** Puerto Rico vs. **AUSTRALIA**

## PREDICTIONS FOR DIVISIONAL PLAY

The two divisions provide a format for round-robin play with the teams roughly seeded according to their position in previous ISF Championships. Arguably, this system provides some parity however, with the last championship five years ago (in Christchurch, NZ in 2004) the teams' personnel can change dramatically.

**POOL A** – The three-time defending champion Black Sox of New Zealand are the easy favorites, with Japan and United States battling for 2<sup>nd</sup> and the sought after double life in the playoff round. Denmark and Mexico, while ranked quite low, could play their way into the 4<sup>th</sup> and final playoff spot.

**Prediction** – the Black Sox will not be denied "numero uno" as they know the significant value of double life in the championship round. The second spot may not be decided by sterling play, but conceivably by

United States or Japan suffering a weak moment with disastrous consequences when they face each other, or being victim of an upset by a lower ranked team. Mexico and Denmark could grab the 4<sup>th</sup> spot with consistent play against the bottom feeders. Great Britain, Philippines and Botswana will scramble to avoid the basement.

**POOL B** – This division appears to be tougher.

Canada, with home host country advantage, and an abundance of players, especially the lads from Western Canada, who are familiar with the friendly confines of Bob Van Impe Stadium. A loss to Australia would not be deemed an upset, and the game against Argentina last night defines the caliber of the B pool. Argentina should rebound and with Czech Republic should be a contender as well.

**Prediction** – Team Canada and the Aussie Steelers will finish 1-2 or 2-1, depending on head-to-head matchup. Argentina and Czech Republic have been seriously advancing their program over the past five years and should each grab a single life in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. Venezuela, South Africa, Puerto Rico and Indonesia will duke it out for the bottom half of the pool.

### OPENING NIGHT FEATURE GAME

Team Canada, silver medalists from 2004, and Team Argentina, a steadily improving team destined to move up from its 8<sup>th</sup> place finish last time round, were worthy combatants for the feature game.

On paper, the Canucks were the easy pick. Fans who follow the game know that Argentinean players were taking the round ball seriously and the game would not be a slam dunk. Several players from below the equator have been spending South American winters in the northern hemisphere, honing their skills.

From the opening pitch delivered by Canadian hurler **Todd Martin**, it was evident that Argentina was not intimidated. A lead-off walk to **Fernando Petric** was quickly matched with a single by **Pablo Montero** and quickly it was two on board and no-one out. Was Martin in trouble – possibly? However a defensive gem by 1B **Derek Mayson**, on a screamer from Julio **Gramarci**, erased one runner on the double play. Clean-up batter **Gustavo Guerrinieri** doubled to plate Petric before Martin induced a ground all to end the inning. Early success for Argentina taking a first inning 1-0 lead. The Argentina line-up proved to be a surprise with **Juan Potolicchio** on the mound. Perhaps Argentina was saving fire-baller **Lucas Mata** for the battle of South America Saturday morning in the matchup with Venezuela.

The Canadian response was simple – put the ball in play. Lead-off batter **Ryan Wolfe** legged out an infield chopper, **Jody Eidt** singled, and a **Colin Abbott** infield dribbler provided opportunity for the Portugal Cove NL native to display an elusive move en route to first base, avoiding a tag to keep the offense festering. **Ian Fehrman** promptly singled, next **Steve Mullaley**

scampered down the baseline to avoid an inning ending double play and Canada was in control 3-1.

In the next three innings, Martin found his groove, retiring nine of ten batters he faced.

**Steven Mullaley** doubled in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, sending Potolicchio to the showers with **Maximiliano Montero** coming on in relief. Mullaley scored on **Craig Crawford's** single and added two RBI in the 4<sup>th</sup> with a stand-up triple. He later scored on a wild pitch and the Red & White were in charge, leading 7-1 after four complete.

In the 5<sup>th</sup>, inning a surprise move by Canadian field manager as **Mark Smith** removed Martin. That in itself was not surprising, but the reliever was indeed a surprise – **Sean Whitten** – a late addition to the roster. Whitten was called for an early illegal pitch, but effectively framed the plate with a variety of heat and changeups, yielding only an infield single while fanning three.

In the bottom of the inning, a flare by Wolfe, followed by a **Kevin Schellenberg** single produced the runs ahead rule. Final score **Canada 8 Argentina 1. HARRAHS**

### NIGHT CAP – CHAMPS AND USA

**10:28 pm** – **The Haka** is performed with a heightened passion and takes on new meaning as the traditional New Zealand dance delights the crowd... and seems foreboding for the starting nine of the U.S. of Eh.

**10:35 pm** – The American roster is bereft of depth in pitching. Lefty **Paul Koert**, the multi-national mercenary with the southpaw for hire, takes the mound and was greeted nastily by a focused, talented, and free swinging Kiwi squad.

**17 minutes** after the opening pitch, Koerty has been roughed up in a bat-around inning that scores eight runs. The **Brad Rona** 3-run automatic to LF is the most dramatic of a salvo of rockets leaving the infield.

As Hermans Hermits proclaimed - **2<sup>nd</sup> VERSE, MUCH THE SAME AS THE FIRST**

Enter right-sider 42 year old veteran **Terry Luster** and top of the order...The first four batters in the line-up score – again - as they did in the first go-round.

**10:35 to 11:10** - **35** minutes for one-half inning of play. 17 batters, 12 runs, 9 hits. With such an offensive Kiwi batting display, the three U.S. errors could be overlooked.

The Sox take to the field to play it out – can **Marty Grant** – toeing the rubber for his 4<sup>th</sup> ISF Championships - stay interested with a 12-0 stake.

Yes indeed - Marty has the downer working and solid defense by 3B Brad Rona and SS **Nathan Nukunuku** vacuum the balls hit their way. Three up, three down. Final score NZ – 15 runs, 15 hits USA 12 batters 12 outs (mercy enforced)

**Final analysis** – the outcome was as expected, but the margin was alarming. Team Canada displayed solid offence, as did the Steelers earlier in the day. But those Black Sox – that was truly offensive.

## Line Scores

10:00 GH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
Denmark	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	5	0
Botswana	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	3

WP: Kim Hansen Losing Pitcher: Tony Moyo

2:00 GH	1	2	3	4	5	6	R	H	E
Puerto Rico	0	0	0	1	0	8	9	10	0
Indonesia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2

WP: German Diaz LP: Jajat Kusumanegara

11:00 BVI	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
Philippines	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	8	0
Great Britain	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	8	0

WP: Rogelio Rojas Losing Pitcher: James Darby

3:00 BVI	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
Japan	2	1	0	0	4	0	3	10	15	3
Mexico	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	4	0

WP: Terui, Kengo LP: Martinez, Oscar

12:00 GH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
Czech	0	0	0	3	4	1	0	8	8	3
South Africa	3	0	2	0	0	1	0	6	5	4

WP: Lubomir Vrbensky LP: Tidima Kekana

7:00 BVI	1	2	3	4	5	R	H	E
Argentina	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	1
Canada	3	0	1	3	1	8	11	0

WP: Todd Martin LP: Juan Potolicchio

1:00 GH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
Australia	2	0	0	1	0	0	4	7	7	0
Venezuela	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1

WP: Adam Folkard, LP: John Garcia

9:00 BVI	1	2	3	4	R	H	E
New Zealand	12	0	1	2	15	15	0
USA	0	0	0	0	0	0	3

WP: Marty Grant LP: Paul Koert

## ISF Men's World Championship Records Thru 2005

**Batting Individual Highest Average:** Clark Bosch, Canada, 1988, .647

**Hits:** Crestwell Pratt, Bahamas and Bob McKinnon, Canada, 1988, 21

**Runs Scored:** Marty Kernaghan, Canada, 1988, 19

**Runs Batted In:** Brian Rothrock, USA, 1988, 23

**Doubles:** Bob McKinnon, Canada, 1988, 7

**Triples:** Redelio Cruz, Cuba, 1988, 4; Mark Sorenson and Taifau Matai, New Zealand, 1996, 4 each

**Home Runs:** Brian Rothrock, USA and Marty Kernaghan, Canada, 1988, 8 each

**Total Bases:** Brian Rothrock, USA and Marty Kernaghan, Canada, 1988, 46 each

### TEAM BATTING

**Highest Batting Average:** New Zealand, 2004, .404

**Most Hits:** USA, 1988, 142

**Most Runs Scored:** Canada, 1988, 142

**Most Runs, Game:** Canada vs. Denmark, 1988, 31

**Most Runs Batted In:** Canada, 1988, 125

**Most Home Runs:** Canada, 1988, 37

### FIELDING

**Team - Highest Fielding Percentage:** USA, 1968 and Canada, 1984, .990

**Fewest Errors:** Canada, 1984, 2

**Most Putouts:** New Zealand, 1988, 318

**Most Assists:** Bahamas, 1988, 132