

Softball NZ Announcement - TAB Challenge Cup 2019

The 2019 TAB Challenge Cup will showcase the best men's fastpitch players on the globe with 3 of the world's top 4 ranked softball teams confirmed to contest the tournament in Auckland.

To be held at ELE Stadium Rosedale Park in Albany from February 8 -10, the TAB Challenge Cup will see teams representing New Zealand, Japan, and Australia competing across 13 games and provide critical international competition for the home side in their lead up to the 2019 WBSC Men's Softball World Cup hosted by the Czech Republic in June.

"The TAB Challenge Cup is a world-class event that promises to showcase the strength in men's fastpitch with 3 of the top 4 teams in the world competing for honours" says Softball NZ CEO Tony Giles.

"The Black Sox brand is a true New Zealand sporting success story and we are delighted to be hosting the calibre of Australia and Japan on home soil" says Giles.

Fresh off their Intercontinental Cup title win in Czech Republic last August the Golden Homes Black Sox will be looking to continue that winning momentum at the Challenge Cup. The Black Sox who only lost one game at the 2017 Challenge Cup to Japan will be aiming to take the cup for back to back titles.

The Black Sox last played Australia at the 2017 WBSC Men's Softball World Championship in Whitehorse, Canada where the group claimed their 7th world title with a stunning victory over their cross-Tasman rivals in an epic final encounter.

In another coup for Softball NZ, the TAB Challenge Cup will be broadcast on SKY Television with 6 feature games being broadcast live across their Sky Sport platform.

Golden Homes Black Sox Head Coach Mark Sorenson is delighted at the opportunity. "I'm really excited to be able to put our very best 32 athletes on display against two of the top countries in the world in Australia and Japan. The opportunity to expose a larger group of athletes to the standards of international competition, will not only improve our overall standard, but increase competition for final places in the team that will travel to the World Cup in Prague, when it's named after the Club Nationals in March" says Sorenson.

TAB Challenge Cup tickets can be purchased at

<https://www.iticket.co.nz/events/2019/feb/tab-challenge-cup>

Glen Roff - Softball Manager