

Junior White Sox to start campaign against Japan

10 August 2015

The Junior White Sox will play their opening match today in Oklahoma City at 8.00pm (1.00pm NZT) against the defending champions, Japan. This comes after three teams withdrew from the competition, which resulted in the draw shifting from four pools to two.

Head coach, Kevin Gettins, noted that the girls are nervous but keen to take on the current world champions. "The key to competing with a team like Japan is to minimise errors and eliminate walks, any chance they get with runners on base they have a knack of punishing you", says Gettins.

"The longer we stay with Japan deeper into the game the better chance we have. We are going into this game to compete aggressively as it is critical for the rest of the tournament that we put in a strong performance."

The Junior White Sox played ten warm up games in Los Angeles before flying to Oklahoma City, where they secured two additional practice games against Australia and Czech Republic.

Pitcher and catcher combination, Courtney Gettins and Kayla Rangiawha, kept the Australians scoreless in a "shock" 0-0 draw. The Kiwis managed to get runners on but could not capitalise and failed to produce any runs. The game was called after 6 complete innings due to "soaring temperatures".

It was a much different story against the Czechs with New Zealand putting on productive hitting display, taking the match comfortably 11-4. Coach Gettins mentioned that the team's build up was patchy but that their last two games have lifted some spirits.

The new draw for the world championships will see the top 4 from each pool go through to the playoffs.

Pool A: New Zealand, Japan, Colombia, Canada, Great Britain, China, Argentina.

Pool B: Australia, USA, Puerto Rico, Czech Republic, Italy, Mexico, Chinese Taipei and Brazil.