

CARL TUINENGA APPOINTED NEW JWSX HEAD COACH

Newly-appointed Junior White Sox coach Carl Tuinenga hopes to take the team to the Canada Cup to prepare for the next under-19 girls world championships.

Softball New Zealand has confirmed the appointment of Canterbury-based Tuinenga as head coach of the Junior White Sox through to the 2019 world championships in California. Softball New Zealand chief executive Tony Giles said it was "a fantastic opportunity for Carl".

"It's a step up from the under-17 programmes where Carl was involved for several years through the Friendship Series in Australia."

Tuinenga said he was delighted to get an opportunity at the "next level" after enjoying his experience with the Emerging Sox.

A former premier grade pitcher in Christchurch, Tuinenga has been coaching female softball teams for over 15 years after starting with his daughters' T-ball sides. He coached at under-13 and under-16 levels for the Papanui Tigers before taking over the club's premier women's team. "That same year, I started as assistant-coach of the Canterbury under-17s and I've been progressing from there."

He coached his province's under-17 and under-19 teams and the Canterbury Development squad before becoming head coach of the Canterbury Red Hawks senior representative team for four years.

His highlight at the Red Hawks helm was coaching Canterbury to the National Fastpitch Championship title in Christchurch in 2014. "That was fantastic, it was Canterbury's first win in 10 years. That's probably been the ultimate in my coaching career up till now, along with coaching a New Zealand team, which is pretty special too, to be fair."

Tuinenga, who has coached Albion to a club premiership title, took over this season as head coach of Halswell, the current Canterbury champions. He is widely regarded in Christchurch for his work with individual players and has taken great pride in seeing some of his Canterbury Red Hawks players, notably infielders Mikayla Werahiko and Cassie Siataga and pitcher Amy Begg go on to play for the White Sox.

Tuinenga says: "Everybody judges success by silverware, but learning about people is also a very satisfying part of coaching". He has found it "pretty rewarding" to see "individuals succeed, knowing you have contributed to what they are doing".

Moving up to the Junior White Sox, Tuinenga aims to create "more alignment" between the junior programme and the White Sox. He has a good rapport with White Sox coach Kevin Gettins, who has already invited him to join the White Sox at some tournaments.

"At this stage, I'm going to the Asia-Pacific Series in Sydney with the White Sox in February, and Kevin's asked me to go to Hawke's Bay on the 20th of December to coach a New Zealand invitation team against the University of Oregon Ducks. "I'll also hopefully be involved in the the Oregon series in Auckland prior to that."

Tuinenga is excited about the potential for the Junior White Sox and expects selection to be eagerly contested for the 2019 world championships squad with a number of players still eligible from the team taken to the 2017 world tournament by his Junior White Sox predecessor Venita Hokai.