

WBSC Europe VP Softball Report

Issue 26

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TO: Softball Europe National Federations

Dear Friends,

As 2024 comes to a close, the 2024 season is also behind us. Now is the perfect time to reflect on this year's activities and start planning for the year ahead. I would like to take this opportunity to update you on our activities and operations, ensuring you are well-informed about the achievements and developments in European Softball.

2024 season overview:

The primary goal of WBSC Europe Softball in 2024 was to deliver competitions that meet the high standards we aspire to and that our Federations and teams expect. I am personally delighted to see an increasing number of teams interested in participating in competitions under the WBSC Europe umbrella, confirming that we are steering our course in the right direction.



Overall, 2024 was another busy and successful season for Softball Europe. A total of 150 teams (compared to 132 in 2023) played 563 scheduled games (up from 498) across 25 diamonds (23 in 2023). This achievement would not have been possible without the dedication of players, coaches, organizers, volunteers, and SE officials. My heartfelt thanks go out to everyone who contributed to making our vision a reality.

This year, we hosted four European Championships, including the most prestigious, the Women's European Championship. These

competitions crowned four European champions, with titles spread across four nations: Italy, the Netherlands, Czechia, and Great Britain.

We also held five European Cups hosted in four different countries. Dutch clubs continued their dominance in the Women's Cups, while Denmark's Hurricanes reclaimed the throne in the Super Cup Men. Beyond the champions, we witnessed numerous personal and club victories.

The 2024 international season brought historic achievements, including a medal for Udo Dehmel in the Premiere Cup and a milestone for Spain in the U15 Women's European Championship. Croatia celebrated winning the Women's Cup and earning promotion to the Premiere Cup for the first time.

It's these victories, whether they seem small in the grand scheme or monumental for the participants, that truly highlight the spirit and growth of European Softball.

Women's Softball European Championship:

The 24th edition of the Women's Softball European Championship took place from September 1 to September 7, 2024, in Utrecht, Netherlands. The tournament, which began in Rovereto, Italy, in 1979, has become a cornerstone of European softball.

The 2024 championship concluded with Italy securing their 13th continental title, dominating the competition with an undefeated 9-0 record to claim the gold medal. Great Britain followed closely, earning the silver medal with a 7-2 record, while the Netherlands captured the bronze, also finishing with a 7-2 record. Czechia rounded out the top four, replicating their 2022 performance with a 5-4 overall record.

The tournament reached an emotional peak just before the gold medal game, as Dutch softball legend Rebecca Soumeru was honored on the field. Though inducted into the WBCS Europe Hall of Fame in 2020, this moment marked a long-awaited recognition in front of her peers and fans, making it a truly special occasion. - more here..



EMRYT and MASTERS are growing:

Two unique competitions for specific age groups and conditions were held this year, drawing tremendous interest from participants. The Softball European Massimo Romeo Youth Trophy (EMRYT) for U13 players and the MASTERS tournament for players aged 40+ showcased the growing enthusiasm for these events.

EMRYT took place in Collecchio, Italy, featuring a total of 17 teams (4 in [Sport Division](#) and 13 in [Future Division](#)). Meanwhile, the MASTERS tournament was held in Barcelona, Spain, with 18 teams participating (10 in [Women's Division](#) and 8 in [Men's Division](#)). I would like to personally thank FIBS (Italy) and RFEB (Spain) for their close cooperation in organizing these successful events.



The Softball European Massimo Romeo Youth Trophy continues to serve as both a platform for young athletes to compete and an opportunity for them to be inspired by some of the sport's best. This year, [Olympians Greta and Elisa Cecchetti](#) inaugurated the event, inspiring the young participants, just as U.S. Olympian Leah O'Brien-Amico did last year.

On the other hand, the MASTERS tournament aims to reunite players on the court, where they once competed fiercely in their prime. The event is filled with joy and camaraderie, offering a space for retired athletes to reconnect. Reflecting this spirit, the tournament's age requirements will gradually increase in the Men's Division to 45, ensuring it remains a celebration of lifelong dedication to the sport.

European and World Softball Ranking:

The 2024 European Softball Rankings have been released by the WBSC Europe Softball Commission, offering a comprehensive overview of national team performances in recent European Championships across multiple categories. – more [here](#). The European Softball Rankings have been published annually since 2015, utilizing the same methodology since their inception. These rankings serve as both a marketing tool and a means for allocating teams into competition pools.

Rank	Team	Points	Change
1	ITALY	5312.5 pts	-
2	NETHERLANDS	5050 pts	▼ -1
3	CZECHIA	5025 pts	-
4	GREAT BRITAIN	4637.5 pts	▲ +1
5	SPAIN	3900 pts	▼ -1
6	FRANCE	3562.5 pts	▲ +1
	GERMANY	3562.5 pts	▲ +2
8	ISRAEL	3262.5 pts	▼ -2
9	UKRAINE	3112.5 pts	▲ +1
10	GREECE	2450 pts	▲ +4
11	AUSTRIA	2400 pts	▲ +1
12	BELGIUM	2262.5 pts	▲ +4
13	IRELAND	1937.5 pts	▼ -4
14	CROATIA	1860 pts	▼ -1
	POLAND	1860 pts	▼ -3
16	SWITZERLAND	1475 pts	▲ +1
17	SWEDEN	1437.5 pts	▲ +3
18	SLOVAKIA	1400 pts	▼ -3
19	DENMARK	900 pts	-
20	MALTA	550 pts	▲ +2
21	FINLAND	425 pts	▲ +1
22	HUNGARY	325 pts	▼ -1
23	BULGARIA	300 pts	▲ +1
24	TÜRKIYE	125 pts	▲ +1
25	LITHUANIA	25 pts	▲ +1

European teams also maintain a strong presence in the [WBSC World Rankings](#). The Netherlands, the top-ranked European team, holds 5th place in the WBSC World Ranking for Women's Softball.

Remarkably, seven European countries are ranked in the top 15 worldwide—a historic achievement and a testament to the increasing level of high performance among European teams.

In Men's Softball, two European teams are in the WBSC World Ranking's top 15: Czechia at 7th place and Denmark at 15th. These accomplishments highlight the continued progress and competitiveness of European softball on the global stage.

EBSCA 2024:

The EBSCA Training Camp 2024, held in Diessen, Netherlands, from October 23 to 27, brought together 58 athletes and 16 coaches from across Europe for an intensive and enriching training experience. Focusing on skill refinement, strategy, and team-building in a supportive environment, the camp proved to be both memorable and highly beneficial for all participants.

Throughout the [EBSCA Training Camp 2024](#), participants engaged in a wide array of structured training sessions. This year's camp offered additional value to its participants. Synergy Sports, a division of Sportradar and a WBSC Europe partner, was on-site providing video performance analysis for pitchers, catchers, and hitters. Each athlete received detailed performance evaluations and feedback to support their ongoing development.

For the coaches, EBSCA provided Premium Memberships, granting access to valuable NFCA materials, including drills, podcasts, and webinars. These resources are an exceptional tool for continuous learning and professional growth.



The camp concluded with a closing ceremony celebrating the accomplishments of both athletes and coaches. It was a memorable experience that combined skill development with camaraderie, further solidifying its role

in advancing softball across Europe. Coaches and players from across the continent united through their shared passion for the game under the banner of softball #GettingBetterTogether.

A video recap captures the essence of the camp, showcasing the structured training sessions, innovative techniques, and unforgettable moments shared by participants. Special thanks to videographer Lorena Puškarić for creating this wonderful video. Watch the recap [here](#)

Softball Future in Europe:

The WBSC Europe Softball Division reviewed this year's performance during its [meeting in Prague](#) and proposed several minor adjustments for the upcoming season. Additionally, a new cooperation agreement between Hönig's Europe and WBSC Europe for the provision of umpires was signed at the meeting. These updates, along with other key developments, will be presented at the upcoming WBSC Europe Congress, scheduled to take place in Zagreb in February, where new leadership for the next four years will also be elected.



Plans for 2025 are already well underway. The European events [Calendar](#) has its organizers confirmed, and the deadline for entries into next year's tournaments is set for December 31.

Europe will also be proudly represented on the global stage at the World Games in China and the U15 and U18 Womens' World Cups.

Another exciting year of softball experiences lies ahead, promising to further advance the sport across Europe.

Final words:

As we conclude this year, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to the success and reputation of Softball Europe. My gratitude goes out to the representatives of the national federations for their dedication to European softball—both through fielding teams and organizing tournaments.

A special thanks to Elda and Kika, whose tireless efforts for our beautiful sport did not go unnoticed. When I say "day and night," I mean it quite literally—Elda often supported us from across the ocean, even during her nights.

To my colleagues on the WBSC Europe Softball Commission, the tournament staff, and everyone at WBSC Europe and WBSC, thank you for your open and warm cooperation. I would also like to acknowledge Craig Cress, WBSC Vice President for Softball, for his willingness to listen and respond to the needs of softball worldwide.

I deeply value the openness and unity within our community, especially during challenging times. All of our achievements—whether large or small—are the result of a collective effort. I emphasize ALL of US because even the smallest contribution, whether from a tournament volunteer or a coach instilling values in young athletes, strengthens our entire community. For that, you have my utmost admiration and gratitude.



It is a tremendous privilege to be able to play and enjoy sports, particularly during a time when war looms so close to us. Let us recognize this gift, cherish it, and continue to build on the values that make our sport and our community so special.

If you have any questions, suggestions, feel free to contact me anytime.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. Waage".

*Gabriel Waage
WBSC Europe Vice-President Softball*