



**EUROPEAN  
SOFTBALL  
FEDERATION**

# NEWSFLASH

April 2011



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Sportfriends,

Sport is one of the greatest aspects of our life which unifies all people involved in softball, both on the National and International levels.

We all invest hours in our sport, without receiving monetary compensation but only great pleasure in return. Softball has become not only a factor of participation in the top leagues or in the European and World Championships, but a recreational pastime for many.

This is where we need to grow in the coming years. The ESF has invested and will continue to invest in Slow Pitch Softball and together with CEB we will develop our sport through School-programs and BeeBall.

Talking about BeeBall, all participants of the congress in Antalya, should remember the enjoyable presentation of BeeBall by Anton Kops, who, at that time, was a Board member of the Dutch Federation.

Last year a new Dutch Board was elected and Anton became the Board member of the Gryphons, a club in the Southern part of the Netherlands.

Last week I visited a league game at Gryphons and awarded Anton with our ESF box of miniature medals for all his work regarding the introduction of Bee Ball in the Netherlands as well as his efforts to make this available for all the European Federations.

Europe is the only continent that does not have its own Continental games. IOC member and President of the European Olympic Committees Patrick Hickey, is hoping to set up an event that would incorporate all the main Olympic Sports.

The plans are currently undergoing a feasibility study by Deloitte. If successful, the Games could either be in addition to European

Championships or possibly replace them. Hickey has the support of 47 of the 49 European Olympic Committees.

He described initial interest from sponsors as „colossal“. Other continents already have their own games like the Pan American Games, the Pan Arab Games, the All-Africa Games and the Asian Games.

Hickey is convinced that the European Games can make produce more income than all the current individual Championships combined.

If the plans for the European Games are successful, the first event is likely to take place in June or September 2015, possibly in London. At the Sport Forum at Budapest, we asked if softball will be included in these Games. We are waiting for an answer and will keep you informed.

At the end of this month, the ESF Board will meet in Haarlem in the Netherlands for the their Spring Meeting to review all coming Tournaments of this year.

If you have any comments or questions, please send them to our Secretary General via email and we will add this on the Agenda of the meeting.

Have fun !

Andre van Overbeek



## ESF SLOWPITCH CLINIC IS RECEIVED WITH ENTHUSIASM IN SWITZERLAND

by Bob Fromer

Croatia, Slovenia, Malta and Belgium (three times!) have all hosted weekend ESF Slowpitch Clinics over the past few years, run by coaches and umpire trainers from the British Softball Federation.

On March 19-20, the Swiss Baseball and Softball Federation was the latest host for an ESF Slowpitch Clinic, with 20 people attending at the Wittenbach Baseball and Softball Club near St Gallen and enjoying a great weekend of learning and playing the game.

The clinic was delivered by GB Slowpitch Team Assistant Coaches Lukas Kelly and Sara Vertigan and British umpire trainer and ESF TC Mike Jennings.

### *Making up the Rules*

One of the first problem the clinicians encountered was that slowpitch isn't played to a fixed set of rules in Switzerland, and every tournament or league has its own!

In addition, while some of the trainees had played slowpitch, fastpitch or baseball before, others had never encountered concepts like „tagging up“ or a „double play“.

But as Mike Jennings said, „They were already keen on playing slowpitch and were determined to improve their knowledge and playing skills. They wanted to take the sport more seriously and contributed wholeheartedly to the practical sessions.

„The course seemed to inspire a desire to standardise the rules they use (ISF being the most accessible common standard), to recognise how and why co-ed rules differ from the single-sex disciplines, and to improve their umpiring skills in parallel with playing competence.“

### *Day One*

The first day of the clinic began with theory but soon moved on to practice.

Sara Vertigan reported, „They began with a classroom session on umpiring, including the basic playing differences between slowpitch, fastpitch and baseball and height regulations and strike zone definition in slowpitch pitching.

We then moved on to practical exercises designed to enhance that learning. „Early on, we blended pitching drills with umpiring practise so all three of us could be involved, and I must say that over the two days the umpiring skills showed a huge improvement.“

The participants then worked through sessions on basic skills and personal tuition on hitting techniques. The first day concluded with a vigorous indoor scrimmage game, since it was snowing outside.

According to Mike Jennings, „Those umpiring for the first time found it an interesting challenge!“

### *Day Two*

The second day started with an extended GB Softball-style warm-

up session, emphasising discipline and team work, as a demonstration of the techniques participants could use to prepare their own teams for games.

This was followed by on-field drills that demonstrated when and why to make certain plays. Sara Vertigan said, „Many of the players had no idea what a double play was, no understanding of tagging up etc, so it was important to talk them through everything.“

The course concluded with another indoor game during which all the participants demonstrated their newly-developed skills, including the designated umpires calling an inning behind the plate and in the field. The learning came together during this competitive game and it proved an enjoyable and energetic end to the course -- a way to pull everything together and promote the fun side of the game.

### *Reactions*

Lukas Kelly said: „In all the basic areas we explored, from warm-up to warm-down, we saw a substantial improvement in basic skills including disciplined warm-up, throwing, ground balls, hitting techniques, infield exercises and outfield exercises.

I was certainly tired by the end, and I'm sure they would have been too! We put them through their paces but they rose to it without complaint. They were totally respectful and a joy to coach.“

Sara Vertigan said: „For me, having two coaches there for the 18-20 players we had was fantastic. With the varying levels of experience among the players, it meant a lot more one-to-one coaching than I was able to give at the clinics I did in Belgium and Malta last year. Overall, I had a great time and I felt that we made a positive difference.“

Mike Jennings noted: „Throughout the course, volunteers from the local Wittenbach Club, the Vikings, provided morning croissants, coffee, water and fruit, plus lunchtime pizzas and sausages. We were grateful for the gracious hospitality provided by the club and Swiss Federation throughout our stay.“

By the end of the clinic, the trainees were talking about sending a team to the UK to play in a tournament this summer, and they hope to be entering ESF slowpitch competitions before long!



## IBAF AND ISF MEET TO DISCUSS...

...COLLABORATION ON JOINT PROPOSAL TO REINSTATE BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL ONTO THE OLYMPIC PROGRAMME

NEW YORK, NEW YORK (USA) -- The International Softball Federation (ISF) and the International Baseball Federation (IBAF), which are separate and independent international federations recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as governing their respective sports, announced today that they have agreed to explore the feasibility of collaborating on a single, joint presentation to the IOC seeking to restore softball and baseball onto the programme of the Olympic Games in 2020.

The IOC and the Local Olympic Organizing Committees (LOOCs) have faced increasing financial and organizational pressures in recent years as a result of the growth of the Olympic Games and the accompanying new venues and numbers of athletes that must be accommodated.

In a 2005 vote undertaken with a view to controlling the size of future Olympic Games, softball and baseball were dropped from the 2012 Olympic Games programme and subsequently were not

reinstated in a 2009 vote for the 2016 programme. Mindful of the concerns and pressures facing the IOC and the LOOCs, the IBAF and ISF are analyzing the savings and the reduced impact that may be derived from a combined proposal that women's softball and men's baseball share a venue and share space in the Olympic Village for the Summer Games in 2020.

Should an agreement be reached to work together, the ISF and the IBAF believe that they would be able to demonstrate compelling reasons why, under such a proposal, their respective sports should be reinstated onto the Olympic programme.

The IBAF and the ISF would work closely with the IOC to assure that any joint proposal would accomplish their goals in a manner that complies with the Olympic Charter.

The ISF and the IBAF will meet again – perhaps as soon as next week's SportAccord convention in London – to talk further about the possibility of the two federations working together on such a proposal.

*Press Release by the ISF*

## THE SWEDISH BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL FEDERATION HELD THEIR ANNUAL MEETING LAST WEEKEND (MARCH 26TH) IN STOCKHOLM

*by Kristian Pälviä, Swedish Baseball/Softball Federation*

During the Annual Meeting, the SBSF member clubs and districts approved last years Report, the proposed budget for 2011 as well as the Operational Plan for 2011-2014.

14 clubs and one district was present at the Annual Meeting, held at Quality Hotel Nacka in Stockholm.

The Operational Plan for 2011-2014 emphasises development initiatives in order to

1. Strengthen the clubs and districts
2. Develop more coaches and leaders
3. Increase recruiting in clubs
4. Develop competitions and events
5. Raise the competitive level of Elite players and National Teams

In the elections, Mats Fransson was re-elected as President for the Swedish Baseball and Softball Federation for a period of one year.

In the other elections for the SBSF Board, there was three vacancies to fill after the resignations of board members Henrik Jørgensen (Helsingborg), Åsa Höglund (Sundsvall) and Johnny Stormats (Leksand).

To fill the vacancies, Maria Jönsson (Göteborg), Jenny Wonisch (Norrköping) and Karl Knutsson (Sölvesborg) was elected to the SBSF Board, while Lars Sundin was re-elected as member to the board.

Stormats will continue to preside over the Competitions Committee outside of the SBSF Boardroom.

The SBSF board for 2011 is as follows:

- Mats Fransson, President
- Karl Knutsson, Vice President
- Ulf Steinvall
- Ola Sund
- Maria Jönsson
- Jenny Wonisch
- Lars Sundin



# EUROGAMES TO RUN SLOWPITCH AND FASTPITCH COMPETITIONS IN ROTTERDAM

by Bob Fromer

EuroGames 2011, a major sporting and cultural festival aimed at LGBT participants but open to all, will feature both slowpitch and fastpitch softball when it takes over Rotterdam for five days from July 20-24.

Slowpitch competition for men's, women's and co-ed teams and fastpitch competition for men's and women's teams will be featured alongside 27 other sports at EuroGames 2011, a major sporting and cultural festival aimed at LGBT participants but open to all that will take place in Rotterdam, Netherlands from July 20-24.

The softball competitions will run from Thursday, July 21 through Saturday, July 23, starting at 9.00 am, and will be played at the Euro Stars ground, a recently renovated softball venue located in Capelle a/d IJssel, east of Rotterdam, easily reached by public transport.

## Registration

Teams from all over Europe are expected to take part, but individual players without a team can register for a team assignment by contacting [softbal@eurogames2011.eu](mailto:softbal@eurogames2011.eu).

Teams will be able to specify whether they want to play fastpitch, slowpitch or both when they register for EuroGames softball, and players can take part in both single-sex and co-ed competitions.

Three games in each tournament are guaranteed -- but of course there will be a great deal more to the event than just the softball, with a major programme of cultural events planned as well. More information can be found on the EuroGames website.

## Tournament rules

Twelve teams per day can be hosted at the Euro Stars venue, and the organisers will announce when the different competition formats will take place nearer the time.

However, Saturday, July 23 is being reserved for the co-ed slowpitch competition, which will be limited to 12 teams on a first-come first-served basis.

The co-ed tournament will be played as a 5:5 competition. Tournament rules will follow ESF regulations, except that no new inning will be started after 75 minutes and teams will need to have a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 15 players.

The EuroGames organisation will supply game balls, umpires and scorekeepers.

Gold, silver and bronze medals will be awarded for all three competitions, as well as personal prizes for the Best Hitter and Most Valuable Player in all competitions.

The final deadline for entering a team or registering as an individual player is July 1, 2011, and 18 is the minimum age for participation.

## Cost

There will be no cost for registering a team, but players on each team will need to pay an individual entry fee.

If paid before April 30, this will be 100 euros for EGLSF members and 120 euros for others; if paid after May 1, the fee will be 130 euros for EGLSF members and 150 euros for others.

More information about registration can be found at: <http://www.eurogames2011.eu/en/register-now>.

All teams will be received with open arms -- they do not have to be LGBT orientated.

The EuroGames is based on understanding and respect for all sexual preferences, opinions, religions, races, colours and creeds.

## Accommodation and travel

The EuroGames has its own travel desk for hotels, flights and hosted housing.

Special travel offers are mainly for flights combined with hotels, but the travel desk will gladly help with all arrangements if you contact: [travelDesk@eurogames2011.eu](mailto:travelDesk@eurogames2011.eu).

