



Challenge Chatter

The Official Newsletter of the 2008 Ramada 3 Nations Challenge
Final Edition

It was an exciting time in Saskatoon as three of the top men's fastball nations took to the diamond competing in the Ramada 3 Nations Challenge. The event proved to be a great showcase for men's Fastpitch in Saskatchewan. Over 1000 people witnessed exhibition action in Prince Albert and Pilot Butte, 1500 in Melfort and the 4 day event drew over 7500 fans in Saskatoon.



Although they split with the first place Canadian squad the Japanese were forced to play in this 1:00 semi-final by virtue of their 8-1 loss to Canada last night. After some rain in the morning the sky cleared and the sun came out for the semi final. **Tatsuoya Hamaguchi** got the start for the Japanese facing against right hander **Travis Price** for the U.S.. The Americans were looking to regain some respect after going winless in the preliminary round and being beaten badly last night by Japan 13-6. In the first inning **Chase Tuner** drew a one out walk and was advanced to second on a passed ball, **Kyle Magnusson** also drew a walk. U. S. catcher **Frank DeGroat** ended a long battle with a three run homerun to put his team up by 3. Price looked sharp using his change up very effectively in putting down the Japanese in order in the bottom of the first. The Japanese got their first hit in the second inning when **Ryuji Hazeyama** hit a one out double but they were unable to capitalize. In the top of the third the U.S. had something going as lead off batter **Blake Miller** took one in the arm and stole second. **Chase Turner** struck out bringing up veteran Kyle Magnusson who singled, but center fielder **Hiraku Yokoyama** threw out Miller at home to prevent any scoring. **Norihiko Aoyama** got the Japanese on the board in the third with a solo shot to left as the Japanese looked ready to do some real damage. The ninth man in the order in the order **Yu Nishimori** got on base by an error to **Steve Pinochio**. Following a strike out by **Shuhei Suzuki**, **Hiraku Yokoyama** bunted for a single, but Price pitched out of the jam getting a pair of ground outs. In the fourth Japan brought in **Kazutaka Murasato** to pitch, and he set aside the Americans in order. **Ryuji Hazeyama** led off with walk in the fourth. Following a sacrifice bunt **Hiroshi Ishimura** hit a single to left to score the run. He stole second and advanced to third on a bad throw by DeGroat, scoring on a little single to left to tie the game. In the bottom of the fifth the Japanese scored a pair as **Hiraku Yokoyama** led off with a double to right and scored on a triple by Tsutui and who was then hit in on a sacrifice fly to left. With two out in the bottom of fifth the rain came down leading to a brief delay. The momentum turned for good in the top of the sixth when the Americans got back to back one out singles by **Kyle Magnusson** and **Frank DeGroat** and a wild pitch advanced the runners to 2nd and 3rd. With the tying runs in scoring position two hard hit ground balls to third baseman **Takuto Tsutsui** produced the two outs that ended the American threat. A Japanese single and walk chased Price in the bottom of the sixth bringing in **Cody Thomson**. Following a 50 minute rain delay, two costly American errors allowed the Japanese to score four runs and put the game out of reach, winning 9-3.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
United States	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	4
Japan	0	0	1	2	2	4	x	9	10	0



The Japanese were looking for revenge following an embarrassing 8-1 loss last night. After an offensive explosion that saw round robin that featured 21 homeruns and a final night that saw 28 men cross the plate in only ten innings no one was ready for the low scoring final hat ended the tournament. **Todd Martin** got the start for Canada. He came out blazing throwing over 80 miles per hour. He got through the first inning stranding a lead off walk. **Kunihiko Iida** started for Japan. **Ryan Wolfe** welcomed him with a drive to fence, but was robbed by center fielder he gave up hits to **Derek Mayson** and Jody **Eidt** but got **Keith MacKintosh** popped up to end the inning. In the second Martin stranded a one out walk getting out of the inning by facing only four batters. Canada stranded runners on second and third in the bottom of the second as **Ryan Wolfe** popped out to first. For the third straight inning Japan got a runner aboard but could not score him as **Rob Giesbrecht** committed an error. In his three innings of work Martin was dominant as he held Japan hitless as in the fourth Canada brought in **Trevor Ethier**. Giesbrecht atoned for his error at the plate with a bunt single and a stolen base but he was left at second when **Keith Mackintosh** lined a grounder to the pitcher for the third out. Ethier mowed down the three batters he faced in the fourth. In their half of the fourth Canada was again disappointed as they stranded **Ian Fuhrman** on second when **Jeff Ellsworth** was put out on a hard hit ball to the pitcher. After four hits and two Japanese errors in four innings they were still scoreless. Ethier was again unhittable the Japanese had nothing across in the fifth. **Dean Holoien** entered in the sixth inning to pitch. making his first appearance of the tournament as he was nursing an injury for most of the tournament. He gave up Japan's first hit to pinch hitter **Kenji Nakamura** who bounced one just over his outstretched arm but was erased on a smooth 1-6-3 double play. **Tatsuya Hamaguchi** came in to pitch for Japan in the sixth and he kept the Canadians off the bases in the inning. Holoien mowed down the Japanese in the top of the seventh setting the stage for an interesting bottom half of the inning. **Ian Furhman** led off the inning with a single off the pitcher's glove and was moved to second on **Craig Crawford** bunt. **Jeff Ellsworth** proved to be the hero as he doubled home the winning run to give Canada the title.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
Japan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Canada	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	6	1

