

Australia tops Guam, New Zealand to win Oceania Youth Championship and qualify for WBSC U-18 Baseball World Cup 2017



SYDNEY -- Host Australia went undefeated against Guam and New Zealand to capture the U-18 Oceania Baseball Championship today at the Blacktown International Sportspark.

As the Oceania champion, Australia will represent the continent and compete *For the Title of World Champion* at the [WBSC U-18 Baseball World Cup 2017](#) in Thunder Bay, Canada, this September.

New Zealand earned 2nd Place and Guam took 3rd Place in the continental championship, which opened on Wednesday, 18 January. [Read more...](#)

Australia crowned first-ever U-12 champion of Oceania, advances to WBSC U-12 Baseball World Cup 2017

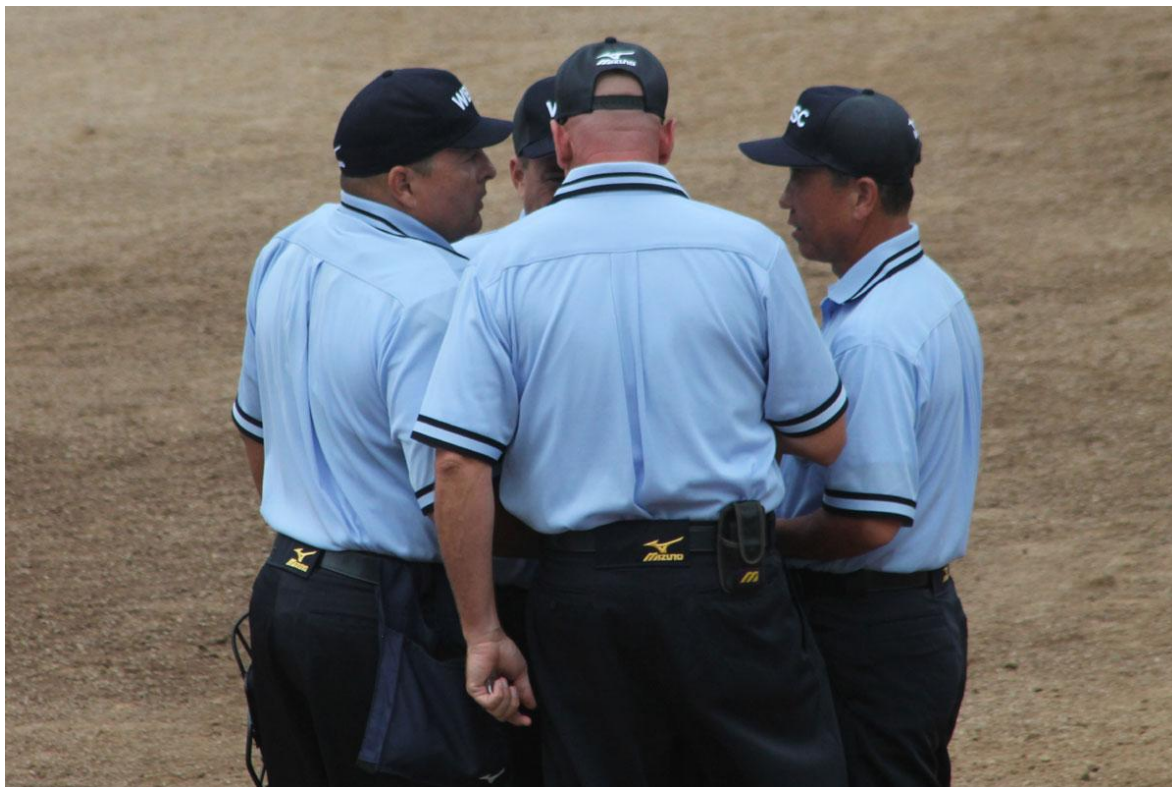


HAGATNA, Guam -- World No. 11 Australia defeated unranked Guam, 18-0, in the final of the inaugural U-12 Oceania Baseball Championship to become the first-ever U-12 champion of Oceania and qualify for the [WBSC U-12 Baseball World Cup® 2017](#) in Tainan, Taiwan.

Host nation Guam, unranked American Samoa and Australia -- the top-ranked nation in Oceania -- battled in the double-elimination youth continental championship, which was staged Guerrero Field in the nation's capital.

Facing elimination on Saturday, Australia overcame undefeated Guam in an exciting 10-9 extra-inning, walk-off win to force the winner-take-all Final rematch on Sunday. Earlier Saturday, Guam knocked out American Samoa, 18-6. [Read more...](#)

WBSC announces new members of 9-nation global Softball Umpire Committee



LAUSANNE -- The WBSC announced the newest members of the regional softball umpiring committee, including appointments from the Czech Republic, Japan and the United States. The new composition of the nine-member, gender-balanced committee covers the five Olympic continents - Africa, Asia, America, Europe and Oceania.

Ms. Christina Drumm (USA), Ms. Haruhi Goto (Japan), and Mr. Pavel Prachar (Czech Republic) have been appointed to the WBSC Regional Softball Umpire Coordinator Committee.

The global umpire committee members oversee umpire activities and programs in their respective territories, working with the Director of Umpires on training and certification courses, including the web-based UmpSchool. The committee also reviews rule changes and provides rule interpretations, while bringing recommendations to the WBSC Softball Executive Board. [Read more...](#)

Softball Olympian Jennie Finch named Youth Softball Ambassador for MLB



Major League Baseball has named WBSC Ambassador Jennie Finch as a Youth Softball Ambassador. Finch will support MLB's Youth Programs with initiatives and strategies that are designed to grow softball at the amateur and youth levels. In addition to her duties as an ambassador of softball, she will also support an effort to promote girl's baseball.

Finch is a two-time Summer Olympics medalist, leading the USA Softball Women's National Team to the gold and silver in 2004 and 2008, respectively. She continues to work with the WBSC for the sport as a global athlete ambassador. [Read more...](#)

Israel breaks ground on landmark new baseball centre in Bet Shemesh as sport continues globalisation



BET SHEMESH -- Ground has broken on the construction of a new multi-venue baseball centre 30 kilometres (19 mi.) west of Jerusalem in Bet Shemesh, as the bat-and-ball team sport -- played in over 140 countries -- continues to see global expansion.

Israel's new playing and training baseball hub, which will be completed later this year, will include one regulation field and two youth fields, batting cages, lights, dugouts and spectator seating.

Leaders from the Israel Association of Baseball (IAB), the city of Bet Shemesh, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and the Bet Shemesh Baseball Club led the ground-breaking ceremony. Israel Men's National Team athletes, including Major League Baseball players, who are touring the nation, also participated in the ceremony.

The event was attended by hundreds of excited local baseball fans and young players. [Read more...](#)

Pakistan Government to boost baseball domestically, internationally as popularity rises



ISLAMABAD -- The federal government of Pakistan has announced plans to expand the development of baseball in the country as well as internationally, a decision welcomed by the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC).

The backing from the Pakistan government is in response to baseball/softball's steady increase in popularity in the country, which is currently ranked 24th of 72 nations in the WBSC Baseball World Rankings.

"It is a heartening sign that baseball is on a constant rise in the country, which is evident from Pakistan teams' performances in international events home and abroad," Pakistan Federal Minister for IPC Raiz Hussain Pirzada told reporters.

Through a collaboration with the Pakistan Federation Baseball (PFB), the Pakistan Sports Board will support efforts to boost the Pakistan National Baseball Teams, to host international events and to explore the launch of the region's first-ever international league, which could potentially include clubs from neighbours Afghanistan, India, Iran, Nepal and Sri Lanka. [Read more...](#)

Iran continues development efforts with upcoming softball umpire seminar



TEHRAN -- The WBSC Softball Director of Umpires, Bob Stanton, will visit Tehran 17-21 April for a five-day seminar for beginner and intermediate softball umpires as part of a joint collaboration to introduce and expand softball in Iran. The seminar will look to evaluate and further improve upon the standard of umpiring in the Asian nation and neighboring countries in the region.

The joint collaboration to boost baseball and softball development in Iran was first announced in May 2016, involving WBSC, the Iran Federation of Sport Associations, Iran's Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, the Iranian National Olympic Committee, and the Iran Baseball and Softball Association.

The first phase of the cooperation has focused on support and instruction (training, coaching, scoring, umpiring and venue construction), laying a foundation for the introduction and adoption of baseball and softball in school programmes in Iran -- targeting participation among young people and women, and the establishment of new clubs for national championships. [Read more...](#)

World No. 16 Nicaragua targets biggest year in history for its Baseball National Teams



MANAGUA -- The president of the Nicaraguan Baseball Federation (Feniba), Nemesio Porras, is eyeing 2017 as potentially the biggest year on record for baseball in the nation and its Baseball National Teams.

Porras, a former Olympic and Baseball World Cup National Team player, [told national media](#) that he sees 2017 as a major opportunity to continue building Nicaraguan baseball, which is the national sport of the Central American country.

Over the last few years under Porras, Nicaragua has jumped from No. 28 in the WBSC Baseball World Rankings in 2014 to its current position at No. 16.

Qualified for the Central American Games 2017 in Managua, the U-18 Baseball World Cup 2017 in Thunder Bay (CAN) and the U-12 Baseball World Cup 2017 in Tainan (TPE), Nicaraguan baseball leaders have their sights on earning more medals and climbing even higher in the world rankings. [Read more...](#)

EU funded Softball Youth Exchange programme kicked off in Croatia



ZAGREB -- A European Union funded youth "Sports Xchange" programme between the Czech Republic and Croatia kicked off in Zagreb.

The nine-day programme brought 30 13-18-year-old girls and boys from each nation together to raise awareness of a healthy lifestyle among young people based on active participation in sports and volunteering in sports organizations.

Workshops were held on topics including improving softball and teamwork skills, ignoring bias and prejudice, and gaining respect for others and their opinions. One of the goals was to try out and learn various forms of creative expression. [Read more...](#)

Puerto Rico Men's Softball National Championship: Guaynabo Mets win back-to-back crowns



The Guaynabo Mets have repeated as Puerto Rico Men's Softball National Champions by dominating the Ponce Lions, 11-3, in the third and final game of the championship series.

The win marks Guaynabo's twelfth overall national championship and the two powerhouse clubs now winning a combined 27 out of 30 national championships.

Guaynabo earned the national crown in consistent fashion finishing the regular season with an 11-1 record with their only loss coming from Barranquitas.

In the quarterfinals of the playoff, they swept Juana Diaz, while in the semifinal they eliminated Barranquitas in a 3-1 series record. [Read more...](#)

Australia Women's Softball National Championship: Firestars reclaim Gilley's Shield crown



The New South Wales Firestars reclaimed their title as Australian Women's Softball National Champions as they dominated the 2017 Gilley's Shield final over their arch-rivals Queensland Heat.

In contrast to the usual tight contests between the two powerhouse teams, the final was lopsided, with the Firestars winning 8-0 at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Softball site -- Blacktown International Sportspark.

NSW and National Team pitcher Kaia Parnaby was the standout performer of the final day, throwing complete-game shutouts in both games to help her team claim the most prestigious title in Australian women's softball.

The win reversed the result of the 2016 Gilley's Shield final, which the Heat won 3-1. [Read more...](#)

In Memoriam: Greg Jelks -- Australia baseball legend, 2000 Olympic coach



SYDNEY -- International baseball veteran, Olympic baseball coach and Australia baseball legend Greg Jelks, 55, suffered a heart attack and passed away aboard a return flight to his adopted homeland, Australia.

Jelks and his jersey number 44 were honoured during the exhibition game between the Perth Heat of the Australian Baseball League (ABL) and the Australian National Team. The ABL also posted a [video tribute](#).

The Alabama, USA-native obtained Australian citizenship in the 1990s and was a member of the Australian Baseball National Team at the Baseball World Cup 1998. He was appointed to the Aussie coaching staff at the Olympic Games Sydney 2000. He served as a coach for Australia in the World Baseball Classic in 2006 and 2013, and for the 2017 World Baseball Classic Sydney Qualifier won by Australia last February. [Read more...](#)

WBSC WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017

WBSC Men's Softball World Championship
Whitehorse, Canada - 7 to 16 Jul #2016MWC

WBSC U-19 Junior Women's Softball World Championship
Clearwater, FL, USA - 24 to 30 Jul #2016JWWC

WBSC U-12 Baseball World Cup
Tainan, Chinese Taipei - 28 Jul to 6 Aug #U12WorldCup

WBSC U-18 Baseball World Cup
Thunder Bay, Canada - 1 to 10 Sept #U18WorldCup

About World Baseball Softball Confederation

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 213 National Federation and Associate Members in 142 countries and territories across Asia, Africa, Americas, Europe and Oceania.

