

Day 1

G1

Japan v Argentina, 6-4

The first up game of the TAB Challenge Cup didn't fail to deliver with third seed Argentina taking on world number two Japan.

Both teams played with the intensity of the last and final game of the tournament providing a thriller which went down to the wire. But it was Japan who came out on top with a 6-4 win out hitting Argentina 11-10.

The highlight of the game and potentially the play of the tournament came in the form of a slick triple play in the 6th inning. Argentina was down 5-4 with loaded bases and zero outs when batter [Santiago CARRIL](#) ground out to third baseman [Tomonori Inove](#). Inove threw to second base which was then transferred to first baseman for some of the finest defensive skills you will see in the game.

Both teams used a number of pitchers but it was southpaw [Takuya Kyakuno](#) who closed out the game to give Japan a well deserved win.

G2 – Australia v Samoa,

Fifth seed Australia made light work of their first game of the TAB Challenge Cup when they took care of Samoa 12-3. The Samoans who are ranked 12th in the world scored in the 1st and 2nd innings but were unable to contain the might of Australian line up who amassed 12 runs in the first 3 innings. The 'run rule' came into effect when Australia finished the game in the 5th inning given they were ahead by more than 7 runs.

Mark Harris was the standout at the plate with two automatics. Dinger number one was in the first inning scoring Hayden Mathews which was backed up with a solo shot in the fourth.

G3 – New Zealand v Japan, 10-5

The Golden Homes Black Sox took care of business when the world number one took on second seed Japan in the feature game of day one at the TAB Challenge Cup. In a dynamic game it was New Zealand that pulled away in the sixth scoring 5 runs and eventually a 10-5 win.

The Sox got off to a great start when rising star Cole Evans took one out of the yard to give the men in black a 1-0 lead in the bottom of the second.

Black Sox centre fielder Ben Enoka increased the lead to 5-0 with a 2-run dinger scoring brother and captain Thomas in the bottom of the fourth.

Starting pitcher Nik Hayes was replaced by Penese Iosefo in the 6th which was when the wheels started to wobble for the Black Sox. Japan pulled back 4 runs to tie the game 5-5. Iosefo struggled in the middle of the but finally found his way in the top of the 7th to close out the Japanese for the win.

G5 – Argentina v Czech Republic, 4-0

Czech Republic who have a world ranking of eight put in a strong effort in their first outing when they took on the force of Argentina.

Argentina scored in the bottom of the second to take a 1-0 lead. However, the Czech's contained the Argentinians and were in the hunt until up until the 6th inning when the Argentine bats awoke scoring 3 runs.

The final 4-0 score line was flattering for the Argentina who were out batted 6 hits to 5.

G6 – Argentina v Australia, 9-2

A game that was set to be one of the match ups of the day failed deliver. Argentina made light work of the Australians who opted to leave their ace pitchers Andrew Kirkpatrick and Adam Folkard at home.

Argentina jumped out to a big 5-0 lead in the bottom of the first and tacking on a further 3 runs in the 3rd. Australia replied with two runs of their own but the damage was done with the Argentinians run ruling the opposition in the 4th inning to finish the game 9-2.

The hit count was relatively light with Argentina out hitting Australia 5 to 2. But it was the wild pitches and walks that helped give Argentina the game and something for the Australians to think about moving into day 2 of the tournament.

G7 – Japan v Czech Republic, 3-2

Czech Republic came to play and will be rueing the fact they gave up 3 runs in the first inning ultimately deciding their fate.

The Czechs replied in the 3rd with two runs of their own with that being the last scoring play for either side in the game.

It was a tight ball game and one that saw each team get 4 hits apiece.

Although the Czech's had two loses on the first day of the TAB Challenge Cup they will be pleased with the fight and grit they have shown going down narrowly to two teams ranked far higher than them on the WBSC ladder.

G8 – New Zealand v Samoa, 11-1

The last game of day saw the Golden Homes Black Sox take on their softball brothers Tanifa Samoa.

Samoa jumped out to an early 1-0 lead through the double off the bat of Tony Niu who scored Gene Robinson. But the lead was short lived as the Black Sox quickly amassed 5 runs through their turn a bat in the bottom of the first. With two outs the heart of the order fired up staring with a single from captain Thomas Enoka. A further 5 singles and a number of walks saw the Black Sox jump to a healthy lead and some challenges for the Samoans.

New Zealand when onto grab a further 6 runs including a walk off home run to Josh Harbrow to finish the game in the 4th inning.

Josh Pettett had his first outing of the day showing he would be force to be reckoned with throughout the tournament.

Full results and breakdowns at

<http://www.softball.org.nz/TAB+Challenge+Cup/Challenge+Cup+Results+and+Game+updates/Day+1+8022017.html>