



*Newsletter*

ESF Newsletter 3rd issue, May 2015

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# EDITORIAL

Mette Nissen;

Vice President for Operations,

Dear friends,

With this Newsletter to all of us, I have the opportunity to communicate to you from the perspective of our work at the Executive Board and from my personal perspective too.

My working area within the ESF is Operations, which means I try to make sure that all our projects keep moving forward and that the Commissions and Committees continue their work, along with their special tasks that are updated quarterly.

I would like to report that, overall, the EC and its Commissions and Committees are producing excellent work. From my perspective as the Operations Officer, I see how much effort all the volunteers are putting in to keep improving the ESF.

Our playing season has just begun and soon our official ESF tournaments will begin – all 10 of them. The Technical and Competition Committee has prepared a great season of tournaments, with marketing and media being a center of attention as there will be more webstreaming than ever before.

Under the Development Commission, clinics and other programs are being held and more will follow throughout the season. Questionnaires have been sent out and are now being analyzed to see how we can support our member countries in their development plans.

As I am sure you have noticed, our Facebook page and our website has had a profound makeover and, under our Communications Director, Helena Novotna, has become a professional sport website.

As a Vice President of the ESF, I feel the responsibility to care for the European softball family in the best possible way, together with my colleagues on the Executive Board. We all strive to see our family grow bigger, closer and stronger.

Internationally, European softball is very well respected, and we are involved in the development of softball worldwide. One of my tasks as a member of the ESF Development Commission is to continue to build our relationship with ASA/USA Softball, who have been very supportive. Exchanges have already been made with success, mostly on the players' side, and more activity is planned.

Our need for volunteers is obvious and I am pleased to be able to say that we have great volunteers, doing great work to grow softball in Europe. Thanks to all of you -- without your help, we would not be able to run even half of these projects.

When I attend a tournament or an event as a player, spectator, guest or "on the job" as an ESF VP, I always feel that softball people all over Europe are open and friendly, always ready to welcome new people into our sport. I feel we are unique in that respect.

I am certain that this season will be another great one for European softball. I thank you all for assisting in keeping us moving forward – I am proud to be part of this family.

See you on the field.

**Mette Nissen, ESF Vice President for Operations**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mette Nissen'.

# ESF News

## Executive Board Meeting

The ESF EC had their spring meeting in Haarlem where they finalized the arrangements and organization of the 2015 ESF tournaments, development projects and other important issues.

The EC, when having their meetings in the different cities, has also the opportunity to meet the federation officials from those countries. This time it was the turn of the Dutch federation to send their representatives. Along with Marlies Struyve, came Frits Mulder Board member of the Dutch Baseball Federation and CEB President Jan Esselman.



The main topic of discussion was the concept of joining CEB and the ESF in a number of joint issues, with the future intent of formalizing a structure that would create an organization that would be a unified front and leverage the strengths of both Confederations towards any of the International entities they have to deal with on a regular basis. This is with the understanding that this needs to be a strategic process with a specific business plan that will include all aspects of creating the perfect atmosphere for the future of both sports, while sustaining their independency. The first meetings will be held soon and will include the ESF representatives, Andre Van Overbeek, Gabriel Waage and Ami Baran. The ESF EC hopes that the future of our sport will be one of growth and strength especially with the hopeful Olympic return in 2020.

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## Webstreaming

It was decided at the 2015 ESF Congress that live webstreaming of the top European events is an important means for developing a larger audience for softball. An increased budget to be invested into live video streaming of ESF official competitions was approved by a Congress vote. Agreements were then made with two companies – Czech Playo TV and Italian INOKE – who will broadcast as follows:

- Playoffs and final games of the EChW (Friday, Saturday).
- Final day of the EChCG (Saturday).
- Playoffs and final game of the EChJM (Friday, Saturday).
- Playoffs and final games of the ECWA (Friday, Saturday).
- Playoffs and final games of the ECWCW (Friday, Saturday).
- Playoffs and final games of the ESCM (Thursday, Friday, Saturday).

This is a huge step in the promotion of our sport. ESF Communications Director Helena Novotna is also making sure that all tournament organizers will offer daily news bulletins from their tournaments in English.

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## European Coaches Association

The establishment of the European Softball Coaches Association is under way.

As promised, we will be creating a home for all those coaches who spend their lives developing our sport. We have begun with a preliminary draft of the structure of the organization, including Articles of Association, benefits for coaches, a partnership agreement with the NFCA and much more.



The Development Commission and the EC, along with Mattias Grimsoft, Head of the Coaches/Clinicians Committee, are working to make sure that this organization will be meaningful and can help us prepare our coaches throughout Europe for the task of developing softball to the highest standards.

If any of you have suggestions for this project, please feel free to send them to Mattias Grimsoft at [grimsoft@yahoo.com](mailto:grimsoft@yahoo.com) (please cc [sg@europeansoftball.org](mailto:sg@europeansoftball.org)).

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### Development – Tournaments and Clinics

The ESF Development Commission (DC) has been hard at work looking into different aspects of development throughout Europe, based on proposals made during the ESF Congress.

The Federations of Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia and Austria have progressed the so-called “Interleague” and the ESF DC, cooperating with Petra Cizmic has seen this movement as an important brick in building the foundation for a more expanded Interleague throughout Europe.

The hope is that different regions will create a form of Interleague in their part of Europe, with support from the ESF. The ESF is looking into establishing this as an official program and finding ways to assist in the development of such an exciting project. The Interleague has received support from the ESF and we hope to see this project’s growth in the upcoming years.



Coming to a tournament where we see a high level of play is always exciting, but we should also take into consideration that at the same tournaments our developing federations are there, hoping to fit in, play at a good level and watch the top teams as they fight for the medals. The ESF DC has proposed that at some of this year’s competitions we will incorporate pitching clinics. The schedules will be tight, but we are certain coaches and players will find the time to learn from a battery of clinicians who will be on site to teach and help. These are some of the tournaments where we are hoping to have such clinics:

- EChW in Rosmalen
- EChJM in Most
- EMRYT in Collecchio
- EChCS in Dupnitsa (specifically for our slowpitch community)
- ESCM in Prague (where we will be seeing the New Zealand Junior men competing for the first time in Europe).

Another area which the ESF DC has invested are semi-regional tournaments, each based on certain aspects of our sport. This will be the second season of the Baltic Open Championship (in cooperation with Mattias Grimsoft, Kristian Palvia and Mette Jackobsen), with the goal of turning this into a regional championship in the future. Norway, Sweden, Lithuania and Denmark will be there, either with men's and/or women's teams. We recently saw the Balkan Triple Ball (organised by Youri Alkalay), which included teams from the Balkan region playing fastpitch softball and baseball and ending with a friendly game of slowpitch softball.



In cooperation with Little League, there will be a clinic for softball coaches on July 25-29 at their regional complex in Kutno, Poland, offering classroom instruction (July 25-26), hands-on practice sessions (July 26-28) and in-game analysis (July 27-29). This training will be offered during the Little League Softball Regional Tournament played from July 27-31. Little League will cover the costs of housing and meals for participants during their stay in Kutno.

We are opening registration for this event for about 10-15 coaches, on a first-come first-served basis. Please let us know if you are interested.

There is much more going on with regard to development and we will be updating you regularly.

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### ESF Calendar

A new feature has been launched on the ESF website – the ESF Calendar. All tournaments from the ESF Competitions section have been included in this calendar together with other world and European softball events.

You can quickly recognize the official ESF competitions (shown in blue), ESF events (shown in red) and unofficial competitions (shown in yellow).

You can ask for your own international event to be added to the Calendar and to the Competitions section by emailing ESF Communications Director Helena Novotna ([hnovotna@europeansoftball.org](mailto:hnovotna@europeansoftball.org)).



round #1: TON SNIJDERS

### ESF Photofest

The first three rounds of the ESF Photofest 2015 have taken place and we are approaching the Grand Final round. The next round will open on June 4 with a theme of Best Softball Action.

You can review our first two winners and their pictures below.



round #2: OLAF HAUWITZ

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# News from National Federations



## CZECH REPUBLIC

In April, the women's and men's national teams from Indonesia came to Prague for a number of games against top Czech teams.

The Indonesian Women's National Team played against Joudrs Prague on April 1 and learned about unpredictable weather when they had to contend with a snowstorm during their game. During the following week, the team played against the Czech Junior National Team and other teams from the top Czech division, and also entered Prague's first spring tournament in preparation for the SEA Games, which take place in June.

The Indonesian Men's National Team came to Prague two weeks later as part of their preparation for the ISF Men's World Championship in Canada this summer. The Indonesians played against the Czech Men and Junior national teams and also against some of the top teams from the Czech first division.

Both are looking forward to coming back to Europe next year for another meaningful softball experience.



## HUNGARY

The softball season has kicked off in Hungary, with six teams from three cities competing in the national championship.

This year, for the second time, two of the teams will also participate in the Interleague, an international three-round tournament, along with two teams from Slovakia, two from Croatia and one from Austria.

The next round will be hosted by Hungary on June 13-14 in Érd (Budapest area).



## JERSEY

The Jersey Softball Association hosted a co-ed slowpitch tournament on May 2-3, welcoming teams from the UK for two days of competition. Jacksons Falcons won the Plate championship, while the CPA Global Pirates won the Trophy in the highly competitive top tier. It was, overall, a successful event despite unpleasant weather conditions on the first day.





## UKRAINE

On April 25, a sports picnic called Spring Awakening was organized in Kiev.

The main purpose of the event was to popularize baseball and softball among Ukrainians. It turned into one of the best baseball-softball events of the past few years. In a large city park, various activities were organized, including a baseball and softball contest, workshops with players from various Ukrainian clubs and a barbecue, bar and live music.

In addition, two friendly games were played.

Nika Lugansk faced the Kiev Panthers in a friendly softball game, which for Lugansk was a practice game before the Ukrainian Championship and for the Panthers was their first game after a long break.



## ITALY

The 2015 edition of the Torneo della Repubblica is going to be one of the leading European softball events of the season, because of its importance to participating teams who are preparing for the European Women's Championship.

The Czech Republic will participate with two teams – the National team and a Czech All-Star Team – while Italy, Germany and France will be present with their national teams.

On Monday June 1, the tournament will host the first Italian Softball All-Star Game, together with a Home Run Derby. Players for the All-Star Team have been chosen through a vote on the Italian Federation website, and this team will play against the Italian National Team.

On May 31 and June 1, a parallel tournament will take place, named Torneo Città di Bollate, with the Italian Under-16 National Team, two Under-19 teams and the Division 2 team from Rescaldina. This competition is designed as preparation for the Italian team that will attend the European Cadette Championship.



## GREAT BRITAIN

Over the weekend of June 6-7, the British Softball Federation and BaseballSoftballUK (the development agency for the two sports) will host the London Cup, an international women's fastpitch tournament, at the country's top facility at Farnham Park near London.

Five teams will compete: the Danish National Team, club teams from Paris and Stuttgart, the London Angels (European Women's Cup winners in 2013) and a GB Select Team made up primarily of GB Under-19 players. One of the main aims of the tournament is to help the GB Juniors prepare for the ISF Junior World Championships this summer in Oklahoma.

The UK has hosted a number of clinics during the winter and spring. In February and March, Dutch pitchers Lindsey Meadows and Femke van Dusschoten came to Britain to run pitching clinics supported by the BaseballSoftballUK's High Performance Academy, and in April, former Dutch and GB Women's Team Head Coach Craig Montvidas gave a clinic for coaches on game awareness and a throwing clinic for male and female GB Under-19 players. Finally, on May 23, American pitching coach Denise Davis, owner of the Planet Fastpitch organization in Massachusetts, attended a competition day in the Great Britain Fastpitch League and delivered a series of short pitching clinics.

Meanwhile, the slowpitch season is well under way in Britain, and final selections have been made for the GB Slowpitch Team that will attempt to win a 10th straight European Championship at the EChCS in Dupnitsa, Bulgaria this summer.



FRANCE

Nice was chosen in 2011 by the International Masters Games Association (IMGA) to organise and host the European Masters Games in 2015. The IMGA is a non-profit association based in Lausanne, Switzerland, which has organised World Masters Games for more than 20 years. There will be a softball tournament organized as a part of this event. The tournament will be played in two categories age 35+ and 45+, both men's and women's softball, October 1st - 11th.



CROATIA



CZECH REPUBLIC



DENMARK

Junior Tour 2015 was the name of an international event that was organized through cooperation between Croatia, the Czech Republic and Denmark, involving mainly boys' teams. Three days of softball practice were led by Kevin Stockford, with the Danish and Croatian teams training together and playing friendly games at Joudrs Prague. More than 60 youth players attended this event. Over the weekend, an international tournament was held and teams from all three countries had the chance to play more serious softball.

This event was a huge success and the organizers from the Czech Republic are planning on continuing this type of event in future with the aim of developing European boys' competition.

Anyone interested in attending next year's event should contact Ondrej Stroner ([ondrej.stroner@centrum.cz](mailto:ondrej.stroner@centrum.cz)).





# Official Competition Information

## EChW: Rosmalen, Netherlands

The Greek National Team will be able to play after all in the European Women's Championship in Rosmalen!

After legislative changes in Greece, the Greek Softball Federation has been temporarily reinstated and Greek teams allowed to enter official ESF events. At the recent EC meeting in Haarlem, the Greek National Team's late entry request was approved and so the total number of teams competing for the title of the European Champion will be 20!



The organizer of the EChW has also released the official poster for the event.

## **EUROPEES KAMPIOENSCHAP FASTPITCH SOFTBALL 's-HERTOGENBOSCH - ROSMALEN**



**ZONDAG 19 JULI  
OPENINGSCEREMONIE  
ZATERDAG 25 JULI  
FINALES  
19 LANDENTEAMS**

**SPORTPARK GRYPHONS  
DE GROOTE WIELEN - ROSMALEN  
WWW.ECHW2015.NL**



## EChCG: Nuoro, Italy

The official logo and banner for the EChCG was finally created and preparations for this tournament are in their final weeks. The Cadette girls will start their tournament on June 29.



The [ESF Facebook page](#) will have daily updates from the tournament, with links to play-by-play, photo galleries and live webstreaming of the last two days of the competition.



Want to receive the ESF newsletter? Ask for it [here](#).

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