



*The World Games 2025 (TWG) – Men & Women – Chengdu –
China*

August 6th – 10th & August 13th – 17th 2025



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I have the great pleasure in presenting a report on behalf of myself and Tony (TK) Kairaruna for our appointment to the above event held in Chengdu, China, August 2025.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to begin by sincerely thanking the following people and organisations for their assistance and support.

- Softball New Zealand – Especially Jason Merritt
- The National Umpire Staff
- The Dugout for the travel shirts
- Promo Lab for their assistance with our gift exchange
- Nacho Pardo – Director of Umpires
- Wiremu Tamaki – Assistant Director of Umpires
- WBSC Staff – Especially Laurie, Aki, Chenxi and Sam
- The players and fans who attended the tournament
- The countless volunteers in Chengdu

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Flight arrangements were made by the WBSC Travel Logistics Manager in Switzerland. Initially, he had us travelling separately. However, after contact from TK, we were placed on the same flights. We travelled from Auckland to Guangzhou, where we had a 4-hour layover before a short flight from there to Chengdu. At Chengdu airport, we were greeted by volunteers and were placed on a bus from the airport to Village A, where we were provided with our accreditation, and then it was a short walk to Village B, which was our accommodation. The accommodation was shared with other sports athletes and officials. At Village B, we were issued with World Games apparel, including running shoes, shirts, a jacket and track pants.

ACCOMMODATION, LAUNDRY & TRANSPORT

Accommodation was at the Holiday Inn, Chengdu Century City, a very large hotel (775 rooms). We shared rooms of two. Breakfasts and dinners were provided, and food, water, and soft drinks were available 24 hours. Security at the hotel was intense, with staff requiring us to wear our accreditation at all times. Bags were scanned upon entry, and individuals were “wanded” each time we arrived at the hotel or the ballpark. There was a temporary 24-hour self-service laundry with ten washing machines and ten dryers, allowing us to do laundry at any time. Outside the laundry was a lounge area, perfect for meetings and socialising.

Transport arrangements to and from the ballpark were strictly followed. The bus departure point was a five-minute walk from the hotel. The journey to the ballpark took just under an hour, depending on traffic. The accommodation, laundry, and transport arrangements were entirely satisfactory.

PARK & FACILITIES

The event was held at the Xindu Better City Softball Arena. The venue was about an hour's bus ride from the accommodation. Two fully enclosed diamonds were of a very high standard. Both fields had fully electronic scoreboards. Diamond 1 had full live streaming with multiple cameras. This was a world-class facility. There were no unusual ground rules in effect. Dugouts were spacious, and there was a good area for the umpires to hydrate during the games. Due to the high temperatures, mandatory 3-minute drinks breaks were held after the 2nd and 4th innings. The changing facilities for the umpires were on the second floor of a spacious amenities building. This was a short walk from Diamond 1. On occasion, a golf cart was used to transport umpires to Diamond 2. There were three changing rooms. Four males in two of them, and the females in the other. In addition, there was another room available for pre- and post-game debriefs. Downstairs, there were large relaxation rooms. These were used for lunches, which were supplied daily. There were also snacks and drinks available throughout. These rooms were also utilised for bat checks at the start of each tournament. Full wi-fi was available throughout the building and grounds area. In the next building were the athletes' changing rooms and dining areas. This building was also utilised by chiropractors, who were available to all participants daily. Their service was free. It was used frequently by the athletes and the umpire crew. I cannot fault the Park & Facilities

THE UMPIRE CREW

There were ten WBSC umpires appointed to the tournament, plus two supervisors.

DIRECTOR OF UMPIRES – Nacho Pardo (ESP), assisted by Wiremu Tamaki (NZ)
CREW: Mark (Porty) Porteous (NZL), Tony (TK) Kaiaruna (NZL), Jason Carter (AUS), Willie Lopez (PUR), Miki Yabe (JPN), Takashi Hashimoto (JPN), Genevieve Gaudreau (CAN), Michal Zidek (CZE), Galip Sonmez (GER), Tao Cheng (CHN)

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The World Games consisted of 35 sports with nearly 4,000 athletes competing. There were multiple venues throughout the city of Chengdu. Chengdu has a population of over 20,000,000. The softball event consisted of two separate tournaments. Men were played from the 6th to the 10th of August. There was a two-day break before the women played from the 13th to the 17th of August. The play in both events was of a high standard. Unfortunately weather played a major role in both events. This resulted in no play on the last day of the Men's competition, with the Gold Medal being shared between the USA & Japan and the Bronze Medal between Canada & Venezuela. The semi-finals of the women's competition were unable to be played as scheduled. This resulted in the semi-final and Gold and Bronze Medal games being played back-to-back on the last day. The USA took the Gold Medal, Chinese Taipei the Silver & Japan the Bronze. The semi-final between the USA and Japan was one of the best games of either tournament, going ten innings. Both TK & I were on the game.

SUMMARY

This was a very long tournament. The standard of umpiring was high. The crew bonded well and were always open to critique and were willing to step into the breach if required. The

heat and humidity at the event was extreme. On three occasions, umpires were unable to continue their plate games. This was despite the level of hydration that was encouraged throughout. It should be noted that a 27-year-old Argentine athlete in the orienteering event succumbed to heat stroke. This indicates the intensity of the heat and humidity in Chengdu. The crew utilised the new Dynamic Movement mechanics, notably around 2nd base and the plate, to good effect. I believe it is fair to say that the New Zealand umpires did particularly well in both events. I was appointed to the Men's Gold Medal game, and TK was to be the plate umpire on the Men's Bronze medal game. These games did not take place. TK was appointed to the Women's Gold Medal Game, and I was on the Bronze Medal match. Both of us were considered senior umpires at this event and were often sought out for guidance and advice. This was the longest tournament I have been a part of, being 15 days. As mentioned, the World Games Event was huge. Due to our distance from the park and also weather delays, we were not able to attend either the Opening or Closing Ceremonies, which was unfortunate. WBSC kindly invited all of the Technical Officials to dinner on one occasion. This was Hot Pot, the dish the region is famous for. They also took the group to the Panda Base on our rest day. These were both great experiences. Overall, this was one of the most enjoyable events I have been a part of. That is largely thanks to the fantastic organisation from TWG, WBSC, etc., plus the guidance and mentorship of Nacho & Wu.

Ngā mihi nui.

Mark (Porty) Porteous & Tony (TK) Kaiaruna

PHOTOS

