



BACKSOFTBALL CAMPAIGN FOCUSES ON ISRAEL AS ATHLETES PREPARE FOR MACCABIAH GAMES

Softball president: “This is a perfect example of our sport being accessible to a wide-range of participants.”

Ramat Gan, Israel; 10th July 2009: Softball players from around the world are finalizing their preparations for the 18th Maccabiah Games which begin in Israel on Monday, reinforcing the universal popularity of the sport as the BackSoftball campaign continues making an impact.

Softball teams from three continents will take part in the Men’s and Women’s Open and Master’s competitions at the Maccabiah Games, with almost 7,500 athletes taking part at what is considered to be the third largest sports event in the world.

Softball first joined the quadrennial Maccabiah Games programme in 1981 and this year there will be 31 sports taking part. Teams from Argentina, Canada, Israel, Mexico, USA, and Venezuela will participate in this year’s softball competition.

The Israel Softball Association will be promoting the BackSoftball campaign during the softball competitions, highlighting the work they have been doing in the region in recent years as well as activity this month by two of their national teams.

A number of programs have been developed by the ISA, including junior coaching workshops, which are implemented through the use of Physical Education teachers and after-school programs.

International Softball Federation President Don Porter said, “The Maccabiah Games have been a notable date on the softball calendar for many years now and we are proud to continue being a part of them. Our sport is a part of 15 different multi-sports Games and this one is truly unique because men and women from a range of age groups get to take part. This is a perfect example of our sport being accessible to a wide-range of participants.”

Also in that country, Israel’s women’s national softball team is currently getting ready for the 11-nation VIII European Championship Women “B,” which begins on July 27 in Belgium. This comes on the heels of a third-place finish last week by one of their other national teams at



another regional event, the VI European Championship Junior Boys, held in the Czech Republic.

The ISF is committed to growing the sport worldwide in a bid to target new players at every level, with particular focus on women and youth.

Softball's exemplary anti-doping record in top level competition is further reason why softball is becoming so popular throughout the world.

Softball was first featured in the Olympic Games in Atlanta in 1996 and last year's competition in Beijing was very successful with a total attendance close to 180,000 and a continuation of the sport's excellent record of no positive doping tests at any of the four Summer Olympics that the sport has been a part of.

A final decision on which sports will be added to the current roster of 26 at the 2016 Summer Olympic Games will be made at the 121st IOC Session in Copenhagen in October this year.

Further information is available in the OTHER DOCUMENTS section of www.BackSoftball.com

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