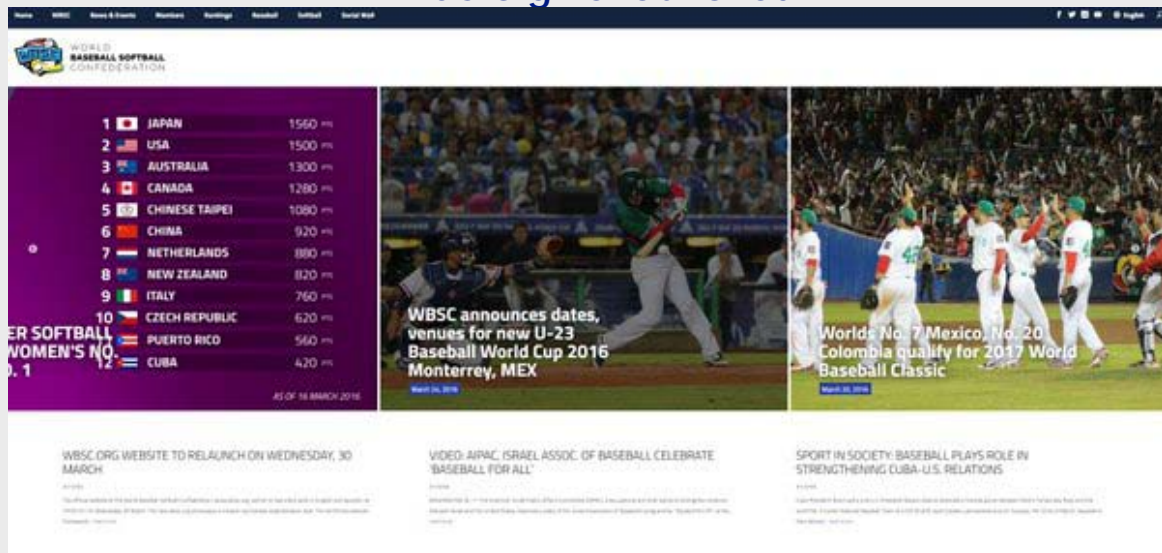




NEWSLETTER -- 31 March 2016

WBSC.org Re-launched



The official website of the World Baseball Softball Confederation, www.wbcs.org, has been re-launched, both in English and Spanish, and showcases a modern and simple-sophistication look.

The reinforced website framework has been configured to handle ultra-high volume and extreme spikes in fan traffic, particularly during event time.

Updates with rich, new content and sections will continue to be implemented to the evolving website, including expansion of the multi-language platform into Chinese, Japanese and Korean, so the millions of baseball/softball fans can follow their National Teams competing on the world stage in their native languages.

Fans will also be able to follow WBSC's new "Social Wall" section, which displays the real-time @wbcs social media feed (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube), making it quick and easy to follow and join the discussion on announcements, breaking news, videos and updates.

Dedicated pages for WBSC's Members (National Federations and Associate Members) as well as the Continental Confederations have also been expanded upon.

WBSC launches first-ever Softball World Rankings: Japan Women's No. 1, New Zealand Men's No. 1

The World Baseball Softball Confederation launched the first-ever world rankings for softball, across both men's and women's disciplines. The newly implemented world ranking system tracks the performance of a country's National Team in the Softball World Championships, including junior and top-tier levels, over a three-year period.

The WBSC Softball Competitions Commission carried out the assignment of extensively reviewing, developing and introducing an initial world ranking system.

Japan and New Zealand rank No. 1 in the new WBSC Softball World Rankings in women's and men's, respectively.

Asia, the Americas, Europe and Oceania are all represented in the Women's Top 10, highlighting a universal footprint of the sport. Four regions are featured in the Men's Top 10, including Oceania, the Americas (North, Central, and South Americas), Asia, and Europe.

Rank	Country	Score	Rank	Country	Score
1	JAPAN	1560	13	DOMINICAN REP.	300
2	USA	1500	14	GREAT BRITAIN	240
3	AUSTRALIA	1300	14	MEXICO	240
4	CANADA	1280	14	RUSSIA	240
5	CHINESE TAIPEI	1080	17	BOTSWANA	180
6	CHINA	920	18	BRAZIL	120
7	NETHERLANDS	880	19	VENEZUELA	100
8	NEW ZEALAND	820	19	ARGENTINA	100
9	ITALY	760	21	SOUTH AFRICA	40
10	CZECH REPUBLIC	620	22	COLOMBIA	20
11	PUERTO RICO	560			
12	CUBA	420			

New WBSC Baseball World Rankings revealed

The WBSC revealed the latest standings in the Official WBSC Baseball World Rankings, which weigh a country's entire National Team programme (from U-12 to Pro) in international competition.

Rank	Country	Score	Rank	Country	Score
1	JAPAN	5154			
2	USA	5091			
3	CHINESE TAIPEI	4702			
4	KOREA	4641			
5	CUBA	3727			
6	VENEZUELA	3633			
7	MEXICO	2793			
8	CANADA	2699			
9	ITALY	2297			
10	NETHERLANDS	2096			
11	PUERTO RICO	1759			
12	DOMINICAN REP.	1559			

The world rankings reflect a 4-year cycle and a data set of more than 1,000 international contests dating back to 2012.

Ranked No. 1 since November 2014, Japan (5,154 pts.) remains the top-ranked baseball power, while the United States remains at No. 2 (5,091 pts.).

No. 3 Chinese Taipei, No. 4 Korea, No. 6 Venezuela and No. 7 Mexico reached historical highs among the Top 10.

Four nations made their historic debuts in the WBSC Baseball World Rankings: No. 58 Singapore, No. 59 India, No. 66 Estonia and No. 68 Iraq.

Nations, Pools revealed for 2016 WBSC Women's Softball World Championship



A record 31 nations will be competing at the 15th WBSC Women's Softball World Championship in Surrey, Canada, from 15-24 July.

The 15th Women's Softball World Championship in Surrey will bring together the world's top softball athletes from all five regions, representing the largest global footprint in the event's history, as eleven nations will be making their women's world championship debuts -- Brazil, Ecuador, India, Ireland, Israel, Kenya, Pakistan, Peru, Serbia, Switzerland, and Uganda.

Africa (2): Kenya, Uganda
Americas (10): Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Peru, United States, Venezuela, and host Canada;
Asia (6): China, Chinese Taipei, India, Japan, Pakistan, Philippines;
Europe (11): Austria, Czech Republic, France, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Serbia, Switzerland;
Oceania (2): Australia, New Zealand.

Umpiring officials announced for 2016 Women's and Junior Men's Softball World Championships



The World Baseball Softball Confederation Softball has appointed 30 umpires from 18 countries to officiate in the 15th WBSC Women's Softball World Championship in Surrey, BC, Canada later this year.

Officials will be represented from Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, China, Cuba, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, Spain, USA, and Venezuela.

Sixteen umpires from eleven countries have been appointed to officiate in the 11th WBSC Jr. Men's Softball World Championship in Midland, Michigan, USA later this year.

Officials will be represented from Australia, Botswana, Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Israel, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, and USA.

Olympic softball pitching legend joins WMG2017 Ambassador Programme

The Olympic woman softball pitcher and bronze medalist Jenny Holliday has today been announced as an ambassador for the World Masters Games 2017, the world's largest multi-sport event that kicks off in Auckland, New Zealand in just over a year.

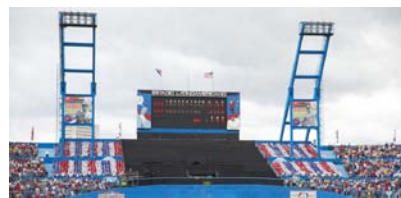


Holliday joins international Goodwill Ambassador, Lord Sebastian Coe, former Olympic bronze medal swimmer Anthony Mosse, two-times Olympic medal winning volleyball coach Hugh McCutcheon, fellow Australian world squash legend Sarah Fitz-Gerald and Canadian basketball supremo Jude Kelly as the internationally-based World Masters Games 2017 ambassadors.

Softball is one of 28 sports taking place across more than 45 competition venues during World Masters Games 2017. The event is Fast Pitch and has a minimum age of 35 for men and women. Competition will be in three categories - Competitive (35+ and 45+), Recreational (35+ and 45+) and Open (55+). Softball will take place across two competition venues - North Harbour Softball Stadium at Rosedale Park and Rangitoto College, depending on division and age category.

Sport in Society: Baseball plays role in strengthening Cuba-U.S. relations

Cuba President Raul Castro and U.S. President Barack Obama attended a friendly game between MLB's Tampa Bay Rays and the world No. 5 Cuban National Baseball Team at a full 55,000-seat Estadio Latinoamericano on Tuesday, the 22nd of March.



Baseball is the national sport of both nations, and the game attended by the two leaders generated worldwide media attention.

It marked the first time in 88 years that a U.S. president visited Cuba.

Two-time Olympic gold medallist with the Cuban National Baseball Team (1996 and 2004) Pedro Lazo threw out one of the ceremonial first pitches, as the Rays went on to defeat Cuba, 4-1.

In a statement regarding the occasion, World Baseball Softball Confederation President Riccardo Fraccari said:

"This friendly international game underlines the power of sport to unite and serve as a universal platform. It reflects baseball in its highest form: as a symbol of inclusivity, friendship, hope, respect and cooperation. WBSC applauds the Cuban Baseball Federation and Major League Baseball for joining together to use our sport to help facilitate this historic result."

WBSC Global Ambassador Antonio Castro was in attendance.

Worlds No. 7 Mexico, No. 20 Colombia qualify for 2017 World Baseball Classic

Two countries from the Americas advanced through qualifiers of the WBSC-sanctioned 2017 World Baseball Classic, as Mexico and Colombia earned spots in the 16-nation main tournament.



Mexico beat No. 15 Nicaragua twice and edged No. 16 Czech Republic, 2-1, in Mexicali. Germany was also part of the Mexicali qualifying group and was eliminated after two games.

In Panama City, Colombia defeated No. 17 Panama twice, as well as No. 21 Spain. France knocked Spain out the qualifier but fell to Panama twice in the modified double-elimination format.

The final qualifier for the 2017 WBC will be in Brooklyn, USA, from 22-25 Sept, as No. 14 Brazil, No. 23 Pakistan, No. 33 Great Britain and No. 43 Israel contend for the final spot.

Last month, Australia advanced to the 2017 WBC, topping the group that featured New Zealand, the Philippines and South Africa.

New WBSC U-23 Baseball World Cup 2016 in Monterrey, Mexico to be played 28 Oct - 6 Nov



The dates and venues for the first-ever WBSC U-23 Baseball World Cup 2016, which will be hosted by the city of Monterrey, Mexico, from 28 October to 6 November, and will be the top international competition of the year, allocating 690 world ranking points to the first-ever U-23 world champion.

The world governing body announced the expansion of the U-21 Baseball World Cup to a new U-23 format.

The main stage of the global tournament will be one of the highest capacity baseball stadiums in all of Latin America, at the 27,000-seat Estadio de Beisbol Monterrey, home of professional club Sultanes Monterrey of the Mexican Baseball League (LMB).

The official hashtag of the WBSC U-23 Baseball World Cup is #U23WorldCup.

Nations, Logo announced for WBSC U-15 Baseball World Cup 2016 in Iwaki, Japan



The III WBSC U-15 Baseball World Cup 2016 will be staged from 29 July to 7 August in Iwaki, Japan, an area devastated by the earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan five years ago on 11 March 2011.

National Teams

- Americas (6): Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Panama, United States and Venezuela
- Asia (3): Chinese Taipei, Japan and South Korea
- Europe (1): Czech Republic
- Oceania (2): Australia and New Zealand

World No. 3 Cuba, who defeated No. 2 USA in the finale of the 2014 U-15 Baseball World Cup before 15,000 fans in Mazatlán, Mexico, will enter Iwaki as the defending U-15 world champions.

Three stadiums will stage world championship games, including 30,000-seat Iwaki Green Stadium, which hosted the Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB) All-Star Game in 2013.

The official hashtag of the WBSC U-15 Baseball World Cup is #U15WorldCup.

VIDEO: AIPAC, Israel Assoc. of Baseball celebrate 'Baseball for All'

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), a key political arm that works to strengthen relations between Israel and the United States, featured [a video](#) of the Israel Association of Baseball's programme, "Baseball for All", at the recent AIPAC conference in Washington D.C.

IAB's Baseball for All brings groups of Israeli Jewish and Arab boys and girls together to promote friendship, respect and understanding through participating together as a team in the sport of baseball, with the underlining mission to help shape a better and safer world for future generations.

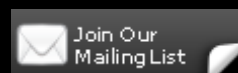
IAB President Peter Kurz was among the invited guests to the annual conference.



In Memorium -- Jimmy Chen, WBSC Softball Division Regional Umpire Coordinator for Asia

The WBSC is saddened by the news of the passing of Jimmy Chen Kuo Hwa, WBSC Softball Division Regional Umpire Coordinator for Asia. Mr. Chen, 63, passed away peacefully at his home.

Mr. Chen was the Chief Umpire of the Chinese-Taipei Amateur Softball Association (CTASA), umpiring at the 1995 and 1999 Jr. Women's Softball World Championships before his appointment as SCA Chief Umpire and Asia Regional Umpire Coordinator in 2011.



Headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland -- the Olympic Capital -- the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) was established in 2013 and granted recognition as the sole competent authority for the sport of Baseball/Softball by the International Olympic Committee at the 125th IOC Session on 8 September 2013. The WBSC has 209 National Federation Members in 142 countries and territories across Asia, Africa, Americas, Europe and Oceania.