



**EUROPEAN
SOFTBALL
FEDERATION**

NEWSFLASH

October 2012

FIRST OFFICIAL SOFTBALL FIELD BUILD IN THE UKRAINE

by Noskova Galya, Secretary Softball Club NIKA

The first official softball field in Ukraine has been built and on September 29 in Lugansk, there have been the Opening ceremony.

This field is the first in the new development of softball in Ukraine and will be a big part in that development.

The field is based at the Softball Club „Nika“ at the Dahl University.

The hope that this field will attract more children to the sport and even others who would like to join the program in the development of softball in Ukraine.

We also hope that with this development interest in the game will grow and future plans for developing another field will allow Ukraine to bid for European Championship Competitions.



The field was built with the help of trade mark company Steel Symphony, Mr.Sergiy Grishchenko and General manager softball club „Nika“ - Dahl University - Mr.Vasyl Kysil



BEE BALL

by Anton Kops (ESF Development Comm. for Bee Ball)

On YouTube is now available the Dutch promotional clip “How to play Bee Ball” now in the version with English subtitles for the ESF and CEB use.

Here is the link: <http://youtu.be/EzpXqpTbL34>

For more information about Bee Ball, contact Anton Kops, email apakops@tiscali.nl



SLOVENIANS WIN THE EUROPEAN SLOWPITCH CUP

by Bob Fromer

Pardubice, Czech Republic: August 4 -- Everyone will say that it's the best thing that could have happened for slowpitch softball in Europe -- and even some members of the British team Chromies might agree.

The long reign of British national and club teams (and, on one occasion, the Irish) at the top of European slowpitch is over. In the final of the 2012 European Slowpitch Cup on Saturday, August 4 in Pardubice, the Slovenian team Lisicke proved that the previous night's win over the Chromies in the 1 v 2 Page Playoff game was no fluke by doing it again.

This was a tense, close and extremely well-played final, and Lisicke prevailed 6-4 after the Chromies ran themselves out of a rally in the bottom of the seventh inning with the tying runs on base.

The game could not have been more even. Both teams had 12 hits, the Chromies committed only one error and Lisicke two and both received superb performances from their pitchers -- David Lee for the Chromies and Ales Mravlje for Lisicke. But for once, it wasn't the British that won on power. GB's all-time power hitter Brett Gibbens, to be sure, had a home run in the game -- his ninth in the competition. It was a solo shot in the first inning and gave the Chromies a 1-0 lead. But Lisicke's Ales Mravlje had two blasts over the left field fence in the third and fifth innings, driving in five of the Slovenians' six runs, and those home runs were the difference.

The Slovenian team, as winners often do, had three crucial pieces of luck in the game, including one of their errors that turned out to work in their favour. But no one can begrudge them a wonderful triumph. The Slovenians lost only once in the eight-team competition, and their blend of base-hitting, speed, power and thoughtful pitching is slowpitch at its best, as befits the only Central European country without a fastpitch programme.

„I don't have any complaints,“ Chromies Co-Manager Doug Clouston said after the game. „They played great softball, and they were younger, faster and fitter than we were. It was a wonderful tournament, and if anyone disparages the European Cup back home after the week we've had here, I'll just laugh at them.



„But I think we have some major rebuilding to do,“ Doug added. Slovenia as a country is currently ranked second in the European slowpitch table, and now they are ranked first in European club slowpitch. It is a remarkable achievement for a tiny country that came to the 2008 European Championships in Southampton and finished last.

The Final

Having lost on Friday afternoon to Lisicke in the 1 v 2 Page Playoff game, Chromies had to overcome dangerous opponents Saturday morning in the German Team UCE Travellers to get back to the final. That was a tight game as well, with the Chromies prevailing 11-8.

But there was a special atmosphere about the final even before the game began, and it had to do with the fact that no one could confidently predict the outcome. The game the two teams had played the previous afternoon had gone into the seventh inning tied at 9-9. What would happen today?

Having lost the 1 v 2 game, Chromies were the visitors in the final, and the aim was to jump out on top quickly. They did -- on Brett Gibbens' solo blast in the top of the first -- but a 1-0 lead didn't feel like much of a cushion.

Lisicke came back in the bottom of the first with two hits, but a double play started by Moe Flett at third base kept them off the board. An even better play kept the Slovenians scoreless in the bottom of the second when Eric Kelly made a tremendous throw to the plate from right-centre field to nail the lightning-quick Ziga Strvicelj trying to score on a single by Ziga Bauer.

In the top of the third, the Chromies increased the lead to 2-0. Eric Kelly led off the inning with a triple to the fence in left field and scored on Michael O'Sullivan's groundout to first.

Clearly, this was going to be a game of pitching and defence -- but 2-0 was never going to be good enough, and Lisicke erased the lead in the bottom of the third with the benefit of their first break in the game. There were two on and two outs when Savina Golicnik hit a sharp ground ball back to David Lee. On another day, David might have snared it, but this time it bounded off his glove, a run scored, and instead of the inning being over, Ales Mravlje was coming to the plate. One long home run later and Lisicke led 4-2.

A double play cut down a Chromies' rally in the top of the fourth, but the British team shaved the lead to 4-3 in the top of the fifth. David Lee singled to left, went to second when the ball was misplayed and scored on a double by Eric Kelly.

The Slovenians scored their last two crucial runs in the bottom of the fifth, but there were two out and no one on when they did it. Savina Golicnik drove a 1-1 pitch over the head of Brett Gibbens in left, and that brought Ales Mravlje to the plate. Brett could only wave his arms in despair as the ball soared over his head and over the fence for a 6-3 Slovenian lead.

The final two innings were a tale of GB trying to find a way to catch up, and being thwarted by the Slovenian defence and two pieces of bad luck.

In the top of the sixth, Brett Gibbens and Misha Sulcova singled with one out. Danny Gunn then smashed the ball back at pitcher Ales Mravlje. The ball cannoned off his arm and up in the air -- but straight to second base player Grega Vacancic standing near the bag, and the result was an inning-ending and very fortuitous double play.

So to the top of the seventh, with the Slovenians still leading 6-3. Could the Chromies find a comeback?

Moe Flett opened with a fly ball to Ziga Bauer, but the unflappable David Lee lined a single up the middle, Jenny Ball dropped a single into left and Eric Kelly lined a single to left, scoring David and cutting the lead to 6-4, with Jenny on second and Eric on first.

Up came Natalie Bailey, pinch-hitting for Vicky McKendrick, and Natalie hit a line drive to shortstop Andraz Skabar. Andraz caught the ball for the second out and fired to first in an attempt to pick off Eric Kelly. The throw skipped past the first base player, Tina Trobec, and Jenny Ball scampered to third and was waved on home. But the ball had rebounded back to Trobec, who fired a

strike to the plate and Jenny was tagged out by catcher Gabi Hu-merca despite a headfirst slide.

It was a stunning ending. Suddenly, the game was over and the Slo-venians were European Cup champions. And no one could deny that they deserved it.

Individual awards

Individual player awards went to:

Best Batter (Male): Brett Gibbens (Chromies/GB)

Best Batter (Female): Danielle Finnemore (UCE Travellers/GER)

Best Pitcher: David Lee (Chromies/GB)

MVP (Male): Max Zerhuser (UCE Travellers/GER)

MVP (Female): Ruth Brady (Dodder Dynamoers/IRL)

The best yet

Players, umpires and ESF officials who were in Pardubice are all agreed that this year's competition has been the best European Slowpitch Cup yet.

That's not just because the competition has enjoyed its highest number of entries (eight), but because of the quality of the softball played and the closeness of the competition, with seven of the eight teams capable of beating the others.

More importantly, the techniques and tactics of slowpitch are now much more widespread in Europe. It's no longer a case of Euro-pean baseball and fastpitch players trying to adapt to the slowpitch game -- the teams here this week are playing proper slowpitch, and some of them are playing it very well indeed.

A proposal has been sitting on the desk of the ESF Executive for over a year now to make the European Slowpitch Cup a biennial event, alternating with the European Slowpitch Championships.

The theory is that having just one European slowpitch event per year (instead of two in European Championship years) will en-courage more countries/teams to enter. It remains to be seen whether the ESF will bring this about, and what the response will be, but opinion in Pardubice seemed to favour the proposal. All the teams here want their experience this week to be repeated (the 2010 European Slowpitch Championships in Prague were very similar), and having one slowpitch event per year amidst a full baseball and fastpitch calendar in Europe may be the way to go.

But the main lesson coming out of this week, foreshadowed in the European Slowpitch Championships last year in Dupnitsa, is that the days of automatic British (or occasionally Irish) victories are over.

When Japan beat the USA to win the last Olympic Championship in Beijing in 2008, the universal opinion (apart, of course, from Team USA and the ASA) was that the result was good for soft-ball -- albeit maybe four years too late to keep the sport in the Olympics. In Pardubice, the universal opinion (shared by many of the Chromies), is that the win by Lisicke is a very good thing for slowpitch softball in Europe.

If the Slovenians could beat one of the best teams in England, then other countries and slowpitch club teams will be thinking that they have a chance to do so as well. And eventually, they will.

A win for the Tigers

In their very last game of the tournament -- the seventh place playoff game with the Askoe Linz Bandits from Austria -- the Sun-ville Tigers from Belgium finally won a game. They took an early lead, went into the bottom of the seventh 8-5 ahead, and just held out as the Bandits scored two and had the tying run on third and the winning run on second when the final out was made.

The crowd -- and there were decent crowds all week -- gave the Belgians a warm hand.

But it was a particularly disappointing result for the Austrians, who opened the tournament with three wins in their first four games, including the only pool defeat of Lisicke, then didn't win a game thereafter. In the very last pool game on Friday, had the Austrians defeated the Dodder Dynamoers, they would have made the play-offs. But after trailing 8-0 and coming back to 8-8, the Austrians lost 9-8 and now they have finished the tournament in last place.

As for Dodder Dynamoers, they lost the fifth place playoff game on Saturday to the Czech team DNACE by a score of 17-10 and played poorly in doing so. Irish softball has some rebuilding to do, perhaps more urgently than the Chromies.

Final Standings

- 1 -- Chromies (GB)
- 2 -- Lisicke (Slovenia)
- 3 -- UCE Travellers (Germany)
- 4 -- Pasos Pardubice (Czech Republic)
- 5 -- DNACE (Czech Republic)
- 6 -- Dodder Dynamoers (Ireland)
- 7 -- Sunville Tigers Belgium
- 8 -- Askoe Linz Bandits (Austria)

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NEWS OF THE SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN SOFTBALL FEDERATION

by Yuri Alkalay

Youri Alkalay - president of Bulgarian Softball Federation and Alexandrina Bogdanova – deputy head-coach of the Bulgarian National Team (women's fastpitch) conducted a Level 3 clinic for Turkish Softball Federation in Kirikale (60 km from Ankara).

Over 20 attendants from all over Turkey (including coaches, physical education teachers, officials and players) spent 3 busy days at the field and in the classroom covering a hectic schedule: advanced

pitching, defensive and offensive skills, planning and organization of tournaments, school programs, etc.

High temperatures (over 40 C) did not discourage the participants who were extremely enthusiastic to gain knowledge and learn new skills.

A successful practical examination and theory test put an end to 3 fruitful days full of friendship and sporting spirit.



AUSTRIA: SHARX WON 10TH TITLE

by Michael Vallant, Austrian Baseball/Softball Federation

The Final Four of the Austrian Softball League took place at the Softball field Freudenuau on 8th and 9th of September.

After a tight race for the top spots 3 teams finished with the same record after the round robin but the tie breaker went in favor of the Dornbirn Sharx.

Pee Wees St. Poelten finished in 2nd place, Vienna Mosquitoes in 3rd. The last spot went to the Vienna Wanderers.

In the first game of the page system Final Fours Vienna Mosquitoes faced off against the Vienna Wanderers.

After 2 innings the score was tied but in the 3rd the Mosquitoes scored 8 unanswered runs. This inning decided the game and the Vienna Mosquitoes secured their first medal in their history.

The 2nd game saw a rematch of last year's final, Dornbirn Sharx vs Pee Wees St. Poelten. Although the Sharx had a lot of scoring chances and went up 1-0 in the first inning. But it were the Pee Wees tipping the game in their favor with 2 runs in the 4th inning. With a final score of 3-1 the Pee Wees advanced directly to the grand finale.

In the next game Sharx and Mosquitoes played for the second sport in the grand finale.

The pitching of the Sharx overpowered the batting of the Mosquitoes who managed to score just one run.



On the other hand the Sharx offense had no troubles scoring run after run. With an 8-1 win the Sharx advanced to the grand finale, Mosquitoes finishing 3rd in the overall standing.

In the grand finale Pee Wees faced off against the Sharx once again. Sharx got off to a great start scoring 6 runs in the first 3 innings.

Although the Pee Wees had many opportunities to score the Sharx limited them to just 2 runs over 7 innings.

Winning the game by a final score of 9-2 the Dornbirn Sharx secured the 2012 title, their 2nd in a row and 10 overall.

BULGARIA: AKADEMICS SOFIA WIN 9TH GOLD MEDAL

by Gergana Handjiyska, BSF

The Akademiks Sofia, one of Bulgaria's top fastpitch softball teams won the Bulgarian Championships, which also commemorates the 20th anniversary of the women's softball championship in Bulgaria.

This is 9th gold in the club's history following the titles in 95, 98, 99, 2000, 2001, 2008, 2009, 2010.

The Akademiks won the finals in a 2:0 victory with scores of 8:7 and 4:3 against the team of Babes Blagoevgrad.

The team from Blagoevgrad never gave up and were very close in taking both games thanks to the performance of their pitcher Alexandrina Bogdanova and the catcher Lyubima Harizanova, who was also the best batter on the team offense.

The Akademiks, who finished the season undefeated, started the play offs nervously with consecutive errors, which would have cost them the first game, but thanks to their good offense, managed to win the first game 8:7.

Nikoleta Konova, Alexandra Genova and Iliyana Trencheva took turns at the plate and the win went to Trencheva, who closed the last two innings without giving up a run.

In the second game Iliyana Trencheva got the win allowing only 3 unearned runs. The offense was led by the player/coach Gergana

Handjiyska with 4 hits and 1 RBI and the 3rd baseman Nikoleta Konova with 2 hits and 2 RBI. Final standings for 2012:

1. Akademiks Sofia
2. Babes Blagoevgrad
3. Angels Dupnitsa
4. Devils Dupnitsa
5. Athletic Sofia
6. Lions NSA Sofia



SPAIN: CS VILADECANS WINS THE SPANISH LEAGUE

by Xavier Mateu, Real Federaci3n Espa1ola de B3isbol y S3fbol

CS Viladecans has won their third straight female softball national competitions by winning the the Divisi3n de Honor of the National League, and the Copa de la Reina.

In the National League, the team from the Barcelona area won in the play off 3 games against Kirologi OBB from Orio (San Sebastián).

The same team from the North of Spain was the opponent in the Gold Medal Game of the Copa de la Reina.



SWEDEN: SKÖVDE WIN 7TH STRAIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP

by Kristian Pälviä, Svenska Baseball och Softball Förbundet

Photo by Magnus Hallqvist, www.hallqvist.net

In the Swedish Championship for fastpitch, women, Skövde beat Leksand to capture their seventh straight championship.

This year, the Finals were more tight than ever with three games being won with one run.

Skövde, having lost four starters from last years Championship team, was not expected to be in the run for another



championship and barely advanced to the playoffs, finishing in 4th place in the league.

Leksand, with a young and promising team, finished third in the regular season standings. But in the playoffs, both teams stepped up to the plate and played spectacular, giving the crowds in the Final Series many good plays and showing softball at its best.

Regular Season, final standings:

Sundsvall Mosquitoes	16	11-5	22
Enköping Wildcats	16	10-6	20
Leksand Lumberjacks	16	7-9	14
Skövde Saints	16	7-9	14

Söder Black and Blue	16	5-11	10

Semifinals:

Sundsvall – Skövde	0-11, 0-10
Enköping – Leksand	3-2, 2-10, 2-15

Finals:

Skövde – Leksand	4-3, 6-5
Leksand – Skövde	7-6, 2-8

Tess Granath was selected Most Valuable Player in the Final Series.