



New Zealand Under 19's Women Softball Team

3 May 2011

Hawkes Bay girl named Captain for World Series

Coach Venita Hokai has named 17 year old Rita Hokianga (Ngati Kahungunu) as Captain of the NZ Under 19s Women's Team (Junior White Sox) heading to the World Series in Capetown, South Africa later this year.

Coach Venita explains "It wasn't a hard decision to name Rita as Captain as she been a part of the national squad since we began 3 years ago. She has always been the type of go-to player, and has a no nonsense attitude! She has 'mana' amongst her peers, whanau, school and team mates and it is evident that she will fill this role with ease. Rita will play a pivotal role up to and during the World Series."

On being appointed as Captain of the Junior White Sox Rita said: "When Coach Venita phoned me about the Captaincy role at first I was in total shock and then when it sunk in I got really excited! It is a huge honour for me and I will treasure my time in this role. A new goal I have set for myself is to do what I can to make sure that the Junior White Sox achieve success at the World's for Women's softball in New Zealand!"

Rita had her debut in 2010 with the NZ Senior Women's Team (White Sox) at the Webber-Eadabone Sheild Challenge in Australia. Being a member of both the junior and senior national teams at the same time is a remarkable achievement.

Rita comes from the softball stonghold of Hawkes Bay where she first swung a bat playing tee ball at the age of 5 years. After playing for many years for the Dodgers Club, Rita moved to Hutt Valley for the 2010/11 softball season to pitch for the Saints Club. Whilst this was a wonderful opportunity to play alongside and against premier players Rita's heart is always in Hawkes Bay and now that the softball season has ended she is back home in Hastings. Currently a Year 13 student at Hukarere Girls College Rita is a Prefect and takes pride in this leadership role within the school environment.

The team build up to Capetown with a training camp scheduled for July and a domestic premier club women's tournament in October. The Junior White Sox are entirely self funded. To donate to the team or individual players go to www.fundraisingonline.co.nz and enter 'softball' or a players name in the sponsor a friend box.



Rita credits the following whakatauki for providing her with guidance and inspiration to succeed: "Whaia e koe te iti kahurangi ki te tuohu koe me he maunga teitei - Seek the treasure that is most dear to you, if you bow your head, let it be to a lofty mountain."



Rita Hokianga in action in the third test vrs Australia in April 2010