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# newsletter

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All correspondence to: [info@europeansoftball.org](mailto:info@europeansoftball.org)

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## FROM THE EDITOR

The ESF Newsletters will be published every four weeks and will contain a wide range of information about softball in Europe.

If you want to publish an article, message or announcement on a softball topic in the Newsletter (on events, rules, equipment or anything else), please send your copy (in Word), preferably accompanied by pictures, to: [info@europeansoftball.org](mailto:info@europeansoftball.org).

## DEADLINES...

In case you want to publish about events in your country, send it for the next issue (3) on or before August 20-2013.

Please include pictures if possible.



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This Newsletter is published under the responsibility of the Executive Board of the European Softball Federation.

## COLOFON

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Editing: Bob Fromer (UK)

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



### Happy and surprised

European Softball Federation President Andre van Overbeek was in Prague last month to watch the European Women's Championships, and was impressed by what he saw, both on and off the field. Before the tournament was over, he sat down with us to discuss the competition and added some comments about the improving standards of softball in Europe.

### First impressions of the tournament.

"My first impressions of the tournament that's happening here in Prague, organisation-wise, are tremendous.," Andre said. "People have done so much work and it is running smoothly. So I'm very happy with what I've seen.

### The number of spectators that visited the parks.

"I was absolutely happy that there were so many people at Svoboda Park for the first day of the tournament. If I were to estimate, there were between 500 and 700 people to watch the Czechs play in the evening game. That's more than we've ever had on the opening day, for sure. Of course, we always get a lot of people to the important games – the semifinals and finals – and I expect we will here too. But for the first day, it was surprising. [Editor's Note: crowds of well over 1000 people intended important games later in the tournament.]

### Europe is coming near to the top of the world.

"From this European Championship, the top teams advance to the World Championships. There are other parts of the world where softball is more popular than in Europe, but I see that the gap is closing.

"Take the Netherlands, for example. They were twelfth in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, eighth in the World Championships in 2010 in Venezuela and sixth in 2012 in Canada, so the best European teams are becoming more competitive with the top teams in the world. Next year, the World Championships are in the Netherlands, and I hope the Dutch team can finish even higher. Getting into the top four will be difficult when you have teams like the USA, Japan, Australia, Canada and China, but even some of those can be beaten by European teams, I am sure."

*Let's Play Ball...*



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## NETHERLANDS WIN THIRD STRAIGHT EUROPEAN WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP



After almost scoring at will throughout most of the 2013 European Women's Championships, played in Prague from July 7-13, Team Netherlands had their bats nearly silenced in the final by Italy, as pitchers Mara Papuzzi and Gretta Cecchetti limited them to just three hits in the game.

But the Dutch still managed to manufacture three runs and win 3-0 behind a complete-game shutout by Lindsey Meadows in a final that wasn't quite as close as the score might suggest.

The Dutch, under Head Coach Craig Montvidas, were undefeated during the tournament in which 19 countries competed, and won every game they played by the mercy rule except for their last two games against Italy: the 1v2 game in the Page Playoff, which the Dutch won 7-3, and then the final.

As mentioned above, the Netherlands had defeated Italy 7-3 in the 1v2 Page Playoff game, and the Czechs swarmed all over Russia in the 3v4 game, bunting them to death in the first inning and scoring four runs in the process, then adding two more runs in the second. The Russians, whose defense fell apart in those first two innings under the pressure of the Czech short game and a large and noisy Czech crowd, recovered to out-play the Czechs the rest of the way, but they were too far behind to come back and lost by a final score of 8-3.



Craig Montvidas

In fact, in the 1v2 game, the Dutch were one out away from a five-inning 7-0 mercy rule win over Italy until Andrea Montanari hit a three-run home run with two out in the Italian half of the fifth.

"It's true," said European Softball Federation President Andre van Overbeek after the final. "There is now a gap between the Dutch and everyone else in Europe."

### Page Playoffs

The Page Playoffs at the European Championships involved the Netherlands, Italy, Russia and the Czech Republic, after Great Britain was eliminated on runs conceded in a three-way tie between GB, Italy and the Czech Republic in their playoff pool and Britain had to settle for fifth place.

The result was that Italy played the Czech Republic in the Page Playoff semi-final, and crushed the Czechs 10-1 in five innings to set up yet another Holland v Italy final.

### Dominant pitching



Lindsay Meadows

The story of the final was Dutch pitcher Lindsey Meadows, a long-time resident of Holland who is the only American player in the Dutch national team programme.



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Meadows went the full seven innings, scattering five singles, walking two and striking out five, and kept the Italians constantly off balance with a very effective change-up which had them hitting pop-ups and weak ground balls throughout the game.

Although the Italians out-hit the Dutch 5-3 and left six runners on base to five for Holland, it never felt like the Italians

were going to score – and the Dutch certainly weren't going to help them, playing efficient and errorless defense throughout the game.

The Italian defense, on the other hand, was not nearly so watertight, and it cost them.

Holland opened the scoring in the bottom of the second inning. Clean-up hitter Saskia Kosterink led off with a triple down the right field line. The next batter, Virginie Anneveld, hit a fly

ball into right centre field. Kosterink would almost certainly have tagged up and scored after the catch, but there was no catch as the Italian centre fielder and right fielder collided and the ball was dropped, with Anneveld reaching third base.

However, Italian starter Mara Papucci, who only struck out four Dutch batters in her 4.2 innings of work, struck out three of them in a row after the error to keep the Dutch lead at 1-0.

## Key error

The scoreline stayed at 1-0 until the bottom of the fourth inning, when the Italians again gave the Dutch a helping hand and two more runs were scored without the benefit of a hit. Part of the problem was the three Dutch hitters that Mara Papucci walked in the inning, and one run scored on a fielder's choice.

But the second run scored when a slowly-hit two-out ground ball to second base, possibly the easiest play of the game, was bobbled by Italian second base player Sandra Bosdachin and her recovery throw to first was deemed too late by the first base umpire.

After that, it was just a matter of Lindsey Meadows continuing her mastery of the Italian hitters, and no Italian reached third base over the course of the game.

Italy twice had two runners on base with Andrea Montanari at the plate – the author of the only runs scored against the Netherlands in the tournament – but she popped up in the third to

end the inning and was left holding her bat in the fifth inning when Eva Trevisan was thrown out at third on a double-steal attempt by Dutch catcher Nathalie Timmermans.

A tiring Mara Papucci was lifted in favour of Greta Cecchetti with two outs in the fifth, and Cecchetti retired the remaining Dutch batters without allowing a baserunner.

In the end, though, the pitching of Lindsey Meadows and the Dutch defense were just too formidable a foe.



Italy pitcher Greta Cecchetti



Italian pitcher Mara Papucci

## Plate result

The ESF tried a new format at this tournament for the 11 teams that did not make the playoffs after the first round robin, based on a British proposal that was passed at the ESF Congress in 2012.

The idea was to create a "Plate Tournament" for the non-playoff teams rather than have them just play for places, with a Page Playoff all of its own and a "Plate Winner" at the end.

In the Plate Page Playoff, Germany defeated Belgium 5-1 in the 1v2 game, Slovakia defeated Ukraine 7-1 in the 3v4 game, Slovakia defeated Belgium 2-0 in the semi-final, and Germany won the Plate final 6-0 over Slovakia.

After Germany had lost two close games they should have won to GB and Russia in the initial round-robin Pool C, it was always clear that they would be the shark in the Plate pool, and so it turned out.

## Individual awards

Individual player awards were given at the Closing Ceremony.

The Best Batter (based on batting average) Tereza Jackesova of the Czech Republic.

The Best Pitcher (based on earned run average) Sarah Benchali of France.

The Tournament MVP was Dinet Oosting of the Netherlands



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## JAPAN CROWNED JUNIOR WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONS

The ISF Junior Women's World Championships concluded on Sunday, July 7 in Brampton, Ontario, Canada, with Japan earning the Gold Medal following a 4-0 win over the United States after the game was called at the end of six innings due to rain.

The game was scoreless through four innings before Japan opened the scoring with four runs in the top of the fifth inning. With two outs in the top of the sixth, thunderstorms caused a three-hour rain delay, and once the field was declared playable, the teams were able to complete the sixth inning before another rain delay forced tournament officials to award the win to Japan.

On Saturday, the United States had defeated Japan by a score of 4-0 in the 1v2 Page Playoff game, while Australia had defeated New Zealand 9-1 in the 3v4 game. Earlier on Sunday, Japan defeated Australia 9-2 to earn a spot in the Championship game, leaving Australia with the Bronze Medal, and Mexico defeated the Czech Republic 5-2 to win the Consolation Final after having beaten Great Britain 7-6 in the Consolation bracket on Saturday.

With regard to European representation at the tournament, Great Britain (3-4) finished ninth, the Netherlands (3-4) finished tenth and the Czech Republic (1-6) thirteenth. These placings were based on the initial round-robin games and did not include the Consolation playoffs.

Japan's win at the Junior Women's World Championships, combined with the Japanese Senior Team's win over the US at the 2013 World Cup of Softball and their World Championship and Canadian Open wins over the US in 2012, have



*Japan's Misato Kawano (9) and Yuka Ichiguchi celebrate after scoring in Sunday's championship game against the United States.*

*Photo/Sue Ogrocki*

confirmed Japan as the leading world power in women's fast-pitch softball and have left the United States in the unusual position of wondering what they need to do to catch up.

**But the fact that the United States is no longer the dominant force in the sport may well be a good thing when the International Olympic Committee considers whether to return baseball and softball to the 2020 Olympics instead of wrestling and squash in September.**

## KNBSB PROMOTES SLOWPITCH SOFTBALL AT WORLD PORT TOURNAMENT BASEBALL ROTTERDAM



On July 6, during the World Port Baseball Tournament in Rotterdam, the Dutch Federation KNBSB also promoted a slowpitch tournament. Slowpitch is one of the major development targets for the Netherlands, and six enthusiastic teams registered for this promotional event.

The level of play in the slowpitch tournament was superb, and some of the hits became an unexpected problem for the cars in the car park behind the baseball field – so much so that the tournament had to be relocated to the second baseball field at the Rotterdam Family Stadium.

From that moment on, the teams were able to play slowpitch softball without any problems. After the tournament, the slowpitch participants were invited to watch a baseball game between the Dutch National Team and Curacao, an exciting top-level baseball game traditionally watched by many thousands of baseball fans in Holland.

Another step towards embedding slowpitch softball in the Netherlands.

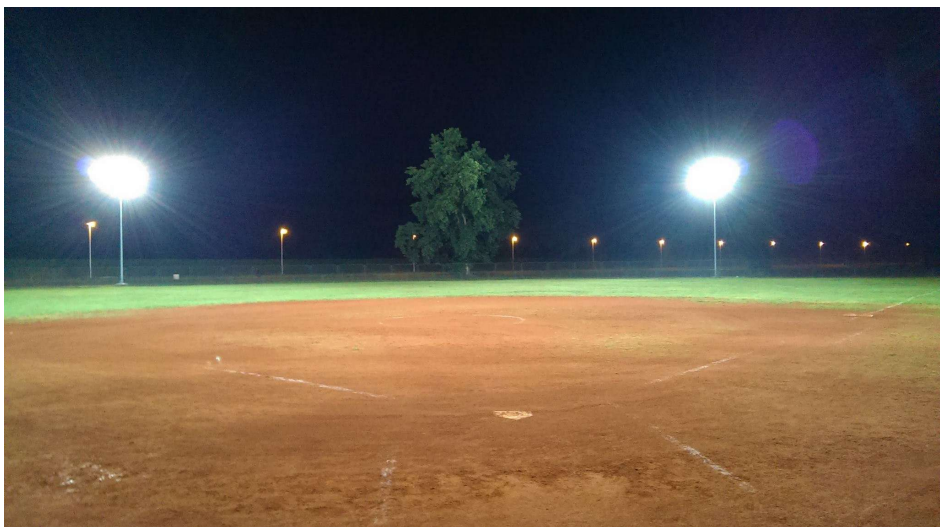


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## FIFTH MEN'S INTERNATIONAL FASTPITCH TOURNAMENT IN ZAGREB (CROATIA)



Field by night © Jarun, Zagreb/Croatia

by Ivan Špoljar (Span, Zagreb).

**For the fifth year in a row, the Span Men's Fastpitch Team, led by Dinko and Maja Regula, organized a great weekend of softball, the Knockout Round V Men's Fastpitch Tournament, from June 7-9 in Zagreb, Croatia.**

The tournament featured eight teams from all over the Europe.

Three teams from Croatia took part: the host team and organizer Span, nine-time Croatian champions Zagreb Giants and the young team Tram 11. They were joined by Roma Lupi (Rome, Italy), IDF (Paris, France), Foreign Legion (a collaboration of experienced players from the Netherlands and Germany), Dream Team Ježica (Ljubljana, Slovenia) and true legends of the

sport DieHards (players gathered from all over the world and led by softball legend Reg Martin)

### Friday

After some minor weather interruptions, three games were played on Friday evening.

Tram 11 beat Giants by 5-4, the Giants beat the DieHards 2-1, and the evening ended with a match-up of two well-known opponents, host Span and Roma Lupi (runner-up at the 2012 Men's Fastpitch Super Cup). The game ended with a comfortable 8-2 win by Roma Lupi..

### Saturday (08.06.2013.)

Saturday finally brought great summer ball-playing weather and everything was set for some good games and entertainment.

Group standings at the end of the day were:

#### Group A

1. Roma Lupi
2. Dream Team Ježica Ljubljana
3. Span
4. IDF Paris

#### Group B

1. Foreign Legion
2. Tram 11
3. Giants
4. DieHards

Special thanks to **Pavel Prachar**, who led an umpire clinic for young Croatian umpires on Saturday and shared his experience and knowledge.



Summer shower © Jarun, Zagreb/Croatia



Pitcher in action  
© Jarun, Zagreb/Croatia





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**SPAN (CROATIA)**

Host team Span © Jarun, Zagreb/Croatia

## Best so far

The overall impression from all participants was that this was the most competitive and strongest Knockout tournament so far, especially considering the quality of the pitching from all eight teams.

In the end, we can only say a huge thanks to all the participants (both players and coaches) and to all the umpires, the ball collectors, the girls in the clubhouse, all the visitors to the tournament and those who participated in any other way.

We hope to see you all next year for Knockout Round VI and we can only promise that we will do our best to make the tournament even better in the years to come.

## Sunday

The tournament was again rewarded with fine sunny weather on Sunday. In the morning, games for positions 5-8 were played.

IDF Paris were beaten by DieHards, who finished in seventh place, while in the game for fifth place, Span beat the Giants 13-3, with young pitchers from both teams given opportunities to show their skills.

Then came the semifinals, and we saw excellent pitching from all four teams.

In what was probably the best duel of the tournament, Tram 11's young pitcher Hrvoje Jerbic was able to hold off Roma Lupi at the cost of just a single run, while Roma pitcher Martin Svoboda yielded three, and Tram 11 held on for the win over Roma Lupi and advanced to the final.

In the other semifinal, Dream Team Ježica defeated Foreign Legion.

In the third-place match, Roma Lupi won confidently over Foreign Legion, while Tram 11 won the final against Dream Team Ježica by a score of 3-2

## The final standings were:

- |                                |              |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Tram 11                     | 5. Span      |
| 2. Dream Team Ježica Ljubljana | 6. Giants    |
| 3. Roma Lupi                   | 7. DieHards  |
| 4. Foreign Legion              | 8. IDF Paris |



Closing ceremony © Jarun, Zagreb/Croatia



## LINKS:

<https://www.facebook.com/SoftballKlubSpan-Zagreb>

<http://www.softball-span.com/>

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/147456773/The-DieHards-News-Chronicle-Zagreb> (DieHards KO V review)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3K5jRq5Hkc> (Knockout Round V promo video)



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## CZECHS WIN EUROPEAN JUNIOR MEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP



The European Junior's Men's Championships were played in Stenlose, Denmark from July 8-13, with five teams taking part.

But the two best teams were clearly the defending champion Czechs and the host Danes, and these two met in the 1v2 Page Playoff game on Saturday morning, with the Czechs winning 20-6.

Despite the scoreline, the young Danes battled well and surprised the Czechs with extra-base hits from Kaspar Olsen and Jacob Mortensen and then a long grand slam home run from Anton Brown.

Denmark made it back to the final, and this game, delayed a couple of times by rain, was a much closer affair, won by the Czechs by a score of 4-3.

The Danes scored early on a pair of RBI doubles from Frederik Terkelsen, but the Czechs came back with a string of hits to score three runs in the third inning and the winning run in the fourth.

### FINAL STANDINGS

1. CZECH REPUBLIC
2. DENMARK
3. CROATIA
4. ISRAEL
5. GREAT BRITAIN

## NEW BOARD MEMBERS GREEK FEDERATION



After the annual General Assembly of the Greek Softball Federation and elections on June 26, 2013, the H.A.S.F. has a new Executive Board:

<b>President:</b>	<b>Mr. Konstantinos Liarommatis</b>
<b>1st Vice President:</b>	<b>Mr. Dimitrio Kortesis</b>
<b>2nd Vice President:</b>	<b>Ms. Maria Koliou</b>
<b>General Secretary:</b>	<b>Mr. Philippos Malevitis</b>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Mr. Spyridon Ballian</b>
<b>Member:</b>	<b>Mr. George Loagogiannis</b>

## BEEBALL TOURNAMENT IN SWITZERLAND

On Thursday, July 7 the Swiss Softball Club Bern Cardinals invited 37 pupils from the primary school of the Länggasse, aged 10-11 years, to play BeeBall, the youth development game which was introduced by Anton Kops at the ESF and CEB Congresses in February.

The kids and teachers had a brief introduction, and then four teams were formed and a competition was played. According to the organizing club, the session was a tremendous success and both teachers and pupils had a lot of fun. The games were played using the free BeeBall Starter Kits provided by ESF/CEB.

According to the teachers, BeeBall will now become a regular part of their school program



BeeBall Clinic in Basel - Switzerland



*Let's work on the future -  
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ESF is coming to your place inclusive 5 FREE Starterskits.*





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## Project “Play ball EU style”

Project “Play Ball EU Style” was held earlier this summer in Zagreb, Croatia, on the softball fields of Softball Club Princ. The project started on June 14 and lasted for 10 days. The organizer of the project, funded by the European Commission’s Youth in Action programme, was the Softball Club Špansko from Zagreb, and clubs from Hungary and Bulgaria participated, with between 16-30 young people of both sexes from each country, most between 13 and 25 years old.

The goal of the project was to educate young people through non-traditional and informal forms and methods to provide a framework for young healthy lifestyles, focusing on the benefits of participation in outdoor activities.

The project focused on communication and cooperation between the young people who, in their countries, share a common interest in softball. Activities were designed to facilitate the exchange of knowledge between the young people, the creation of new friendships and an acceptance of different cultures and values.

On the ground, the project produced a fabulous camp, with six days of softball in a fantastic village by the sea, plus a day of matches with 10 camp teams.



More info can be found on the Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/ZagrebSoftballCamp?ref=hl>

and on the website: <http://pink-panthers.hr/>.

Any club or federation interested in a similar exchange should contact:  
[skpinkpanthers@gmail.com](mailto:skpinkpanthers@gmail.com).



This project has been funded by the European Commission’s Youth in Action programme”







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## FIRST PURPOSE-BUILT SOFTBALL AND BASEBALL FIELDS ARE OPENED IN GREAT BRITAIN

By Bob Fromer

A special ceremony held on Saturday, July 20, marked the official opening of Great Britain's first purpose-built baseball and softball complex at Farnham Park Sports Ground near Slough, about 30 km west of London.



The complex, built with funding from the British government agency Sport England and Major League Baseball's Baseball Tomorrow Fund in partnership with South Bucks District Council and the DIY chain Wickes Homestores, consists of two dedicated softball fields that can be used for fastpitch and slowpitch as well as youth baseball, and a full-sized dedicated baseball field which also contains a slowpitch softball field in one corner of the outfield.



Farnham Park Sports Ground also has other grass areas that can be used for softball as well as other sports, and the ground hosts many of the most important slowpitch tournaments run in the UK each year, some with over 50 teams taking part.



*The Opening Ceremony was a celebration both for keen enthusiasts of the sports from around the country and for local residents, who were treated to a spectacle.*

After the ceremony itself, hosted before a crowd of over 500 people by TV and radio personality Colin Murray and ending with a mass rendition of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame", the crowd was able to enjoy simultaneous exhibition games in three formats: an exhibition fastpitch game featuring players from a number of GB teams, an exhibition baseball game featuring the GB Under-23 team against an All-Star team from Britain's top baseball league and a men's slowpitch game that was part of the Men's and Women's Slowpitch National Championships taking place at the facility over that weekend.

The fields were constructed by BaseballSoftball UK (BSUK), the development agency for the two sports in Britain, and BSUK Chair John Walmsley said: "This is a sporting landmark – our very own 'field of dreams' in England's green and pleasant land. Farnham Park will serve the local community here for many years to come, allowing children to grow into adults on these fields, and mature from rookies to seasoned players, coaches and managers. But it will also serve as a national centre for both our sports and we will invite the rest of Europe and the rest of the world to play baseball and softball here."





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## MACCABIAH GAMES ARE A HUGE SUCCESS

The Maccabiah Games, also known as the Jewish Olympics, is the world's third-largest sporting event behind both the Summer Olympics and the World University Games. This year's Maccabiah in

Maor, Israel hosted 9000 athletes from 70 countries, playing in 46 different events.

Played on the shores of the Mediterranean, the softball competition at the 19th Maccabiah Games featured Men's Open and Masters teams as well as Women's teams from Israel, Canada, the USA, Mexico and Venezuela.



To the delight of tournament organizers, team Cuba made their debut in the event, taking part in the Men's Open bracket.

Playing before capacity crowds at the new Alvin M.

Levin Field in Maor, the 51-game tournament, run in cooperation with the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and other Friends of the Field, was quite a success. Donors, athletes and fans alike all got to share in the thrill of victory as well as the agony of defeat.

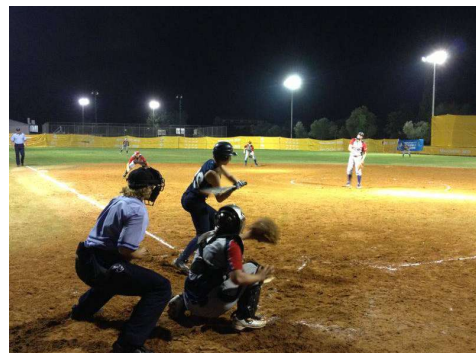
The tournament's most dramatic moment took place in the Men's Masters Gold Medal game between Team USA and



Team Canada. Trailing 6-3 and batting with one out in the bottom of the seventh inning, Canada's Dave Goldstein hit a walk-off grand-slam home run to propel team Canada to the championship.

### Other champions

As well as the medalists, there were other champions taking part in the Games, particularly more than 30 volunteers who hustled and played their hearts out to ensure that the ten-day competition was run smoothly and efficiently. For the first time ever, the softball competition was simulcast around the world with the Gamechanger application, allowing families, friends and fans from North and South America to follow the games in real time.



*As with every previous Maccabiah softball event, the ESF was responsible for supplying all eleven of our umpires. If you want to talk about real heroes, these men and women persevered in daily temperatures of 35 degrees, making sure all 51 games were called with honor and true sportsmanship.*

Lastly, a special thank you has to go out to the Organizing Committee. What started out on paper back in 2011 blossomed into a full-scale softball tournament in the summer of 2013.

To Goose Gillett, Ami Baran, Guy Bender and Cathy and Corey Vyner, we all say thank you for putting on such a great show.

**See you all again in 2017.**

### Tournament Results

#### Women's Division

Gold – USA  
Silver – Canada  
Bronze – Israel

#### Men's Open Division

Gold – USA  
Silver – Canada  
Bronze – Mexico

#### Men's Masters Division

Gold – Canada  
Silver – USA  
Bronze – Venezuela





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## GREAT BRITAIN WINS NINTH EUROPEAN SLOWPITCH CHAMPIONSHIPS

By Bob Fromer

As the final fly ball out off the bat of Slovenia's Gabrijela Humerca settled into Paul Gough's glove in left field, there were no wild celebrations by the Great Britain team at the end of the 2013 European Slowpitch Championships, played from July 17-20 in Pardubice in the Czech Republic.

Instead, the GB players wandered around the field in a bit of a daze, because what they were feeling was probably more relief than elation.

The GB Team had just won its ninth straight European Championship title, and the final score of 13-7 over Slovenia suggests that the win was reasonably comfortable. In fact, it was anything but, and this was a game that eventually put both GB and the Slovenians through the wringer.

Although GB led from the third inning onwards, and gradually widened their lead to 9-1 at the end of five innings, the last two innings were a rollercoaster for both teams, with numerous points where the course of the game might have changed.

In the end, GB won this game, and the tournament, in part because they had more talent than anyone else -- though Slovenia comes close -- but more because that talent ran all the way through their 18-player squad. Every single one of those 18 players made genuine contributions throughout the tournament and GB's "rookie" Head Coach Steve Patterson, in his first European Championship, did a superb job of blending those contributions into a winning formula.

### Awards

As expected, GB dominated the individual awards at the Closing Ceremony. Roger Grooms was the tournament's Best Pitcher, Jenny Ball the Best Female Batter and Danny Gunn the Best Male Batter.

The Most Valuable Player awards went to Ruth Lillis of Ireland and Ales Maravljje of Slovenia.

And after all the awards had been given out, it was entirely in the spirit of the tournament that the three medal teams and all the spectators danced together on the field to the song that had become the tournament unofficial anthem, Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline".

### The final standings were:

1. Great Britain
2. Slovenia
3. Germany
4. Ireland
5. Czech Republic
6. Serbia



### The rest of the day

Four games preceded the final on Saturday, three of them in the Page Playoff.

GB beat Slovenia 15-3 in the Page Playoff 1v2 game, Germany held on to edge Ireland 7-6 in the Page Playoff 3v4 game, and Ales Mravljje hit two home runs as Slovenia crushed Germany 17-1 to give the Germans the Bronze Medal and put Slovenia into the final.

In the other game, Serbia and the Czech Republic played to decide fifth place, with the Czechs winning 20-0 over a depleted Serbian team down to only nine fit players.

### Reflections

The 2013 European Slowpitch Championship was a well-organised tournament, played in the usual friendly spirit that slowpitch tournaments create -- and the singing and dancing of the Irish-led crowd made it even more special.

But the European Slowpitch Championship needs more teams and more varied competition. The 2010 edition in Prague, which had eight teams altogether, including Belgium, Austria and Guernsey, was a better tournament. There are an increasing number of countries playing slowpitch in Europe; the trick is to get them all to come to the same tournament at the same time.

The British Softball Federation will press for a special Slowpitch Meeting at next year's European Softball Federation Congress to try to get the slowpitch-playing countries onto the same page.

But for now, one thing is certain -- the 2013 GB Slowpitch Team played great softball from the beginning to the end of this tournament in going undefeated and largely unchallenged except