

You Make the Call

QUESTIONS



QUESTION #1

A ball is hit deep into the outfield, the outfielder gloves the ball holding onto it for three or four strides before running into the fence and dropping the ball. What is the ruling, catch or no catch?

QUESTION #2

A player is discovered wearing metal cleats. What is the call?

QUESTION #3

With runners on 1st and 2nd and two strikes on the batter, he hits a long foul fly ball that is caught. Both runners tag up and advance. What is the ruling?

QUESTION #4

A ball is hit over the outfielder's head and rolls under the outfield fence. The fielder reaches under the fence for the ball as the batter circles the bases for a home run. What is the ruling??

QUESTION #5

On a close play at home, the runner slides into the scoring plate, beating the throw to the catcher who is standing on the home plate mat. What is the call??

QUESTION #6

Runner on 1st base with less than two outs when the batter hits a fly ball which is caught by an outfielder. The outfielder throws back to 1st attempting a double play. The runner slides back into 1st base just beating the throw. What is the call??

QUESTION #7

A pitcher is discovered using a mitt. What is the ruling??

THESE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ARE BASED ON ASA RULES.

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AROUND THE WORLD IN SEVEN INNINGS!



I never thought of softball as a way to see the world—but it really can be. Last spring I learned of an opportunity to play softball in Taiwan and Japan in the 2009 Asia Cup International Slow Pitch Championships. I was really interested, but a bit apprehensive because I don't know anyone else on the team. Most of the players were from Southern California. I decided to be adventurous, and I'm really glad I was. After meeting up with the team in Los Angeles, we made the 12 hour flight to Taiwan together. Upon arriving, we were greeted by our interpreter, Ambrose, who took good care of us the whole time we were in Taipei.

The first day we just got settled in the hotel. The accommodations were first rate! The next morning, we headed out to the ball field for two games against teams from Taipei. That was when I first learned that the game was a bit different from American softball. For example, they use a 14 inch ball compared to our 12 inch one, and the ball is softer but heavier. I brought one home for souvenir. It took a while to get the hang of driving the ball instead of hitting it into the ground, even with my Miken bat! The field itself was a bit different too. The bases were only 45 feet apart instead of 65. You might think that you could beat out infield hits a bit easier, but the players are in closer too. Also had to get used to the fact that you can't tag up on a fly ball from 1st or 2nd base but you can from 3rd.

Each game started with a tradition where each team lined up from home plate to the pitchers mound facing each other. Team members bowed and shook hands with the player across from them. Then it was "Let's play ball!" or I'm guessing that's what the umpires yelled! At the end of each game, there was a similar formality, where again the teams line up, but this time by position. There was still the bowing and hand shaking, but also the customary exchange of gifts. After the first game, since I played left field, I lined up facing the Taipei left fielder, Dickie Chen, who was a very, nice guy and a very good ball player! I handed him a USA patch and a USA softball T-shirt. He gave me his Taipei softball hat which he had signed in Chinese and English. He complimented my USA hat, so I signed it and gave it to him. Then he went to his bat bag, and I wondered "What is he getting now? He came back and gave me a brand new beautiful white wooden bat that he autographed too. I felt like we were playing "Can you top this?" By this time I was starting to run out of things to exchange. All I had left was the clothes I was wearing. I thought about my softball pants, but I didn't want to go back to the hotel in my underwear! So we decided to end it there. Actually, this was a very nice custom and the bat is on display at home!

In all we played 8 games over 4 days in Taipei, and finished 3rd out of 6 teams at .500. Afternoons were spent

sightseeing, visiting some of the temples and scenic countryside. For me, food was a bit of a challenge. I'm not usually a picky eater, but I mainly lived on sticky rice for the first 4 days. There was a lot of dried fish and delicacies that didn't really appeal to me. At the end of the tournament in Taipei, there was a nice banquet. They're big on karaoke there, so each team performed a song. Our team had no clue what the Taipei teams were singing, but it was all good fun! There were only 12 songs in English to choose from, so we did a stirring rendition of "Those Old Cotton Fields Back Home". Then we sat down to eat. There was big cast iron pot on the lazy Susan in front of me with a chicken in it. I thought, "Oh boy! Something other than sticky rice!" I grabbed the ladle to dig in and was surprised when the ladle came out with the chicken head with the beak, comb and wattle still attached. Back the ladle went. Too bad, back to sticky rice!! It was an nice way to end this part of the tournament. The Taiwanese people really treated us well. They were welcoming and fun-loving.

We left for Japan the next morning and stayed in the beautiful coastal town of Tanabe. We had the opportunity to meet the mayor. We met in his office where he welcomed us to the town and served us tea and oranges. He didn't speak any English, but through his interpreter he asked our manager where each player came from in the United States. When he was told that all the players came from Southern California except one from New Jersey, the interpreter asked who came from New Jersey. Small world, she was born and raised in Secaucus!

At our first game, I learned that softball here was a little different again from Taipei. The outfield had a white line 180 feet out that went from the left to the right field foul line. If the ball went over this line on a fly, it was an automatic home run. Even with the bigger, heavier ball, there were some home runs hit. If the ball went over the line on the ground, it was a ground rule double. There was the same tradition of welcome, with the handshakes and bowing before each game, and the exchange of gifts at the end of each game. There were teams from different cities in Japan and one team Taipei. We played 10 games and came in 2nd place with a record of 9-1, losing out to the team from Taipei in the finals.

In Japan too, we used our afternoons to explore the country a bit. We visited museums, saw some really interesting architecture and the Tanabe coastline where they hid the submarines during WWII. Despite the language barriers and cultural differences, we found a way to communicate and have fun. Since coming home, I kept in touch with Dickie Chen. The whole trip was a really enjoyable experience and I am looking forward to going back again this November!

Players: Taiwan Softball Players are very talented. Most could field there position, hit and run well. The age of the Taiwan teams was between 50 and 60 so they did have a slight advantage over our team of 65-70. If you made a good defensive play or had a nice hit they were the first to bow to you and then shake your hand. You also did the same for them. This held true for the Japan Teams also. I did notice one thing about the Japanese teams, all the players seemed to be the same height. Except one team from Tokyo, they had some guys about 6'4" I found the people and the players to be very nice.

By Bill Codner

Glimpse of History



Sultan didn't swat here... Barnstorming in Dover on Oct. 6, 1920, Babe Ruth (center), along with Carl Mays and Lefty O'Doul played baseball here, in front of more than 4,000 spectators who had gathered at the east Dover field (today Hamilton Field) to watch the Yankees play the Dover Athletic Association in an exhibition game. Up until 1922, barnstorming tours were a popular way for ballplayers to earn extra money while baseball was out of season. Cities like Dover were happy to host big-league players; however, the practice came to an end when banned by Baseball Commissioner Judge Kenesaw "Mountain" Landis. Disappointing the Dover crowd with no home runs that day, the Babe and the Yankees lost to the Dover team 3-2 in 14 innings.