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ESPN, ESPN2 and ESPN3.com to air World Cup of Softball live from Oklahoma City

OKLAHOMA CITY – Seven 2010 KFC World Cup of Softball presented by Six Flags games including the women's fast pitch Championship Game and the men's slow pitch Border Battle will air live across the United States on ESPN, ESPN2 and ESPN3.com, the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America announced today. The World Cup is July 22-26 at the ASA Hall of Fame Stadium, which recently hosted the 2010 NCAA Women's College World Series.

"Since its inception in 2005, the World Cup of Softball has become one of the premier international softball events," ASA Executive Director Ron Radigonda said. "This year, the fans have the unique opportunity to not only watch the National Teams of Canada and Japan but also two women's teams from the United States and the men's slow pitch teams from Canada and the USA. We are pleased to have the ESPN networks bringing the highest level of our sport into America's living rooms and into homes across the world. Their continued relationship with the ASA has been vital to continuing the growth of our sport during this critical time."

The World Cup, the only international event hosted by ASA/USA Softball, is the only international softball event aired in the United States. In addition every game will be offered in high definition on ESPN HD and ESPN2 HD. For the first time, all seven of ESPN and ESPN2's USA Softball Women's National Team ESPN and ESPN2 telecasts will be simulcast on ESPN3.com. In addition, each of the seven games will be offered in high definition on ESPN HD and ESPN2 HD. Selected games from ESPN's coverage will also be televised globally to more than 150 countries across ESPN's international networks including ESPN America, ESPN Pacific Rim, ESPN Australia HD, ESPN Brazil HD, ESPN Israel, ESPN Middle East, ESPN Africa, ESPN Caribbean and ESPN2 Caribbean.

"Our coverage of the World Cup of Softball and the NCAA Women's College World Series in recent years demonstrates ESPN's commitment to women's sports and the importance of softball in our lineup," said Carol Stiff, vice president, ESPN programming and acquisitions. "We are proud to work with ASA/USA Softball again this year to put Team USA and the best athletes in international softball back in front of our viewers."

ESPN is the exclusive home of the KFC World Cup of Softball presented by Six Flags and features over 14 hours of live coverage on ESPN, ESPN2, and ESPN3.com highlighted by multiple prime time windows including the Championship Game on July 26 at 8 p.m. CST. Games may be re-aired throughout the year.

The complete domestic ESPN, ESPN2 and ESPN3.com live air schedule is below.

July 22 at 7 p.m. – USA vs. Canada – ESPN and ESPN3.com

July 23 at 7 p.m. – USA vs. Japan – ESPN and ESPN3.com

July 24 at 1 p.m. – USA vs. USA Futures - ESPN (tape delay from 11 a.m.) and ESPN3.com

July 24 at 3 p.m. – USA vs. Canada (men's slow pitch Border Battle) – ESPN and ESPN3.com

July 24 at 7 p.m. – USA vs. Japan - ESPN2 and ESPN3.com

July 25 at 4 p.m. – USA vs. Canada - ESPN2 and ESPN3.com

July 26 at 8 p.m. – No. 1 vs. No. 2 - ESPN2 and ESPN3.com

All times are local (CST) and subject to change.

The women's action will be called by two-time Olympic Champion Michele Smith and Los Angeles Dodgers play-by-play announcer Eric Collins. For the Border Battle, Collins will be joined by former ASA Super and Major Slow Pitch player and Major League Baseball infielder Doug Flynn, who played for the Cincinnati Reds, New York Mets and Montreal Expos among other teams. He also participated in the 1988 Summer Olympic Festival slow pitch exhibition games where his 'West' team took home the Gold. Flynn, a two-time World Series Champion with the 1975-76 Reds and the National League Gold Glove Second Baseman in 1980, provides color commentary for the University of Kentucky baseball team.

"To put on the USA uniform and play in front of our home fans in Oklahoma City is really special," Olympic Gold and Silver Medalist Cat Osterman (Houston, Texas) said. "But knowing our family and friends across the country are watching us at home adds another element of excitement to the World Cup of Softball. Thank you to ESPN for allowing us to share our sport with an even larger audience. Their support of the World Cup throughout the years has really helped softball thrive."

The World Cup of Softball and the Border Battle are sanctioned by the International Softball Federation, the governing body of softball internationally as recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the General Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF). This marks the second year of The Border Battle and is the only international event of its kind.

"Every kid's dream is to wind up in a SportsCenter highlight," said two-time USA Softball Men's Slow Pitch National Team member Brian Wegman (Hamilton, Ohio). "ESPN gave us that chance last year and we're thankful to have the opportunity again this summer. Playing for your country in a game aired on ESPN is awesome. Having the Border Battle is a great opportunity for everyone who plays slow pitch and wants to bring the game to a higher level."

Team USA won the inaugural Border Battle last year with a comeback 30-23 victory. In 2009, backed by the pitching of Monica Abbott and Osterman in the World Cup Championship Game, the United States women claimed a third title, and achieved a 6-0 record, by defeating Australia 3-1. Team USA also won the first two World Cups while Japan claimed the third in 2007. (The event was not held in 2008 due to the Olympic Games in Beijing, China.)

For more information on the World Cup, log on to <http://www.usasoftball.com/>.

ESPN Inc.

ESPN, Inc. is the world's leading multinational, multimedia sports entertainment company featuring a portfolio of over 50 multimedia sports assets. The company is comprised of six 24-hour domestic television networks (ESPN, ESPN2, ESPNEWS, ESPNU, ESPN Classic, ESPN Deportes) and ESPN 3D, an event-based network. ESPN, ESPN2, ESPNU and ESPNEWS HD are simulcast services. Other businesses include ESPN Regional Television, ESPN International (46 networks, syndication, radio, web sites), ESPN Radio, ESPN.com, ESPN3.com (broadband sports network) ESPN Mobile Properties, *ESPN The Magazine*, ESPN Enterprises, ESPN PPV, and other growing new businesses including ESPN on Demand and ESPN Interactive. Based in Bristol, Conn., ESPN is 80 percent owned by ABC, Inc., which is an indirect subsidiary of The Walt Disney Company. The Hearst Corporation holds a 20 percent interest in ESPN.

About ASA

The Amateur Softball Association, founded in 1933, is the National Governing Body of softball in the United States and a member of the United States Olympic Committee. The ASA has become one of the nation's largest sports organizations and now sanctions competition in every state through a network of 83 local associations. The ASA has grown from a few hundred teams in the early days to over 240,000 teams today, representing a membership of more than three million. For more information on the ASA, visit <http://www.asasoftball.com/>.

About USA Softball

USA Softball is the brand created, operated and owned by the ASA that links the USA Men's, Women's, Junior Boys' and Junior Girls' National Team programs together. USA Softball is responsible for training, equipping and promoting these four National Teams to compete in international and domestic competitions. The USA Softball Women's National Team is one of the only two women's sports involved in the Olympic movement to capture three consecutive gold medals at the Olympic Games since 1996. The U.S. women have also won eight World Championship titles including the last six consecutive as well as claimed three World Cup of Softball titles. For more information about USA Softball, please visit <http://www.usasoftball.com/>.

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