



XI Jr. Men's Softball World Championship

@wbsc #2016JMWC

📅 July 24, 2016 - July 30, 2016

📍 Midland (USA)



Travel Report for David Fortin, NZ umpire

WBSC 2016 Jnr Men's World Champs

Overview

This is my report for the WBSC 2016 Junior Men's World Championship held in Midland, Michigan from 24-30 July 2016. I was privileged to be selected to represent New Zealand along with my colleague Tony TK Kaiaruna for what would be my first international appointment at a WBSC event. Preparations began several months before the tournament in terms of logistics and also team-building exercises with the international crew. The Merle Butler Cup is a case-based competition where teams are created with the goal of enhancing communication between crew members of different countries and speaking different languages. My team included participants from the USA, Germany and Botswana and we created a private group Facebook page to facilitate our exchanges.

I left NZ in early July and spent a few weeks in Canada where I did some umpiring at the top fastpitch league in Quebec in the Bellechasse region near Quebec City. My travel to Midland in the state of Michigan was a bit longer as expected as my plane was delayed by some severe thunderstorms in the Chicago area which meant an overnight sleeping at the gate at O'hare to catch the next flight out at 7am the next morning. On the same day, I did two warm-up games in late afternoon, one plate and one base with the Australian international team vs. local Midland teams.

We met the crew the following day and attended the technical meeting and the bat check session. We were briefed on the protocols for the 20-second clock and the 5th umpire system which were both used for all games in the tournament. The crew stayed on the campus of a university near the playing grounds and the accommodation provided was very comfortable, meals at the campus cafeteria were also provided 3 times a day.

Crew

12 Teams participated in the world Champs: ARGENTINA, AUSTRALIA, BOTSWANA, CANADA, CZECH REPUBLIC, DENMARK, ISRAEL, JAPAN, MEXICO, NEW ZEALAND, SOUTH AFRICA, UNITED STATES

The crew included 16 umpires from 11 different countries:

AFRICA
BOTSWANA
MATABOGE, Abel

AMERICAS
CANADA
GERRIOR, Darren
MORRISEY, Mike

MEXICO
CHAPA, Abel

PUERTO RICO
OCASIO ARROYO, Luis

UNITED STATES
CONNORS, James
NORRIS, Jerry
WALLACE, Kevin
WELLS, Sean

ASIA
JAPAN
TABINUKI, Toyomatsu

EUROPE
CZECH REPUBLIC
DOSTAL, Jiri

GERMANY
LAUTENSCHLAEGER, Florian

ISRAEL:
ARON, Brian

OCEANIA
AUSTRALIA
BARROW, Richard

NEW ZEALAND
FORTIN, Dave
KAIARUNA, Tony

SUPERVISORS
MAOENG, Vincent
RYAN, Kevin
STANTON, Bob

Tournament

Umpires were assigned to 2 games every day and the original appointments had me selected to plate the opening game of the tournament on diamond1 after the official ceremonies in a game USA vs Botswana and I was really looking forward to that experience. Unfortunately, the first day started with heavy rain and several of the early games had to be postponed to the following day, so I ended up officiating that rescheduled game the next day.

All games used the 20-second clock and the 5th umpire protocol to handle changes and substitutions. The weather conditions were variable with rain at different times during the week and some very hot conditions with high humidity and temperatures over 32 degs most days.

The level of softball was very high for most games even for some of the emerging countries involved with the game. The highlight of the week for me was for me was on day4 on the final game of pool play involving USA vs Australia. This game had a rain delay at started late in the evening under the lights on diamond1. A very tense game with a major brawl clearing both dugouts and ending with 2 ejected players. The game went into extra innings and ended on a USA walk-off win in the bottom of the 9th.

Australia (3-2) vs. United States (4-1)

3-4 (9 innings)

[Box Score](#)

The United States finished in second place in Pool A after a 4-3, extra inning thriller win over Australia in the final pool play match. With both teams held without a run until the sixth inning, it was the U.S. who ultimately came out on top over Australia following a ninth-inning RBI single by Jonathan Broadbear to score Steven Nessler.

Zane Chason's six strikeouts over five innings combined with Derek Martin's two singles lifted the USA over the Junior Steelers after a rain-delayed contest that did not begin until 10 p.m., four hours after its originally schedule start time.

It was a great week of softball and a fantastic crew to work with and we still keep in touch through our facebook page for the tournament. Kevin Wallace from Illinois was my roommate for the week. It was really good that I had TK with me as my mate from NZ and he provided valuable insights all week based on his previous experience the year before at the Jnr Women's Champs in Oklahoma. All in all, a great experience as an umpire and one I will remember forever.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the NZ National Umpiring Staff for believing in me, Softball New Zealand, in particular Eugene Gilbert, for their assistance, Bob Stanton, Vincent Maoeng and Kevin Ryan TCUs, the local Midland umpire association Rick and Mike and their team of volunteers and of course all The WBSC Umpiring Crew.

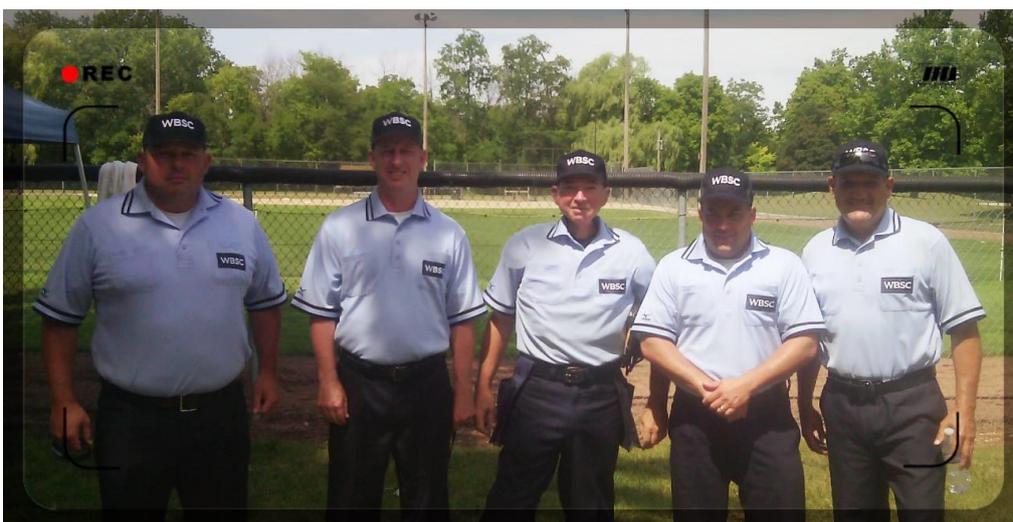
Photo Album



WBSC crew



with Bruno Guay and Serge Laflamme in Canada



with Jim Norris USA, Darren and Mike from Canada, and Chapa from Mexico



with Kevin Wallace roomie



with TK, Tabi and Chapa



USA vs Australia crew on day4