

Day 3 – ROUND TWO

G16, Australia v Samoa, 4-2

Australia took the honours in the first game of Day 3 at the TAB Challenge Cup at AWF Sports Stadium with a win over Samoa 4-2.

Australia put the heat on in the early part of the game scoring their 4 runs in the first three innings.

Samoa who were on a high from their dramatic win over the Czechs late last night only managed to score 2 runs, one in the 1st and one in the 4th inning.

Australia out hit Samoa 6 hits to 3 but it was the high Samoan error count that proved the difference. 5 errors were a few too many at this level and an opportunity that Australia took full advantage of.

G17, Argentina v Japan, 2-1

Game 17 was a key matchup and one that would keep both teams in the hunt for the second and third playoff spot this Sunday.

As expected it was a tight affair with Argentina looking to balance the books given they come up short going down to Japan 6-4 in round 1.

Both teams scored one each in the 3rd innings and were heading for tie breaker when Argentina scored the game winning run on a tough pass ball through the catcher's legs that was unable to be retrieved from the back of the screen and save the game for the Japanese team.

Both teams started with their aces on the mound in southpaw Kengo Terui for Japan and Roman Godoy for Argentina. Both pitchers kept the opposing line ups honest only giving up 3 hits apiece.

G18, New Zealand v Samoa, 10-3

Brother verse brother, it was New Zealand against Samoa in the 3 o'clock game at AWF Sports Stadium at the TAB Challenge Cup.

In a similar 1st inning to that of their first encounter, Samoa came out firing as expected scoring 2 runs in the top of the 1st through a Joshua Nui single. The Golden Homes Black Sox replied immediately with 4 runs of their own.

The Black Sox went onto rack up 6 more runs over the course of the game largely off the bats of Tyrone Bartorillo, Thomas and Campbell Enoke with two hits each.

Nik Hayes and Penese Iosefo split the pitching duties with 3 inning's each.

Samoa with just the one win under their belt played tough and pushed the Black Sox although the 10-3 score suggested otherwise.

G19, Japan v Czech Republic, 5-0

The Japanese took care of Czech Republic with relative ease scoring 5 runs to 0 on Leveloff Field. The Czechs provided little fire power securing just the one hit for the game against Japan's 8.

Key hitters in the Japanese line up were Atsushi Komiyama and Tsuka Oishi picking up 2 RBI's each.

Takurka Kyakuno got the win with 5 solid inning's giving up just the one hit and taking 4 strikeouts.

G20 – Argentina v Australia, 6-3

An important game for both sides in an attempt to stay in the hunt for the playoff game on Sunday morning at the TAB Challenge Cup.

It was the Argentines who crossed home plate in their first at bat followed closely behind by Australia in the next frame with a run of their own. The game seesawed with both teams battling away until Argentina drove in 3 runs in the 5th and tacking on another two in the 6th to do enough to take the game 6-3.

It was an even battle at the plate with Australia pipping Argentina by one out doing them 8-7 in the hitting count.

G21 – Argentina v Czech Republic, 8-6

Argentina were quickly back to work with Czech Republic in the second game of their double header. Both teams came out firing with each team scoring 4 runs in the 1st inning.

Argentina scored another 3 in the third. A late run from the Czechs scoring 3 in the 6th wasn't enough to give them their first win of the tournament.

The improving Czechs will be pleased with their progress as they battled hard pushing Argentina right until the end.

G22 – Japan v New Zealand, 2-1

In the main game of the day it was the number two seed Japan who stepped up to give New Zealand their first loss of the tournament in an intense game at AWF Sports Stadium.

In a low scoring game that only offered 5 hits between the two teams. The difference came down to a two run homer to Japanese left fielder Yusuke Morita in the bottom of the 5th. The Black Sox fought back hard and were gifted a run in the 6th when Japanese pitcher Yuya Yamawaki walked four Black Sox hitters including Ben Enoka allowing Joel Evans to walk home from third base.

The 6th inning was the last real opportunity the Black Sox had to score and in the end will have to settle for second best and they look ahead to tomorrow's games against Czech and Australia.

Josh Pettett got his second start of the tournament pitching the full 7 innings.

The loss will be a timely one for the Black Sox who will take the positives and regroup as they continue to move towards an automatic entry into Sunday's final.

Full results below

<http://www.softball.org.nz/TAB+Challenge+Cup/ChalleGnge+Cup.html>