



FAST PITCH SOFTBALL ... WHAT A GAME

The city of Saskatoon is set to host one of the biggest events in local sports history. Just how big?.. you might ask. The sport Softball has been around for 122 years and is played in more than 114 countries on four continents throughout the world. The 2009 ISF Men's World Softball Championship brings to the Bridge City the best of the best in softball in an event has been going strong since 1966.

Fans can look forward to experiencing this event at two of the best softball facilities in the world, Bob Van Impe Stadium and Gordie Howe Fastball Field. The games they will see are fast, intense and action packed. Unlike the slow moving 170 minutes of an average nine inning Major League Baseball game, the best softball players will play their seven inning game in almost half that time. Not only are they shorter but they will produce more action too. The top four MLB teams in 2009 are averaging about 5.5 runs a game. Whereas, according to the stats from the previous world championship the top four teams in this event will average nearly 6 runs a game.

By combining the closeness of smaller playing surface with the speed of the game this sport is played at machine gun speed and no one has to sit around waiting for action. If you want fast action, fast pitch softball can't be beat. The fastest pitch ever recorded was by softball pitcher Eddie Feigner at 104 miles an hour, beating out baseball's Mark Wohler at 103. Many sport scientists say a hitting fast pitch softball is the toughest thing to do in sports. Not only will they move the ball up, down, left and right, but a number of the pitchers in this event will throw the ball 80 miles an hour. At that speed the batter has a mere .341 of a second to react. Compared to baseball it is similar to reacting to a 106 mph fastball, which is more than 5 mph faster than the fastest pitch every recorded in MLB game. The game doesn't slow down once the ball leaves the pitcher's hand as when it is put into play by the hitter it's moving just as fast. The maximum speed a ball will be coming off the bat will be 85 miles an hour. Imagine being an infielder standing less than 60 feet away when that ball is hit, knowing you have less than a half second to make a play on it or you are in real trouble. Once caught the ball must be thrown to first base and caught in less than 3.5 seconds in order to put out a fast runner. Fans don't blink or you will miss the action.

This event will make you proud to be Canadian. Canada's Men's Softball program is one of the strongest in the world and presently the national team is ranked number two in the world. Canada has been in the medals in all but 2 of the 11 championships winning 3 gold, 5 silver, and 1 bronze medal.