



EDITORIAL

John Austin

Vice President - Development

Off the back of a successful Congress last month where we presented some very exciting initiatives such as the European Softball Coaches Association (ESCA) and the ESF Euroleague (Interleague) we can look forward to a great 2016 season.

ESCA was set up in order to develop the coaches within our game, to be a central resource for learning and sharing knowledge and eventually standardised accreditation for all softball formats.

The Euroleague, conceived by the Interleague (2014 when Croatia, Hungary and Slovakia organised three weekend tournaments during the season) will be based in different regions, with countries grouped on a geographical basis enabling more international standard games, competition and exposure for our players and coaches.

We also look forward to a busy season of tournaments, (10 in total), development clinics for both fast pitch and slow pitch players and slow pitch umpires, as well streaming of games and online competitions. Of significant interest to me is the Slow Pitch Super Cup being held in Austria in August with a record total of 15 teams participating. This highlights the continued growth of the slow pitch format in Europe. Team Europe and the All Male Slow Pitch Championships still have some way to go but we're hard at work planning for their development.

Finally, I can't finish without a brief mention about our media and communications. I believe we have made great strides in using the internet and social media platforms to help us deliver our message and increase our exposure. We've learnt a lot from our online activities over the past

few years and I am excited about using what we have learned to help drive us forward online. So don't forget to check out the website and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

A lot done, but a lot more to do!

Wishing you all a great season ahead.

John Austin, Vice President - Development



2016 ANNUAL GENERAL CONGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

The annual General Congress of both the European Softball Federation (ESF) and the Confederation of European Baseball (CEB) took place on the second weekend of February in Hoofddorp, Netherlands.

During the event, the Financial, Development, Marketing and Media, Technical and Competitions and Legal Commissions held their meetings to present 2015 reports and 2016 plans.

For a comprehensive report on the Congress, go to our [website](#), where a full summary has been published. Below are the key issues from the meeting.



General Progress Report

UPDATE FEBRUARY 2016

The [General Progress Report](#) booklet, circulated at the recent Congress, sums up the ESF's development projects, media and marketing activities and competitions in 2015.

Pick-up Players (PUPs) in ESF Regulations

A new definition of a Pick-up Player (PUP) for purposes of ESF competition was decided at the Congress. From now on, anyone who does not hold a passport from a country affiliated to the ESF is considered a PUP. This means that all citizens of ESF-member countries are allowed to play for any European club in Cup competitions where licences are required.

This rule is easily enforceable and verifiable, and will hopefully provide more opportunities for European players in the competitions.



European Softball Coaches Association (ESCA)



A major ESF development project starting in 2016 is the European Softball Coaches Association (ESCA). On the recommendation of ESCA Chair Ami Baran, the EC appointed Mattias Grimstoft (SWE) to be the Chief Director and Craig Montvidas (NED/USA) as the Director of Coach Development.

Registration for ESCA has already been opened at hnovotna@europeansoftball.org. This is the chance to take part in the European coaches' community, gain additional education and experience and become one of those coaches who was there when European softball became serious about coaching.

ASA/USA Softball and European Softball Sisterhood

The ASA/ESF Sister Program was launched a few years ago. The main objective was to give each of our European member Federations an opportunity to build a relationship with an ASA State Association and work together on programs such as player exchanges, shadow coaching for coaches, umpire exchanges and equipment collection for the sister European Federation.

Many state ASA associations were enthusiastic about making this connection and there were some initial successes, although fewer ESF Federations took advantage of the opportunity than had been hoped.

The ESF Development Commission still believes in the value of this project and we have asked ASA Executive Director Craig Cress to help us move it forward. Craig spoke about the program at the ESF Congress and will personally be involved in dealing with each request as it comes in through the ESF Development Commission.

All Federations will be assigned a sister state and if a Federation would like to contact its ASA sister association and work with them directly to implement a defined program, we will facilitate that through Craig Cress. Hopefully, this initiative, which could have considerable value for softball in Europe, will bear more fruit in the future.



Craig Cress, ASA/USA Softball

European Baseball Softball Steering Committee (EBSSC) Joint Commissions

Members of the European Baseball Softball Steering Committee (EBSSC) Joint Commissions met for the first time at the Congress to work out basic principles and means of further cooperation.

The **Marketing Commission** agreed to focus on a project to raise awareness of our sports among the European public and to promote the two sports together.

The **Operations Commission** will begin by recommending to the EBSSC a standard procedure for preparing a Joint Congress. Other joint events will be considered after the first task is completed.

The **Development Commission** will be looking to define exactly what is meant by development and create a common understanding of what needs to be developed and how. The Commission will also investigate the initial impact of BeeBall in Europe to evaluate its viability as a tool for the development and acceptance of baseball and softball throughout the continent.

Marketing Commission: (left to right) J. Boyd, Y. Alkalay (guest), P. Kurz, H. Novotna, S. Djuric



2016 ESF COMPETITIONS

All European Championships and Cups for 2016 were allocated and we are happy to confirm Spain as the organizer for the Junior Women's Championship and Austria as the organizer for the Co-ed Slowpitch Super Cup. All the remaining competitions will be held in one of the more traditional locations in the Czech Republic or Italy. In future, we're hoping to expand the number of European countries that bring top events to their grounds.

You can review the list of entries [here](#) for this year's ESF competitions and you can see the Championship round-robin pools [here](#).

There are two official competitions where teams can still sign up before April 15.



The ESF Festival of Youth, the **European Massimo Romeo Youth Trophy**, is the chance for girls – and now boys -- to get the experience of a lifetime, connect with players from all over Europe and strengthen their passion for softball.



The **European Softball Masters** Tournament is also open to both genders, and will feature men's and women's fastpitch tournaments played simultaneously in one location. Only players aged 35 and older are allowed in this competition, but age is the only condition that participants have to meet.

ESF VIDEOFEST 2016

Following the 2015 Photofest, a video contest will be organized this year. So get ready, because we will be looking for the best softball drills! Charge your cameras or phones and be prepared. We'll be announcing the contest soon and the winner will be able to experience what it's like to be an ESCA member, but with no entry fee to an ESCA clinic of their choice!

SOFTBALL ALL AROUND EUROPE

There are more unofficial tournaments than ever in Europe these days. Don't miss the chance to get that competition experience that can make all the difference. Find the tournament that suits you and your team, sign up, and play! Full details for all the tournaments listed are on the ESF website and links are given below.

YOUTH TOURNAMENTS

MAY 6-7
2016

INTERNATIONAL CUP
Joudrs U13 U16
BOYS

4 SOFTBALL FIELDS
AT JOUDRS & SABAT

ENTRIES STILL OPEN
ALREADY CONFIRMED PARTICIPANTS
INCLUDE CZECH REPUBLIC (5 TEAMS),
DENMARK (3 TEAMS), AND CROATIA

3-DAY WORKSHOP BEFORE THE TOURNAMENT WITH INTERNATIONAL COACHES

FOR DETAILS CONTACT ONDREJ.STRONER@CENTRUM.CZ
+420 724 429 608

YouTube facebook *Joudrs*.CZ

Joudrs International Cup - U-13 and U-16 boys' teams are invited to come to Prague, Czech Republic in May and join teams from Denmark, Croatia and the Czech Republic to improve their softball skills in an international tournament.

EUROPA BASEBALL E FRIUL 81 SOFTBALL CLUB A.S.D.
ORGANIZZANO:

Baseball
Softball

TORNEI INTERNAZIONALI GIOVANILI
XXV MEMORIAL FEDERICO ZUTTON
X Summerdays

DAL 1 AL 3 LUGLIO 2016
CASTIONS DELLE MURA (UDINE)

Europa baseball and Friul 81 softball are pleased to invite you to baseball and softball youth international tournaments
25th Memorial Federico Zutton
10th Summer days
July 1st to 3rd 2016
Castions delle Mura UDINE

SOFTBALL
girls 13u (age 9-13) 6 teams
girls 17u (age 14-17) 6 teams

BASEBALL
boys age 9-12 8 teams
boys age 13-14 6 teams
boys age 15-16 6 teams

Clubs only
Federal umpires
Games from 8:30 am to 8 pm
Closure and prize award ceremony July 3rd at 5pm

Evening music events
Green volley and football

CONTACT INFO:
EUROPA BASEBALL
www.europabaseball.eu
presidente@europabaseball.eu
FRIUL 81 SOFTBALL CLUB A.S.D.
www.friul81softball.it
friul81softball@gmail.com

The **Summerdays Tournament**, an international youth tournament for U-13 and U-17 girls, will be held for the 10th time at the beginning of July in Italy.



Due Torri is a traditional tournament for U-14 and U-16 girls held in late July in Italy.



In April, **The European-American Friendship Cup** promises a good quality junior women's tournament in Stuttgart, Germany.



The 2016 London Cup Tournament on July 2-3 in the UK is designed as a warm-up for the 2016 European Junior Women's Championships, but senior women's teams are also welcome. Only one or two places are still open.

SENIOR TOURNAMENTS

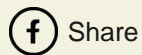
Clubs all over Europe organize tournaments for senior men and women in either fastpitch or slowpitch softball.

There are mixed fastpitch tournaments in Switzerland (International Mixed Fastpitch Tournament) and the Czech Republic (Instax Fastpitch Cup).

Men's tournaments will be held in various locations, including Guernsey, Israel, Gran Canaria and, more traditionally, in the Netherlands.

As usual, women's fastpitch tournaments offer the widest portfolio of options. The prestigious Prague Softball Week is still open for entries as well as tournaments in Croatia and the Netherlands. The Austrian Finkstonball offers players the chance to visit a nearby music festival.

To have your tournament included on the ESF website, please contact the Communications Director at: hnovotna@europeansoftball.org.



Want to receive the ESF newsletter? [Click here!](#)



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Our mailing address is:

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